

# Acts 4

## Vocabulary words for this chapter:

Pharisees – They originated from the time of the Maccabees; a sort of "Puritan" movement; very orthodox; observed many ceremonies to the letter, but full of pride; opposed Christ while he lived

Sadducees – skeptics; materialists; did not believe in the resurrection or in any kind of spirits

-Opposed Christ after his resurrection

-Annas and Caiaphas (high priests) were Sadducees

-They were the ones who asked Jesus about the woman who married 7 brothers after of the previous one – "Who will she be married to in heaven?" (Matt. 22.27-40)

Sanhedrin – supreme ruling body (religious, civil, and criminal offenses

-70 members (rulers, elders, scribes, lawyers, and theologians)

Nazareth – half way between Sea of Galilee and Mediterranean Sea

## Acts 4.1-4

### **V1 – What three groups of people opposed Peter and John?**

1. Religious (priests)

2. Military (captain of the temple guard)

3. Civil (Sadducees)

-#1-2 – The people Judas went to in order to get money to betray Jesus (*Matt. 26.14, Luke 22.4*)

**V2 – Why did they object? Why get upset with the resurrection of Jesus?** They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead

**V3 – How did they fight the apostles on this issue?** Put them in jail for the night

**V4 – What was the result with the people?** More and more believed in Jesus

-How large was the church now? 5000 men (the church was growing rapidly)

## Acts 4.5-12

**V5** – The next day (too late to charge them on the previous day)

**V6** – Who gathered for the scene? The high priests and their associates

**V7** - Did they believe that a miracle had taken place? Yes

-What were they most concerned about? Whose authority had they used in raising the crippled man?

**V8** – Who helped Peter to answer? **Read Matt. 10.19-20** – This passage was fulfilled before the very body that had put Jesus to death!

**V 9** – Peter shifted the burden of proof from the apostles to the Sanhedrin

**-In other words, why were they upset that a good thing had been done here?** It is up to themselves to defend their opposition to the miracle

**V 10** – **To whom did Peter attribute the great good that came about because of this miracle?**

Jesus Christ

**-Specifically, how did Peter describe Jesus?** The one was raised from the dead

**-Peter would not let them off the hook – he poured on the logic**

**V 11** – **What Old Testament scripture did Peter quote at this point?** *Psalm 118.22*

**-What was the meaning of that passage?** Evil people would reject the Messiah, but the Messiah would become the cornerstone of the Kingdom of God

**V 12** – What a powerful passage!

**-What was the essence of Peter's statement?** There was salvation only in Jesus Christ

**-Notice the exclusive nature of the Christian religion – There is no place in the gospel with compromise with other "faiths" and other religions and other "gods"**

## **Acts 4.13-22**

**V 13** – **What did the members of the Sanhedrin know about the background of Peter and John?**

That they were not formally educated

**-But where did Peter and John get their education?** From being with Jesus

**V 14** – **How could the members of the Sanhedrin criticize Peter and John at this point?** They had to remain quiet

**-Why?** Because the formerly crippled man was standing before them

**-What does this tell us about those who reject Jesus Christ?** They cannot base their objection on the evidence, because the evidence supports Christ

**-But most people reject the gospel just because they want to!**

**V 15** – **What did the leaders of the Sanhedrin order Peter and John to do?** To leave the assembly, so that the Jewish leaders could try to decide what to do

**V 16** – They were not able to deny the evidence (but they still rejected Jesus!) – Just amazing!

**V 17** – **What were they worried about?** About this "new" religion spreading among the people

**-What should they have been worried about?** Their own salvation and their standing before God

**V 18** – **What was their warning to Peter and John?** To stop preaching about Jesus

**V 19-20** – **What was Peter's answer to the Sanhedrin?** That the Christians could not stop speaking about Jesus the Messiah

**-What principle does this passage give us about when we can disobey the civil government?**

When the civil laws conflict with the gospel of Christ

**-There is a very important principle here – We cannot obey unscriptural laws and say, "Well, I'm not responsible; I'm just obey the laws of the land, the laws of the civil government"**

-There is a great application concerning Christians' not participating in carnal warfare, and saying, "I was just obeying orders."

-See *Ephesians 6.12*, *2 Corinthians 10.3-5*

This writer knows a preacher who says that we can do anything the government orders us to do, and God will not hold us accountable, because we are told to obey the civil rulers (*Romans 13.1-7*)

-He believes Christians can serve as spies and thus lie, commit fornication, etc., and still not be accountable, because they are acting on behalf of the civil government

-But if that were so, Peter and John would have said, "Well, the civil rulers have told us to stop preaching about Christ, so I guess we have to obey them"

-But that is not what Peter and John said here

-They were going to disobey the civil rulers when the rulers made decisions that contradicted the Word of God

-Please consider the very serious implications of *Acts 4.19-20*

**V 21** – **How did the Sanhedrin respond to the statement made by Peter and John?** They threatened them again and then released them

-**What was their reaction of the people?** They were glorifying God over what had happened

**V 22** – **What other details did Luke give us here?** The man was over 40 years old (further evidence that a miracle had taken place)

## **Acts 4.23-31**

**V 23** – **What did Peter and John do when they had been released?** Reported all that happened to the other Christians

**V 24** – **What was the reaction of the Christians to what had just taken place?** They glorified God and gave thanks to Him

**V 25-26** – **To what part of the Godhead did they attribute the release of Peter and John?** The Holy Spirit

-**What Old Testament passage did they quote in their rejoicing?** *Psalm 2.1*

-**What was the message of that passage?** No power on earth could overturn the Kingdom of God

**V 27** – **What rulers had opposed Jesus?** Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the Jews

**V 28** – **Had God planned on these things happening?** Yes

-**Did God force these people to try to destroy Jesus (in other words, were they predestined to do these things, and thus were not responsible for their actions)?** No, God foreknew what would happen, but he did not remove free will from these people

**V 29** – **What did the Christians pray for?** That the apostles would continue to speak out about Jesus Christ

**V 30** – **What else did they pray for?** That the miracles would continue

-**Did you notice what they did not pray for?** They did not pray that the persecution would stop

**V 31** – **What was the result of their prayer?** The Holy Spirit shook the place, and they all began to

Speak the truth with boldness

### **Acts 4.32-37**

**V 32 – Why was charity needed especially now?** Because of all the foreigners who were in Jerusalem because of the Pentecost celebration – they wanted to remain in Jerusalem in order to get better grounded in the faith

**V 33 – What was the focus of their preaching?** The resurrection of Jesus Christ

**V 34 – What was a result of the love and charity that the early Christians had for each other?**  
No one was in need or hungry

**V 35 – How was the charity administered?** The people laid their contributions at the feet of the apostles

**V 36 – What person is introduced into the Biblical record at this point?** Joseph

-What was his nickname? Barnabas

-What was the meaning of that name? Son of Encouragement

**V 37 – Why was he given that nickname?** He sold some land and laid the proceeds at the feet of the apostles

-This was in stark contrast to what was going to happen in the next chapter with Ananias and Sapphira

-The next mention of Barnabas is in *Acts 11.22*

-He plays a great role in the remaining books of the New Testament

Revised 2013-01-21