



# Bethany Bible Study & Discussion:

Wednesdays  
7.30-8.30PM

## ACTS 4

### First Persecution & Second Pouring of the Holy Spirit

*Some questions to guide your thoughts as you meditate on Acts 4*

1. **First Persecution** (1-7,13-18): Who were the Persecutors? Why were they grieved or deeply disturbed? What is Sanhedrin? What was the verdict?
2. **Peter & John's Response** (8-12, 19-20): What gave them the courage to speak up? What were their messages to the persecutors? What was their bold response to the verdict? Does their response contradict Romans 13:1-2?
3. **Church's Response** (23-30) What did Peter & John do after being released? What was the pattern in prayer? What were their three prayer requests?
4. **God's Response** (31) Were all the prayers answered? Do we face persecution in the US?
5. **Caring church at Jerusalem ... Love in action** (32-37) What does the Lord expect from us today?
6. Important Themes, Important Characters, and Lessons learned (*this is work-in-progress question and we can continue to build the list as we meditate on the book*)

Chapter 4  
June 3, 2020



# Bethany Bible Study & Discussion:

Wednesdays  
7.30-8.30PM

## ACTS 4

### First Persecution & Second Pouring of the Holy Spirit

*Some questions to guide your thoughts as you meditate on Acts 4*

#### 1. **First Persecution** (1-7,13-18):

Who were the Persecutors?

Why were they grieved or deeply disturbed?

What is Sanhedrin?

What was the verdict?

Chapter 4  
June 3, 2020

## First Persecution (1-7,13-18): begins from within

### The Persecutors (1,5-6)

- Sadducees – liberals, did not believe in resurrection, top level authorities
- Priests – responsible for ceremonial activities
- Captain – Temple police
- Annas – high Priest (Jesus taken to Annas, John 18:13,24)
- Caiphas – Son-in-law of Annas, Presided over the trial of Jesus
- John & Alexander
- Rulers, elders, and scribes
- Other members from Priestly Descent

# Why were they grieved or deeply disturbed by Peter and John? (verse 2)

- Peter and John posed a threat to the Temple establishment
  - Their teachings contradicted Teachings of the Temple
  - They testified of the resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ
  - People were being convicted ... Mass conversions

# What is Sanhedrin?

- Jewish court system with final authority on Jewish law
- Anyone going against their ruling could be put to death.
- 71 Members with high Priest with the senior rank

## Deuteronomy 16:18

“You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

## Why 71 Judges?

Numbers 11:16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

# What was the verdict?

- Question (v.7) :  
...by what power or by what name have you done this?  
(Mathew 21:23, Jesus was asked the same question)
- Verdict (v. 18):  
And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

## 2. Peter & John's Response (8-12, 19-20):

- Were Peter & John surprised that they were being persecuted?
- What gave them the courage to speak boldly?
- What were their messages to the persecutors?
- What was their bold response to the verdict?
- Does their response contradict Romans 13:1-2?

## Peter and John not surprised by the Persecution

- Warned by the Lord in Mathew 10:17-20
  - 17“But beware of men, for they will hand you over to *the* courts and scourge you in their synagogues; 18and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19“But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. 20“For it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.



# Source of Peter's boldness and message

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? <sup>8</sup> Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Ghost**, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

- Holy Ghost gave the courage and the message to speak to Jewish court (Peter and John were uneducated fisherman)

# Peter's 3 messages

- **Focus:** Jesus Christ (similar to messages in chapters 2 and 3)

**Message #1:** Message of crucifixion and resurrection (v.10)

**Message #2:** Message of rejected stone becoming the chief corner stone (v.11) (Psalms 118:22-23, Isaiah 28:16)

**Message #3:** Message of **ONLY ONE** way (v.12) (John 14:6)

# What was their bold response to the verdict?

- **Verdict** (V.18) ... commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus
- **Response** (19, 20). <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. <sup>20</sup> For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.
- **Does the response contradict Romans 13:1-2?** No, our first allegiance is to the principles of God's word.

### 3. Church's Response (23-30)

- What did Peter & John do after being released?
- What was the pattern in prayer?
- What were their three prayer requests?

What did Peter & John do after being released?  
What was the pattern in prayer?

- Peter and John reported back to the believers in church (verse 23)
- **Pattern:** in one accord, Worship followed by Supplication

# Three prayer requests

1. Ask God to look into the threats (Judgement and vengeance left to God)

Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but leave room for God's wrath. For it is written: "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord." Romans 12:19

2. Courage to speak with boldness (to continue the great commission)
3. Signs & wonders (healing)

## 4. God's Response

Verse 31 “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness”

Verse 33 And with **great power** gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and **great grace** was upon them all.

- Were all the prayers answered?

## 5. Caring church at Jerusalem ... *Love in action* (32-37)

What does the Lord expect from us today?

32 ... were of one heart and one soul ...34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, <sup>35</sup> And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

- John 13:34 ... That ye love one another; *as I have loved you*, that ye also love one another. (*high standard of love*) ...
- Lord expects us to be loving, sensitive to respond with compassion to the needs of others (especially those in the local church).



# Important themes/moral lessons/application

**R**EVELATION + **A**PPPLICATION = **T**RANSFORMATION

- Acts 1:** Wait + Witness with the power of the Holy Spirit
- Acts 2:** Repent & Be Baptized, and be added to local church  
7 qualities of local church (most important ... Be Steadfast in Word. Prayer. Communion. Fellowship)
- Acts 3:** Ministry to one lame person can open doors to bigger ministry  
Peter's approach to witnessing
- Acts 4:** Stand up to authorities if it contradicts God's Word  
Share burdens with local church  
Live in obedience to the guidance of the holy spirit  
Cultivate oneness & compassion in local church



# Bethany Bible Study & Discussion:

Wednesdays  
7.30-8.30PM

## ACTS 4

### First Persecution & Second Pouring of the Holy Spirit

*Some questions to guide your thoughts as you meditate on Acts 4*

1. **First Persecution** (1-7,13-18): Who were the Persecutors? Why were they grieved or deeply disturbed? What is Sanhedrin? What was the verdict? Do we face persecution in the US?
2. **Peter & John's Response** (8-12, 19-20): What gave them the courage to speak up? What were their messages to the persecutors? What was their bold response to the verdict? Does their response contradict Romans 13:1-2?
3. **Church's Response** (23-30) What did Peter & John do after being released? What was the pattern in prayer? What were their three prayer requests?
4. **God's Response** (31) Were all the prayers answered?
5. **Caring church at Jerusalem ... Love in action** (32-37) What does the Lord expect from us today?
6. Important Themes, Important Characters, and Lessons learned (*this is work-in-progress question and we can continue to build the list as we meditate on the book*)

Chapter 4  
June 3, 2020