

# Acts Chapter 4

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Father, we are grateful for an occasion like this to be together again. Thank you for the presence of each one and for the content before us we'll be considering. We continue to uphold Ron Keplinger and Mary in our prayers and the situation that they are facing.

And we are so grateful that you are a God who is not unaware of their situation. And you are moving and working on their behalf in ways that we do not know and understand.

Thank you for being the ever diligent God you are. And for Carol and Eric Anderson, the situation that they face now, complicated by a broken leg, we just pray that through this additional adversity they will discover in more and more ways that your grace is indeed sufficient regardless of what comes into our life.

You are there and you are a caring and loving God and you are committed to working together all things for our ultimate good. We bless you for that truth and thank you for being a God that you are whom we can trust.

We ask your blessing upon our study and upon the meal that we'll enjoy later and the day that is before us in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Well, we have concluded Acts chapter 3.

[ 1 : 2 0 ]     And I would simply remind you again, and by the way, this is our June 14 session. I need to date this so it is more easily pegged for those who are recording it.

So for the June 14 session, we are going to open chapter 4, but I would remind you, as I often do at the conclusion of a chapter, that there is nothing inspired about the chapter divisions.

So in order to maintain the continuity of thought and not break up the process, we ought to just continue right on reading as though there is no chapter division here because there wasn't when the book of Acts was written by Dr. Luke.

So the chapters that are really, the chapter divisions are really only a few hundred years old in comparison to when the text was originally written.

So keep that in mind and understand that while there is nothing inspired about the chapter divisions, they are helpful in locating a text. And by the way, there is nothing inspired about the verse divisions either.

[ 2 : 2 6 ]     Those two are man-made. It wasn't written in chapters and verses. It was just written in a text. But man inserted the chapters and the verses for the purposes of locating the text.

And it would be a whole lot easier to just be able to tell you to turn to Acts chapter 4 than it would be to tell you turn to about one-sixth of the way through the book of Acts and we'll start reading.

So we've got a locator. In other words, chapters and verses are addresses for the text. And when you know the address, the street and the street number, you can go right to it.

Otherwise, you wander around the neighborhood looking for it. So we have concluded Acts chapter 3. And in order to maintain the flow, I want to go back and read, if I may.

But we will just be reading and I will reserve comment. At the beginning of chapter 3 and verse 20, Peter has just reminded people, his audience, whom I believe to have consisted of thousands, thousands of Jews there in this huge expanse area of Solomon's porch in the temple.

[ 3 : 44 ] He has just delivered a continuation. And this is very important to understand. He is actually giving them a continuation of the message he delivered on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2.

And this follows hard on the heels of that. And he is reminding them that there were two things essential for the kingdom of heaven to come to earth.

One is the Messiah must die and pay the penalty for the reversal of the curse of sin. And Christ has done that. God has done his part.

The second part is dependent upon Israel as a nation embracing that work that the Messiah accomplished. And when that happens, we are told in verse 20 at the top of the page, And he shall send, that is, God the Father, He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom the heaven must receive, and by this time heaven had already received him because the ascension has already taken place, whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

In other words, when that time comes, God the Father will send the Son back again. He sent Him the first time to be the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world.

[ 5 : 21 ] But when He sends Him again the second time, it will be to establish that kingdom. And he reminds them in verse 22, For Moses, and this of course is talking about the content in the first five books of the Bible, Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me.

Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say to you. But they didn't. They didn't. They rejected that prophet's message.

And that prophet, of course, was none other than Christ Himself. He is the prophet referred to by Moses in Deuteronomy. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet, speaking of Christ, shall be destroyed from among the people.

Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

You, as he addresses this audience before him, consisting entirely of Jews, he says, You are the children, the descendants of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed, unto you first.

[ 6 : 55 ] And he's talking to Jews about Jews. He's saying, You, you sons of Israel, unto you first. God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from His iniquities.

How so? By dying for them. By being the substitute for your iniquities. Turning you away, every one of you, from His iniquities.

And as they spake unto the people. This huge group of people gathered there, Peter is lifting his voice, projecting loudly, talking to all of these people.

I can see them standing there, listening in mass. They had never heard anything like this, unless they were present on the day of Pentecost. Some of them might have said, Oh, it's this guy again.

And he's talking about Jesus who was crucified, saying He was... And they are giving an audience. They are listening, intently. And as they are listening, and Peter is speaking, continuing this powerful message, as they spoke unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple.

- [ 8 : 22 ] The captain of the temple, fellas, is kind of like the sergeant at arms. He is the guy who was responsible for maintaining order and decorum.
- He is responsible for what goes on in the temple, for proprieties, improprieties, etc. He's the overseer of the temple.
- He's the one that minds and is noteful of everything that's going on. He has his hand on everything. This is the captain of the temple and the Sadducees.
- The Sadducees constitute that sect in the Jewish economy who were the principal shakers and movers.
- These were the ones who were largely responsible for the arrest of Jesus. These are the ones who, in collusion with Judas Iscariot, struck the deal to arrest Jesus in the middle of the night, bring Him before Annas and Caiaphas, who were Sadducees, the high priests, for a kangaroo court trial in the middle of the night, and then later on to Pilate where the sentence of execution would be handed down.
- [ 9 : 44 ] This is the same crowd these people were deeply entrenched in Jewish religion and politics. And you need to understand, fellas, in Judaism, religion and politics were one.
- Such a thing as separation of church and state didn't exist. The church was the state. The state was the church. Although it wasn't a church, but it was a religious entity.
- It was the body of Judaism as the Jewish faith was practiced in this day. And it was the Sadducees who comprised the liberal wing of the Jewish establishment.
- These were the liberals or the modernists of their day. To give you an example, they completely rejected the idea of the resurrection of the dead.
- They did not believe that. They embraced the Greek concept of life after death, which meant there wasn't any. There was not going to be any physical resurrection of the body.
- [ 10 : 59 ] And they were thinking in very practical terms because if you've seen anything having to do with a dead body, particularly after it has been dead for several days, who wants anything to do with that?
- Well, nobody I know of. But the kind of body that is a resurrection body that God is providing for is not a decaying, corrupt, fetid-smelling, stenchful body.
- It is a glorified, risen body in a newness of life. But they had no concept of that. All they could think of was in terms of the Greek idea of the resurrection of the body.
- Who would want anything to do with that? They denied the reality of the resurrection of the dead. And they also denied the existence of angels. And if you understand the connection between those two, you can understand where they're coming from because angels are spirit beings.
- They are spirit beings who are able to assume a physical appearance, as many angels did. But a spirit being, a spirit being in its very essence is immaterial.
- [ 12 : 16 ] It's not physical. We don't really understand that even though we have as part of our makeup a human spirit, which is the real you that is housed in this body.
- And when you die, the real you departs from this body and goes to be with the Lord. That's the part that is absent from the body present with the Lord.
- Well, they had no respect for that at all. No understanding of it. So, I want you to keep in mind how the line of approach that these are going to take.
- It is the priests, captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them. I can just see these guys elbowing their way, making their way through the crowd.
- You can tell who they are by the kind of garb they are wearing, the decor they are wearing. They would stand out like a sore thumb as these are the hoity-toity.

[ 13 : 21 ] I mean, these are the shakers and movers. And these guys come out there and they begin elbowing their way through the crowd. Make way, make way, everybody. And everybody says, ooh, ooh, ooh, it's the priests. You know, and they all step aside and make room for these guys to make their way.

And they're all elbowing their way up to where Peter is, where he is speaking. And we are told that they came upon them. They approached them physically, moving through the crowd, getting up to where they are, being grieved.

The ASV says, being sore troubled. The RSV says, they were annoyed. 20th century New Testament says they were much annoyed because they were...

Weymouth says, they were highly incensed. Goodspeed, they were greatly disturbed or indignant at their teaching the multitude.

And flip the page, if you will. Exasperated at their teaching and they preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

[ 14 : 33 ] Now, you can understand why they were really upset because as far as they were concerned, there is no resurrection of the dead. And this guy, this ignorant, unlearned fisherman and his cronies are trying to pass this baloney off on these people about Jesus having been crucified and now risen from the dead.

Well, we're not going to stand for it. And they weighed into them simply because they are teaching this. And they laid hands on them. They arrested the apostles and put them in hold until the next day.

Fellas, I can't emphasize enough how critical this is in light of who is doing this.

You've got to understand these are the people in the premier leadership position for the whole nation of Israel. These are the shakers and movers.

These were the ones who originally conspired, as I mentioned earlier, with Judas to have Jesus arrested. They were the ones who put Pilate up to issuing an order of execution.

[ 15 : 53 ] They are the ones who stand to lose the most. These are the same ones who in John's Gospel said, Listen, we have got to nip this thing in the bud because Jesus of Nazareth is becoming too popular and He's going to gather too large of a following and it's going to result in public demonstrations and malese.

And here's what they said. I don't know where this is. It's in John. It's in John. And they said, And if we don't put a stop to it, the Romans will put the hammer down and they will take away our position because they were entrenched in Jewish society.

You see, they were still able to function religiously because Rome allowed them to. Rome gave them certain liberties to carry out their Judaism. And they were well positioned in Jewish society, well connected.

They were the up and outers. They had the perks. They had the influence. They had the clout. Even though they chafed under Roman rule, they were still at the top tier of the ladder of all Judaism.

These are the men who make the decisions for the rest of the nation. And they have tremendous influence on the rest of the nation. These were the ones who were yelling, Crucify!

[ 17 : 20 ] I am crucified! We have no king but Caesar! These were the same crowd. And later, fellas, later, they are going to be the ones who will personally, physically, accost Stephen in Acts chapter 7 and physically hustle him out of town to the city limits where they will personally stone him to death.

this will be the leadership of Israel. That's why it is so very, very significant. Jesus never had problems with the common people.

We are told the common people heard him gladly. Jesus Christ was not a threat to the common people. He was a breath of fresh air.

their response to him. Their response to him was, No man ever spake like this man. For he spoke with authority, not as the scribes and Pharisees.

And the common people heard him gladly. But the people who were at risk, the people who stood to lose the most, were the scribes and Pharisees.

[ 18 : 38 ] They were the ones who continually came to him and taunted him. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Ha! Gotcha, didn't we? Ha! Whatever answer you give is wrong. But he didn't fall for it.

And if a man takes a wife and he dies, and another man takes a wife and he dies, and another man takes a wife and he dies, and this woman has all these husbands and they all die.

Well, in the resurrection, Jesus, whose wife is she going to be? She had seven husbands and they all die. We got him now. We got him now.

And Jesus said, You fellows don't understand the power of God or the resurrection from the dead. You don't understand any of this. And he went on to explain. So, every time they accosted him, he always had an answer.

And it always made them look like the fools they were. They had a vendetta against him. Not only did they see him as a threat to their power and position, they saw him as being a perpetual source of their embarrassment before the crowds.

[ 19 : 44 ] Roger, do you have a comment? Did I not hear one time that the Pharisees and Sadducees were not even Jewish legal as far as being and they weren't the, what did it, the tribe of Levi?

They were disappointed. Yeah, well... They worked their way up. They might be saved buddy-buddy with the Roman government. I thought I heard it. They weren't the...

They should not have been the priests. Should not have been the priests because of the Jews. Yeah, well, that's... You're right. You're right about that. Caiaphas... I get these fellows mixed up all the time.

Caiaphas and Annas. Caiaphas and Annas were father-in-law and son-in-law. And that is true.

They were not direct descendants of Levi. Aaron... Aaron was a direct descendant of Levi.

[ 20 : 47 ] Aaron was the first high priest appointed back in the book of Exodus. And every high priest thereafter had to be a direct descendant from the tribe of Levi.

Well, Annas and Caiaphas weren't. They were puppet priests. They were put in their position of power and influence by the Roman government.

Herod. Herod the king who was responsible for the massacre and the murder of the innocent babies in an effort to try to kill Jesus. He was the king of Judea.

But he was a king put on the throne by Rome. And he was a puppet king. He was not in the royal tribe of Judah.

He was not in the lineage of David. In fact, he was not even a Jew. Herod was an Idumean. Herod was a direct descendant not of Jacob but of Esau.

[ 21 : 54 ] He was an Edomite. He did not belong on the throne. Caiaphas and Annas did not belong in the high priest. But nonetheless, they had the official legal position.

even though they were not entitled to it. So, let's keep on there if we may. They laid hands on them because they were preaching through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

They laid hands on them and put them in hold unto the next day. For it was now evening. How be it?

Many of them which heard the word believed. Many, however, of those who had heard their message that Peter had just delivered believed it.

And the number of the men were involved. We don't know how many women there were involved. And the number of the men was about 5,000.

[ 22 : 52 ] Or it came to be about 5,000. Now, I think we can assess from that probably what this means is in addition to the 3,000 that were reached on the day of Pentecost in the chapter just before this, another 2,000 was added to it or another 5,000 was added to it.

That's not really clear. But at any rate, we're talking about thousands of people. So at this time, the number of believers may have reached a total of about 5,000. Or it may mean that those just as a result of Peter's preaching there in Acts chapter 3 that there were 5,000 who came to believe.

I don't know which it is, but it doesn't make any difference. There are several thousand. But it does not just give you some feel for what the size of that crowd must have been.

We're not talking about a couple of hundred people. We're talking about a huge throng of people that have gathered there. And all of this gathering is in response to this man who was accustomed to laying at the temple gate beautiful, lame, where he had been for who knows how many years.

And now he's walking and jumping. That's going to draw a big crowd. And indeed it did. And we read in verse 5, It came to pass on the morrow that their rulers and elders and scribes, 20th century says, the leading men, counselors, rabbis, members of the council, magistrates, etc.

[ 24 : 31 ] And Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas, either his son-in-law or his father-in-law, whichever it is, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred or relatives of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem, and when they had set them in their midst, they asked, get this picture, this is the next morning, this council of all of these big shots convenes, and someone turns to one of the officers of the temple and says, okay, go get those guys, bring them in.

So here's this council, all the shakers and movers, and here comes Peter, James, John, all the guys that come traipsing in, they've been kept in jail overnight, now it's the next morning, and they're going to be indicted.

And, as they stand there before them, one of them, possibly the chief priest, we don't know, but he says, by what power, or by what name, have you done this?

Then Peter, and you've got to note this next phrase, because it is pregnant with meaning, then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit.

Quite different from when he gave an account of his presence to a little Jewish maiden before the crucifixion when he said, I don't know him, I don't know what you're talking about, never laid eyes on him.

[ 26 : 24 ] This is a different man. This is a man who has seen with his own eyes and handled with his own hands God. He's the Lord of glory.

Peter is coming from a position of authority that these who are accusing him know nothing about. And I'm telling you, it puts spine, spunk, courage in the backbone of Peter, because when you can stand with authority and speak on something that you not only know, but you know that you know, you can be fearless.

And Peter is fearless. Filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him does this man stand here before you whole.

this, and he's referring to this Christ, this one, he is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which has become the head of the corner.

This is a fabulous, fabulous reference. and it goes back to the Psalms, and we'll have to investigate it in our next session together, but this is priceless.

[ 28 : 29 ] And when Peter stands and delivers this message, everybody there knew exactly what he was talking about. he is saying that the stone which the builders rejected, and you are the builders, you people, shakers and movers of Israel, you are the builders.

And when a stone was presented to you, you see, this is a takeoff on the building of the temple, which was made with stones, and the stones were cut at the quarry, not on site, they would be cut to size at the quarry for the exact dimensions, and then brought up to be placed in position, and the one who was in charge, the foreman of the job, would look at the stone, measure it, make sure it was the right shape and the right size, and then he would order it inserted into the building.

And Peter is saying, Jesus Christ is like the stone that you examined and rejected.

You would not give him his rightful place. And this passage is just so loaded, and the best is yet to come. down, and I have a well- ■■■ of the ■■■■■ of the abused is the first under the fr