

Acts Part 8 – Apostles Under Arrest

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Acts 4:1-12¹

1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,
2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.
3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.
4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.
5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,
6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.
7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?
8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,
9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;
10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.
11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.
12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

We left off in our last study with the powerful preaching of Peter after the miraculous healing of a lame man. We saw that Peter doesn't take credit for what God has done and tells the people that it was Jesus, the one that they murdered that was responsible for the man's healing. He tells them what he told the 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost, that they must repent. He said in Acts 3:19: *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;*

So, tonight we pick up at the beginning of Chapter 4 and we are going to see that not everyone is happy about the sermon the Peter just preached. In fact they are downright mad about it.

1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, 2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

Alright, so the Butcher, the Baker, and the Candlestick Maker all rush upon Peter and John. No, seriously, look at who these three groups are: **The Priests:** The priests were always arch enemies of Jesus. They hated Jesus and they hated the fact that Jesus was referred to as fulfilling the priesthood. There were numerous priests in that economy; High Priest, Chief Priest, Head Priest, and Priests in general. We first hear of a priest in **Genesis 14:18: And Melchizedek king of Salem**

brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. We read in 1 Chronicles 23 that David separated the Tribe of Levi into 24 classes of Priests that formed the Levitical Priesthood.

Then we have the **Captain of the Temple:** His job was to maintain order and peace in the Temple. He was like the head of the Temple security force. No doubt he was there to prevent some kind of riot or disorderly conduct due to the Apostle preaching and all the people running onto the porch.

And lastly there are **the Sadducees.** And as my dad often says... "**they are sad-you-see...**" There were three main Jewish sects of that day; the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. The Pharisees were the largest but the second largest was the Sadducees. The Sadducees denied the existence of angels or other spirits, and all miracles, but they especially denied the resurrection of the dead. They were strongly opposed to the teaching of bodily resurrection. So any teaching that Jesus rose from the dead is going to draw them out of their lairs. In fact, the Bible tells us that it precisely why they are "*grieved.*"

3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

Since it was late in the day "eventide," specifically during the time of the evening sacrifice, it was not convenient to assemble the Sanhedrin court together at night plus it was not technically legal for the Jews to conduct trials at night. So they put them in lockup for the night. This just goes to show you how scary it was that such men had the authority to arrest people for no cause.

4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

Well, despite the circumstances, the powerful message that Peter preached stirred up conviction in the hearts of the listeners and the Bible says that "**many of them which heard the word believed.**" Then we have that statement; "**and the number of the men was about five thousand.**" Now be very careful here. While it is tempting to say that 5,000 men just trusted Jesus as their Savior after that particular sermon, but that is not how this reads. Look at it closely and I believe you will see that Luke, the human penmen of the Book of Acts, is giving us a grand total of the number of people who have thus far been saved and are part of the Church; starting with:

- 120 in the Upper Room
- 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost
- then these "many" which would be about 1880
- Making it a grand total of about 5,000 people that belonged to the New Testament Church.

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,
6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

Peter's powerful sermon has really caused some major disruption to the religious norm of the day. They have called out the big guns for this trial; **rulers, elders, and scribes.** Then **Annas**, who was the High priest for 11-years in Jerusalem, then **Caiaphas** the son-in-law of Annas who was the current High Priest (and by the way, the one that was in charge during the trial and death of Jesus), a man named **John**

¹ All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version

(not the Apostle John), **Alexander** (who we are not sure of either but some claim he was some very rich man that had a lot of influence on the High court). Then “**the kindred of the high priest.**” This was probably very powerful relatives of Annas and Caiaphas.

Luke provides this large list of people to us no doubt to show how big of a deal this was to them.

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

Then they ask Peter and John a question that they are not going to like the answer to. “**by what power or by what name, have ye done this?**” In other words, what and who gave you the authority and the means to pull off such a miracle? Who and what is your secret? Now, of course they are hoping that Peter and John are using some kind of hocus pocus or black magic to perform these miracles. If so, then they will arrest them have them put to death for using witchcraft, black magic, and sorcery because those things were unlawful and grounds for execution.

Also, the only people that had the authority to preach and teach and deal with religious matters in the Temple were the Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees, and Priests. So called “common men” were not allowed to do such things.

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

Take notice that once again the Bible mentions that Peter was “**filled with the Holy Ghost.**” He isn’t acting upon his own power or talking in his own words or defense, but rather the Holy Ghost is directing him on what to say. I want to tell you, there is no greater feeling a person can have than when you open your mouth and the Holy Spirit speaks through you. This past Sunday after preaching the message I got in the car and Mary said, “*that was a good message.*” I said, “*well, I have no idea what I said the whole last half of the sermon.*” And I didn’t. I mean I was just standing up here opening my mouth and the Lord was putting words into it. It is moments like that you know you are exactly where God wants you and you aren’t trying to make something happen or convince anyone of your own thoughts or ideas. It is the greatest experience in the world. Would to God that our whole lives and every conversation be guided by the Holy Spirit.

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

Oh wow, what an earful Peter gave them. If you think they were “grieved” before, you can only imagine what this did to them. Their heads are probably spinning on top of their necks. Especially the Sadducees when he mentioned that part about Jesus raising from the dead.

You know, one thing that strikes me in reading the sermons and statements that Peter has been making in the Book of Acts is, he is a whole new Peter. I mean, Peter, the one who walked around with his foot in his mouth the entire time he was with Jesus is now making some of the most intelligent statements and bold proclamations of anyone in the entire Bible. Talk about growing in Christ!

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

Then Peter does what he always does, he goes back and grabs Old Testament Scripture to back up his claims. Here he is quoting from the Psalms: **Psalms 118:22: The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.**

The Prophet Isaiah mentions this stone and applies it to the coming Messiah, in **Isaiah 28:16: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.**

Jesus quoted the same Scripture in Matthew 21:42 and applied it to himself. **Matthew 21:42: Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?**

The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:20 also states that Jesus is the “chief corner stone.” **Ephesians 2:20: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;**

So, this is even more proof that this mighty miracle was wrought in God through Christ Jesus. These religious leaders are not going to go against God or the teaching of the Old Testament.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Then one of the most doctrinal and solid statements in the Bible concerning salvation. You cannot be saved by any means or any person other than the Lord Jesus Christ... PERIOD. Muhamad can’t save you, Buddha can’t save you. Confucius can’t save you. Billy Graham can’t save you. Your parents and grandparents can’t save you... only Jesus can save you.

Jesus himself made it very clear in the Gospel of John that He is the only way to the Father. Thomas said to Jesus “**how can we know the way?**” and in the next verse in **John 14:6: Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

How this must have stung that group of religious nuts that day. These men who were trusting in their good works and their religious rituals to save them. Much like the Muslims, Jews, Mormon’s, Jehovah’s witnesses, all of those groups that claim some other method of salvation other than Jesus Christ, are all lost and going to hell. We need to remember that friends. Jesus is the only way to be saved. If you are trusting in anything else or anyone else then you are as lost as lost can be and you are headed to hell.

Well, I want to stop right here because there is too much to cover to go further tonight. In the next lesson we will see that the religious men can’t dispute what Peter has said. They are very perplexed on what to do with them. So they make a rash decision to try and silence them. We will see that their decision is going to backfire on them.