

## ***Acts 4: The Imprisonment of Peter and John***

- The devil never leaves God's people alone for very long.
- 2 Tim.3.12: "all who live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."
- Luke 21.12, 17: "...will persecute you...and be hated by all because of My name."
- Chief priests: Politically appointed; Captain of temple guard: 2<sup>nd</sup> in authority only to the high priest.
- Sadducees: small powerful group; did not believe in the resurrection. (Acts 23.6,8)
- What were the charges against Peter and John? (No laws were broken)
  - Teaching the people
  - Peter & John were proclaiming Jesus
  - Proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead (See 1 Cor.15:20-29)
  - Peter and John arrested and jailed
- V.4: "but many who heard the message believed..."
- The apostles could be imprisoned but not their words!
- Belief: includes trust and obedience; Christians often called in Acts—Believers.
- People were being baptized every day in Jerusalem (Acts 2.41, 47).
- Church growth: "and the number of the men came to be about 5,000.
- V.5: "on the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander..."
  - Rulers: chief priests; elders: older men/leaders; Scribes: teachers of the law;
  - These 3 groups composed the Council or Sanhedrin---they were the Jewish national council, the Jewish senate (5.21), and the Supreme Court. The most powerful 71 men in all the Jewish state. (Also, very corrupt at this time).
  - The apostles and the healed lame man were placed in the center of the group
- Their question: "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"
  - Done what? Healing, preaching, something else? Vague question.
  - Note Jesus trial: Luke 22.66-71; similar kind of questioning.
  - Power: Gk. Word means miraculous power;
  - "What name have you done this? By whose authority; (Mt.21.23)
    - We are the ones in authority here!
  - Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 21.14,15; Mt.10.17-20; Lk.12.11)
    - Promise to the apostles not to worry about what to say
- Peter implies in effect that if you are really interested in who made him well, I'll tell you! "Jesus Christ the Nazarene and by this name this man stands here before you in good health."
  - "God raised Him from the dead...He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief cornerstone."

- V.12: “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”
  - Jesus could make the beggar well physically and can make all mankind spiritually well!
  - John 14.6: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
  - Truth by nature is always narrow
- The Councils reaction (4.13.-22)
  - Noticed the confidence of Peter and John (uneducated men).
  - Noticed that they had been with Jesus!
  - The formerly lame man was standing there whole and in good health—undeniable. (he was 40 years old and had been lame since birth).
  - They ordered them to leave the council...what shall we do with these men?
  - Cannot deny the miracle...Let’s warn them not speak of Jesus any more.
  - Peter said, “We cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard.”
- Apostles were released and went to their own company and prayed. (Unity)
  - “O Lord it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea...”
  - “Now Lord take note of their threats...and grant us boldness and confidence.”
  - Lord heard their prayer and shook the place with an earthquake.
  - Lesson: When it seems to us that everything is out of control in our lives, it is important to remember that we worship One who is in control---who can make good come from evil. (Rom. 8.28).
- Barnabas: Levite by birth from the island of Cyprus; His name means son of Consolation and Encouragement. His name mentioned 25 times in book of Acts.
- Lessons for Us;
  - Opposition from the Evil One will come on all Christians
  - His opposition will fail if we stay close to God (James 4.7).
  - Do we view challenges as Oppression or Opportunity?
  - Do people notice that “we have been with Jesus?”
  - Others have made it through all their trials and gained the victory...so can we!
  - We can turn in hard times to “our own companions”...the church. We can’t make it alone.