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**A0825 – June 22, 2008 – Acts 4:23-31 – The Prayer For Boldness**

**Acts 4:23-31** Απολυθέντες δὲ ἦλθον πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους καὶ ἀπήγγειλαν ὅσα πρὸς αὐτοὺς οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι εἶπαν. <sup>24</sup>οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἤραν φωνὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἶπαν· δέσποτα, σὺ ὁ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς, <sup>25</sup>ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου στόματος Δαυὶδ παιδὸς σου εἰπὼν· *ἵνατί ἐφρύαξαν ἔθνη καὶ λαοὶ ἐμελέτησαν κενά;* <sup>26</sup>παρέστησαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ κατὰ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ κατὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ. <sup>27</sup>συνήχθησαν γὰρ ἐπ’ ἀληθείας ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ ἐπὶ τὸν ἅγιον παῖδά σου Ἰησοῦν ὃν ἔχρισας, Ἡρώδης τε καὶ Πόντιος Πιλάτος σὺν ἔθνεσιν καὶ λαοῖς Ἰσραὴλ, <sup>28</sup>ποιῆσαι ὅσα ἡ χεὶρ σου καὶ ἡ βουλή [σου] προώρισεν γενέσθαι. <sup>29</sup>καὶ τὰ νῦν, κύριε, ἔπιδε ἐπὶ τὰς ἀπειλὰς αὐτῶν καὶ δὸς τοῖς δούλοις σου μετὰ παρρησίας πάσης λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον σου, <sup>30</sup>ἐν τῷ τῆν χειρὰ [σου] ἐκτείνειν σε εἰς ἴασις καὶ σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα γίνεσθαι διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ ἁγίου παιδὸς σου Ἰησοῦ. <sup>31</sup>καὶ δεηθέντων αὐτῶν ἔσαλεύθη ὁ τόπος ἐν ᾧ ἦσαν συνηγμένοι, καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν ἅπαντες τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος καὶ ἐλάλουν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ παρρησίας.  
(NA27)

**Acts 4:23-31** And having been released they (Peter and John – two well trained believers who capitalized on the opportunity presented in the Temple Compound) went (3PAAI) to their own (other Jewish believers) and reported as much as the chief priests (Sadducees) and the elders (Pharisees) said (3PAAI) to them. <sup>24</sup>And when they heard (AAPart) they raised (3PAAI) a voice with one mind to God and said (3PAAI), “Master, You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, <sup>25</sup>who our father, by the mouth of the Holy Spirit, David, your servant said, “WHY DID THE NATIONS RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES THINK ABOUT VANITY? <sup>26</sup>THE KINGS OF THE EARTH STOOD (3PAAI) and the rulers were gathered

(3PAPI) TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS ANOINTED (This is all a quote from the LXX Ps 2:1-2 except *kena* in NA27 is *kenos* in LXX) (Literal Prophecy + Application), <sup>27</sup>for (explanatory *gar*) against truth in this city there were gathered (3PAPI) against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with Gentiles and peoples of Israel, <sup>28</sup>to do (AAInf) as much as Your hand and Your plan had decided beforehand to occur (AAInf). <sup>29</sup>And now Lord, look (2SAAImp) upon their threats and grant Your servants to speak (PAInf; the words) Your word with all boldness, <sup>30</sup>while You stretch Your hand to heal (the works; reminder of the healing of the lame man, Peter's arm reaching down to pull up the lame man was also Jesus' hand) and signs and wonders occur through the name of Your holy servant Jesus (the servant of Isa 52:13; 53:11). <sup>31</sup>And when they had prayed (prayer of request, asking for something) the house in which they were (3PIAI) gathered in was shaken (the granting of the request; 3SPAI) and they were all filled (3PAPI) by means of the Holy Spirit and they spoke (results during the early church; 3PIAI – inceptive imperfect) the word of God with boldness.

**(Author's Translation)**

**Acts 4:23-31** When they had been released, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. <sup>24</sup>And when they heard *this*, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, <sup>25</sup>who by the Holy Spirit, *through* the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS? <sup>26</sup>THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.' <sup>27</sup>"For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, <sup>28</sup>to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur. <sup>29</sup>"And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, <sup>30</sup>while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." <sup>31</sup>And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and *began* to speak the word of God with boldness. (NASB95)

Alright, we're dealing with a bonafide miracle in early Acts, chapter 3-4, this all occurred in the city of Jerusalem. So, let's not forget where we've come from and where we're going. We're studying one of the most crucial books of the NT, it's rarely taught, that's one reason I'm teaching it. Just think if you didn't have this book. You'd have the gospels which cover the birth, the life, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ and even if you could half way understand that apart from the OT then what happens when you read the epistles? You'd be totally lost because in the gospels you're dealing with the OT nation Israel and in the epistles you're dealing with NT Gentile Churches. Acts is given as an explanation, a bridge between these two programs. The only way, and I repeat, the only way to understand this is by Acts. Acts is the only record we have of the first 30 years of church history. Without it there's just a big gap. So what happens is the Holy Spirit through doctor Luke fills the gap with Acts. Then we have the fact that many a pastor comes down the line and totally misinterprets the book, tries to normalize what happens in Acts for all time. Now this is not a record of what *must* happen; it's a record of what *did* happen. That's the nature of a transitional book and that's the key to Acts, transition. What we mean by this is that as you read the book of Acts you're reading an accurate report of what happened but you're not reading what must happen. What did happen and what must happen are two totally different things. We can gather principles, we can draw some application but we're not building doctrine from here. Just because something happens one way in Scripture doesn't mean it's must always has to happen that way. Take Moses and the Red Sea and Moses walks up to the Red Sea with his staff and the waters part, now that's a historical event, that's what happened but does that mean that every time Moses went up to a body of water it divided? See that's ridiculous and it's ridiculous to do that with Acts. Acts records what did happen but if you try to make this a record of what must happen for all the Church age, just normalize it you make a big mistake, exegetically, practically, historically, every way you could make a mistake you make a mistake if you do that. So that's what we mean by transitional book and that's why the book of Acts begins with great emphasis upon the kingdom. It is the kingdom that has been promised to the nation Israel if she would repent. Jesus said on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And that gave Israel forty more years of grace before judgment, a re-offer of the kingdom. So the apostles again and again and again would come back and say if you will

repent then the times of refreshing will come from the Lord and the kingdom can be restored. And so this was the emphasis in those early sermons in Acts, but we know now, Monday morning quarterback, we know now that on the day of Pentecost, unseen, even to the apostles, a new body had formed, the Church. And as it became increasingly obvious the nation would not accept Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, it was becoming increasingly obvious that this new entity, the Church, slowly comes into being. Two themes; a declining emphasis on the Kingdom and increasing emphasis on the Church.

So early Acts starts with Jesus, He's been to the cross, He's been resurrected and now He's marching around for forty days giving historical credence to His resurrection and He's teaching His 11 apostles, down to 11 because Judas went aside from the office, and what He teaches them is that the kingdom will come but only when the nation Israel repents so they are to serve as witnesses, 1:8, they are to serve as witnesses of the resurrection, they are not to run around Palestine sharing their own fuzzy feelings about Jesus, nowhere in the word of God are believers told to go around witnessing to unbelievers of their experiences. The witness is not to your own personal experience or my own personal experience, the witness, the content of the witness is who Jesus Christ is and what Jesus Christ has done, His person and His work. He was the God incarnate and He died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead. So, that testimony, that witness of what happened in history, that is what has power, it's not your experience, it's not my experience, it's the word of God that is the power of God unto salvation, so that's what we bear witness to, that's what the direct eyewitnesses, Peter, John, Matthew, James, and so forth, were to bear witness to. And the standard operating procedure is given in v 8. It will go forth to Jerusalem first, that's Acts 2-7, then to Judea and Samaria second, that's Acts 8-12 and finally to the remotest parts of the earth and that's in Acts 13-28. Now that's what we're studying here, the going out of this witness in Jerusalem accompanied by miracles and there's a miracle on the day of Pentecost and then a sermon on the day of Pentecost. Result: 3,000 Jews believe but the nation doesn't repent. Then you have the lame man healed in a strategic location, the Temple Compound, right at the busiest place in the Temple, the Beautiful Gate, and then a second sermon, this time 2,000 men believe, so we're up to 5,000 and that's just the men, the Greek nouns are very particular that the total at this point was the men only. Jerusalem at this time had a population of about 30,000 people, so if we assume that these men

had wives and children that believed then you can easily imagine that you have 15,000 believers suddenly, that's half of the population, within 2 months of the resurrection, half of the people running around Jerusalem are believers in Jesus as the Messiah, and if you're a politician and you have all the power of a local authority, the perks of being in the priestly class, you have control over the Temple Compound and so forth, like these Sadducees did, then you're feeling threatened here by these uneducated fishermen; your authority, your power, your economy, your whole world around you is falling apart and so you're going to do whatever you can to put a stop to this. So the first tactic they take is simply to confuse the issue, we call this operation confusion and Satan is the author of it. The way they do this is to avoid the issue of the resurrection. Rather than getting that issue out in the open and that is the issue, they try to get Peter and John on a breach of the Mosaic Law because if they can do that then they can execute them and the game will be over. But because of their brilliant articulation of the Scriptures they fail to capture them so they move to a second tactic, confine this movement, we call this operation quarantine and Satan's the author of this method too. So, what we're watching is the persecution rise and how believers are to respond under pressure, when the heat is turned on by the civil government. How can the believer maintain his composure in a heated situation and how is he to graciously and kindly defend against the state. And that means is simply by using the only weapon the Christian has and that's the word of God, the believer's responsibility is to trust the word of God. We studied last time the doctrine of civil disobedience, why Peter and John could, without violating the 4<sup>th</sup> divine institution, selectively disobey that institution when the government intrudes into the domain of the Church. We pointed out that this is a model that may have to be used again in our country as the government insists upon butting into the 3<sup>rd</sup> divine institution by insisting upon dictating the terms of education to Christian parents. Ultimately it's going to come down to a collision as to who is in authority, the Church or the state, and as we have noted this is an increasing thing; we have seen this in the courts in California and this is the culmination of a slow process that began in the late 1800's in our nation when secular humanism began to organize itself around key power players and now, if it isn't headed off by grace there will be a full-scale collision between Church and State. So that section of Peter and John defending themselves is quite relevant.

Today let's start in 4:23 and finish up to v 31. We're having a bit of a review here to work back into the text. Now, v 23 goes on to describe, after this tremendous victory over the civil authorities how Peter and John went back to the church with the report. **When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.** Now this was a very serious and exciting moment in church history. They were sharing with many groups of believers in Jerusalem how the word of God left speechless these high power attorneys, attorneys who, for once in world history, imagine that, an attorney without a rebuttal. So for the first confrontation in church history between demonic forces manipulating these human attorneys you see the word of God triumph and this is because the word of God is on a plane all by itself. It's above every human authority, not just by degree but by character so that in the final analysis it's superior to all human rationalism. No argument, no matter how well formulated, no matter how many Ph.D's worked it out, can compete with the word of God, simply because of the fact that all human arguments are stem from humans who are limited in knowledge where as the word of God comes from an omniscient God. He has all the information and therefore His word can't be defeated. So this is your authority, in every area of life, not just the religious things, morals and ethics but in every area of life. This is the final court of appeal and as long as you're appealing to this you can never lose, not only in the area of legal argument but also in every area of life, the underlying philosophy which plays out in physics, biology, government, art, music, it all starts here, this is your base for thinking correctly. There is no other way to think about things other than God's way, all other thinking is essentially non-thinking. That's the verdict of Scripture and that's the Church's battle in this age. "Are we going to submit to the Scriptures in all of our mental processes like Peter and John or are we going to retreat to a heart-centered, I feel good Christianity?" Peter and John never did that and the effects of that are seen here in the realm of civil government. Granted this is difficult to do, it's difficult because it takes years and years of training, Peter and John were trained from childhood on the OT and for 3 ½ years personally by the Lord Jesus Christ before they were prepared to stand before these authorities so you have to train, train, train, the word of God, the word of God, the word of God and you have to be prepared in the biblical distinctives, "What's the DVP of science, the origin of man, the nature of man and animal? What's the DVP of language and logic? Crucial, powerful topics. Here the issue that came to the fore was "What is DVP on civil authority, do I

obey or disobey, what are the situations when I am responsible to disobey? This is a very modern issue in America as the word of God comes under intense judicial scrutiny, not the word of God itself but those who uphold it and teach it and its place in the public forum. So we can learn from Peter and John here something we too face in our own time and they had to have the answers before they went into this investigation or they'd fumble the whole thing. They didn't have time to go back and learn their OT and see how other believers like Daniel dealt with civil authority, they didn't have time to go back and read about Rahab lying to the government of Jericho, they didn't have time to re-read how the midwives Shiphrah and Puah rejected Pharaoh's command, they already had to know all that so that when the heat was on and the Council said, "Do not speak any more in this name," they had the guts to stand up and say, "Uh, uh, sorry, we can't go along with your program, do what you have to do but we're not bowing to your demands, we simply can't." And they must have wondered, having rebelled against the ruling class what the future held, what were the long term circumstances, where was this leading and we're rapidly approaching the answer when the State gets blood in chapter 7.

So the result, in v 24, and remember, Luke is summarizing this very rapidly for us, we're going through it even more rapidly but he's summarizing what took hours and hours to report and discuss and therefore in v 24, when you read that, understand this wasn't just one prayer meeting. **And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord.** The idea here is that we're going into prayer here, all over Jerusalem, believers praying as a result of what God had done. There's no praise for Peter and John, they don't come back bragging about what they had done and how they outmaneuvered the Sanhedrin with all their learning, oh no, the focus is not on Peter and John, it's on God, they recognize God's sovereign hand in this and it says they **lifted their voices to God with one accord**, and the word there means "with one mind" so that what you have, and this is very significant is not just one prayer meeting, this is the result of getting together and discussing all that happened and coming to one mind so they are able to work out a specific prayer request. It wasn't just "Oh God, Oh God, why did this happen and what are we going to do, and Oh God help us and all the rest of it." This prayer request was a very carefully engineered petition to God the Father. Watch what they said, **they lifted their voices to God with one mind and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE**

**EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM.”** Now why do you suppose they began their prayer with a praise item? What particular doctrine does the praise remind you of? The doctrine of Creator-creature distinction. He is the Creator, go back to the biblical framework way of thinking where you have the creation as the foundational event of the DVP; He is the source of it all. Why do they go back to that idea? Because there are two philosophies of state; either it is God who is over man and the state or it is the State over man and his religion. And those are the options, and therefore they trace it all the way back to the philosophic base, **“O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM.”**

Therefore we approach you. And the word “Lord” here is not the word “Lord” normally used, its *despot*, it means dictator. “O dictator, You have made all things,” and therefore they are focusing on God’s authority, that He is absolute dictator.

Then in vv 25-26 he quotes one of the great Messianic psalms, Psalm 2. **who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, ‘WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS? <sup>26</sup>THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.’** Now besides showing their great insight into the Old Testament, there’s something else this verse shows related to the inspiration of Scripture. You, **by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said.** This is a real bombshell as far as modern theology is concerned as to what our authority is and it proves that it wasn’t the 20<sup>th</sup> century fundamentalist who invented inspiration of Scripture. The idea in the Greek and this is hard to translate, but the idea is that David is the mouth of the Holy Spirit. If that isn’t a strong declaration of the inspiration of Scripture I don’t know what would be. Isn’t that remarkable? They said when David wrote those Psalms he wasn’t speaking from himself, he was acting as the mouth of the Holy Spirit. And so they have full confidence that the word of God is not the ideas or thoughts of God but the word of God. Their confidence was in an inerrant Bible. And they quote Psalm 2. This is the passage they thought of when they were viciously attacked by the Sanhedrin. It’s a very interesting choice because if you know what Psalm 2 is about you know it’s a prophetic Psalm related to the war of Armageddon. This isn’t just about people getting mad at Christians and taking them to court. This is a passage that shows in the last days of the Tribulation the



Antichrist and his kings will gather together in the valley of Jezreel in a global attempt for total autonomy, they want to cut the cords of dependence upon God and His Christ so you have this final all out war against God. And what Peter and John do as they are attacked by the Sanhedrin is they say, "You know, this kind of antagonism reminds us of Ps 2 antagonism," that kind of hatred was coming from the Council. Now obviously they're not considering Psalm 2 fulfilled, they knew full well this was a future global war but what they saw was a similarity in that just as the Gentile Kings will make their stand against God and Christ so the Sanhedrin had taken their stand against God and Christ by opposing Peter and John. So this is a NT quote from the OT and so we need to briefly review the four different ways that occurs. This is a crucial area of hermeneutics, the rules of interpreting Scripture, so as you read the NT and the author quotes the OT all you have to do is filter the quotation through these four methods to understand how and why he's reminded of that passage. Now the first category is very simple, *literal prophecy + literal fulfillment*, very straightforward, example, the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem says Micah and Jesus was born in Bethlehem, very easy, little prophecy and a literal fulfillment. This is the most common way the NT authors quote the OT. Second category, *literal event + typology*, in this case some historical event is picked up as typological of a future event, example, God called Israel out of Egypt and God called Jesus Christ out of Egypt, literal event picked up and used as typology of the Lord Jesus Christ. Third category, *summarization*, in this case the NT authors seems to be quoting the OT but if you search the OT you won't find those words anywhere, in this case it's just a summary of what was taught, the summary witness of the OT. Fourth category, *literal prophecy+ application*, this is where you have a prophecy that will be literally fulfilled but because of one point of similarity the NT author picks up and quotes that prophecy, not because it was being fulfilled but because of a point of similarity. We already saw this in Acts 2:17, on the Day of Pentecost you had the tongues phenomena and Peter explains that by quoting Joel 2, but the strange thing is that Joel 2 doesn't talk about tongues, Joel 2 talks about a lot of things but the only thing Acts 2 has in common with Joel is that there was a pouring out of the Spirit, everything else is different. And it's the same way in our quote today. Ps 2:1-2 is quoted but scan the quote and ask yourself, "In light of Peter and John's arrest and interrogation what's the common element?" What do Psalm 2 and Acts 4 have in common? Anger and opposition to God. Just as the Tribulation Gentiles will be angry and gather

to oppose God so the Sanhedrin was angry and gathered to oppose God. Everything else is different about the passages but that one point of similarity tipped Peter and John off to quote Ps 2. So that's a literal prophecy + application to Peter and John's situation.<sup>i</sup>

The explanation is given in v 27 which has already been our conclusion but here expanded, **For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel.** Who were they gathered against? Not "Your holy child Jesus" if it reads that but in the Greek Old Testament (LXX) it reads **Your holy servant Jesus**, and what great OT passage do we find that phraseology? Isaiah 52-53. Why if you back up to Peter's sermon in Acts 3:13 he uses the same title of Jesus, He's God's servant, Peter's sermons are saturated with Isa 53 imagery. Why is that significant? Because it shows you, contrary to modern Judaism that Isa 53 was interpreted by ancient Jews as referring to the person of the Messiah, it's not true that the nation Israel is to be identified as the servant, but the individual Messiah who would die for the nation and that's who they're rejecting, the servant of Isa 53, Jesus. **For truly in this city**, alright, this is a matter of truth, this is not some Jewish opinion, **For truly...there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel**, notice all the groups involved, was it just the Jews? Every once in a while you get some anti-Semitic groups parading around, "Oh the Jews crucified Jesus so God's through with the Jews, no future for Israel." Well, pardon me for asking, but "What do you do with this verse? It wasn't just Israel, it was just as much your Gentile descendants who were at fault. And then the phenomenal statement in Acts 4:28, <sup>28</sup>**to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.** I don't think you have to be a hardcore Calvinist to get the sensation of sovereignty there. No matter how you slice it you have a tremendous statement in this verse about sovereignty over the crucifixion. Somehow these people were simply carrying out what God predestined to occur. And whatever you do with this, however you model God's sovereignty it can't do away with personal responsibility, look at all those of v 27 who of their own volition were involved in the crucifixion, yet v 28 God's hand and purpose predestined the event. Divine sovereignty is not fatalism. The tendency is to slip into fatalism but the Bible never permits that, the Bible always protects the Creator-creature distinction

so that what the Creator does, His cause-effect *upon* the created order is never in conflict with what the creature does, cause-effect *within* the created order. Cause effect upon the created order is not identical to cause-effect within the created order. Peter and John didn't have a problem with divine sovereignty and human responsibility, they saw no contradiction. So when faced with this opposition from the Council they went back, back to the basic issue, the issue of the essence of God, that God is Creator, that God is sovereign, and that's a tremendous comfort, that things are not ultimately in my hands, He's in control.

Now notice verse 29 because a lot of people who think about sovereignty get the idea that it does away with prayer, somehow if God has already predestined something then we might as well not pray because what's going to happen is going to happen anyway so why pray, that's fatalism and that's wrong because in verse 29 they prayed for certain things to happen. God's sovereignty means that God's program will come to pass but it will be by means of responsible choices. Sovereignty includes human choice, and so this is why in verse 29 they said **And now, Lord, take note of their threats**, that is, put them in the ledger books, write them down for the day of judgment, **and grant** and the word grant means give us something we don't have right now, what do they lack? **that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence**, put bluntly they're asking corporately for the ability to carry out civil disobedience just like Peter and John. You have to get into the human drama here, imagine the difficulty in a high court of law to defy the state's decision. When, and remember, there are very specific cases where you should defy the state, it's not the thing you're particularly upset about, your taxes or something, the cases are narrow and laid out in Scripture when to defy, the rest of the time you obey, but the prayer here is that when they are put on trial unlawfully, when the state has crossed the line, then they too want to speak the word **with all confidence**.

Verse 30, **while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.**" Alright, that's the accompanying sign, the healing, signs and wonders that take place in the book of Acts as an authentication that the message they will speak is God's message and these miracles will be done **through the name of** the holy servant Jesus, more Isa 53 terminology, remember, it's the name of

Jesus they said not to use but it's the name of Jesus that is required for the authenticating miracles.

Alright, verse 31 we get the results, **And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken**, so there was a geological phenomena that assured them the Lord had heard their request and would grant their request and then we see the spiritual results **and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness**. Notice the connection between being **filled with the Holy Spirit** and speaking **the word of God with boldness**. There's nothing here about a hoorah experience. The filling of the Spirit simply refers to the Spirit-filled life which means speaking in terms of the word of God. So you can never separate the word of God from the filling of the Spirit. Lots of Christians want to divorce the word of God from their spiritual experience, "Oh so and so is so spiritual" and you ask how they know that and you get something like, "Well the Lord's blessed them with all kinds of prosperity" or "I can just see them glowing" and that has nothing to do with it. A spirit filled believers is someone who is speaking the word of God with boldness. And this gets confused in American churches because American's have the tendency to confuse boldness with arrogance. Now arrogance is wrong but certitude and boldness are biblical and if you have a problem with the word of God being taught confidently and with authority here then you'd have a problem with Peter and John and you'll just have to adjust. So being filled with the Spirit is just to be speaking the word of God boldly. That identification is proved by Paul's parallels in Eph 5:18 he commands, "be filled with the Spirit" and in Col 3:16 he commands "let the word of Christ dwell richly within you." Those are exact parallels. They're the same thing, not a particle of difference. So in accordance with this when Peter and John gave their defense and it says they were filled by the Spirit that their tool of defense was the word of God. That's what gets results and so the Jerusalem believers prayed for that and received it, they were filled with the Spirit and **began to speak the word of God with boldness**, and the verb speak is an inceptive imperfect meaning they went out into Jerusalem and began to speak the word of God with all boldness and they kept on doing this, everywhere they went, all over the city they were speaking the word, speaking the word, speaking the word. And the state said "You can't do that, you can't speak in Jesus name, stop it, you can't do that, we told you not to do that" and yet, they do it anyway. And as believers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a rapidly deteriorating American I'm going to

do it anyway. No matter what the state tells me, no matter how politically incorrect the Bible is, and you should know that “federal hate crime” bill S. 1105 and H.R. 1592 are under imminent consideration in both the Senate and the House of Representatives<sup>ii</sup> and if this bill passes then I can no longer preach the gospel, I can no longer call homosexuality a sin, I can be arrested for my thoughts about homosexuality, and you as a body of believers will be required to hire a pastor (male or female) regardless of their sexual orientation, you’ll have no say in the matter, and I, I will be required to marry homosexual couples and if I refuse, if you refuse...jail time and fines. So, Acts 4 is a very modern issue and the issue is when the government comes in and says, “The Bible is hate speech and you can’t teach the word, you can’t teach homosexuality is a sin and we require you to marry homosexuals,” then what are you going to do? Are you ready for that because that’s the issue on the table; the pagan agenda behind this, this is not a simple issue, the agenda is not just to get our acceptance of their sinful practices but to legislatively force conformity, and the issue is “Are you ready to take the consequences of the state? Go to prison? Wake up in a cold cell separated from your wife and children?” My analysis is that the body of Christ is asleep at the wheel and yeah, yeah, yeah, it’ll never happen but mark my words it is going to happen and when I’m arrested or some other person in this assembly is hauled off to prison then maybe we’ll wake up. So we have to be ready as a body of believers. Are we going to be loyal to the word of God and speak boldly or are we going to shrink back? So there was a rising tension between church and state during the early church and there’s a rising tension between church and state in the modern church and we have to be ready.

Next week we’ll see the results of this but I hope that this Acts 4 passage will show a little bit of what believers in the past had to face and give you a model of the faith that was held by our brothers and sisters in Christ centuries ago. And quite frankly the way things are shaping up if we as Christians are to retain our freedom we may have to go through this; one reason I’m teaching you this is so we know what to do if we ever get ourselves in this kind of a situation.

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<sup>i</sup> With their kingdom focus they may see this as early antagonism which will lead to the final conflagration of Ps 2.

<sup>ii</sup> [http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=55392](http://www.wnd.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=55392)



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