



The Early Church Faces Opposition Acts 4

Introduction

Fresh on the heels of healing the lame man (**ch. 3**), the young church must defend itself against the full force of the “political powers” of Judaism. Two apostles are taken into custody, threatened, and released. However, this will not stop the “march of the gospel.” The church will use this to grow even more. Even in the face of such opposition, the believers show care and concern for each other (**vv. 32-37**).

Peter & John’s Arrest (4:1-22)

- 1) What happens to Peter & John while they are preaching? (**vv. 1-3**; **cp. 3:13-26**) Had Jesus warned of this happening to them? (**cp. Lk. 21:12-13**)
- 2) What effect did arresting these 2 apostles have on the young church? (**v. 4**)
- 3) What happened the day after the arrest? (**vv. 5-7**) What do you think was meant by the question in **v. 7**? (**cp. vv. 9-10**)
- 4) Thought questions: what do you suppose these 2 apostles had going through their minds as they recalled a meeting “not-too-distant” in the past before the Sanhedrin? (**cp. Lk. 22:54, 63-71**)
Having heard the council’s question, what previous words of Jesus would have been brought to the apostles’ minds? (**cp. Lk. 21:14-15**)
- 5) How is Peter described as he begins to answer? (**v. 8a**) How does he reply to the council? (**vv. 8b-12**) What does Peter state again that had been emphasized in his 2 sermons? (**v. 10b**)

The Two Treatises

Lesson 29

- 6) What does Peter do in v. 11? What does he claim? (v. 12; cp. Jn. 14:6)

- 7) How did Peter's words affect the Sanhedrin? (vv. 13-14) What did the apostles' boldness force them to do? (v. 15) What was their "dilemma?" (v. 16)

- 8) What course of action did the council pursue? (vv. 17-18) How did Peter & John respond to this? (vv. 19-20) *Thought question:* what "principle" does this set forth for N.T. Christians re: civil law?

- 9) How did this "episode" end? (vv. 21-22)

A Request For Courage (4:23-31)

- 10) After their release, where did Peter & John go? (v. 23a) What did they do? (v. 23b) After their "report," what happened? (vv. 24-30) What is "admitted" in v. 28? (cp. 2:23) What passages were quoted in this prayer?

- 11) What was their request? (v. 29) *Thought question:* what was ***not*** requested, given what had happened to them?

The Two Treatises

Lesson 29

12) How did God answer this prayer? (v. 31) Does this verse give us any indication as to who the "companions" [NKJV, NASV], "company" [KJV] were from v. 23?

13) What would the shaking of the place indicate? (v. 31)

Describing The Early Disciples (4:32-37)

14) How are the Christians described? (vv. 32-35) What did the apostles continue to do? (v. 33)

15) Who in particular is described in vv. 36-37? What did the apostles think of him? What did he do?