



December 9, 2015

Acts 4:1-35

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Exegetical Study

1. **Acts 4:1-4** - *“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. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.”*
 - a. Approximately two thousand more people believed the gospel message of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, which brought the total to about five thousand!
 - b. The temple had its own limited military force.
 - c. The Sadducees were a Jewish religious sect that was known for not believing in three specific things: angels, miracles, and resurrection of the dead.
 - i. They were *“greatly disturbed”* because the salvation message of Peter and John made the resurrection a central theme of the gospel.
 1. **John 14:19** - *“Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.”*
 2. **John 11:23-26** - *“Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha answered, ‘I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ ”*
 3. **1 Corinthians 15:12-22** - *“But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than*

that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.”

4. Pastor Gary said, “No other world religion makes the claim that their leader rose from the dead, not Muhammed, Confucius, [or] Ghandi. They are all dead; they are all buried. Only Christianity makes the exclusive claim that [their leader], Jesus, rose from the dead. And because he lives, we also shall live.”

2. [Acts 4:5-12](#) - *“The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest’s family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: ‘By what power or what name did you do this?’ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: ‘Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, 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. He is ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.’ ”*

- a. The “*rulers, elders and teachers of the law*” made up the ruling counsel or Sanhedrin, which was similar to the Supreme Court of the United States.
- b. There were seventy members of the Sanhedrin.
- c. The Annas and Caiaphas mentioned here are the same two high priests involved in Jesus’ death.
 - i. At that time there was a co-leadership for the Jewish high priest.
 - ii. Annas, who was older than Caiaphas, was the rightful Jewish high priest.
 - iii. Caiaphas, who was Annas’ son-in-law, was appointed by the Roman government as what we might call a “puppet high priest.”
- d. Salvation through Jesus alone is an exclusive claim with an inclusive aim.
 - i. [John 14:6](#) - *“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life.*

No one comes to the Father except through me.’ ”

- e. This may not be “politically correct” in the day in which we live but it is practically true.
 - i. Pastor Gary said, “The only reason why someone finds that the exclusive claims of Christ are narrowminded and bigoted is because they have not understood their need, and, therefore, they do not accept the way. Until someone gets to the bottom of their own sinful human condition, they will never see their need for Christ.”
 - ii. **John 1:12** – *“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...”*
 - iii. **Revelation 22:17** – *“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.”*

3. **Acts 4:13** – *“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.”*

- a. God has used many, many people who were unschooled, ordinary people to do remarkable things, including Hudson Taylor, D.L. Moody, Charles H. Spurgeon, and countless others.
- b. God has used many, many educated people to do remarkable things, including Moses, Daniel, Paul, and countless others.
- c. Pastor Gary said, “God is not looking for [the most polished, the best pedigree, the most educated, the most professional], he’s looking for people who are vessels that are teachable and surrendered for him to use. ... Ideally it is skill and heart, but I will take heart over skill any day of the week! Because skill can be learned, skill can be acquired, but heart, that’s a soul issue, and that’s what is being [spoken of in this verse]. ... God loves to do extraordinary things through ordinary people.”

4. **Acts 4:14–20** – *“But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. ‘What are we going to do with these men?’ they asked. ‘Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name.’ Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, ‘Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.’ ”*

- a. Pastor Gary said, “Obedience to God trumps obedience to man – every time. Whenever you are in a situation when you are being asked to do something

that compromises the integrity of what you know to be right according to God's Word, don't follow authority. That's the only exception to disobeying or disrespecting authority. Every other time we need to obey and respect authority, even when it's not convenient, but when it's directly opposed to what we know is right according to the standards of God [that's when civil disobedience is the right thing to do]."

5. **Acts 4:21-30** - *"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. For the man who was miraculously head was over forty years old. On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. 'Sovereign Lord,' they said, 'you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One." 'Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of our holy servant Jesus.' "*
 - a. **Psalm 2:1-2** is quoted in **Acts 4:25-26**.

6. **Acts 4:31** - *"After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly."*
 - a. Pastor Gary said, "Wait a minute! I thought they were all filled with the Holy Spirit in [**Acts 2:4**]? ... They were all filled with the Spirit and they spoke in tongues. Now... they were all filled with the Spirit and 'spoke the word of God boldly.' This was a direct answer to their prayer."
 - i. The filling of the Holy Spirit is not a one-time event.
 1. D.L. Moody, the great 19th century pastor, was asked why he said he needed to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit, and his reply was simply put, "Because I leak!"
 - ii. **Ephesians 5:18** - *"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit."*
 - iii. We need to be refreshed by the filling of the Holy Spirit.
 - iv. The Greek grammar means that we are to "be, being filled," which is a continuous action.¹

¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongsg=G4130&t=NIV>

7. **Acts 4:32-35** - *“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.”*

- a. Pastor Gary said, “This verse is not encouraging socialism. ... This [was] not socialism; it’s survivalism. You never see this repeated as a pattern in the New Testament again. ... When you see something in the Bible, don’t think that it’s necessarily indicating a pattern; it’s sometimes indicating a principle. The principle here is that these people needed to pool their resources together to help each other through a very difficult time. [This] expresses their generosity... they were selfless [and] they saw other people in need, and we can learn from this principle. ... [Everything we have is from the Lord, and we are supposed to manage what he’s given us as good stewards and use what he’s given us to bless others.]”