Acts of the Apostles – 4

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A. The Trial of Peter and John (Acts 4:1-22).
   1. The Rejection of the Resurrection (Acts 4:1-3).
      a. **Sadducees**. A Jewish sect denying spirit and resurrection (Acts 23:28; Matt 22:23).
         1. The High Priest was a member of this liberal sect of Jews (Acts 5:17).
         2. Paul later uses this Jewish doctrinal division to protect himself (Acts 23:6).
         3. John and Jesus rejected both Pharisees and Sadducees (Mat 3:7; 16:12).
      b. Observe that false religions seek to maintain a monopoly on teaching people.
         1. Religious monopolies give refined men position, wealth, and security.
         2. Jesus accused the lawyers of stealing knowledge (Luk 11:52; Mal 2:7).
         3. Truth and knowledge are rare today (II Tim 3:6-9; 4:3-4; I Tim 6:3-5).
         4. Rome, for 1500 years, forbade Bibles to be read and spoke in Latin.
         5. Scripture – inspired and certain – in your hands breaks their monopoly.
         6. Pastors – godly and bold – to guide and defend breaks their monopoly.
      c. They hated the doctrine of the resurrection and the idea Jesus was resurrected.
         1. Weeks earlier they paid great money to keep it under (Matt 28:11-15).
         2. The apostolic message damned their no-resurrection, no-spirit heresy.
         3. The apostolic message brought a nightmare to life (Matt 26:64; 27:25).
      d. How did the most educated, Scriptural, and "godly" men in Israel reject them?
         1. A man lame for over 40 years was healed. The soldiers told of His resurrection. And the apostles gave great interpretation of prophecy.
         2. They were blinded by the Lord of glory (John 12:37-41; I Peter 2:7-8).
      e. They ended this great day of Pentecost in prison after two preaching services.
   2. The Belief of the Resurrection (Acts 4:4).
      a. Many of those who heard the preaching believed it – those ordained (Acts 13:48).
      b. Of course, they would have been baptized also (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Pet 3:21).
      c. If the number of men was 5000, then the total crowd might have been 10,000+.
   3. Peter testifies boldly (Acts 5-12).
      a. They are questioned about the authority of their miracle rather than the power.
      b. Jesus had promised the Spirit to assist their public defenses (Matt 10:16-20).
      c. Note Peter poking at the Jewish leadership for trying them for a "good deed."
      d. We healed this man by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
         1. This is the man Christ Jesus Whom you crucified.

2. This is the man Christ Jesus Whom is alive and well.
3. This is the Stone you dread (Matt 21:42-44; Ps 118:22-23; Is 28:16).
4. There is no other salvation than by Jesus Christ (John 14:6; I Tim 2:5).

4. Political expediency at work (Acts 4:13-18).
    a. It was obvious that Peter and John were not educated. Jesus called fishermen.
    b. They marvelled at their response, as Jesus had said the Spirit would bless them.
    c. They presumed correctly that they had been with Jesus to know this doctrine.
    d. They could not say anything due to the healed man standing beside them.
    e. They hold a committee meeting to determine how to suppress the truth.
    f. What can we do to protect our jobs and destroy the truth in spite of a miracle.
    g. Let us use intimidation to threaten them and hope we silence them this way.
    h. So they commanded them with human authority to not preach Jesus anymore.
5. Peter's bold answer (Acts 4:19-20).
    a. Peter reasons – like an eloquent fisherman – as whether obeying God or man.
    b. We are serving God; we have God's message; and this is clearly God's power.
6. The Jews' foolish ignorance (Acts 4:21-22).
    a. They threatened them but did not punish them, because of public opinion.
    b. They couldn't see the glory and power of the healing miracle. They were blind.

B. An Apostolic Prayer Meeting (Acts 4:23-31).
1. Powerful prayer by holy men (Acts 4:23-30).
    a. The address and praise the God of heaven for His creative power.
    b. They appealed to the Scriptures for prophecies describing their predicament.
    c. They applied the Scriptures to their predicament.
    d. They acknowledged the sovereign government of God over the earth.
    e. They asked for God's mercy and blessing to glorify His Son.
    f. Though God had promised all they needed, they yet prayed for it anyway.
    g. They invoke the unique name of His Son – thy Holy Child Jesus.
2. A powerful answer to powerful prayer (Acts 4:31).
    a. The place was shaken for a visible sign of God's Presence and Power.
    b. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.
    c. They spake the Word of God with boldness as they had requested.

C. Character of Spiritual Saints (Acts 4:32-37).
1. Unity of persons and possessions (Acts 4:32).
    a. They were completely united in heart and soul (I Cor 1:10; Ep 4:1-3; Phil 2:1-2).
    b. They did not selfishly think of their possessions as personal property.

c. They shared their goods as the church had been described earlier.

2. Power and grace resulting from unity (Acts 4:33).
    a. Their prayer was answered with great power by the apostles.
    b. Great grace was upon them from God for their prayer and obedience and unity.
3. Sharing of possessions (Acts 4:34-37).
    a. No one lacked anything. We should not assume luxuries, but rather necessities.
    b. Any member with extra sold his assets and gave to the apostles for distribution.
    c. Luke mentions Barnabas by name as an example of one selling real estate.
        1. Barnabas would become a companion of the apostle Paul (Acts 13:1-3).
4. The giving was done under the control and direction of the apostles.
    a. Ministers know the true needs of the congregation.
    b. Ministers have the proven integrity inherent in their office.