

THE FIRST PERSECUTION AGAINST THE CHURCH (Acts 4:1-31)

I. THE CHURCH'S WITNESS FOR CHRIST IN JERUSALEM (1-7)

A. The BIRTH of the CHURCH in JERUSALEM (1-2)

B. The INFANCY & GROWTH of the CHURCH in JERUSALEM (3-7)

1. The Powerful Miracle and Message of Peter in Jesus' Name (3:1-26)

2. The First Persecution Against the Church (4:1-31)

a) Peter and John Arrested (4:1-4)

1) The reason for Peter and John's arrest was that they _____ the _____ to the people (vv. 1-2) just as Jesus Christ commanded them to do in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).

- *What authority does Jesus Christ have and why is this so important in our evangelism?*

2) The reaction of the priests, captain of the temple, and Sadducees was that they were _____ and put Peter and John in custody (vv. 2-3).

- *Which particular gospel truth upset these religious leaders and why?*

3) The response of _____ was to _____ the gospel they heard. (v. 4)

- *What does this say about the condition for salvation?*

b) Peter Addresses the Sanhedrin (4:5-12)

1) The council before whom Peter and John stood trial (vv. 5-6) was the _____ (*sunedrion*, v. 15), who asked "By what _____ or by what _____ have you done this?" (v. 7).

2) Peter's response shows the importance of being _____ with the _____ to be an effective witness (v. 8), describing Jesus Christ by His _____ (v. 10), using _____ in our evangelism (v. 11), and emphasizing that Jesus Christ is the _____ to eternal life (v. 12).

c) The Sanhedrin Responds (4:13-22)

- 1) The council _____ at the _____ of Peter and John as men who weren't educated or trained in their schools and systems but "who had been with Jesus" (v. 13).

- 2) The council also severely _____ them (vv. 17, 21) and _____ them _____ at all nor teach in the name of Jesus (v. 18).
 - *How did Peter and John respond? (vv. 19-20)*
 - *Why didn't the council carry out their threats? (v. 21)*

d) The Church Responds (4:23-31)

- 1) The response of believers in Jerusalem to this persecution was to _____ in _____ to God, remembering that He is the _____ of all things (vv. 23-24) and He foretold in Scripture the _____ of human rulers toward the Lord and His Christ/Messiah (vv. 25-28).
 - *What attributes of God are implied here? How does this apply to persecution for Christ?*

- 2) The request of these believers in their prayer was for _____ to _____ God's Word and for Him to continue performing _____ in Jesus' name to confirm the Word (vv. 29-30).
 - *What didn't they pray for?*

- 3) The result of their dependence upon the Lord reflected in prayer was a supernatural _____ of the place where they met, along with the _____ of the _____ to speak the Word of God with _____ (v. 31).
 - *What does this say about the role of prayer in evangelism?*

Lessons to learn from all of this:

- Satan uses _____ from religion and _____ from government to hinder the spread of the gospel and the growth of believers.

- When the government requires disobedience or prohibits obedience to the revealed will of God, we must obey _____ rather than _____, while accepting the potential consequences.

- We need to be _____ always to preach the _____ and pray for _____ so the fear of man does not bring a snare in hindering us from speaking God's Word.

- Instead of cowering or coddling our fears, we need to face them with _____ and _____ to God Almighty who can enable us to do His will.