

Acts 4 Supplement #2

Chapter Four – First Arrest

ACTS 4:11-22:

In our previous lesson, we covered the arrest of Peter and John while they taught in the temple. It was late in the evening, so they were kept in custody until the next day, then brought before the Sanhedrin court, which included the high priest, his family, rulers, elders, and scribes.

These two Apostles of Jesus Christ would be asked **“By what power or by what name have you done this?”** (vs. 7) This probing question was offered concerning the notable miracle performed by them and was offered as a means for them to hopefully incriminate themselves as the council has nothing to truly charge them for.

Peter, emboldened by the Holy Spirit of God, identified the power and name behind the miracle to be **“Jesus Christ of Nazareth”**, whom they had purposefully accomplished putting to death.

Peter would also render that they accomplished only the purpose and plans of God, in that God raised Him from the dead and glorified His name and demonstrated it in the miracle performed in His name. The accomplished purpose of God is the continued thoughts that we begin this lesson with.

Text #1:

Acts 4:11-12 *“This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’* ¹² **Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”**

Also see: **Psalms 118:22.**

Rejected by You Builders: It had been the intent of God through the work of the prophets (3:24), that the Jews should, along with the Apostles of Christ, have been those who would assist in ushering in the kingdom of God. However, Peter would inform them that instead of standing as builders of the kingdom, they had rejected the only foundation the kingdom could be founded upon, **“Jesus Christ of Nazareth”** (1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:4-10).

This rejection of the cornerstone prophetically seen in the **Psalms**; fulfilled in the actions of the rulers of the Jews, is in fact the rejection of that which the entire kingdom was to be founded upon.

Peter establishes that their rejection was nothing more than their own prejudicial choice to reject Jesus as the Messiah. In spite of their choice God has made Him the Chief Cornerstone and the kingdom [is] being built on Him as foretold by the prophets.

Nor is their Salvation in Any Other: In this statement, made by Peter while he is facing the leaders of the people, would in the context of those present, exclude them, Moses, or any of the prophets. They would either come to understand that “**Jesus Christ of Nazareth**” was the prophet Moses spoke of that they must hear, or they would know the rest of the words of Moses and “**Be utterly destroyed from among the people**” (3:23).

To you and me today, this is equally true, to the exclusion of Martin Luther, Popes, Muhammad, the Dalai Lama, etc.

By God; Jesus Christ has been given a name above all others (**Philippians 2:9**), that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (**Philippians 2:10**), and that He is the only one with preeminence (**Colossians 1:18**).

Text #2:

Acts 4:13-14 “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.”

They Had Been with Jesus: The rulers of the people were not accustomed to being stumped by what they perceived to be country bumpkins (especially Galileans – **2:7**); however, it was familiar to them. The familiarity came from the fact that they had been faced with the same boldness, the same sureness of fact, and had marveled when Jesus of Nazareth had also [**silenced them**] by His wisdom and notable miracles.

Luke 20:26 “But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.”

Luke 20:39-40 “Then some of the scribes answered and said, “Teacher, You have spoken well.” ⁴⁰ But after that they dared not question Him anymore.

Text #3:

Acts 4:15-17 “But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, ¹⁶ saying, “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*. ¹⁷ But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.”

There was no way around the conclusion of the evidentiary miracle that had been performed in the name of “**Jesus Christ of Nazareth**”; a name they thought they were rid of. In spite of these facts, the hypocrisy of the leaders of the Jewish people knew no ends. Their only concern in the face of the message of the salvation offered in Jesus the Christ, was how to limit its spread. It is apparent that the fact that they might be fighting against God Himself had yet to enter their minds (this will come up in the second arrest, by the wise council of Gamaliel – **5:33-39**).

Threaten Them: This is about as far as they dared to go in their attempt to frighten Peter and John from using the name of “**Jesus Christ of Nazareth**”; as the masses of people held these Apostles of Jesus in high esteem.

Text #4:

Acts 4:18-22 “So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. ²⁰ For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” ²¹ So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. ²² For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.”

The first part of the answer given by Peter and John, that they should not speak the name of Jesus, would be directed at the consciences of the council; that is, you judge if we should listen to God or you?

The second part of their response to the council was to show that they were determined to ignore the command of the council (an act of civil disobedience), because it was contradictory to the commands of God and His Christ.

This is a demonstration of the Apostolic teaching concerning the Christians obedience to God first, and then to the governments of man, note:

Romans 13:1-3 “*Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.* ² *Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.* ³ *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.*”

1 Peter 2:13-17 “Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the praise of those who do good.* ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— ¹⁶ as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.”

Regardless of where we live, the type of government, the environment we may find ourselves in, it is never an excuse to put away the practices and commands of God through His Christ. Just as the Apostles here and in **Chapter Five of Acts** were unwilling to yield to the commands of the council against the commands of God, so the Christian to this day should have the same mentality. This is not to say that there may not be civil repercussions; the Apostles faced them. It is to say that they may take your life, but they can never take away your faith, hope, and love in the promises of God.