

# Acts Chapter 4 Con't

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[ 0 : 00 ] Alright, if you will look at the top of your page, which is numbered 454 down the lower left-hand corner, we want to remind you that as a result of the healing of this man at the Gate Beautiful, it had caused quite a stir, and there is a huge crowd of people that had gathered in response to this, and Peter is delivering a message that is actually a kind of continuation of what he was preaching in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost.

And the message is pretty much the same. It simply consisted of Jesus Christ of Nazareth was the Messiah, you crucified Him, God raised Him from the dead, and now Peter adds to that message that if you as a nation will repent of your sin and embrace Yeshua HaMashiach as your Messiah, God will see to it that He returns to the earth now.

That is, as of the time that Peter was speaking. And heaven must receive Him until the times of restitution, and the times of restitution, of course, is referring to the Millennial Kingdom.

And Peter is simply saying that one step of the two necessary steps has already been completed for God to establish the Kingdom.

The first is, Jesus Christ has to pay the price for the redemption of humanity that will allow God to judiciously remove the effects of the curse upon the earth.

[ 1 : 39 ] He has done that. Christ has died. God has kept up His part of what needed to be done. Now, therefore, Israel, the ball is in your court.

Now, the second stage of that which needs to be accomplished is for Israel as a nation to embrace Jesus as the Messiah. And when that happens, God will get that Kingdom underway.

Well, now they are meeting with more opposition. Roger? If I could, can we go back to chapter 3, verse 19, where it says, Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

Okay. We're not talking about grace at this point, right? No, we are not. They're just, as a nation, they have to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Right.

Right. How does the sins be blotted out? How does that work? Well, for sins to be blotted out, prior to the death of Christ, sin was never in a way of finality dealt with.

[ 2 : 57 ] It is referring to, I'm referring to Acts 17, where Paul, in addressing the Athenian philosophers on Mars Hill, says that the times of man's ignorance, God winked at, God overlooked.

And it simply means that up until the time of the death of Jesus Christ, all the forgiveness of all sins prior to that time was placed on hold.

We might say God had written himself an IOU note in regard for the payment of sins. The animal sacrifices, Hebrews makes clear, which could never take away sins.

All they did was cover. All they did was provide a temporary atonement. That's why they had to be made over and over and over again. But when once Christ died on the cross, that made it possible for God to pick up the IOU, if you will, because the IOU was paid.

The death of Christ paid for the forgiveness of sins in a permanent fashion. Not so that sins were covered, but so that they are taken away completely.

[ 4 : 22 ] Now, sins were forgiven earlier. We know in the Old Testament, many experienced that. Even the whole nation of Nineveh in Assyria experienced a temporary reprieve, if you will, when they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

When the man was let down in the Gospels, when the man was let down through the roof, who had been born by four, one of the startling things that Jesus said to him was, Son, your sins are forgiven.

Remember that? And then the Pharisees grumbled among themselves and said, No, wait a minute. Wait. Who can forgive sins but God only? What's this man talking about?

Your sins are forgiven. And Jesus simply responded by saying, Which is easier, to say your sins are forgiven or to heal this man? And the idea is that one who had the power to administer healing on the spot like that and make this man whole, one who had the power to do that also has the power to forgive sins.

And he was placing himself, of course, in the category of deity. And that's exactly what happened. But when the death of Christ occurred, that put the whole sin question in an entirely different venue. [ 5 : 44 ] Now, the forgiveness of sins is available that was not available prior to the death of Christ. Yes. Yes, it does.

I don't know if the assumption is that the time of Jacob's trouble would have begun to take place right then.

I don't know. That's a problematic thing. I just have not been able to work out. But there's no question that he indicated that conditioned upon the repentance of Israel, God would return Christ. Because Christ has ascended and gone to heaven at the right hand of the Father until the times of restitution of all things. And that has to do with the rejuvenation of the earth, which will be realized, of course, in connection with the millennial reign.

So, all of these things are tied together. Now, in verse 13, at the top of our page here for Acts chapter 4, when they, of course, this is referring to the religious establishment.

[ 6 : 57 ] These are the Sadducees and the temple police that have confronted Peter and the apostles in response to their preaching the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

And when they saw the boldness of Peter and John. How do you suppose this came across? Here's Peter and John.

And Peter is delivering this message. Really, it is a stunning message. It is an indictment. He is charging the people in the crowd as being responsible for the death of their Messiah.

And he is saying that even though you delivered him up, God, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, whom you delivered up, whom you crucified, but God raised him from the dead.

This is the message. And Peter is preaching this message with tremendous conviction, stability, assurance. He knows what he's talking about.

[ 8 : 05 ] And he is laying it out in a very unauthoritative, a passionate way. Peter is not being intimidated. He is not being shy. He is not being backward.

He isn't looking for words. He is laying it on the line. Peter is speaking with great authority. And these religious rulers are standing there listening to this and looking at him.

And they are wondering to themselves, what is this? Where is this guy coming from? How is it that he is talking like this? And the text goes on to say, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men.

Unlearned simply means unschooled. Peter and John. Yeah. Peter and John. These guys, these are a bunch of nobodies. Where are they coming off with this stuff?

They are speaking with great authority on these hugely important issues. Where did they get this stuff? They don't know anything about this. These are a bunch of dumb bumpkins, backward fishermen, don't know anything about boats and nets.

[ 9 : 14 ] That's all these guys know anything about. And the translations that follow, notice Reims says, having discovered that they were unlettered and obscure men.

How did they discover that? My suggestion is, and if I may just offer this, I think that as they were listening to Peter speak, one of these Sadducees, Pharisees, or others, turned to some of the people beside them and said, who is this guy?

Who are these people? Where did they come from? Who are these guys? And they were saying, well, these are apostles. They are disciples of Jesus of Nazareth.

They were with him everywhere he went for the three years. And the other text goes on, and Weymouth says, they were illiterate persons, untrained in schools. Moffat, uncultured persons, and mere outsiders.

Knox says, simple men, without learning, uneducated, common men. And they marveled. They were astonished.

[ 10 : 22 ] They were staggered. Reel translates it, the council were dumbfounded, and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

That was their only explanation for these men being able to speak as they had. And fellas, there is no greater compliment that a human being can be paid if people, by his speech, and by his attitude, and by his actions, if they can accuse you of having been with Jesus.

That's a great compliment. And they didn't know it, but they were paying these men a great compliment. Would to God that we all conduct our lives and our attitudes in such a way that people can look at us and listen to us and say, that man's been with Jesus.

That's quite a compliment. Recognizing them also, they had been with Jesus. And beholding the man, I just, I get a chuckle out of this every time I read it.

Beholding the man which was healed, standing with them, they could say nothing against it. Now, it wasn't often that these guys were shut up.

[ 11 : 52 ] But they were shut up here. They really wanted to have some legitimate basis for lashing out at them. And they would look at this man over there who had been healed, a man who is over 40 years of age and had never walked a day in his life, was carried to and from his begging spot.

They knew him. They knew him. They'd seen him there. And now they look at him and he is there standing whole, probably with a big, wide grin on his face, still looking down at his legs and going like this and walking around.

And as they look at this guy, they know this man's got two good legs to stand on. and they don't have a leg to stand on when it comes to criticizing what is taking place.

They could say nothing against it. Not that they didn't want to, but they knew the cold, hard evidence of the power of God is right there before them and they cannot gainsay it.

So, they could say nothing against it. Philip says they could find no effective reply. And the Amplifier renders it they could not contradict the fact or say anything in opposition.

[ 13 : 21 ] But, when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves.

Now, here's what's happening. They've isolated Peter and John and if there were other apostles there, they are not mentioned, but we know at least that Peter and John were there because they surface in the beginning of the chapter, beginning of chapter four.

So, they take Peter and John and they say, you fellas excuse yourselves while we meet here with the council. We'll call you in shortly.

So, possibly a couple of temple police escorted Peter and John aside into another area where the council could convene in private apart from the presence of Peter and John and while Peter and John are away from the council, the council begins to conduct their business.

And we read that they conferred among themselves. They began consulting together. Basic English says, they had a discussion among themselves saying, what shall we do to these men?

[ 14 : 37 ] For that indeed a notable miracle has been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem.

I mean, the word is out and everybody knows it and this is common knowledge and it is all abuzz throughout the whole community. Everybody's talking about this guy who was at the Temple Gate beautiful and he's walking and everyone in Jerusalem knew this man.

And it's the buzz all throughout the community. There's no way you can put out that fire. It's out there. Everybody knows it. Everybody's talking about it. And we cannot deny it.

I don't want to read into the text something that isn't there but if I were to insert a Wiseman opinion it would be something like this and we cannot deny it though we would if we could.

They would love to be able to deny it. They would love to be able to explain it away. But they can't. They have no comeback. But that it spread no further among the people let us let us warn them.

[ 15 : 59 ] Stop them by threats. Let us severely threaten them. Williams translates it. Knox says we must deter them by threats. We had better caution them.

We can't undo what has been done and we cannot deny that it has been done. but this thing has all the marks of poison and we've got to stop it and stop it here.

This is going to get out of control. Now what they are concerned about is this. This man's healing has been affected without any action from them, without any permission from them, without any involvement from them, but they are the authorities.

authorities. And this happened completely outside their authority. Do you not see how they fear there is a losing of power that is beginning to slip away here?

If people take up with this thing, whatever this is that allowed this man to be healed. Now we know that God wasn't in it. We know that it wasn't God that did it. We don't know what the explanation is, but we know it wasn't God.

[ 17 : 08 ] Because we're the guys that represent God. And we didn't have anything to do with this. That's their thinking. So we cannot, we have to protect the people from this. So we're going to threaten them, intimidate them, scare the pants off of them so that they'll go silent.

And we read verse 18, so they called them, they recalled the apostles, they called them back into them, and they commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

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, you'll have to be the judge of that.

for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. Now you talk about nerve.

I mean, this is a real David and Goliath scenario. Here are these two fishermen, Peter and John, uneducated, relatively powerless as men consider power, and they are standing up to the ultimate religious authority in Israel.

[ 18 : 47 ] You talk about backbone. This is the same man that cowered in fear in front of that little Jewish maiden when she accused them of being with Jesus.

Remember as he warmed himself by the enemy's fire? But, what had transpired in the meanwhile is the death, burial, and resurrection of the Messiah.

And Peter knows what he knows, and John knows what he knows, he knows what he has seen and what he has heard, and if you expect us to dummy up about something like this, when God has made it clear that he wants this noise abroad, we just cannot help ourselves.

We have to speak that which we know. We will not be silent. And, fellas, this passage, and one we could couple with it in the book of Daniel in regard to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they were cast into the fire, that Old Testament passage, and this passage here in Acts, provides the legitimate biblical backdrop for civil disobedience.

Christians ought to be the most responsible, the most obedient citizens in a community. But if the time should ever come when the man-made powers that be, whether they be the federal government, the state government, or the local government, if the time should ever come when they require you to act in a way contrary to what you know the Word of God teaches and expects from you, you are under divine obligation to be disobedient to that governmental authority, whatever level it may be.

[ 20 : 47 ] This provides the basis for many of the protests and the marches, etc., that we've seen on behalf of the unborn, and other kinds of actions like that.

The civil rights movement that started in the 1960s that was spearheaded by Martin Luther King was all predicated upon civil disobedience, but it was a peaceful protest.

Now, granted, the marchers often met with physical force from the opponents like the sheriff who sicked the guard dogs on the protesters when they were marching in Selma and places like that, and fire hoses and all the rest, and they often met with violent opposition from the authorities, but they themselves were committed to engaging in a peaceful demonstration, and sometimes that may be the only recourse you have left when you cannot get redress or justice from the powers that be. Sometimes civil disobedience is the only way open to you, but you need to note that in connection with civil disobedience, you are to be, you may be civilly disobedient, but you are still subject to the powers that be, and that means that if your disobedience results in your paying a price for it, then you are to pay the price.

And we see this reflected in numerous instances all throughout human history. In World War II, we've got men like the Dietrich Bonhoeffers who paid a tremendous price for standing against the Nazi regime and being obedient to the dictates of scripture rather than to the dictates of Adolf Hitler, and he paid a price.

[ 22 : 47 ] Sometimes, sometimes there is a steep price to pay for doing the right thing. It would be wonderful if it worked in such a way that when you do the right thing, you are always rewarded.

But sometimes you aren't. Sometimes you are rewarded in a wrong way for doing the right thing. but God keeps good books, and you're better off disobeying man in order to obey God because the payoff will be coming later.

And that's a principle that all believers need to keep in mind. Sometimes you have to suffer wrong for doing right. But you're always on the right side when you do the right thing.

let the chips fall where they may. And if there is punishment or fine, or you have to take your lumps for doing the right thing, God is mindful of that too. And 1 Peter talks about that and references that we were called for this purpose.

That Christ, who did no wrong, suffered for doing the right thing. And he is our example that we should follow in his steps.

[ 24 : 08 ] And Charles M. Sheldon wrote a book by that title based upon that principle in his steps. And it became a bestseller. So this is perhaps the New Testament classic case of civil disobedience where these men stood for their honor before God rather than cave in to the dictates and the demands of men.

We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. In other words, we will not be silent.

And if you don't like that, you're just going to have to do what you have to do. But we're going to do what we have to do and we cannot be silent.

So, when they had further threatened them, New English Bible says the court repeated the caution. they let them go finding nothing how they might punish them.

Oh, they really wanted to, but they didn't have any basis for doing it. They couldn't order them to be beaten. They couldn't order them to jail because you've got all these people standing around.

[ 25 : 22 ] You've got all these witnesses and they would know that an injustice is being committed here and there could even be a riot. In fact, the text goes on to say, finding nothing how they might punish them because of the people.

And may I just insert here, this was one of the key reasons why they arranged with Judas to have a rendezvous to take Jesus prisoner in the wee hours of the morning, probably around two or three o'clock in the morning when he was praying in the garden of Gethsemane because they knew if they tried to do it publicly and openly they would have a riot on their hands.

So let's do it when all of Jerusalem is asleep and we'll be able to take him quietly without any hubbub. And that of course is exactly what they did. So they had a respect for the crowds of people who would have been there and witnessed that.

And because of the people for all men glorified God for that which was done. That is the healing of this man who was lame.

everybody, all of the common people who were there who witnessed it and saw this man, they had already made up their minds. They were convinced this was an act of God. And if the authorities arrested these men and tried to take them away to prison or ordered them beaten or something, there would be an immediate public uproar.

[ 26 : 47 ] And they knew that because everyone was on the side of Peter and John. for the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was showed.

And being let go, and being let go, they went to their own company, that is they came to their own friends, the apostles probably went back to their fellow apostles who were not with them, and they reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

They just explained the whole thing to them. And when they heard that, that is, when the group had heard their story, they, the whole group, lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, here's their prayer, Lord, thou art God which hast made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is, who by the mouth of thy servant David hath said, why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things?

The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ. for of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

And now, Lord, and bear in mind, fellows, all of this that we are reading now, this is all prayer. This is the content of the prayer that is being offered in connection with Peter and John returning from the crowd and explaining to the other apostles what happened.

[ 28 : 51 ] This is all the prayer. And now, Lord, verse 29, behold their threatenings and grant unto thy servants, in other words, grant unto us that with all boldness they may speak thy word.

And of course, they're probably referring again to Peter and John who were demanded to be silent. By stretching forth your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

They began speaking with freedom of utterance. They continued to tell God's message fearlessly. Can you not see what this must have done for the other apostles after Peter and John came in and told them the whole story, how it all had gone down, what the response was, what the religious rulers said, and what the people were saying?

That emboldened the others dramatically, and they are convinced that this is their mission. It is go out and tell, and that's exactly what they are going to do.

[ 30 : 22 ] Questions or comments? Anybody? Yes. Dan? What does it say here, what does it mean when they say the place was shaken where they were assembled together?

The only thing that I can conclude is that there was some kind of a physical movement, shaking, trembling of that building.

I can conclude nothing other than the fact that this was somehow a divine demonstration that God had heard their prayer and that He was actively moving and this place was shaken together where they were assembled.

It kind of reminds me a little bit of Acts 2 and the Pentecostal situation when the place was filled with this rushing mighty wind and everyone was amazed at what was going and people were saying, what is this?

What's happening? What's going? Well, this is nothing more than God extending Himself into this situation in a way that was recognizable by these people and they could understand this.

[ 31 : 30 ] I think it was simply God's response to their prayer. In other words, it's more or less like heaven saying, I've heard you over and out. I got your message. I got your prayer loud and clear.

And He is responding to it and as a result they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God with boldness. All this means is they were brought under the power and the authority of the Spirit of God.

and one of the supreme manifestations of that was speaking the truth in boldness. Speaking without fear or intimidation.

Speaking without hesitation or reservation. Speaking of the facts and the truth that you know regardless of how it is being received. And that's what we are commissioned to do.

We are not commissioned to make people believe but we are commissioned to speak forth the truth. Okay, Rog? Ruth 27 kind of puts the hurt on those that believe we should blame the Jews for killing the Messiah because it includes the Gentiles.

[ 32 : 37 ] Yeah, well, you're right, you're right. And down through the years of course the Jews have been the whipping post for, well in many respects the Jews have been the whipping post for just about all of the world's ills in one way or another.

And you know, that just goes with the territory of their having rejected the Messiah. They put themselves in a position of disfavor and of isolation by all of those who embrace Christ.

And yet, this does not in any way, shape, or form justify anti-Semitism. We are not called upon to hate anyone.

And we are called upon to love our enemies. And the only thing that we are supposed to hate is sin. But the anti-Semitism is very much a reality in our world today.

And every now and then it cools down and then it always flares up again. I don't know if you're aware of it or not, but anti-Semitism is on the march now. Particularly in Europe.

[ 33 : 51 ] Much more so in Europe. Well, yeah. And of course it's always been in the Muslim countries. There's a visceral hatred of the Jew in the Muslim countries. But I'm talking about in Europe in general.

Anti-Semitism is rising again. And so it is here in the United States as well. There is a neo-Nazi movement underway. And that's the name they actually use.

You'd think they'd be embarrassed to be associated with it. But they're not. Because there are people who feel that Hitler and the Nazis were unable to do a complete job with the Jew.

And the job needs to be finished. And there are many people throughout the world who still feel that way about the Jew. It's incredible. But it is more than anything else, I think it is satanic blindness.

It is what Paul spoke of in 2 Corinthians 4 when he said, If our gospel be hid, it is hid to those who are lost, whose minds whose minds the God of this age has blinded, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them.

[ 35 : 05 ] And those who are blinded are, at least in part, those who are in this anti-Semitic thing, and those whom they are persecuting, the Jew, the Semites, they too are blinded by the same force, the God of this world.

So there is a lot of moral, spiritual blindness going on out there. In fact, it is par for the course for the world at large, really.

Yes? Mark, in verse 31, it says, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Is that a little misleading? Aren't we still talking about the common people?

We're not talking about the priests and the authorities? Oh, right, right. No, we're talking about the apostles. Yeah, these are the apostles. These are those to whom Peter and John are reporting after they have been released.

See, they've been set free from the council. No, no, the council is no longer present. In fact, they were, let's see, where is it?

[ 36 : 24 ] It's on the other page, isn't it? So this was not in the temple. Yeah, right, right. This is verse 21. Back on the other page, fellows. Verse 21, so when they, that's the council, had further threatened them, finding nothing how they might punish them because of the people.

For all men glorified God for that which was done. The man was about forty years. And verse 23 says, and being let go. That is, the council released Peter and John. And then, when you look at the next page, it says that Peter and John, then they went to their own company and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

To whom did they report it? They reported to their own company. They reported to the other apostles, etc. And then, that's when this little prayer meeting took place and the place was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

But this was not in the temple. No. Right. Wherever their own company was, at the top of the page there, at verse 23, they went to their own company and reported and so there's a completely different venue.

Yes? In relation to that verse, is there not a distinction between those people basically being controlled by the Holy Spirit? Jesus said, don't worry about what you're going to say.

[ 37 : 48 ] Isn't that what we're talking about? Yeah. Today, we are being led by the Holy Spirit. It's different, right? We have a choice. I think you're right. I think you're right. And there does seem to be a distinction that is made there.

Yes. Peter, on his own, would have fumbled and bumbled through. Sure. Absolutely. In that gospel speech and that, but God gave him the words to say, just like God gave him the words to write down.

Yeah. In John 14 and in John 16, Christ said that when He returns, He will send the Comforter, He will send the Holy Spirit in My name.

He will teach you all things whatsoever I've said unto you, and He will bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I've said unto you. And that would enable them to write with the authority of Scripture inspiration.

And it would also give them the words that they are to say. And that, of course, was supernatural because in and of themselves, they did not have the ability and they certainly didn't have the courage.

[ 38 : 53 ] These were just men. And men are subject to peer pressure and intimidation from others. More often than not, we are more afraid of what other people are going to think of us than we are of what they're going to think of God.

So, we conduct ourselves accordingly because we are human and we are intimidated and we are fearful. But when the Spirit of God filled these men, that was just laid aside.

And they had a holy boldness about them that was undeniable. Dana? Speaking about that boldness, seeing their death and resurrection would have definitely persuaded them.

Oh, yeah. But, what really taught the cake, if they were going ahead and perform a miracle themselves, if they weren't bold before, they would be bold afterwards. Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. And I can assure you, we don't know what all was going on in the mind of Peter, but when he walked up to that man, and there is that poor beggar sitting there cross-legged, looking up at him, expecting to receive a coin from him, I can promise you that when Peter looked at him and said, silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk, and Peter took a hold of him and yanked him, I can assure you, Peter was not

