

# THEY CONTINUED TO SPEAK THE WORD

Acts 4:5-31

The healing of a lame man in the Temple caused quite a stir (Acts 3) and led to the arrest of Peter and John (Acts 4:1-4).

## Acts 4:5-22 Peter and John Put on Trial

### Acts 4:5-7 Peter and John Questioned by Sanhedrin

The *Chamber of Hewn Stones* was an imposing room. Defendants were made to look and feel small as they stood before the elevated seat of the High Priest, President of the Sanhedrin.<sup>1</sup> On either side they were flanked by 35 council members staring them down from their tiered seats.

These were the men who led Israel to reject the Messianic claims of Jesus of Nazareth. These were the men who claimed the signs and wonders accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth were empowered by Satan. These were the men who plotted to have Jesus arrested, tried and executed by the Romans. These were the men who terrified and intimidated Peter to deny Jesus and cower in his quarters after the crucifixion.

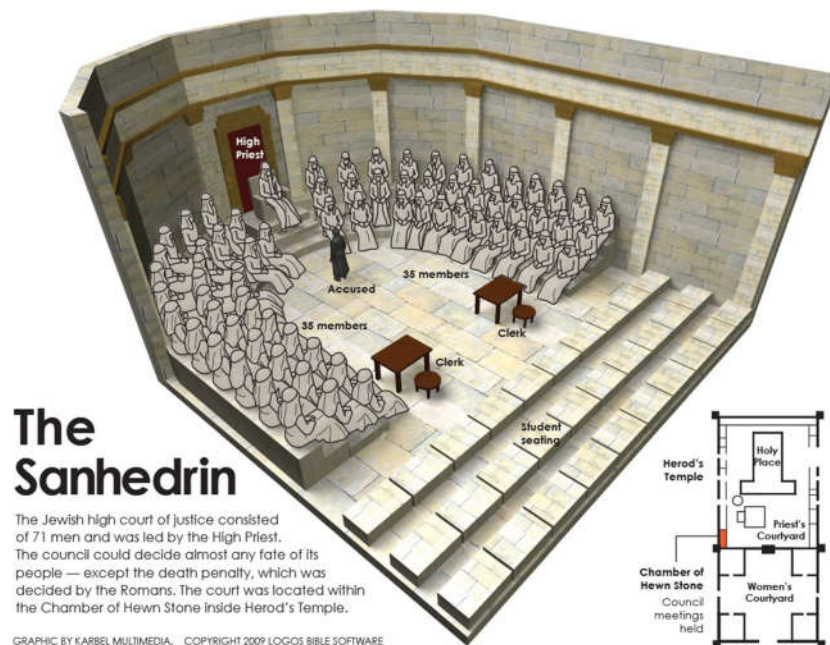
Before them, Peter, John and the healed cripple were summoned to defend the events of the previous day.

By the name and power of Jesus, Peter and John healed this man born lame.

### Acts 4:8-12 Peter Answers

The day before, Peter declared the exact same message to the citizens of Israel. On this day, Peter declared the resurrection of Jesus Christ of Nazareth and the manifestation of Jesus' authority to heal. His hope is that Israel, led by these men, will repent, receive Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah, receive the *times of refreshing* (3:20) and be spared *the day of the Lord* (2:20).

Peter quotes Psalm 118:22. The builders made a huge mistake rejecting the cornerstone which is the key to laying a building's foundation. The rulers of Israel made a huge mistake, they rejected the One Person Who is the key to God's program for Israel. God's program, revealed through the covenants and the words of the Old Testament



<sup>1</sup> The Sanhedrin was the ruling council of Israel containing seventy-one members.

prophets, is to restore the Kingdom to Israel. Jesus is the key to restoring the Kingdom. Jesus is the key to their national/temporal salvation. As a nation, Jesus is the key to delivering them from the Romans and from the coming *day of the Lord* judgment. Jesus is the key to their personal salvation – the forgiveness of their personal sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Peter is confronting the Sanhedrin's catastrophic blunder. Peter could not be any clearer. He is confronting them so they might repent and believe on the only name under heaven by which they and the nation of Israel must be saved. They have a second chance.

### **Acts 4:13-22 Israel's Rulers Double Down in Their Opposition to Jesus**

In the end, the ruling council of Israel, could not rebut Peter's testimony. They could not refute the resurrection of Jesus nor the healing by Jesus' power. Even though the evidence was irrefutable they hardened their hearts in unbelief and doubled down on their opposition to Jesus. All hope for national repentance is lost. That generation of Israel which rejected Jesus of Nazareth will suffer God's judgment. 70AD will come.<sup>2</sup>

### **Acts 4:23-31 The Church Responds to Opposition**

#### **Acts 4:23-28 The Church Was Trained to Expect Opposition**

In prayer the believers quoted part of Psalm 2. Psalm 2 is a Messianic Psalm. The portion they quoted revealed Messiah would be opposed by kings and rulers. This was fulfilled by King Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Romans in general and the rulers and citizens of Israel who rejected Jesus.

Peter and John's arrest and trial before the Sanhedrin is more of the same. Anticipating continued opposition notice that for which the believers in Jerusalem prayed.

#### **Acts 4:29-31 The Church Family Prays for Boldness**

Jewish believers of the Jerusalem Church prayed for boldness and continued opportunities to speak the word of God. The shaking was a sign of divine affirmation of their prayer request.

### **Application**

The fearless response of Peter continues to amaze and witness to the resurrection of Jesus.

The failure of the Sanhedrin to indict Peter and John is further evidence Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. He is the One in Whom we must believe in order to be saved.

When opposed, we, too, should ask for boldness to continue to speak the word of God as did the early believers.

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<sup>2</sup> The Roman invasion and destruction of Israel was completed in 70AD.