

Acts 026

The Exclusiveness of Christ

Acts 4:13-22

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Acts 4:12. We're continuing our verse-by-verse study through the book of Acts. And we've seen the apostles arrested were in Acts 4. And then we've seen the apostles examined by the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin-- that was the Jewish ruling body-- is upset because here are these unlearned and untrained fishermen teaching doctrine. Particularly doctrine that they didn't like, like resurrection. And then healing people. So, this is really the first formal persecution that comes against the church. And so, they take Peter and John and the man that was healed after forty years being in a lame condition, and they imprison them. And they ask him a series of questions. And this gives Peter, verses 8 through 12 of Acts 4 an opportunity to, for the first time, address the Jewish nation. And what I mean by the Jewish nation is the Jewish leadership. So, he's speaking in Acts 2, but not to the leadership. Peter is speaking in Acts 3, but not to the formal leadership. Here, he has an opportunity to speak directly to the leaders of the nation of Israel. Verses 8 through 12. And that whole speech that he does ends with the proclamation that Jesus is the only way of salvation. So, Peter says there in Acts 4:12, *"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."*

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)

And that's where we ended last time. And I felt just a little bit rushed towards the end. I don't know if I communicated everything that needs to be communicated about

this. But the main point is, that verse right there is amongst a few others-- John 14:6, 1 Timothy chapter 2:5, Galatians 2:21, and Matthew 7:13-14. I gave you those last time. That verse really is amongst those other ones I gave you as the big five, I'll call them. Demonstrating that you can't be saved through anyone other than Jesus. So, salvation doesn't happen just because people are out seeking God. I mean, they have to have an encounter with Jesus. It has to be the right Jesus with the right name. And if that doesn't happen, you can't be saved. I mean, that text, that text there is crystal clear. Now, the reason this is a big deal is because in our age-- Well, even before I get to that, focus just for a minute on the word "must." *"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we **must** be saved."* Next to the word "must" in brackets I give you the Greek phrase for that word must. And when you track that same Greek phrase through Luke and Acts-- remember Luke wrote a prequel and a sequel.

The prequel is the Gospel of Luke. The sequel is the Book of Acts. When you track that phrase through Luke's writings, you'll see that that phrase means 100% essential. So, it's not optional. *"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we **must**--"* 100% essential *"--be saved."* So let me just give you a few examples of how that word is used in Luke's writings. And Luke is using the phrase in Acts 4:12 the same way he uses it almost everywhere else-- you have to come to God through Jesus Christ or you can't come. So, in Luke 4:43 it says, recording the words of Christ: *But he said to them, "I **must**--"* Jesus speaking, *"preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose."* So, I've got to proclaim truth. This is My purpose and it's absolutely essential that I do it. 100%. Same Greek word translated as must. In Luke 24:44, Jesus on the Emmaus Road is speaking of Himself as the fulfillment of Old Testament, then called Hebrew Bible. It says: *Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was with you, that all things which are written about Me--"* And here He gives the major divisions of Hebrew Bible-- *"in the law of Moses (Torah) and the prophets (Nevi'im) and the Psalms (The Writings)"* So, it's Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim. TNK. That's where we get the word Tanakh, TNK, to describe the totality of Hebrew Bible. So, He says, *"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**--"* There's our word, *"be fulfilled."* So, Jesus says, My life *must*, 100% essential, be a fulfillment of Tanach. No wiggle room. So, if must means

absolutely essential in Luke 24:44, if must means absolutely essential in Luke 4:43, then that's what it means in Acts 4:12. *"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we **must**,"* absolutely essential 100%, in other words, *"be saved."* This is a big deal today because of the spirit of the age that we're living in, where what people want you to believe or what they're pressuring you to say or believe is basically, 'Everybody is right whether you come to God through Jesus or not, it really doesn't matter as long as you're sincere.' But you see, your Bible will not allow you to believe that if you take it for what it says.

And I believe this becomes one of the reasons why we as the church are going to be put under persecution. This issue that I'm talking about here. The world says there's many ways to God. The Bible says there's one way to God. So, the spirit of the age is constantly exerting pressure on us. We're moving into what I call Oprah Winfrey theology. There's a doctrine out there called inclusivism. What I'm talking about here is exclusivism. There's a doctrine out there called inclusivism, where as long as long as you're seeking God to the best of your ability--- you could be a Muslim doing it, you could be a Buddhist doing it. You know, you could be a whatever, and you don't have to necessarily know the name Jesus as long as you're trying your hardest. Then you're in. That's inclusivism. So, Oprah, and you can find this on YouTube. This is a clip that goes back a few years, but she's interacting with a member of her studio audience who is obviously a Bible believer saying that Jesus is the only way to heaven. Oprah says, "...one of the mistakes that human beings make is believing that there is only one way..." She says, "[There are] many, many paths to what you call," speaking to her audience member, "to what you call God...It doesn't matter whether she called it 'God' along the way or not...There couldn't possibly be just one way. There couldn't possibly be only one way with millions of people in the world!" Her number is off of course, there's not millions of people in the world. There's billions of people in the world. And then they pose this hypothetical. "You lived for the same purpose as Jesus..." It's all about love. "...but [what if] you're in some remote part of the earth and you never heard the name Jesus? [Are you telling me] You cannot get to Heaven..." Well, I'm not, I'm not telling you you can't get to heaven. The Bible is telling you you can't get to heaven. And it's not as if God doesn't care about people that have never heard the name Jesus. Because God has already revealed Himself in creation and conscience. And if a person really wants to know the truth-- and there's two examples of this in the book of Acts.

God sends them the name Jesus. It happens in Acts 8 with the Ethiopian eunuch and Philip. It happens in Acts 10 with Peter and Cornelius. It's not like God doesn't love everybody and doesn't want everybody saved. But that doesn't mean He just lets people into heaven if they're seeking some kind of spiritual light, as they call it, whether it mentions Jesus or not. Inclusivism teaches that. The Bible does not teach that.

So, you might be looking at that and saying, well, that's just Oprah. I mean, who cares what she thinks? She's pagan. Of course, she would say something like that. What's troubling is when it finds its way into evangelical thought. That's where it becomes a problem. Tony Evans, who you can hear on the radio, has a lot of great things to say. I agree with him, probably, I don't know, 99% of what he says is very good. But having said that, he published a book. The title of the book is called *Totally Saved Understanding, Experiencing, and Enjoying the Greatness of Your Salvation*. It's a book that goes back to 2002. So, what I'm giving you here is not tabloid news. I mean, this has been part of the written record, you know, for over two decades. And in this particular book, he's talking towards the end, pages 355 and 359 about people in some remote part of the world that have never heard the name Jesus. And he's basically saying, those people can be saved, whether they know the name Jesus or not. I mean, I could read this whole quote to you, but I'll just read to you what I think is the most relevant portion. He says, "I call this trans dispensationalism." Tony Evans is a dispensationalist. He's a Dallas seminary grad, et cetera. You know, I like Tony Evans personally. But when he starts talking about trans-dispensationalism, he's talking about how the Old Testament Abraham, for example was saved, although he didn't know the name Jesus. Well, the reason Abraham was saved because he didn't know, although he didn't know the name Jesus, is because Jesus wouldn't show up for 2000 years. But he's saying if Abraham could be saved without knowing the name Jesus, then today, people in some remote part of the earth that don't know the name Jesus, they can be saved. He's calling that trans-dispensationalism, which doesn't take into account progress of revelation. Now we have a full canon where the name of Jesus is clearly known and available. So, God holds us to the standard of a complete canon. He did not hold Abraham to that standard because the complete canon didn't exist yet, and the Messiah was in the distant future. We're not in the same position Abraham was in because unlike Abraham, we have a completed work of Jesus and we have a completed New Testament canon. So, he's mixing categories here that should not be mixed. He says, "By this I mean, if a person is sincerely seeking God and desiring to

know Him, and is responding to the truth he knows, if there is no missionary or direct manifestation of God, then God judges that person based on his faith in the light he has received." And what he's opening the door to is the salvation of people in our time period that don't know the name Jesus Christ.

And he's trying to develop that from something that happened in the Old Testament. That statement there is heretical. As much as people like him, enjoy him, appreciate a lot of things he's taught, including myself. What he is saying there is heretical. It goes directly against what the Apostle Peter taught in the passage that we're looking at now, Acts 4:12. And with Tony Evans, it's not misspeaking because I've misspoke. You know, in the heat of the moment you can mangle a few syllables, you know, so to speak. And you can say something you didn't really mean, and you have to come back later and sort of correct it. But when you write it down, that's different. Because you're deliberately reflecting on your words. This is obviously going through-- it's a published book from Moody, a well-known Bible publisher. It's going through editors, and they still left the statement in there. So, you can't just say, well, he misspoke. Because it's in written form. It's now published. Here is an interview. You can catch this on YouTube if you're interested. It's with Robert Schuller. I grew up, maybe ten minutes from his church. I used to drive by right on the freeway constantly. That giant church made of glass, the Crystal Cathedral. He had a television program called the Hour of Power.

Just to give you this story, I used to be a courier for a law firm, believe it or not. Which is a joke because I have no sense of direction. I don't know why I ended up being a courier other than to get lost all the time. And this was before Google Maps, and this was when we used to have something called Thomas Brothers. You guys ever heard of that? Where you had to actually pull out a map and look at it? I'm trying to explain this to my daughter that we used to do this, and it's like she thinks I'm from the Ice Age or something, you know? But I was driving this car, limousine, and I had one of the partners of the law firm's mother in the back seat. She saw my Bible in the front seat, and she was Jewish to the core. And she just starts going on and on about the Crystal Cathedral and what a great place it is. And how she goes there, and she feels, you know, spiritual. And boy, what a show they put on and their choir. And boy, you should see what they do for Christmas and all that. And so, I finally said to her, knowing she was Jewish, I go, well, do they mention the name Jesus at that church? Because it was

really odd to me that a Jewish person that doesn't know the name Christ-- not that a Jewish person can't be saved, but I felt that she was not saved-- would go to a Protestant church like that and feel right at home.

And I said, well, do they mention the name Jesus there? And she said, "Well, not per se" was her quote back to me? "Not per se." But what a place. I mean, the choir and the orchestra and the lighting and the feelings I get. So that's who Robert Schuller is. And Robert Schuller is interviewing here, Billy Graham who is a man that God has used. I'm not denying that. I mean, my own mother was saved at a Billy Graham crusade at Anaheim, Angel Stadium. I think it was in the 1980s. So, I've had people in my family, my own mom, become a born-again believer through Billy Graham's influence. But notice this interview with Schuller and Graham.

Schuller in this interview says: "Tell me, what is the future of Christianity?"

Billy Graham says, "Well, Christianity and being a true believer, you know, I think that's the body of Christ which comes from all the Christian groups around the world, or outside the Christian groups. I think that everybody that loves Christ or knows Christ," watch this now, "whether they are conscious of it or not, They're members of the body of Christ. And I don't think we're going to see a great, sweeping revival that will turn the whole world to Christ at any time...and that's what God is doing today. He is calling people out of the world by his name. Whether they come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, or the non-believing world..."

He's not talking about people getting saved out of those groups. He's talking about people seeking God in those groups without the name Jesus. That's what he's talking about. "...they are members of the Body of Christ because they have been called by God." Now look at this. "They may not even know the name Jesus," That's exactly what Oprah said. And it's very similar to what Tony Evans says. "...but they know in their hearts that they need something that they don't have and they turn to the only light that they have and I think they're saved and they're going to be with us in heaven." Now, Schuller could hardly control himself when he got the world's greatest evangelist to cough this up on his television program.

Schuller says: "This is fantastic. I'm so thrilled to hear you say that. There's a wideness in God's mercy."

And Billy Graham comes back and says: "There is."

So, here's the issue: Why devote yourself, your life to being an evangelist as Billy Graham has done if people are in any way, whether they know the name Jesus or not? I mean, why go to the trouble? And this is the kind of thing that we monitor with our supported missionaries from Sugar Land Bible Church. They have to fill out a questionnaire regularly to continue to receive money from Sugar Land Bible Church because missionaries, for whatever reason, have a tendency to drift into this sort of inclusivist doctrine. So, if this is true, what it does is it throws a wet blanket on missionary work. There is no incentive to devote your life to being a missionary, to learning another culture, or translating the Bible from Greek and Hebrew into some dialect that doesn't have this book if everybody's saved anyway. You know, regardless of whether they know the name Jesus or not. So that's why that Acts 4:12 passage is huge. So, with all of that being said, after the apostles are examined, now the Sanhedrin, verses 13 through 22, renders a decision on what they're going to do with these apostles that are teaching things that the Sanhedrin doesn't agree with, and going around and healing people. What are we going to do with these troublemakers? So you have an observation, verses 13 and 14. A private council meeting amongst the Sanhedrin members, verses 15 and 16. They render an actual decision, verses 17 and 18. And then the apostles respond, verses 19 and 20.

III. Sanhedrin's Decision Acts 4:13-22

- I. Observation (13-14)
- II. Private counsel (15-16)
- III. Decision (17-18)
- IV. Apostles' response (19-20)
- V. Sanhedrin's response (21-22)

And that's where you start getting into things like, when is it acceptable for a Christian to tell the governing authorities "No"? And then the Sanhedrin gives a response, verses 21 and 22, through future threats. So, notice, first of all, some observations that are made. First of all, you have observations from the apostles. I should say observations about the apostles by the Sanhedrin.

And so, we pick it up there in verse 13: *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, the first

thing to notice about these apostles, verse 13, is their confidence. Second Timothy 1:7 says, *For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and self-discipline.* I know that when God is calling me to do something and I'm afraid to do it, I know that those emotions of fear are not coming from Him. They're either coming from the realm of the world system or Satan and the demonic, or my own sin nature. Because God has not given us a spirit of timidity or fear. So that's why when you're afraid, we have to learn the discipline of saying no to emotion and doing what God said we should do. And as we step out, God gives us the courage or the bravery to do it. And Peter and John-- Peter is the more prominent of the two right now in terms of ministry role. This is a guy that denied the Lord three times. And also, was intimidated by a servant girl as you study those denials. And now, as this man is filled with the Spirit, depending upon the Spirit, you see a courage in him and a boldness in him that you don't find in the Gospels.

And what happened is something bigger than Peter is now controlling Peter. And that's the Spirit of God. And so, the Sanhedrin, as they're looking at these apostles who are imprisoned, they're taking notice of that. And they also notice that these two-- oh, really quick, you'll notice that both Peter and John are involved, but Luke focuses on Peter and not John. Why? Because one of the key themes in the book of Acts is the transition from Peter to Paul. So, John is not given as much airtime as Peter is. It's not that John wasn't saying anything, but Luke is more interested in recording what Peter was saying because of his major theme that he's been tracing. You can go back and listen to our introduction to Acts 2 to pick up on that theme if you're interested. So, there's a transition from Peter to Paul. Acts 1 through 12, Peter seems to be the main man. Acts 13 through 28, Paul seems to be the main man. In fact, many of the miracles that Paul does later in the book are recapitulations of miracles already done by Peter. But he says here, verse 13, *...and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men...* which is exactly what they said about Jesus in John 7:15. Says of Jesus, *The Jews then were astonished, saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?"* I mean, this is just a carpenter's son, and yet He speaks with such accuracy and authority. When Jesus finished the sermon on the Mount, which is given in Matthew 5 through 7, it says something there that's very interesting. Matthew 7:28 says, *When Jesus had finished these words-- the sermon on the Mount-- the crowds were amazed at His teaching for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.* See the scribes all quoted each other. Rabbi so-and-so says this.

Rabbi so-and-so says that. Jesus says, thus saith the Lord. I'm the Lord of the Sabbath. I'm not going to get into a rabbinical debate about the Sabbath. I'm the one that gave the Sabbath. And people were amazed that He taught that way having no, what the world system would call, an education. I mean, what Pharisee school did you go to, Jesus? Hey, Peter, what Sadducee school did you go to? The word "uneducated" in Greek is a- that's a negation, *-grammatos*, where we get the word grammar. Untrained in the rabbinical schools. And it doesn't just say untrained. It says-- well, uneducated, that's *agrammatos*. But untrained is *idiotes*. Where you get the idea of an idiot. Um, it literally means one's own. An idiot, someone who's just in their own world. That's what, that's what these Sadducee Sanhedrin members are calling the disciples. Now just because it says this in the Bible, a lot of people take that to mean, well, I guess I don't have to study the Bible because God uses the ignorant and the untrained.

No, because Paul, writing to Timothy, says: [2 Timothy 2:15] *Be diligent to present yourself approved of God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth*. A person of God always needs to be a student, a studier, a scholar, so to speak. A scholar, basically, what that means is a man of leisure. Where they're sort of through their tenure or whatever, unencumbered with making a living, because they have tenure through the school, which devotes themselves to the field of study. In a certain sense, you know, all of us are called to be students, depending on where God has us. But you shouldn't think that God can't use you if you didn't graduate from school A, B, C, or D. Because Peter and Jesus never went to these schools, and yet God was using them. And in fact, it's probably because they didn't go to those schools that God was using them, because if they had gone to Sadducee school, they would have come out as little Sadducees. If they had gone to Pharisee school, they would have come out as little Pharisees, and Jesus would not have taught the way He taught. But the Sanhedrin is noticing this. How can these, how can these guys teach with such power? They understood that they were uneducated and untrained. And then it says they were amazed and began to recognize them as being as having been with Jesus.

They said, we saw you guys earlier. You were with Jesus of Nazareth. We've seen you with Him before. That's what they start to figure out. They start to figure out the source of their authority is not their education, but it's their connection to Jesus. And that in the upper room is exactly what Jesus said would happen. He said to them in the

upper room, [John 15:5] *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."* John 15:8, *"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove yourselves to be My disciples."* So, our task is simply to abide as branches in the vine-- Jesus, stay in fellowship with Him. And as we stay in fellowship with Him, what we discover is we start bearing fruit. It kind of is fruit that comes spontaneously and organically and unplanned. And it seems unplanned to us because it's not our fruit. It's His fruit. He's just expressing Himself through us. And so that's what the Sanhedrin is recognizing about these disciples. The Greek reads: They marveled and kept on marveling at this. And then the Sanhedrin makes an observation about the lame man who's also under arrest. I mean, think about that. Forty years, you have no ability to use your legs. Now you have them, and the first thing they do is they throw you in jail. So now you can walk, but you're in prison. And so, they look at this lame man-- and the reason they locked him up along with Peter and John is they didn't want news spreading everywhere that this guy is the same guy that had no use of his legs, that used to beg in the temple area. But it says in verse 14, *And seeing the man who had been healed standing--* He wasn't standing before. *--standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply.* So, he's not sitting down and taking it easy. He's standing up. Hey, I haven't used my legs in forty years. You think I'm going to sit down? Are you crazy? And the way the Greek reads is: they kept on having nothing to say. I mean, how do you argue against that? It's an obvious miracle. So, then the Sanhedrin says, okay, private meeting, verses 15 and 16. Verse 15, it says: *But when they had ordered them to leave the Council--* So you guys go somewhere else. We need to make a decision. *...ordered them to leave, verse 15, they began to confer with one another,* And you look at verse 16 and it says: *"What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it."* This is an undeniable miracle, and everybody who knows this guy knows it's a miracle.

And we don't want this to spread too far. So, let's lock this guy up fast. So, the Sanhedrin is sort of at a loss concerning what to do. So, they make a decision, verses 17 and 18. What's the goal of the decision? Verse 17, *"But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name."* Notice the first part of verse 17. *"So that it will not spread any further among the people."* You guys are super spreaders, I guess. Don't spread that stuff. You're super spreaders, so we don't want the truth about the miracle that's happened spreading. Now

verse 17 actually is a big deal. The second part of it, it says, "...let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name." Notice how they refer to Jesus. They don't use the name Jesus. Peter used the word Jesus, did he not? Back in verse 12. Actually, not the name Jesus, but he used the name in reference to Jesus. *"There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."* They don't like the name Jesus. So, they say, don't speak any more in this name. The Greek reads "that man."

You know when you don't like somebody, you just don't acknowledge their full name? You just call them, Oh, what's her name or what's his name? Or you know, that name, but they didn't want to actually use the name Jesus. That didn't even want to mention His name, because the name Jesus is a big deal, right? Philippians 2:9-11: *For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Arnold Fruchtenbaum, concerning the name Jesus that Peter emphasized in verse 12 that the Pharisees won't utter in verse 17. Arnold Fruchtenbaum says this:

"One should note the contemptuous use of the phrase 'in this name,' [Verse 17] for the religious leaders did not even want to say the name 'Yeshua.' [Yeshua is His Hebrew name. Jesus is His Greek name.] Rabbinic writings often refer to Yeshua as 'that man.'" Oh, what's his name? They won't say his name, though. "...In Matthew 27:63, the Pharisees called Yeshua 'that deceiver,' As was typical in Pharisaic Judaism. When the rabbis had an issue with someone, they substituted an epithet, title, or derogatory term for that person's proper name. Even today, *Yeshua* is still called *Yeshu*, which in Hebrew forms a three-letter acronym meaning 'May his name and memory be blotted out.' He is also referred to as *Ha-Ish Ha-Hu*, meaning, 'that man' and *Ha-Taloui--*" I think, is how you pronounce that, "--meaning 'the hanged one.'"

So even today, the Jews really don't like to use the name Jesus. They just refer to Him as the Nazarene or the Hanged One or the rebel. And that's what they're doing here. They want they don't even want to mention His name, even though Peter just told them as he spoke to the Sanhedrin. For there is no other name under heaven by which we **must**, we must be saved. So, this goal of: we don't want this spreading around, is

now followed by a command as the Sanhedrin is making their decision. It says in verse 18: *And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.* So, they called them back in the room and they said, don't speak or teach in His name. They put a gag order on him. Now boy, if someone told me I couldn't speak or teach in the name of Jesus, I'm thinking, what would I do with the rest of my life? Because that's all I do. I mean, I study and teach, study, teach, study, teach. It's a privilege to do it, and it's something that God wants done. So obviously if it's something God wants done, Satan wants to shut it up, right?

Dan Wallace, who I don't agree with on everything, but I think he makes a good comment here. Dallas Seminary Greek professor says: "By my count--" he's talking about 2 Timothy, which is telling a pastor how to be a pastor. He says: "By my count, there are twenty-seven explicit commands given in the body of this letter. In 27 words, Paul tells pastors what to focus on. You have to be blind to miss the thrust of Paul's instructions here, because 18 of those commands, fully two thirds, have to do with the ministry of the Word." So, my primary function is basically the ministry of the word. That's Sugar Land Bible Church. People find a pastor and they want to convert him into something else usually. You know, be Mr. Hospitality. Be Mr. Visitation. Be Mr. CEO. A lot of pastors kind of function like cruise directors. We're having shuffleboard today on the Lido deck, know kind of thing. Keep everybody active. Keep everybody running around. But the truth of the matter is, what a pastor is supposed to be doing is he's supposed to be studying and teaching the Bible. That's his basic function according to God. You know, we have a body here of elders and deacons that help with a lot of the other responsibilities. I do some of those things also, but my primary job is to be a Bible student and Bible teacher. And when you read Second Timothy, which should have some priority in our thinking on this-- it's written by Paul to a pastor. Telling a pastor how to be a pastor and two-thirds of the commands, imperatives deal with the ministry of the word.

So, if that's what God wants done, Satan is always trying to derail that. In fact, you'll see in Acts 6, if and when we ever get there, the church trying to move the apostles away from that ministry and get them involved in other things. Service projects. And that's where God raises up the office of deacon, to take that responsibility away from the apostles so they can continue to give themselves to the ministry of prayer and the word. And that's why the church kept growing. If the apostles had gotten off their

task and been derailed, Christianity could have been shut down. So that's an internal attack taking place against the role of teaching. What you're seeing here is an external attack where they say they put a gag order on them. So that's the Sanhedrin's decision. Gag order. And then the apostles respond, verses 19 and 20. You have a rhetorical question, verse 19. And a commitment, verse 20. Notice the rhetorical question because it's sort of sarcastic. A rhetorical question is a question for the benefit of the person you're talking to. It's not designed to elicit information. It's like when I come into my house, and I leave the door open. And my wife says-- who sees the door open, by the way-- "Did you leave the door open?" Now she's not looking for an answer to the question because she knows the answer. The door is open. Rhetorical questions are a polite way of saying: Dummy, you know, close the door. That's what a rhetorical question is. So here come the apostles responding to this gag order with a rhetorical question. [Acts 4:19] *But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge."* Gee, what do you think we ought to do here, Sanhedrin members? Obey God or obey you? You figure it out. And the obvious answer is they're going to obey God. This is going to get developed in the next chapter when Peter will say, in another circumstance: "**We must--**" there's your must again. Essential. "**We must obey God rather than man.**" And so, what you see the door being opened up to here is civil disobedience. You have examples in the Bible where the authorities go too far. In this case, don't teach, which is something that God told him to do and told us to do. And the apostles tell the government no.

One of the places in the Bible where you start to see this is in the book of Daniel, where the nation of Israel is not in Israel anymore. They've been transported 350 miles to the east, to a place called Babylon. Modern-day Iraq. So, they're living outside their land in enemy pagan territory, or they're now having to face something that they never had to face before as a nation. Gentile nations telling them to not do things that God says to do, or to do things that God says don't do. And there are two chapters in the Book of Daniel that reveal this civil disobedience. Daniel 2 through 7 is all written in Aramaic. It's not written in Hebrew. So, it's one of the few sections of Hebrew Old Testament, I should say, that are written in Aramaic. And people believe, myself included, that this forms what's called a chiasm, which comes from the Greek letter *chi*, which looks like an X. And it's a literary pattern where the outer edges of the chiasm talk about the same thing. And as you move inward, the inner edges talk about the same

thing. And as you move further inward, these two areas talk about the same thing. And the point of the chasm is in the center.

Daniel Outline

- 1. Gentile History (2)
 - 2. Protection (3)
 - 3. Revelation to a gentile king (4)
 - 3. Revelation to a gentile king (5)
 - 2. Protection (6)
- 1. Gentile history (7)

So, the information in chapter 2 is repeated in chapter 7. Not robotically, but the basic content is repeated. The information in chapter 3 is repeated in chapter 6. The information in chapter 4 is repeated in chapter 5. Two through 7, Gentile history through prophecy. Times of the Gentiles. Three and 6, Civil disobedience. Chapter 3 is Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who were told to fall down and worship a graven image that Nebuchadnezzar had built, and they said no. Daniel 6, Daniel is told to quit praying publicly. So, what did Daniel do? He went out and opened his windows facing Jerusalem and prayed publicly. And then chapters 4 and 5 are dealing with the revelation of God to a Gentile king, Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4, and a man named Belshazzar in chapter 5. So, Daniel 3 and Daniel 6 are talking about civil disobedience. The same kind of civil disobedience that we're seeing right here. I have four criteria that have to be met before a Christian can say no to the state. Because we believe God ordained the state. Government exists because of God. Paul says that in Romans 13:1-7. We're supposed to submit to the government, respect the government, pay taxes. But I'm here to tell you folks that Romans 13 has been misunderstood as some kind of blind submission to the government, no matter what the government says. And that's not what your Bible says. Because you're seeing examples in Daniel and Acts 4 of very clear civil disobedience. So, what are the four criteria? 1) There has to be a clear contradiction between what God says to do and what man says to do. It's got to be crystal clear. The Persians told Daniel, don't pray. But God said to pray. The Babylonians, Nebuchadnezzar told Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to worship a graven image. Well, we can't do that. Because that would violate the first two commandments of the Decalogue.

No gods before me, God says. And no graven images. So that's what I mean by a clear-cut contradiction between what God says and what man says. 2) You have to try to exhaust all creative legal remedies. Meaning that civil disobedience is not the first option. It's the last option. You do it when nothing else will appease the state. 3) As we engage in civil disobedience, we maintain a respectful attitude towards governing authorities. We're not like Black Lives Matter and these groups that go around and do arson. We're not part of the defund the police movement. We always refer to government officials in a respectful way, even when we disobey. Now you'll see that in Daniel 3, because Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are telling Nebuchadnezzar no, but they keep respectfully referring to him as oh king, oh king, live forever! Not, Nebuchadnezzar, you loser. You're illegitimate. I want to recount. All this kind of stuff. They're still respectful towards Nebuchadnezzar. And 4) I'll tell you this much, if you want to say no to the state, and the Bible opens the door for that in certain circumstances, then you have to be willing to pay the price. Do you remember what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said as they were being thrown into that fiery furnace? Um, I think it's in verse 17. *"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand..."* Daniel 3:17.

But even if he does not. Maybe God will deliver me. Maybe He won't. But I'm willing to pay the price. See that? There's no guarantee that God shows up with deliverance. [Dan 3:18] *"But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king--"* See the respectful dialogue here? *"--that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."* So, a clear cut distinction. You exhaust all creative legal remedies. You maintain an attitude of respect as you say no to the state. And you have to be willing to pay the price. Whatever temporal price is going to be paid, you've got to be willing to pay it. And one of the reasons that Peter and John are telling the Sanhedrin no here is because they have a prior commitment, and it's in Acts 4:20. *"For we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."* I mean, didn't Jesus tell them that you'll be my witnesses at the beginning of the book? Acts 1:8 *"...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."* So, if they stop speaking or teaching in the name of Jesus they cannot be His witnesses anymore. That's why they're saying no to the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin then makes a decision.

That decision is given there in verse 21: *When they had threatened them further, they let them go*-- Now they didn't know they were going to be let go any more than Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego didn't know that the fourth man was going to show up in the fire. *When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened*; So, they threatened them with future punishment. This is the first formal governmental opposition against-- It's not even called Christianity yet. We don't even get the name Christian until Acts 11, what we would call the church-- the way as it's going to be called very early. Verse 21, they had to let them go because no law had been broken. And they had to let them go because the people were praising God. And the Greek reads, they kept on glorifying God. And then as they're letting them go, there's one observation they make about the lame man who is incarcerated with Peter and John as well. And it's there in verse 22: *for the man was more than forty years old*-- I may have said thirty-eight years in a prior study. That's wrong. It's forty years he'd been without his legs from birth. And he was forty years old. ...*for the man was more than forty years old on whom the miracle of healing had been performed*.

Kind of reminds us-- doesn't this --about Jesus? Didn't Jesus heal someone like this? We know from Acts 2:22 that Jesus was a man of miracles, wonders, and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know. So, anybody that knew anything about Jesus knew that He performed miracles when He was doing His earthly ministry. In fact, the whole Gospel of John is set up to record seven miracles that Jesus performed. Doesn't give all His miracles, but it gives seven of them, with the intent that people might see Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and might believe in His name and have the gift of life. John chronicles seven miracles. There were many more, of course, because John says here and in chapter 21 at the end of the book: If I told you everything that Jesus said or did, the world itself could not contain the books written thereof. So, John isn't telling you everything Jesus did. He's just going to focus on seven signs. Those seven signs are the changing the water to wine, John 2. The healing of the official's son, John 4. The healing of the invalid by the pool, John 5. The feeding of the 5000, John 6. Walking on water, John 6. Healing of the Blind man, John 9. Resuscitating Lazarus from the dead, John 11. And those seven are followed by the ultimate miracle of Jesus, which was His Resurrection.

So, there's actually eight miracles-- actually there's nine. Because remember, at the end of John's gospel? The disciples are out there fishing. We've been out here all night. We haven't caught anything. Well, just throw your net on the other side of the boat. What? What kind of stupid suggestion is that? The Bible doesn't say that, but I'm guessing that's what was going through their minds. We're the professionals. But they sort of do it grudgingly, it looks like. And then there's such a catch of fish they don't even have enough room to in the boat to pull in the catch, and the boat starts to sink. So that would be the ninth miracle. So why are these written? John explains: [Jn 20:30] *Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book*; John says, don't even get me started. I can tell you all kinds of miracles. But I just want to give you seven. [Jn 20:31] *But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name*. So, there's a Christological purpose for the book showing that Jesus is the Son of God. And then there's a soteriological evangelistic purpose of the book to get people to understand who Jesus is and trust Him for salvation so that they might receive the gift of life.

That's why when people come to you and say, yeah, I noticed that at work, you know, you keep reading your Bible.

Are you are you one of those Jesus people?

'Yeah, yeah, I am.'

'Well, I've always wanted to learn the Bible. I don't know much about it. Can you direct me to a part of the Bible I can read?'

Where are you going to send them?

'Well, you need to read the whole book of Leviticus.'

No, you send them to John because John's purpose is salvation. See that? It's written to unsaved people, people that don't have life. An unbeliever reads it and says, wow, Jesus is the Son of God. I better trust Him for my salvation and have eternal life. My point, though, in all of this is the third miracle that Jesus did, the healing of the invalid at the Pool of Bethesda. That was a man who was lame. I think it says there thirty-eight years. Now Jesus has done another miracle from the Father's right hand through Peter and John. He's healed a man who was lame since birth. Forty years.

So, this miracle that just happened here that the Sanhedrin is trying to cancel, wipe off the books, this has the fingerprints of Jesus all over it. This is the kind of stuff

Jesus did when He was on the earth. Now he's just doing it through the apostles. So, the Sanhedrin renders their decision. They let them go. 'Just don't speak anymore about Jesus.' And what do the disciples do? They go to prayer. The first thing they do. That is convicting to me because when I hit a problem, prayer is like the last option. Because I try to figure everything out first in my own strength. Um, and then when nothing else works, I say, well, I guess I better pray. But the disciples had hit a roadblock, and their ability to be witnesses is being threatened by the state. And so, they go to prayer. So, the next time I'm with you, we will pick it up right there in verses 23 through 31.