

## THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

### SESSION 15: ACTS 4:14-31

#### ACTS 4:5-22 | PETER AND JOHN BEFORE ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS

- Verses 5-13 included in session 14
- Verse 14 –
  - The **healed man standing with them** was a very inconvenient truth for the Temple officials.
  - The miracle was public and undeniable (so unlike the so-called miracles of today's charismatic circles).
- Verses 15-17 –
  - Peter and John (and, presumably, the healed man) were told to **go aside out of the council** (that is, the Sanhedrin, as in the Greek συνέδριον [sunhedrion] ).
  - The council **conferred among themselves** and determined that the miracle was too undeniable to refute, and also recognized that **this name** of Jesus was their problem, so they determined to **threaten them** about speaking in the name of Jesus.
  - How Luke was aware of this closed-door meeting is unknown, save the fact that the council came forth with a public declaration in verse 18, and, with 70 members, there likely were no real secrets.
- Verse 18 –
  - Because there was no crime (political nor religious) on which to charge them, the Sanhedrin chose censorship.
  - A government (political or religious) that censors its citizens is always one that deserves to be disobeyed.
  - Note: the “Johnson Rule” required that churches avoid political speech or lose their tax-exempt status. This executive order was unconstitutional at its core, designed to keep preachers from speaking politically from the pulpit, and was censorship by any definition. Not until President Trump was this rule removed from IRS guidelines.
- Verses 19-20 –
  - The answer from **Peter and John** is insightful: they recognized the right of the Sanhedrin to make a judgment, but they also stood firm on what they were going to do, regardless of that judgment.
- Verse 21 –
  - The Sanhedrin was driven by an anti-resurrection bias due to the influence of the Sadducees, but did not have a punishable crime.
  - Furthermore, they were concerned **because of the people**. While it could be said that these men were *weasel politicians* because they were afraid of the opinion polls, it can also be said that governments (both political and religious) are *supposed to submit to the will of the people*.
  - In this case, the Sanhedrin did it reluctantly, and only when resorting to *threats*, which would have silenced lesser men than Peter and John.
- Verse 22 –
  - The miracles of the apostolic age were public and undeniable, and verified the "kingdom powers" given to the apostles.
  - While many speak of apostolic gifts in this age, they are unable to perform the miracles of the apostles.
    - When you assume this is a kingdom age, you must assume kingdom powers along with it, along with kingdom positions such as apostle.
    - Jack Hayford wrote the famous song "Majesty," and included the line, "kingdom authority flows from His throne, unto His own."

- All theology which includes a "kingdom now" element will have some element of apostolic gifts.
- Note: the word **shewed** is simply an archaic spelling of the past tense *show*, today said as *shown*. Identical *orthographic* sameness is not required to have a pure copy of God's Word.

## ACTS 4:23-31 | THE APOSTLES PRAISE GOD AMONG THE BELIEVERS

- Acts 4:24-30 - the voice of the people.
  - Verse 24 - We are not told who the spokesman was, but we are told that the people were **with one accord** in speaking this prayer unto God. The prayer begins in praise to God for creation.
  - Verses 25-26 –
    - The people quote Psalm 2:1-2.
    - The word **heathen** is simply ἔθνος [ethnos], which is (as noted by simple observation of letters) the direct source of the English word *heathen*. The modern implication of God-rejecting or sinful is not included in the use of the word.
    - The reference to **the people** is most likely a reference to the *Jewish people*, as will be seen in verse 27. Verses 25-26 speak of the prophecy of the Messiah.
  - Verses 27-28 - These verses show the *fulfillment* of the prophecy of Psalms 2:1-2. Here it is seen that **the people of Israel** as well as **the Gentiles** (once again, the Greek word is *ethnos*, thus, "the heathen.")
  - Verses 29-30 –
    - The believers pray for **boldness** to **speak thy word** as well as **signs and wonders** to be performed by the apostles.
    - If this Scripture is a display of the *church as we know it today*, then we should pray for the same. But, if this Scripture is descriptive of the *apostolic assembly*, then our prayer will be different today (for we are *not* an apostolic assembly).
    - The typical way of dealing with the clarity of this verse is to say, "God doesn't work as many miracles today as He did then, but He still works miracles, especially on the mission field."
      - However, Brazil is expected to have over 50% evangelical population by 2020, far more than our community which has somewhere around 5% (?).
      - Why are there not miracles among missionaries here?
- Verse 30 –
  - There is nothing to say that **the place was shaken** in *figurative* terms. The *plain sense* is that the spiritual power was made manifest in the shaking of the walls.
  - The people were, at this time **filled with the Holy Ghost**. How can this be, if this happened on the day of Pentecost? (Compare Acts 2:4). There are only a few options:
    - Baptism of the Holy Ghost and being **filled with the Holy Ghost** are not the same thing.
      - This is the typical teaching.
      - It is said that *filling* happens "off and on," while being *baptized* only happens once.
      - However, Acts 1:5 predicts that the Apostles would be **baptized with the Holy Ghost** on the day of Pentecost, but Acts 2:4 speaks of the *filling* of the Holy Ghost on that day, making these two *appear to be the same thing*. Furthermore, there is no further word about being baptized with the Holy Ghost outside of Acts 1:5 and 11:16
    - There were *not* 120 in the upper room at Pentecost, but only 12 who were originally filled with the Holy Ghost. Now the entire body of believers was being filled (see notes on Acts 2:1).