

unlearned and ignorant men

Acts 4:1 – 37

~ Simon Peter gave his first sermon in our last report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. Five thousand men were saved by Peter's presentation. Immediately after that, Simon Peter and the apostles were arrested by the Sadducee's and thrown into prison. Preaching the resurrection of Christ was just too much for the religious rulers to handle! That's the way it works today, too. If you have a man who truly believes God and teaches the Bible properly, correctly and completely - the religious mob will fabricate lies, personally attack the man that is teaching the Word of God and attempt to put him out of business. Trust me – I know ALL about how this works, friends. The outright lying attacks on me, personally, are nothing new; and we're going to examine that aspect of ministry very closely in this report....

1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

~ This should be startling to you if it hasn't been called to your attention before. It was the religious rulers who led the prosecution that resulted in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's always the religious people who are the enemies of the True and Living God. Now, we know Nicodemus was saved – and he was a Pharisee. I'm pretty sure Joseph of Arimathaea was a Pharisee, also – although he is not identified as being one in Scripture. We know that Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee. Well, many other Pharisees were brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus at this time, too.

After the Pharisee's had gotten rid of Jesus, they thought their cause was complete. From here forward, we won't hear from them anymore. However, the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, will now become the bitter enemies of the apostles and of the church who will be preaching said resurrection!

So, let me be clear and frank with you dear readers. I am not attempting to straightening out the myriad heresies that abound on this forum on which I teach. I don't feel like that is my job. I'm not interested in reformation work; and I'm not interested in evangelism. Most people around this forum are simply reactionaries who have never been born again; so, reformation would be perfect nonsense. I'm not interested in cleaning up the environment, saving animals; nor am I interested in feeding starving children in countries that the Lord has pronounced His judgment upon. I agree the environment is a disaster and I am sympathetic that people are hungry, and animals are mistreated – but that's not my calling, friends. This is.

Furthermore, the manner in which those things are handled in our contemporary "Christian" churches and religious society is positively shameful. I'm not sure I would want to be connected with any of those "causes" anyways. There is only one proper way to approach the disasters we are presently experiencing on this planet. There is only ONE way to properly feed hungry people and solve our myriad personal problems. That way is by teaching the Gospel of Christ to the entire world in the sound doctrine of the apostles. Man has problems that man cannot solve, my beloved. We have been called to fish in a fishpond; but I can't find a single verse that tells me to clean the pond up. I find comfort in that, because the prospect of saving this world is an exercise in self-defeat.

Well, when you start teaching like I do, the Sadducees quickly become your enemy. The religious man doesn't dislike me - they despise me. The atheists and unsaved people are NOT the enemy. They rarely fight me, and, in fact, they don't even bother to read my reports. The gangster's downtown couldn't care less what I write. The only opposition I receive are from so-called "Christians" who never bother to help a correct ministry in any way. Those who claim to be born again rarely lift a finger to make sure I have something to eat. Those people are the only enemy of the teaching of the Word of God. In fact, the unsaved man who NEVER reads these reports are more likely to help me in my ministry if I ask them than ANY self-professing believer ever has! I simply cannot believe how many want to destroy the cause of Christ while telling me what a good job I am doing – simply – AMAZING. My worst antagonists are religious nut-jobs who never say

anything concerning a report – but they sure will attack me personally. They never read a word - but they somehow know it's all wrong.

The Sadducee's are the meanest of all the people we have encountered in the Bible; and they're the meanest of all those I have encountered in my Spiritual Safari. They are EVERYWHERE, too. They are the ones who deny the supernatural; and they absolutely deny the Word of God is inspired and inerrant – both by the hypocritical and confusing words that drip from their seemingly religious lips; certainly, by their lives....

2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

~ See, it's only the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ according to Scripture that is objected to. You can preach Jesus all day long as some nice, sweet little sentimental individual who loves everyone and will save anyone – and the Mr. Milquetoast Jesus is accepted by everyone who calls themselves born again but never has been. However, when you start preaching the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Mighty Savior from the sin in our lives, and Who judges today in terrifying holiness and righteousness - then you're just not going to have a good time doing it. In fact, you WILL have trouble; just as the apostles were put in prison....

3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

~ So, we're still at the Beautiful gate of the temple from our previous report; more precisely, at the area of the women's court. We know there were five thousand men present; so, the actual number of people would have been much higher. Even though NO ONE has since experienced a true turning to Christ as we have accounted for here, this passage is very encouraging to me. We have criticized Simon Peter before on safari – and sometimes rightly so – but there has never been any man that

accomplished what Peter accomplished in his ministry. Simon Peter was mightily used of God, friends. Although five thousand were saved, this is not an evangelistic meeting by any means. Simon Peter wasn't padding the conversion count to make a good report to turn in. This is a genuine number of converts; and I highly doubt there will ever be anything like it again on the face of this earth - that is, as long as the church is in the world....

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

~ We have considered Annas and Caiaphas the high priest in depth before. These are the two men who originally condemned Jesus to die. They were Pharisee's, but they were also willing to adopt the Sadducee's hatred and hypocrisy towards the apostles whenever it suited their political needs. These two groups would not have otherwise been caught dead near each other; except there were something they could hate together. They always united in hate....

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

~ Being filled with the Holy Spirit is something we should continually be actively seeking; especially before we speak! Those who are tarrying and waiting for the baptism of the Spirit of God simply do not recognize that it already happened - a LONG time ago. When we turn to Christ and accept Him as our Savior from sin, we are regenerated and placed into the body of believers at THAT moment. Quite frankly, until to this time, every word Simon Peter spoke was a word to be eaten. Peter does a pretty good job here, though. His feet are now shod with the Gospel of peace and because

he has previously been filled with the Holy Spirit, he is finally saying the right things....

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

~ Simon Peter is, once again, preaching the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter also makes it more than clear the “stone” is the Christ! Jesus said in Matthew, “on this rock I will build My church!” Well, that rock is Him, friends! The “stone” is NOT the church - and the stone is NOT Simon Peter! We’re talking about Jesus Christ of Nazareth Whom God raised from the dead! I’m not sure why people can't get that theology straight – it is definitely lost at every turn these days. Christ has become the Head of the corner. See, the resurrection is absolutely the central theme of any so called “Gospel” preaching – in fact, the resurrection IS the Gospel....

12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

~ His Name was called Jesus because He would save His people from their sins. When you accept that Name, you accept the Person and all that His Name entails. Again, let’s emphasize and make sure we are perfectly clear – because Simon Peter has made it clear, at least, to me he has. When you come to Christ for salvation, there is no other name under Heaven that can save you. The law cannot and will not save you. Religion will never save anyone. Ritual and ceremony and giving and service do NOTHING to save us. Only when you come in faith by His Name are you saved. We have no other place to turn for salvation in this world. Even with all the religions and with all the dogmatism they employ, not a single one offers salvation!

I heard of a preacher who taught the baptismal regeneration; that is, that you had to be baptized to be saved. Well, even in his pathetic dogmatism, when pressed into a corner, he had to admit baptism didn't assure salvation. Now, you can't get much more contradictory than that! If you come to Christ you are saved; and if you reject this teaching of Simon Peter, then you just do not happen to be saved! This is the ONLY guarantee you will ever have. This is a fine but terrifying message Peter concludes with before the Sanhedrin....

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

~ You and I will do well to have a life that, somehow or another, calls attention to Jesus. These bloodhounds of hate knew the apostles had been with Jesus. Even so, they are not moved spiritually – not even a little bit! They're going to clear the courtroom while they have a conference. See, even the stone cold-hearted Sadducee couldn't deny a miracle had been performed. It takes an extremely dead liberal man in the twenty-first century – removed by several thousands of miles and a couple millennia – to deny the miracles done by Jesus and the apostles. The liberal, in the day which we are studying, would have been dismissed of all credibility for denying a miracle had happened....

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

~ The miracle has happened and there's no denying it. The liberal today says, ".... if I could see a miracle happen, I would believe it." Well, no they wouldn't! Jesus could walk across their swimming pool AND turn the pool

water to wine right now and they would deny Him. We're dealing with human nature, friends. Human nature is opposed to God, naturally. The problem with believing in the Lord Jesus Christ being raised from the dead is NOT in the mind – it is in the will of the heart that REFUSES to give up the sins in their lives! It's the HEART that is desperately wicked! The facts are here in the Word of God, but the condition of the human heart and the self-will that goes along with it is simply frightful....

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

~ It is appalling to discover how hard-hearted the men of the Sanhedrin really were. They simply do not care about this poor, sick man whatsoever. The Sadducee's heart was as hard as nails. As we read on, we see Peter and John released and return to the church. When they get there, they have a tremendous meeting. Never has the church been in such a good spiritual condition as it was at this time period we are studying. Never has the church been at such a high level as we see in this passage. The key was their prayerful praise to God. They acknowledged Christ as the Lord their God and Creator. This is something the church today doesn't seem one hundred percent sure of.

The Lord Jesus Christ is God – are you sure about that? It happens to be pretty important to decide. This is where the power of the church goes horribly wrong today; and this failure is the one reason the church is totally ineffective at reaching lost people for Christ! They know how to entertain each other - but have fumbled the ball converting souls - and they aren't sure what to do. The church has more methods, gimmicks and outright tricks to try to bring people in than an insurance salesman. As a result, the church has become nothing more than a religio-social club – particularly this forum on which I teach. The church is no powerhouse of salvation – not even close! Well, this early church was absolutely sure Jesus was God, and they recite the second Psalm in verse twenty-five. This fulfillment of the second Psalm and the hatred it details has been coming down through the ages for two thousand years plus now. It's been a snowball gathering size and momentum and will finally break in a mighty crescendo upon the earth in a final rebellion of man against God....

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

~ I hope you dear readers are as moved by this section of Scripture as I am. This is a great prayer and praise service in which the apostles are of one accord. Perhaps they prayed at different times, but they were all saying, "... A-Men!" Today, the prayer would have been for persecution to cease; but these men are praying ONLY for the Lord their God to give them the strength to endure it. The early church was very close to the Lord, and they had tremendous power from the Holy Spirit as a result....

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,

37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

~ This section of Scripture concerns the condition of the early church. It was powerful and effective; but that power doesn't seem to have lasted very long after Peter was crucified, and John exiled to the Isle of Patmos. Today, the church is in nearly one hundred percent apostasy - although I won't say complete apostasy. In this passage, Peter and John preach the heart of the Gospel – the resurrection. That's the only subject of any sermon found in Acts, by the way - and I can't emphasize that enough. As our Spiritual Safari concludes this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God, we were also introduced to Barnabus. The early church members could give all of their possessions to the church due to the spiritual condition at the time. If we attempted this today, chaos would ensue. Unfortunately, the spiritual condition of the contemporary church is simply dead. Why not be honest and come to terms with Christ and His proclamations? We all need to come into a closer relationship with our Savior once again ~
