

Acts 4:1-22 - Peter and John Before the Council
October 11, 2020 - Outline and Scripture

Outline

1. Greet one another, begin with prayer, and read Acts 4:1-22.

2. Remind the class about the events of Acts 3:1-26.

3. Discuss the arrest of Peter and John in Acts 4:1-7.

- Arrested by Temple authorities in the midst of Peter’s sermon
- Part of the problem: the Sadducees are vehemently anti-resurrection
- The church grows by leaps and bounds!
- Interrogated by the Council the next day
- The church adds thousands more despite persecution. Why does it seem that the Christian church often grows in persecution? What modern-day examples do we have?
- How intimidating was it for Peter and John to be brought before the Council in vv. 5-7? What might be a contemporary equivalent of this situation?

4. Discuss Peter’s third sermon in Acts 4:8-14.

- Peter is given what to say in fulfillment of Matthew 10:17-20, Luke 12:11-12
- Clear proclamation of Jesus by Peter as:
 - Crucified and Risen One
 - Cornerstone first rejected by the leaders, as in Psalm 118
 - The only means of salvation
- Council notes with great surprise that Peter and John are “uneducated, common men,” as their knowledge and eloquence would normally signify great learning
- Why is it significant that we are told Peter is “filled with the Spirit” in v. 8? How does the Spirit’s filling help Peter to share the good news?
- This is now Peter’s third sermon. Looking back over Acts 2:14-36 and 3:11-26, what do his three sermons focus on in common? How do they differ?

5. Discuss the Council’s dilemma in addressing Peter and John in Acts 4:15-22.

- The Council goes into “executive session” to discuss what to do
- Can’t deny the miracle, as the healed man is present and everyone knows
- Decision? Warn Peter and John not to say anything more to anyone
- The bold reply: “We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard...”
- Why does the Council fail to affirm what’s in front of them? What sparks such denial? Why might the Council want to stifle the Christian movement?
- What opposition does Christianity face today? Give at least three examples. How may we respond, consistent with the mission to spread the gospel in Christian love?

6. Close in prayer.

Scripture (NIV)

1 The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. **2** They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. **3** They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. **4** But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

5 The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. **6** Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. **7** They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! **9** If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, **10** then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

11 Jesus is

"the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone.'^[a]

12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. **14** But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. **15** So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. **16** "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. **17** But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. **19** But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! **20** As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

21 After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. **22** For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

Footnotes

Acts 4:11 Psalm 118:22