

## ~ACTS~

## Lesson 15- The Name that Saves

Today we begin chapter 4 in the book of Acts. By way of review, chapter 3 began with the healing of the lame man and Peter tells us that it was the Name of Jesus Christ that healed this man. Remember in Acts 3:6 Peter says, “*In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.*” And in 3:16, Peter explains that it was “*His Name, on the basis of the faith of His Name that made this man strong... yes, the faith which comes through Him [that is Jesus] has given him this perfect soundness.*” It is the Name of Jesus, and everything that Names stands for that save us unto Everlasting Life.

Peter preaches the Name of Jesus and proves that He is the Messiah who was prophesied to come, and the whole time Peter is preaching, the Word of God is convicting their hearts of rejecting Jesus Christ. As we discussed last week, up until this point, Peter said they had acted in ignorance, without knowledge, but now they are hearing the Truth. They are gaining a knowledge of the Truth, and it is cutting them to the heart. And in verse 19 Peter offers them Mercy by saying, “Repent and be converted, change your thinking, and turn away from your sin and turn upon Jesus Christ. Put your faith fully upon Him so that your sins will be blotted out and your soul will be refreshed, and you will be saved unto Everlasting Life just as the prophets foretold.”

That brings us into chapter 4, and we see two results from this preaching, those who humble their hearts and those who harden their hearts. Let’s read our text today, [Acts 4:1-12](#)...

It’s the Name of Jesus, and His Name alone that saves us from eternal destruction. This is the Gospel, the good news, the *εὐαγγέλιον*, the good message that we preach. That Jesus came in the flesh, died for our sins and was risen from the dead so we could have eternal life. But when we preach this good message to the world, and specifically preach the exclusivity of the Name of Jesus, that there is no other way to heaven except through Jesus. When we preach that, there are many people in the world who don’t like it and they hate us for it. And this hatred brings persecution for the sake of His Name. So what is right response to persecution? It’s not retaliation, it’s not compromise. The right response is faithful endurance. Preach the Word faithfully even in the midst of persecution... even unto death, [Rev 2:8-10](#); [2 Tim 3:12, 4:2-5](#); [2:3, 9-10](#); [12](#); [1:8](#). We do not compromise, but stand strong in Truth. And this is exactly what we see Peter and John do in Acts chapter 4.

Chapter 4 records the first physical persecution against the Church. On the Day of Pentecost, the Church was born, and immediately the enemy started to attack the Truth. It started with the mockers in Acts 2:13, ridiculing and laughing at them. Then 3,000 Jews publicly professed their faith by being baptized in the temple and they confessed their unity with Jesus Christ. As a result, the persecution increased, they were kicked out of the synagogues, [John 9:22](#); [12:42](#), they lost their jobs, and it became harder to live in Jerusalem, [Heb 10:32-34](#). This is why in chapter 2 we saw the Church come together in Fellowship as they sold their possessions to help each other through the persecution, [Acts 2:44-45](#). And now in chapter 4 we see the enemy ramp up the persecution and they arrest Peter and John and bring them before the Sanhedrin. At this point, the Name of Jesus is rapidly taking over the city of Jerusalem and those who were in control saw their power slipping away. This was their biggest fear. This is why they crucified Jesus, [John 11:45-50](#); [12:19](#). And now they are doing the same thing to His Church, [Acts 4:17](#); [5:28, 40-42](#). And so because of greed, pride, and hatred for the Name, that the Jewish rulers, beginning in Acts 4, harden their hearts and arrest Peter and John to prevent the spreading of the Name of Jesus.

Let’s look at verses 1-3...

<p><sup>1</sup> Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, <sup>2</sup> being greatly disturbed</p>	<p><sup>1</sup> Λαλούντων δὲ αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸν λαόν, ἐπέστησαν αὐτοῖς οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ ὁ στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ οἱ Σαδδουκαῖοι, <sup>2</sup> διαπονούμενοι διὰ τὸ διδάσκειν</p>
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that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

<sup>3</sup> And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

αὐτοὺς τὸν λαόν, καὶ καταγγέλλειν ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ  
τὴν ἀνάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν,  
<sup>3</sup> καὶ ἐπέβαλον αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας, καὶ ἔθεντο εἰς  
τῆρησιν εἰς τὴν αὐριον· ἦν γὰρ ἑσπέρα ἤδη.

Verse 1 says, “**Now as they spoke to the people...**” Notice Luke says “they.” You have to remember, that John is with Peter through this whole scenario. Sometimes it’s easy to forget because Luke only records Peter’s words, but John is with him. Remember it was Peter and John who went into the temple at the hour of prayer, Acts 3:3, and now it is still Peter and John preaching. Something else to recognize is that at least three hours has gone by since the lame man was healed. They went into the temple at 3pm, and verse 3 says it was already evening, at least 6pm. Luke records Peter’s sermon in verses 12-26, but Peter and John said much more than what was actually recorded, and they are still speaking at 6pm until the Jewish rulers come to arrest them.

Verse 1 continues, ... **as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them...**” As they are speaking, three groups of people come upon them, 1) the priests, 2) the captain of the temple, and 3) the Sadducees. Who are these men?

- **The priests** were those who would perform the daily sacrifices in accordance with the Law of Moses. Very religious and pious, probably with a fervent enthusiasm for the things of God, but they did not know that God was no longer there in the temple. This reminds me a **Jeremiah 2:8**. Here they are in the temple working every day and they don’t even know that God isn’t there.
- **The captain of the temple** was the strategos, *στρατηγός*, the captain of the temple guard, basically the temple police. These temple police also came out with Judas to arrest Jesus in the garden, Luke 22:52, and they were the ones who also guarded the tomb, Matt 27:62-66; 27:2-4. They were probably provided and paid for by Rome, but managed by the chief priests, Matt 27:11-15.
- **The Sadducees** were a group of Jews who we would describe as the Liberals. They didn’t believe in supernatural things. They didn’t believe in the resurrection, angels, or spirits, Acts 23:8. They also were involved with Rome politically. They were wealthy aristocrats that had their hands in both religion and politics for their own selfish gain. They just used religion as a means of power and influence. The difference between a Sadducee and a Pharisee is the Pharisees were the conservatives. They had a very high standard and adhered to a strict interpretation of God’s Law and Jewish oral traditions. They were wrong and had bad doctrine, but they had a zeal for God. It’s interesting to note that throughout the New Testament, there are many examples of Pharisees and priests coming to Jesus, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, the Apostle Paul, but there is not one mention of a Sadducee coming to the faith. And that’s why they are Sad-U-See.

And verse 2 says they were **greatly disturbed**. This word means greatly annoyed or thoroughly pained. And there were two reasons why they were greatly disturbed. 1) they were **teaching the people** and 2) they **preached the resurrection of the dead** and they did these things **in Jesus**. Peter and John made it clear that everything they were doing was in the authority and the power of the Name of Jesus who had risen from the dead. And because the Sadducees didn’t believe in the resurrection of the dead, this greatly disturbed them, Acts 23:6-10. So these people did not like the fact that Peter and John were teaching about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And even more so, they were upset about their authority being taken away.

Verse 3 says they “**laid hands on them.**” This makes is sound like they gently took them out, no the Greek says, *ἐπιβάλλω*, they threw their hands upon them. In Mark 4:37 this same word is used to describe waves in a windstorm crashing and beating into the boat. This wasn’t a gentle thing.

“...and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.” So Peter and John were thrown in jail for the night until the Sadducees and the priests could assemble the Sanhedrin for the next day because by this time it was evening, at least 6pm.

But then look at what is happening in the meantime... verse 4...

<p><b>4</b> However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.</p>	<p><i>4 πολλοὶ δὲ τῶν ἀκουσάντων τὸν λόγον ἐπίστευσαν· καὶ ἐγενήθη ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν ἀνδρῶν ὡσεὶ χιλιάδες πέντε.</i></p>
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Even among persecution, the Gospel will prevail. In fact, in many cases it flourishes, **Phil 1:12**. And notice how Luke describes how they came to believe... they **heard the Word and believed**. This is Romans 10:17. Remember believing is faithing. It's the same Greek root as faith and Romans 10:17 faith comes out from hearing and understanding and hearing and understanding comes through the Word of God. When the Word is preached, those who have ears to hear; they hear and understand; and out from this understanding comes faith unto Everlasting Life.

“**And the number of men came to be about five thousand.**” Now at this point, from Pentecost until Acts 4, the total of number of men that have believed in Jesus is about 5,000 (3,000 on Pentecost, and another 2,000 here), not including women and young people. So, scholars say this total number of believers could be over 10,000 total people by now, in as short as a couple of weeks, but no more than 2 months after Pentecost. So that's a lot of people coming into the Kingdom in a short time period. It's no wonder why they start adding deacons to help them in chapter 6.

Luke brings us back to Peter and John the next day in verses 5-6...

<p><b>5</b> And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, <b>6</b> as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.</p>	<p><i>5 Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν αὐριον συναχθῆναι αὐτῶν τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ πρεσβυτέρους καὶ γραμματεῖς εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, <sup>6</sup> καὶ Ἄνναν τὸν ἀρχιερέα, καὶ Καϊάφαν, καὶ Ἰωάννην, καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον, καὶ ὅσοι ἦσαν ἐκ γένους ἀρχιερατικοῦ.</i></p>
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It's the following day, Peter and John have been in prison all night, and the Sadducees have assembled the Sanhedrin and brought Peter and John before the tribunal. And within the Sanhedrin council were a combination of Pharisees and Sadducees consisting of **rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander**. Peter, John, and the healed beggar are standing before the Sanhedrin council. The same temple guard that arrested them the night before brought them before the council. They were placed in the middle of a half circle court where 71 elect judges were seated before them. This was the same court with the same judges nearly 3 months earlier that tried Jesus. Now Peter and John are standing in the Name of Jesus before the same people.

Luke mentions both Annas and Caiaphas by name. Annas was the high priest from 6-15AD, but then he was removed by Rome and his son in-law Caiaphas was appointed from 18-36AD. Josephus records three other high priests appointed by Rome in those 3 years in between Annas and Caiaphas *Antiquities of the Jews*, 18:34-35. Even though Annas was not officially in office, he still had great influence. Remember they took Jesus to Annas first and then Caiaphas for His trial, John 18:13, 24. Some scholars believe the Jews revered Annas because he was from the line of Aaron, and Caiaphas was not. Therefore, the Jews looked at Annas as the true high priest of Jerusalem for life, but Caiaphas held the office from the Roman perspective.

There is nothing known of these other two that are named, John and Alexander. Some conjectures have been made that these two men are sons of Annas, because Annas had a son named Jonathan that became high priest in 36AD after Caiaphas. But its hard to say if this is the same man. However, the fact that Luke

mentions them by name means they were of some importance in the Sanhedrin, more than just elders or scribes.

The tribunal begins their questioning in verse 7...

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

*7 και στήσαντες αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ μέσῳ, ἐπυνθάνοντο, Ἐν ποίᾳ δυνάμει ἢ ἐν ποίῳ ὀνόματι ἐποιήσατε τοῦτο ὑμεῖς;*

Notice the question they ask Peter and John, “**By what power or by what name have you done this?**” They already knew the answer. Peter told them back in verse 16 that it was the Name of Jesus that healed this man. But they wanted Peter and John to be on the official record of the Sanhedrin. These people think they are doing God’s work. In Deuteronomy 13:1-5, Moses told the rulers to judge false prophets when they perform a sign or wonder that leads people to other gods. But they are so caught up in their own greediness and pride that they have become blind to the things of God, John 9:39. And they don’t realize this is God doing this miracle. This is Jeremiah 2:8 as I said before.

Peter then responds to their indictment in verses 8-10...

**8** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: **9** If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, **10** let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.

*8 τότε Πέτρος πλησθεὶς Πνεύματος Ἁγίου εἶπε πρὸς αὐτούς, Ἄρχοντες τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, 9 εἰ ἡμεῖς σήμερον ἀνακρινόμεθα ἐπὶ εὐεργεσίᾳ ἀνθρώπου ἀσθενοῦς, ἐν τίνι οὗτος σέσωσται. 10 γνωστὸν ἔστω πᾶσιν ὑμῖν καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ Ἰσραὴλ, ὅτι ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου, ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε, ὃν ὁ Θεὸς ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐν τούτῳ οὗτος παρέστηκεν ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν ὑγιής.*

Notice Peter is **filled with the Holy Spirit** speaking to them. This exactly what Jesus said would happen in **Luke 21:12-18**; Matt 10:19-20; John 16:1-4. These words of Jesus I’m sure are going through Peter and John’s mind giving them boldness as they stand before the tribunal. So Peter full of the Spirit begins giving glory to the Name of Jesus and he answers their question. He knows they’re just trying to trap them, and he knows this could end up in death, but he also knows that this is an opportunity for a testimony. When would he get the chance to proclaim the Gospel to the leaders of Jerusalem all at once? This was a divine appointment set up by the Providential hand of God. And remember, this all started with the healing of the lame man the day before, and has brought them to this point today. God will call His ambassadors into hard situations to preach the Gospel for His Glory.

If Peter wanted to avoid persecution, he could have given a compromised answer. But instead of backing off to avoid persecution, he presses in and names the Name of Jesus in clear evidence to the court. He says, “**If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well...**” In other words, if the only reason you’re examining us, is because of this good deed done to this man, then let me tell you who healed this man.

He says in verse 10, “**let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.**” Look at the boldness of Peter as he is filled with the Spirit. Three months earlier Jesus was in this same court and Peter was outside warming himself by the fire denying His Name. Now he is boldly proclaiming the Name of Jesus to the council.

Notice how Peter describes this former lame man. He is made whole. But Peter isn't just speaking of his physical body, because back in verse 9 he said this man was made well. This word well is, σῶζω- Salvation. This man is Saved, Delivered, born again unto Everlasting Life. Not only is he physically healed, but he is spiritually healed. This is true wholeness, Matt 9:5; 1 Pet 2:24. And it was in the Name and everything this Name stands for that this man stands before you perfectly whole.

Peter is standing before the elite leaders of Jerusalem preaching the Word of God. Peter then quotes a well-known Messianic Psalm of David and convicts their heart of the sin of rejecting their Messiah.

**11** This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'<sup>11</sup> οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ λίθος ὁ ἐξουθενηθεὶς ὑφ' ὑμῶν τῶν οἰκοδομούντων, ὁ γενόμενος εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας.

Peter quotes Psalm 118:22 but he changes it slightly making it personal and directing the guilt emphatically toward them. He says, "This Jesus is the stone which **YOU** builders despised and rejected, and the stone that you rejected has become the chief cornerstone." This wasn't the first time the rulers heard this Psalm quoted to them. In Matthew 21:33-45, Jesus used this same Psalm to warn these same rulers of the destruction that would come from rejecting the Messiah. This stone that has become the greatest building stone, but to those who have rejected and despised this Chief Cornerstone, this stone will become a rock of offense, a stumbling stone in which it will crush them with Righteous Judgment.

And then Peter re-iterates that this stone, Jesus who is the Christ, is the Only Way to Salvation...

**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.<sup>12</sup> καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐδενὶ ἡ σωτηρία· οὔτε γὰρ ὄνομά ἐστιν ἕτερον ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν τὸ δεδομένον ἐν ἀνθρώποις, ἐν ᾧ δεῖ σωθῆναι ἡμᾶς.

This is why the world hates us. Not because we do good things. Not because we are nice and love each other, not because we give to the poor and do other good works. The world doesn't hate us for these things. They hate us because we preach the TRUTH. They hate us because we tell them that Jesus is the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE, and no one comes to the Father except through Him.

So how do we respond to persecution? We stand for Truth and we faithfully endure, 1 Peter 4:12; Matt 5:11. We rejoice, stand strong, faithfully endure in the Truth and never compromise, because a compromised Gospel doesn't save anyone. The most loving thing we can do is PREACH the TRUTH... Because it's the Truth that sets us free and gives us Everlasting Life. And we faithfully endure... even unto death. And we do this so that some might hear these words and be saved.