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By Dan Maines

Acts 4

Acts 4:1-2

As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees came up to them, being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

† The Sadducees denied resurrection (Josephus, Antiquities 18.1.4). Peter and John's proclamation directly contradicted their doctrine. This bold preaching challenged the power of the

temple authorities.

Acts 4:3-4

And they laid hands on them and put them in prison until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

† Persecution could not stop the spread of the gospel. The church rapidly multiplied, fulfilling Isaiah 60:22, "the least of you will become a thousand, and the smallest a mighty nation."

Acts 4:5-7

On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire, "By what power, or in what name, have you done this?"

† The very leaders who condemned Jesus now interrogated His apostles. They ask the same question posed to Christ: "By what authority?" (Luke 20:2).

Acts 4:8-10

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of the people, if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead-by this name this man stands here before you in good health."

† Peter boldly attributes the miracle to Jesus. The crucified and risen Christ is vindicated, and His name heals.

Acts 4:11-12

"He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among mankind by which we must be saved."

† Psalm 118:22 is fulfilled in Christ. He is the rejected stone made cornerstone. Salvation is exclusive to Him.

† The early church fathers (Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.12.2) stressed this exclusivity, rejecting any rival path of salvation.

Acts 4:13

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

† Their boldness amazed the rulers. Training in rabbinic schools was not their source of authority-their authority came from Christ.

Acts 4:14-16

And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply. But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they began to confer with one another, saying, "What are we to do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it."

† The miracle was undeniable. The leaders, though hardened, could not refute the reality of the man's healing.

Acts 4:17-18

But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let's warn them not to speak any longer to any person in this name. And when they had summoned them, they commanded them

not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

† The opposition's goal was suppression of the name of Jesus. This echoes John 11:48 where leaders feared losing their place and nation.

Acts 4:19-20

But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, make your own judgment; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

† The apostles declared civil disobedience when man's commands opposed God's. They were bound to testify of what they had seen.

Acts 4:21-22

When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; for the man on whom this miracle of healing had been performed was more than forty years old.

† The age of the man underscores the magnitude of the miracle. The people glorified God, while the rulers feared the crowd.

Acts 4:23-24

When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported everything that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard this, they raised their voices to God with one mind and said, "Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything that is in them."

† The church responded to persecution with unified prayer, acknowledging God as Creator and sovereign.

Acts 4:25-28

who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'Why were the nations insolent, and the peoples plotting in vain? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.' For truly in this city they were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and purpose predestined to occur.

† Psalm 2 is fulfilled in the conspiracy against Christ. The rulers and nations opposed Him, but God's sovereign plan prevailed.

Acts 4:29-31

"And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant it to Your bond-servants to speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

† God answered by filling them anew with the Spirit. The shaking of the place signifies divine presence, as at Sinai.

Acts 4:32-35

And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each to the extent that

any had need.

† The unity of the early church reflected covenant restoration. They lived out the principle of Deuteronomy 15:4, that there should be no needy among God's people.

† Eusebius praised this communal love as evidence of the Spirit's work (Ecclesiastical History 2.5).

Acts 4:36-37

Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), owned a tract of land, and he sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

† Barnabas is introduced as a model of generosity and encouragement. His role would become significant in the mission to the Gentiles.

How it applies to us today

† The exclusivity of salvation in Christ must be boldly proclaimed, no matter the opposition.

† The church must respond to threats not with fear but with prayer and Spirit-empowered boldness.

† Unity, generosity, and care for one another remain essential marks of the covenant community.

† The rulers of this world cannot silence the gospel. Our confidence is in God's sovereignty.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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