

Acts 025

The Spirit's Power

Acts 4:1-12

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Hey. Well, come on in. The water's fine. Good to see you all this evening, and welcome back to our Wednesday night Bible study. We took a summer break. And in the last quarter we started a study in the book of Acts. We made it all the way through chapter 3. This evening, if you could locate Acts 4:1. To get the cobwebs out, the Book of Acts is about the birth and the growth of the church. So, in Acts chapter 1, Jesus ascended. In Acts chapter 2, the church is born, the Day of Pentecost. In Acts chapter 3, Peter and John heal a lame man. I think he was born lame. He was about 38 years old. And his legs were miraculously restored in Acts 3, which gave Peter a chance to preach to a crowd. And Peter there condemns first-century Israel for their rejection of the Messiah. And chapter 3, as you surely can imagine, flows right into chapter 4 where Peter and John get arrested. So, here's an outline of Acts 4 even going into Acts 5.

Acts 4:1–5:11 **Summary**

- I. Apostles Arrested (4:1-4)
- II. Apostles Examined (4:5-12)
- III. Sanhedrin's Decision (4:13-22)
- IV. Apostles' Prayer (4:23-31)
- V. Pre-Ananias and Sapphira (4:32-37)
- VI. Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11)

The Ananias and Sapphira incident. You have the apostles arrested, verses 1 through 4. The apostles examined by the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin is the existing Jewish religious authority in first century Israel. That's in verses 5 through 12. Then the Sanhedrin makes a decision, verses 13 through 22. And then the apostles go to prayer. And this is a very powerful prayer that they pray in verses 23 through 31. And then the chapter kind of ends with them, the church that is, living in their communal arrangement. Which we saw develop at the end of Acts 2. And that sets the stage very nicely for the

first 11 verses in chapter 5, because in that communal arrangement, it involved selling your property and giving the proceeds to the church. And there was a couple there, Ananias and Sapphira, who publicly misrepresented their generosity. And they were slain in the Holy Spirit. And when I say slain in the Holy Spirit, that's not a good thing. Okay? And God brought upon them maximum divine discipline. And that had, as we're going to see, a purifying effect on the early church. So anyway, that's kind of the lay of the land that we're moving into this evening. I don't think we'll be able to cover all of this this evening, but we can make a healthy start.

I. Apostles Arrested (Acts 4:1-4)

- I. Interruption (1)
- II. Reasons (2)
- III. Arrest (3)
- IV. Results (4)

First of all, the apostles are arrested. We have an interruption, the reasons for the arrest, the arrest, and the results of the arrest. Notice, if you will, Acts 4:1. It says: *As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees came up to them.* So, when it says they were speaking to the people, this is in reference to the sermon that Peter primarily was giving in Acts 3. Where they healed a man who was lame, born lame. He knew nothing but the lack of use of his legs for, I think it says 38 years. And he's miraculously healed-- not by Peter and John, but by Jesus through Peter and John. It's just Jesus exercising His ministry now, from the Father's right hand, through the church, through the apostles. And a big crowd gathers, and Peter uses the opportunity to condemn first century Israel and their decision nationally to reject their own Messiah. So that's what it means there when it says: *As they were speaking to the people...* So, as they were speaking to the people, they're now interrupted by the religious authorities. Who are the religious authorities? It says it right there in verse 1 of chapter 4: *...the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees...* So, these are religious officials or workers. We have priests, the captain of the temple guard and another group here called the Sadducees. And an easy way to remember the Sadducees is that the Sadducees were always sad-you-see. Sadducees. Basically, the Sadducees were people that if we were to try to parallel them today with somebody, we would call them theological liberals. A

theological liberal denies what the Bible says. Denies prophecy, denies miracles and that kind of thing. And that's who these Sadducees were.

The Sadducees only believed in the first five books of Moses. That's all they believed in. They didn't accept the rest of the Old Testament. So that's why when Jesus is talking to them about resurrection, the Sadducees, in the Gospels He does not quote from Daniel 12:2 to prove resurrection to them. I mean, why didn't He quote Daniel 12:2? Daniel 12:2 is a great verse on future resurrection. It says: *Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.* So why didn't Jesus, when He is arguing with the Sadducees in the Gospels about resurrection, why doesn't He quote that passage? That's a beautiful passage to quote from. Well, the answer is the Sadducees did not accept Daniel as authoritatively coming from God. They only accepted the first five books of the Bible, so it wouldn't do any good to prove resurrection from the Book of Daniel to the Sadducees. So instead, Jesus quotes the Book of Exodus. And I'm getting this from Matthew 22:31-32. Here, He's speaking to the Sadducees, and it says: *"But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God:"* And now He's quoting Exodus, *"I am the God of Abraham, And the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." He is not the God of the dead but of the living."*

In other words, He points out that based on the book of Exodus, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive right now. And He uses that to prove future resurrection. So why would he quote that passage? Because that's one of the books they would accept. He doesn't quote the more obvious passage because the Sadducees did not accept anything other than the Pentateuch, the Torah, the first five books of Hebrew Bible. The Sadducees were also sad-you-see, not only because they denied all other scripture outside of Moses, but they denied resurrection. That's why Jesus is debating them about resurrection. They did not believe in angels. Acts 23:8 says: *For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel.* Matthew 22:30 indicates that the Sadducees didn't believe in resurrection. So, you're dealing with people that only believed in the first five books of Moses. They didn't believe in angels. They didn't believe in resurrection. So, sad-you-see is a pretty good name for these people, right? I would be sad too, if I had a limited acceptance of the authority of the totality of what God has revealed. The Sadducees are a little bit different than the Pharisees. In fact,

they're a lot different. Sadducees, we can analogize them to modern day theological liberals. Pharisees were conservatives, but they were hyper-legalists.

This goes back to the Babylonian captivity. The Jewish rejection of the Sabbath sent the nation of Israel into the Babylonian captivity for seventy years. And when the nation of Israel came out of that captivity and came back into their homeland, they said to themselves, we're never going to let that happen again. And so, they built what we call a fence around the law; meaning we're going to pass so many laws against breaking the Sabbath that no one will ever think about breaking the Sabbath. So, they had all these rules about how you couldn't eat on the Sabbath. You know, you couldn't rescue a man on the Sabbath. All these things come into the life of Israel through something called Mishnah and then Talmud. And there were two talmuds. There was one in the land of Israel. There was a later one developed in what's called the Babylonian Talmud. And this is why Jesus said of the Pharisees, you make null the word of God through your traditions. Because what happened is the tail started to wag the dog. They started to read the law-- superimposed over the law were a bunch of manmade regulations and restrictions. So, when Jesus is dealing with the Pharisees, He's always dealing with this issue. He's feeding His disciples on the Sabbath. Pharisees are upset about that. He's healing people on the Sabbath. Pharisees are upset about that. And what are they upset about? They're upset about the fact that He's not respecting their rules.

What Jesus' point is that the tail is wagging the dog. Your rules are being superimposed over God's actual law, to the point where you're burying the original intent of the law under layer after layer after layer of manmade regulation. So, Jesus, as the Lord of the Sabbath, was always trying to get back to what the Sabbath meant. It was supposed to be a blessing for man. Pharisees are saying, nope, you can't do anything on the Sabbath. You can't heal someone on the Sabbath, even though that's a blessing for man. You can't feed your disciples on the Sabbath. You know, pick crops and that kind of thing on the Sabbath, even though that's a blessing for man. You're ruining our rules. So that's a little bit of who the Pharisees were. Pharisees are conservative, but they're beyond conservative. They were hyper legalists. Sadducees are just deniers of what the totality of God's Word says. The Pharisees are going to be dominant in the synagogue. They had a higher sphere of influence in the synagogue. What was the synagogue? The synagogue were these places that Jews would gather,

you know, all over the Greco-Roman world. And they gathered there during a time when there was no temple to go to. Remember the first temple that Solomon built was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and wasn't rebuilt until the days of Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah. So, what did the Jews do? They would gather in the Greco-Roman world in these places called the synagogue.

And the Pharisees were dominant in the synagogue. The Sadducees, as I'm trying to describe it, were dominant in the temple area. So that's why the people that are harassing the apostles in early Acts, really all the way up through Acts chapter 12, are the Sadducees and not the Pharisees. Because the Sadducees had ascendancy in the temple area. In Acts 1 through 12, the early church hadn't spread out yet. And it had a very strong sphere of influence in Jerusalem. So that's why the early church is dealing with the Sadducees until the Apostle Paul in Acts 13 and 14 goes out on missionary journey number one into southern Galatia. And then you'll start seeing him going to the various synagogues outside the land of Israel. And now the people coming against Paul are not the Sadducees, but now they're the Pharisees. So, Sadducees, liberals. Pharisees, legalists. Sadducees dominant in the temple area. Pharisees dominant in the synagogue. Sadducees will be dominant as long as the church has a place of influence in Jerusalem. But the Pharisees, as opponents of the church, will become dominant as the church spreads out and moves outside the land of Israel. So, verse 1 says: *As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them.*

That's a little bit about who the Sadducees are and why they are the primary detractors of the church at this particular point. So, Peter and John. Peter's conversation that he was having in Acts 3, a very effective conversation, is interrupted. The reasons for the interruption are given in verse 2. It says: *being--* Now notice this, not just disturbed but *greatly disturbed. ...being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead...* So here are these apostles. And if you drop over to verse 13 for a minute, you see the way that the religious authorities looked at the apostles. It says: *Now as they observe the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.* So, what is upsetting to the Sadducees is, number one, these apostles are teaching the people and they never went to our Sadducee school. I mean, they don't have a Sadducee degree.

In other words, they don't think like we do. I mean, if these apostles thought the way we thought, then they would only accept Moses. They would reject angels; they would reject resurrection. And here are these men who are untrained fishermen teaching the masses there in Acts chapter 3. In other words, they don't have the authority to be teaching anybody is how the Sadducees were thinking about the apostles.

And what really upset them is they kept talking about Christ's Resurrection. *...proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.* Now, that was really upsetting to the Sadducees because the Sadducees didn't believe in resurrection. And here they're claiming that the man that the nation of Israel just turned over to Rome for execution has risen from the dead, and His tomb is empty. That doesn't fit our doctrine, the Sadducees would say to themselves, and this puts the apostles on a collision course with the Sadducees. The moment Peter in Acts 2:24-- which is a wonderful sermon-- said these words he became, I think at that point, a marked man by the Sadducees. Peter said: *But God--* speaking of Jesus-- *raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held by its power.* Peter continues the subject matter in Acts chapter 3 in that sermon there in verse 15. And it says: *...but put to death--* speaking of Israel-- *the Prince of Life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.* Remember what Paul would say to the Corinthians. Now there's 500 eyewitnesses, First Corinthians 15. Check it out for yourself. They've all seen the resurrected Christ. So, what they were saying is Israel rejected her own Messiah. That made the Sadducees angry enough.

Then they said, this Messiah rose from the dead. And the Sadducees were upset even more because they didn't believe in future resurrection or any kind of resurrection. That's why when you look at verse 2, it says: they were being *greatly disturbed*. Not just disturbed, but *...greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people*. Here are these unqualified fishermen teaching doctrines that we, the religious authorities, oppose. Now, you put all of this in motion, and you can see why they're arrested. And their arrest is described in verse 3: *And they laid hands on them--* That would be Peter and John-- *put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.* Now, why didn't they put him on trial right then and there? Well, it's part of Jewish law. Jewish law says no trial in the evening hours. The only one that they violated that rule for was who? Jesus. Because they couldn't wait to rush Him through the judicial system to get Him dead as quickly as they could. So, they violated everything in their rule book. But here,

at least they're respecting the rule book, and they're not having a trial in the evening hours, because that is forbidden by the Mosaic law. And what is the result of all this?

Because we're kind of in the mindset that, oh, no, if the mandates come back-- which they could. They're talking about it, you know and Sugar Land Bible Church stays open, which is at least my intention. I mean, I would like to stay open. I don't think a pastor, or an elder board has a right to shut down a church. Because whose church is it? It's God's church. If God wants to shut down His church, He's more than capable of doing it. A pastor doesn't have an authority to close down a church. So, if all these mandates come back and hypothetically, let's say we stay open. My goodness, what if they come in here and they find us? What if they come in here and they arrest us? What if they do like they did to that pastor of that Baptist church in Northern California, where they chained the doors? And keep assessing fine after fine after fine against him with an attempt to completely drive the church that he was pastoring under? What do we do then? Well, this is where Acts chapter 4 is so instructive. What Acts chapter 4 says, particularly in verse 4, is God is going to work in spite of that circumstance. Covid mandates don't stop God. Chaining the doors of churches don't stop God. Driving churches into bankruptcy by assessing fine after fine after fine until the church financially has to go under; that doesn't stop God either.

I mean, God's not sitting up in heaven with sweaty palms saying, oh no, they're bringing back the mandates. What am I going to do? I mean, what you see as the church's persecuted in the book of Acts, it keeps growing. Now, I'm sure you realize that this church and every other, virtually 100% anybody I've talked to-- and I talked to a lot of people-- who are involved in ministries that I would call biblically faithful ministries. Every biblically faithful ministry that I know of in the midst of Covid, their ministry expanded. Their ministry grew in any-- however you want to count-- growth. Numerically. Attendance. Finances. Online views. In other words, every church that did things God's way was blessed. That's the best I can tell from my experience going around talking to people that think the way we think at Sugar Land Bible Church. And that's what's happening in the book of Acts. They laid hands on these people. They put them in jail. Peter and John. And what happened? Verse 4: *But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to about five thousand.* So, you see the arrest in verse 3 and then the numerical growth in verse 4. How big was the church? Well, back in Acts 2 it says when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost,

there were *about*-- so it's not an exact number-- there were about three thousand conversions. And now we go into Acts 4 and the number just jumped from three thousand to five thousand.

Now, I don't know of any church growth methodology that can even come close to what's happening here in the book of Acts. And as you know-- and we don't hear about it a lot on the news, because there's a blackout related to what news we actually get from certain countries of the world, but the underground church in the world is thriving. I mean, the church is growing by leaps and bounds under the most despotic, evil regimes on planet Earth. The Iranian church, Persian church is growing underground. The Chinese church is growing underground. So don't think that if the government turns on us that somehow God's hands are tied. In fact, that could be the very blessing that causes even more growth to the to the body of Christ. And so, it says: *But many of those who had heard the message believed*; Notice the only condition that's necessary to get saved. It's to believe. Lewis Sperry Chafer says:

"...upwards of 150 passages of Scripture condition salvation upon believing only."

Some of the famous ones you know; the very first one was Abraham. Abraham received a revelation from God. And then it says Abraham walked an aisle and filled out a card and felt really bad. No. It says Abraham believed in the Lord. And He reckoned it to him as righteousness. By the way, that's Paul the Apostle's favorite verse. Because Paul quotes it over and over again to defend his doctrine.

God's Doctrine of Justification by Faith. John 3:16 you know. *For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.* Acts 16:30-31. The Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas later in the book of Acts life's most important question. There's no more important question than this one. *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved," I mean, there's nothing here about rehearsing every sin you've ever committed and confessing it. There is nothing here about feeling bad about your sins. If you want to feel bad about your sins, go for it. But that doesn't save anybody. I mean, I feel bad about a lot of my sins of the past, but I can beat myself up until the cows come home and that doesn't get me to heaven. What gets me to heaven is I'm trusting in what Jesus did for me 2000 years ago. You know, filling out a card,

calling a prayer hotline, giving money, walking an aisle. I mean, none of it saves anything. It's the faith expressed in the prayer, if you want to pray a prayer, that saves you. I mean, I was saved at 16 by praying the sinner's prayer. But in hindsight, I recognize that it wasn't praying the sinner's prayer that saved me. It was the faith expressed in the prayer that saves.

And that's what you see over and over again in Scripture. It just lays out this single condition. Verse 4 says: *But many of those who heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.* Now who is Luke writing to? Luke, as we studied in the introduction to the Book of Acts, is writing to a man named Theophilus. Theophilus, when we stitched all that material together, the best that we can tell, he is a saved Gentile who is having questions about whether Christianity is for him. Because it all looks so Jewish. I'm a Gentile that works for Rome. Am I contemplated in the plan of God? Yet we can tell, he looks like he's come to saving faith in Christ. So, Luke writes a two-volume set-- The Gospel of Luke being the prequel, the Book of Acts being the sequel-- to this man, Theophilus, to give him an orderly account of the life of Christ, gospel of Luke. And the birth and growth of the church, book of Acts. And how the message of the church ultimately got to Theophilus, probably in Rome. And he's showing him that what has happened, as recorded in Luke's Gospel and in the book of Acts, is a work of God. And God put the whole thing into motion, Theophilus, for your benefit.

And every Gentile Christian can say the same thing. The whole thing was put into motion because God knew the time in history would come where we would trust in Christ, as Theophilus had done. So what Luke is doing, and he's a physician, he's a doctor, he's a detail guy. If you have a doctor that's not a detail guy, you might want to find a new doctor. So, he's very detailed in his history, and he's writing a book, the book of Acts on the birth and the growth of the church.

- Birth and growth of the church numerically, geographically, ethnically.
- Components
 - Numerically (progress reports)
 - Geographically (From Jerusalem to Rome)
 - Ethnically (From Judaism to Gentile domination)

And he's tracking the growth of the church numerically, geographically and ethnically. Ethnically, how it started off as an offshoot of Judaism, but eventually became a predominantly Gentile body. Geographically, how the message of the church made its way all the way to Rome through God's power. And numerically, how the church grew. And how does he document the numerical progress of the church? Through these numbers that we call progress reports.

Progress Reports

- Clearest: Acts 2:47; 4:4; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31
- Less clear: Acts 1:13, 15; 2:41; 4:4:31; 5:14, 42; 8:25, 40; 11:21; 13:49; 17:6

We've seen two already. Acts 2:47, three thousand saved. Acts 4:4, now we're up to five thousand. And on the top bullet point, I've got the clearest progress reports that I know of in the book of Acts. And I'll make reference to those as we continue through the book of Acts, verse by verse. The bullet point down below are progress reports that aren't as conspicuous as the ones top. But they're there, nonetheless.

So, we're dealing with a worldwide movement that started with eleven people. The apostles. Then they added Matthias because of Judas's suicide. Now we just jumped from eleven to twelve. You continue reading in the book of Acts, as the apostles are praying, it gives the number 120. So now we're at 120. And then Peter preaches, probably one of the greatest sermons that's ever been preached in the history of Christianity in Acts 2. Three thousand. That's what Jesus was talking about when He said, you're going to do greater works than Me. Remember He said that in the upper room? I mean, even Christ Himself never instantaneously converted three thousand people that I'm aware of. And now we're in Acts chapter 4 and we just jump from three thousand to five thousand. And it happened in spite of the fact that the leaders were arrested. So, if the leaders are in jail and the church is still growing, it must be the result of God, right? It's not some kind of managerial acumen that's making this thing move. I mean, this is the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. So, this is why these guys are arrested. And you go down to verses 5 through 12 and now the Sanhedrin, the legal political body dominated by the Sadducees-- once the Peter and John are arrested-- they start to examine them, question them. {slide 21, 22, 24}

Acts 4:1–5:11 Summary

- I. Apostles Arrested (4:1-4)
- II. **Apostles Examined (4:5-12)**
 - A. Sanhedrin's Questions (5-7)
 - B. Peter Addresses Sanhedrin (8-12)
 - 1. Convening (5)
 - 2. Conclave (6)
 - 3. Questioning (7)
- III. Sanhedrin's Decision (4:13-22)
- IV. Apostles' Prayer (4:23-31)
- V. Pre-Ananias and Sapphira (4:32-37)
- VI. Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11)

So, we have the Sanhedrin's questions, verses 5 through 7. And then Peter speaks, verses 8 through 12. And this will be Peter's first opportunity to address not just Israelis-- he did that in chapter 2 and chapter 3-- but Israeli authorities. Israeli leadership. And so, his words there in verses 8 through 12, as you'll see, are a big deal. But first, notice the Sanhedrin's questions. We have the convening, verse 5. The conclave, verse 6. And I looked for a "C" for that last one, but it wasn't working for me. So, I just said, questioning, verse 7. Notice the convening. Verse 5: *On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem.* Now the next day, why does it say the next day? Because they're trying to follow their own rule book the best they can. We can't have a trial in the evening hours, even though we railroaded Jesus that way. So, with these guys, let's just try to follow the rule book a little bit. And so, they start the questioning the next day. No trial during the evening hours. Who was involved in this questioning? Different religious groups: rulers, elders, scribes. These are all religious authorities. I would guess that the rulers are Sadducees. The elders and the scribes could consist of some Pharisees. I'm not saying that there are no Pharisees here in Acts 4, but they're just not as dominant as the Sadducees are.

The Pharisees, as I mentioned earlier, will become very dominant once the gospel, the church, leaves the borders of Israel. And they have a conclave there, verse 6. We've got some names: *and Annas the high priest was there--* bringing in the bigwigs, in other words. *and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.* Now, who are these names? Annas is the high priest. Caiaphas is

kind of one of those that's down the line of becoming the high priest. He will become a high priest, but he's not a high priest yet. He's a later high priest. John is not to be confused with the Apostle John, who is under arrest but is Annas' son. And who else does it mention here? Alexander, probably a member of Annas' family. And then those who are of priestly descent. I mean, how did you become a priest in the nation of Israel? You had to be a descendant of which tribe? Levi. You had to have Levi in your "genes", in other words. I got to keep you guys awake somehow. You had to have Levi genes. And you had to be a descendant of who? Aaron. Going back to the time of Moses, right? The first high priest. So, all these people-- and there have been whole dissertations written on this-- can be documented from extra biblical sources. I mean, these are like real people that really lived.

And so, I like to point this out just as we're going through Genesis on Sunday morning. When it mentions people and places of geography, this reads like a history book. This is not tall tales. This is not Veggie Tales, this is not fairy tales. This is not Jack and the Beanstalk. This is not hey, here's some fuzzy, spiritual motivational tips for you today. Anything you draw out of the Bible by way of application-- application is important-- you have to understand it's coming out of real history. Because now that we have turned all our kids over to secular education, sadly. I'm not talking about people in this church, necessarily. I'm just talking about evangelicals in general. Now that we've fed all our kids to the beast called secular education, they all think that what they learned in the secular school is the real history. And what you guys do on Wednesday night and Sunday morning and in home fellowships, oh, that's just the religious stuff. So, they've drawn a distinction. The secularists have taught our youth to draw a distinction between what's historical and what is religious. That's why people write you off when you talk to them. You start talking to them about Jesus and they'll say something like, oh, you're religious. Meaning you're kind of in the anti-intellectual, non-historical box over here. And I'm here to tell you that that whole thing is just a lie. The Bible is history. And frankly, it's a lot better history than what they're learning in the secular schools.

What they're learning in the secular schools is historical revisionism. Edited history to promote an ideology. This is why they don't like true Christianity. Because true Christianity, if it's let out of the box, is true history. And God will use true history to tear down false ideologies. So, we have the convening, the conclave and then the questioning starts verse 7: *When they had placed them in the center...* What's that

game? Mush pot? Something like that. Where someone's in the-- what's it called? Mush pot, there we go. It's been a little while since I played it, but I might be a little tall to be in the mush spot, but at any rate. It's like they're surrounding these guys, Peter and John, who have been under arrest. They put them in the center. And they start asking them questions. *When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"* Done what? Well, healed a lame man in Acts 3. And you'll see in a moment that lame man was also under arrest. Because they're referring to him. He's in the room. So that's quite an irony. You get your legs back after 38 years, and the first thing that happens to you is you get thrown in prison. My goodness, that's what religion will do to you, by the way.

Once Jesus sets you free, religion will put you right back in jail. So, they asked this question. Verse 7: *When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"* In other words, who gives you a right to go around healing people and giving sermons? Now notice this expression. *By what name and by what power?* They are not denying that the miracle happened. Because it did. You can't deny it. A guy has no ability with his legs, and now he has it in a nanosecond. And it wasn't one of those kinds of things where you okay, go to your doctor and come back in five weeks and walk and see how you feel. It was an instantaneous healing. So, they can't deny the miracle, because he's the guy that used to sit out there in front of the temple and ask for money for 38 years. Kind of like the local beggar. Everybody knew who he was. The guy couldn't walk. Now he can walk because Jesus healed this man through Peter and John. So, by what power are you doing these things? And by whose name are you doing these things? And the implication is, because they can't deny the miracle, you obviously did this through the devil's power. That's the point. You did this through satanic power. So, when you can't deny the obvious, you just attribute it to Satan.

Has that been done before in the Bible? Isn't that what they said to Jesus when He did a healing? Matthew 12:24, *But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."* They couldn't deny the miracle, so they attributed the miracle to Satan. And that verse, as we have explained it, is the tipping point in Matthew's gospel. Once they did that, the offer of the king and the kingdom was withdrawn. The offer is revoked. God now says that generation is under judgment. Not that individual Jews couldn't get saved. I'm talking

nationally. Nationally, God is finished with this generation. He'll work through a future generation of Israel, distant future. But it's over for this generation. They could have had the king and the kingdom. So, the Sadducees, who are part of this ruling aristocracy, do the exact same thing, relative to this miracle that had been done by Jesus through the hands of Peter and John. He is healed by Satan's power. And here we go. Peter speaks up. {30, 31}

II. Apostles Examined (Acts 4:5-12)

A. Sanhedrin's Questions (5-7)

B. **Peter Addresses Sanhedrin (8-12)**

1. Miracle's source (8-10)
2. Israel's rejection of Messiah (11)
3. Only way of Salvation (12)

This gives Peter a chance to speak for the very first time, to the leadership of the nation, verses 8 through 12. This is where he talks about the miracle's true source, verses 8 through 10. Israel's rejection of her Messiah, verse 11. And only one way of salvation, verse 12. Peter says, You want to know where this miracle came from? Let me tell you about it.

Look at verse 8: *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit*-- I hope you see what I'm seeing here with Peter. You're seeing a different guy. You're not seeing the guy anymore that speaks and Jesus says, get behind Me, Satan. The apostle with the foot shaped mouth, as I like to call him. You're not seeing the guy who denied the Lord three times. One of those denials was to a little girl, he was so intimidated. You're not seeing the guy who walks out on the water, and then he becomes afraid because of the wind and the waves, and he takes his eyes off Jesus and he starts to sink. You're seeing a totally different person. It's obvious, based on the sermon that he gave in Acts 2, where you have three thousand conversions. It's obvious, based on the sermon in Acts 3 where he's addressing the masses, not the leadership yet, but the masses. And he continues on now addressing Israel's leadership. And what changed in Peter's life? It's right there. *Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit*. That's what the Holy Spirit does for you. What did Paul say to Timothy? God has not given us a spirit of timidity. But a spirit of love, power and self discipline.

Boy, I hope that when I get up here and teach and do anything in ministry, I hope I'm a different person than I am normally, as I try to depend upon the Holy Spirit. And that's what the Holy Spirit will do for your life. It's not like Peter suddenly got more intelligent. It's not like he went to some kind of self-help course to learn how to succeed in life. I mean, he had a power that was higher than himself that was directing his words. That's why they're as penetrating as they are. Now, the prequel to the book of Acts is the Gospel of Luke, right? And didn't the Lord say this in Luke 21:14-15: *So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.* I mean, Jesus said that would happen. And it's happening. Now, as a pastor don't use this to say, well, I guess I don't have to study because God's going to tell me what I'm going to say beforehand. No, that's an abuse of the passage. The Bible says, Second Timothy 2:15, study and show yourself approved as a worker that need not be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth, the Word of God.

But it's dealing with situations that you're thrown in, but you don't have time to prepare for. You know, your boss wants to talk to you. The doctor wants to talk to you. Family members want to talk to you. It's the kind of things that happen lickety split where you just say, Lord, I'm going to start talking here, and I need You to fill Your servant's mouth with wisdom. That's what's happening to Peter right here. And Peter has no corner on God. God is the same yesterday, today and forever, right? So, what he's doing for Peter, He'll do for you. He'll do it for me. *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to--* now who is he talking to? *"Rulers and elders of the people,"* He's not talking anymore to the men of Israel as he does in Acts 3:12. He is not talking anymore to a crowd of people as he does in Acts 3. Now he's talking to the leadership. And he continues going down to verse 9. He says: *"if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well,"* See how he refers to him as "this man." The man that had been made well was right there in jail with them.

As you look at the bottom of verse 10, it says: *"by this name this man stands here before you in good health."* So at least three people were jailed here; Peter, John and the man healed. Why would they want the man healed jailed? Because they don't want the good news of his healing spreading. They don't want it factually demonstrable that this man had no capacity with his legs for 38 years, and now he can walk instantaneously. I mean, Peter says, are we being thrown in jail because we did

something good? I mean, are you jailing us because we healed somebody? Is that what you're all hot and bothered about? So, there's a little bit of sarcasm here. Then you move down to verse 10 and it says: *"let it be made known to all of you and to all the people of Israel—"* Addressing all the people of Israel through Israel's representatives. *"...that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene,"* The name Jesus is a big deal. You'll see that in verse 12: *"for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."* And it's kind of interesting in our culture, there's kind of a lot of God talk, spiritual talk. People talk about God all the time. You know, the Man upstairs, whatever. We'll interject the name Jesus into the conversation.

And you'll see really fast, that's a game changer. I mean, just say the word Jesus. Not in a cussing sense, obviously, but talk about your relationship not to God, but to Jesus, and you'll get people's attention because there is power in the name of Jesus. *"Let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene,"* Look at this, *"whom you crucified,"* Speaking to the leadership of the nation. *"whom God raised from the dead--"* Double whammy. Slap number one, you killed your own messiah. Slap number two, the doctrine of resurrection, which you guys don't believe in, is true. Acts 2:23, he said something real similar to the Israelis. He said: *"this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."* Well, who killed Jesus? The predetermined foreknowledge of God or the Jews that killed Him? The answer is yes. It's both. God used their decision to accomplish His predetermined plan. You say, well, how can God do that? Well, He's God. He pulls stuff like that off all the time. He uses the free will decisions of His enemies to accomplish His own will. People say, well, do you believe in divine foreknowledge or do you believe in free will? The answer is yes. They're both there. I mean, God is so big that He can take a Christ rejecting decision and use it to execute His grand plan of the ages.

That's why when you're in heaven with the Lord and He starts to unfold all this stuff to you, the only thing you're going to be able to do is just praise the Lord. Because only God can pull this off. This is the kind of thing that Peter is addressing. And he gets back to resurrection, which he did in Acts 2:24 and Acts 3:15 as I mentioned earlier. Something that the Sadducees don't even believe in. No wonder the church is at odds with the national authorities. End of verse 10 says: *"but by this name this man--"* What

man? The lame man who was right there in prison with them. *"By this name this man stands here before you in good health."* So don't say Satan did this. Satan did not do this. This was done-- and the apostles are very careful-- not by us. We're just human instruments. This was done by Jesus. The same miracles He was doing on the earth, He's doing them now from the Father's right hand in His present session. His high priestly ministry. And now Peter gets into the subject of Israel's rejection of her Messiah. Verse 11: *"He is the stone,"* Peter here speaking to the Jewish leaders. An ignorant and untrained fisherman, and the Holy Spirit is surfacing in his mind at the immediate point of need Scripture after Scripture after scripture that deals with the situation that he's in.

So, you can prepare yourself ahead of time all you want. But only the Holy Spirit is going to help you in this kind of situation. You can prepare yourself by knowing the Bible, but it's up to the Holy Spirit to surface in your mind the scriptures that you need at the specific point in which you need them. That's what's happening here with Peter. In fact, he's so effective at this, they're just marveling. This guy never went to a Sadducee school. How does he know all this stuff? So, verse 11, he says: *"He (Jesus) is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief cornerstone."* This is Psalm 118:22. He is paraphrasing it and applying it to Israel's leaders. The stone is Jesus. The builders are Israel's leaders. The rejection is Israel's leadership rejecting Jesus Christ, which happened in Matthew 12:24 where the leadership attributed Christ's miracles to the devil which is the whole turning point in Matthew's gospel, as we have as we have studied. And then who's the cornerstone? The cornerstone is the resurrected and ascended Jesus Christ. In fact, Paul the Apostle in the book of Ephesians later written, of course-- we don't even have Paul's conversion yet-- talked about the church and how the church is built. Ephesians 2:20 says: *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.* They're the foundation that God put into the ground floor of the church using this temple metaphor.

I was joking with some good people up here earlier about people claiming to be apostles. And I usually say, wow, you sure look good for your age because you should be 2000 years old right now because you're like the foundation of the church. A little sarcasm, sorry. But the chief cornerstone is Jesus. When a temple or a building is put in, the very first stone that's put in is the cornerstone. The cornerstone is used to measure all the other stones. How do you know if all the other stones are the right distance? You measure them by the cornerstone. So, the cornerstone goes in first.

Then the foundation stones-- apostles and prophets. And then God has been building the church on this foundation for the last 2000 years. And that's what Peter is talking about now. Fortunately, Psalm 118:22 is followed by Psalm 118:26 which says: *Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord*; Referring to Israel's future conversion. So yes, in the first century they rejected Him. Psalm 118:22 was fulfilled. But don't think based on that, that God is through with national Israel. The day is going to come when they will embrace Him. Matthew 23:37-39 talks about that. And then let's close here with verse 12, end of Peter's speech here to the leaders: *"And there is salvation in no one else."* Wow, talk about controversial.

"...for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." Notice the name of Jesus, the exclusiveness of Jesus. Salvation is found in no one else. John 14:6, Jesus said: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the father but through me."* First Timothy 2:5 says: *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* Do not waste your time praying to Mary or the saints. They have no power to help you or listen to you because they're not the God Man. Only the God Man can bridge the gap between God and man. And there's only one of those. Matthew 7:13-14: *"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it."* You want to talk about something that America needs to hear right now? Galatians 2:21, Paul says: *"I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."* In other words, if there's another way, I mean, if there are many paths to God, why did Jesus have to die on the cross? It was a waste of His time.

It's one of the greatest statements on exclusivity that you have in the whole Bible. Acts 4:12, As Peter is speaking to the leadership. Notice the word "must." The name of Jesus *"by which we must be saved."* See the little particle there in brackets? *Dei*, I think, is how you say that in Greek. Look at how that's used in Luke 4:43: *But he said to them, "I **must** preach the kingdom of God to the other cities, for I was sent for this purpose."* Luke 24:44: *Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms **must** be fulfilled."* That's the same word that's used in Acts 4:12: *"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name--"* You got to

hear the name Jesus. Greek, Jesus. Hebrew, Yeshua. *"For there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."* Why am I emphasizing this? Because there is a doctrine called inclusivism which teaches you can be saved through your own path without Jesus or His name, as long as you're sincere. Oprah Winfrey theology.

Sadly, Oprah Winfrey theology has found its way into some of the biggest names in evangelicalism. And I was hoping to read some of those quotes tonight, but I can't because I'm six minutes over. I'll try to do some of that next week. So, we have the apostles arrested and the apostles examined.