

## Thoughts on Acts Four

*With great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.  
(Acts 4:33).*

In Acts chapter one, we find that an apostle must have witnessed, actually seen, the resurrected Christ. In Acts chapter two, Luke quotes (Psalm 16:10) where David looks forward to the resurrection of Christ. And in chapter four, the Jewish leaders are agitated because the disciples are preaching about the resurrected Christ (Acts 4:2). The dominant theme in every gospel lesson, from about seven months before His crucifixion (Matthew 16:21) until today, is the risen savior who is "Made both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Paul told the people of Athens that the proof that God would judge the world was the resurrection of His appointed judge" (Acts 17:30-31).

Jesus demonstrated His ability to forgive sins by curing paralytics. Three of the gospel writers recorded a specific healing in Galilee which was seen by many Jews from both Galilee and Judea. The people were excited and desired the healings, but Jesus wanted everyone to believe in Him and be saved from their sins. Jesus' first words to the paralytic shocked and captured the attention of those present. "Friend, your sins are forgiven you" (Luke 5:20). The scribes and the Pharisees considered Jesus' words blasphemous because only God could forgive sins. Jesus responded, "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? "But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home" (Luke 5:23-24). Jesus had given life to limbs that had been lifeless but offered life eternal to the spirit.

In the name of Jesus, Peter and John healed a man who had never been able to walk, being lame from birth. Now, the emphasis is upon the creator, who, being raised from the dead, was the power working through the apostles. The same power used to cure the Galilean paralytic cured the Judean cripple. The message of the apostles was that Jesus was alive and active to heal the spiritual body. Healing the physical body was only a demonstration that the power of the resurrected Christ could forgive sins and save them from the consequences of sin.

Years later, Paul wrote about the primary features of the gospel that he preached to all. "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Paul explained that Christ was the first of many to be raised from death (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Some did not believe Jesus' teachings, and others did not believe Peter and John in Jerusalem. Many failed to understand Paul's teachings, and today, many deny that Jesus left Heaven on a mission to save mankind. Even today there are also those who question how resurrection is even possible. Apparently, they also questioned the possibility in Paul's day, for he wrote, "But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" (1 Corinthians 15:35). With the mind on such things as how it is done, people lose sight of the objective of God's promise to provide an eternal home for the faithful. Satan has constantly distracted us from the prize with questions that do not matter.

The main point of all Biblical discussions on the resurrection of all people is that it will happen. We

are not told when, but we are told that Christ will return for the faithful (John 14:3); (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2); (Hebrews 9:27-28). The events that will occur on that day are far beyond our ability to comprehend, much less describe in words. For bodies to be re-formed that have been destroyed in many ways is beyond our reasoning unless we remember that God and His Son made man from dust and caused him to breathe. That Jesus caused bones and muscle tissue to form inside the lame and rebuilt the delicate eyes of the blind. How did He do it? He is the creator who knows things too wonderful for our human minds. John states our limited knowledge this way. "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:2).

As we are reminded by a literal version of King Solomon's words, we have, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this applies to every man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). God's commandments, given to us by His Son (Hebrews 1:2), point to a resurrection from death into life. Our duty then, as Paul says of himself, is to "Press on after a mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). That mark is the inheritance in heaven that awaits the resurrected follower of Christ.