***In the Name of Jesus Christ . . . .***

**Summer 2021, Acts 3-4 July 11, 2021**

***“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.”*Acts 4:10-12 (Peter’s third sermon, quoting from Psalm 118:22)**

**A Day in the life . . . .**

1 *One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 2 Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. 4 Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” 5 So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.*

*6 Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” 7 Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. 8 He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. 9 When all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.*

Acts 3:1-9

Four things to observe:

1) Count the “names”

2) When and why do people “leap”? (See Isaiah 35:1-10; John 4:14; Job 6:10)

3) What do you learn about being a witness to Jesus death, resurrection and presence in our lives?

4) How does the Jerusalem church respond to opposition?

**Two sermons, one Name**

12 *When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. 14 You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. 15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. 16 By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see* . . . .”

Acts 3:12-16

8 *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! 9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, 10 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. 11 He is*

*“ ‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’*

*12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*

Acts 4:8-12

1) One God: the Father of our Lord who is the God of Abraham (his promises are ours!)

2) One story: Jesus’ death and resurrection

3) Through faith in this Jesus, healing happens!

**The Prayer**

23 *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. 24 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. 25 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?*

*27 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. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. 29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”*

*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.*

Acts 4:23-31

1) They looked to Scripture for praise and confidence in God’s providence

2) Boldness

**Even more Pentecost lessons for the church today**

1) Prayer is also about when and where

*They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to [the] prayer[s].*

Acts 2:42

*Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.*

Acts 3:1 (ESV)

2) We respond to opposition with praise and with confidence in God’s Creator providence

*12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And,*

*“If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,*

*what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”*

*19 So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.*

1 Peter 4

3) The uniqueness of Jesus’ name

*8 But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 9 That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

Romans 10



**Resources for further studies in Acts**

The Bible Project team has great stuff on Acts at [*https://open.life.church/items/179224-poster-jpg*](https://open.life.church/items/179224-poster-jpg)

Spurgeon has sermons on this text at [***http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols4-6/chs209.pdf***](http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols4-6/chs209.pdf)and, on repentance in Peter’s sermon, at [*http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols13-15/chs804.pdf*](http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols13-15/chs804.pdf)

Jonathan Edwards has a wonderful essay on this text at [*https://www.monergism.com/unbelievers-despise-glory-and-excellency-christ*](https://www.monergism.com/unbelievers-despise-glory-and-excellency-christ)

Deffinbaugh has a helpful introduction at [*https://bible.org/seriespage/unique-contribution-book-acts*](https://bible.org/seriespage/unique-contribution-book-acts )  
and two sermons on this passage in his Acts series at [*https://bible.org/series/studies-book-acts*](https://bible.org/series/studies-book-acts)

Tim Keller has a wonderful sermon at [*https://www.monergism.com/signs-king-%E2%80%93-acts-237-47*](https://www.monergism.com/signs-king-%E2%80%93-acts-237-47)

John Piper has a helpful look at repentance in his “Repentance, Forgiveness and the Gift of the Spirit” at  
[*https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/repentance-forgiveness-and-the-gift-of-the-spirit*](https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/repentance-forgiveness-and-the-gift-of-the-spirit)

I have really appreciated John Stott’s *The Spirit, The Church and the World: The Message of Acts* (IVP, 1990) and F. F. Bruce’s work: *New Testament History* (Doubleday, 1980) and *The Book of the Acts* (Eerdmans, 1984).

Carl Trueman’s conclusion in *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* (Crossway, 2020) influenced my thinking on the church. His third point, the importance of proper natural law thinking, is reflected in Kevin DeYoung’s blog at [*https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/gods-good-gift-in-making-us-men-and-women/*](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/gods-good-gift-in-making-us-men-and-women/)

# Acts Timeline (ESV Study Bible)

# Table Description automatically generated

**THE WAY OF SALVATION**

**NO. 209 at** [***http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols4-6/chs209.pdf***](http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols4-6/chs209.pdf)

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, AUGUST 15, 1858,**

***BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,* AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS**

*“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name*

*under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

*Acts 4:12*

IT is a very happy circumstance when the servants of God are able to turn everything to account in

their ministry. Now the apostle Peter was summoned before the priests and Sadducees, the chief of his

nation, to answer for having restored a man who was lame from his mother’s womb. While accounting

for this case of healing, or if I may use the expression, for this case of temporal salvation, the apostle

Peter had this thought suggested to him, “While I am accounting for the salvation of this man from

lameness, I now have a fine opportunity of showing these people, who otherwise will not listen to us, the

way of the salvation of the soul.”

So he proceeds from the less to the greater, from the healing of a man’s limb to the healing of a

man’s spirit, and having informed them once that it was through the name of Jesus Christ that the

impotent man had been made whole, he now announces that salvation—the great salvation, must be

wrought by the selfsame means, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name

under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

What a great word that word “salvation” is! It includes the cleansing of our conscience from all past

guilt, the delivery of our soul from all those propensities to evil which now so strongly predominate in

us. It takes in, in fact, the undoing of all that Adam did. Salvation is the total restoration of man from his

fallen estate and yet it is something more than that, for God’s salvation fixes our standing more secure

than it was before we fell.

It finds us broken in pieces by the sin of our first parent, defiled, stained, accursed. It first heals our

wounds, it removes our diseases, it takes away our curse, it puts our feet upon the rock Christ Jesus, and

having thus done, at last it lifts our heads far above all principalities and powers, to be crowned forever

with Jesus Christ, the King of heaven.

Some people, when they use the word “salvation” understand nothing more by it than deliverance

from hell and admittance into heaven. Now that is not salvation—those two things are the *effects* of

salvation. We are redeemed from hell because we are saved, and we enter heaven because we have been

saved beforehand. Our everlasting state is the effect of salvation in this life. Salvation, it is true, includes

all that, because salvation is the mother of it and carries it within its bowels, but still it were wrong for

us to imagine that that is all the meaning of the word.

Salvation begins with us as wandering sheep. It follows us through all our mazy wanderings. It puts

us on the shoulders of the shepherd. It carries us into the fold. It calls together the friends and the

neighbors. It rejoices over us. It preserves us in that fold through life. And then, at last, it brings us to the

green pastures of heaven beside the still waters of bliss, where we lie down forever, in the presence of

the Chief Shepherd, never more to be disturbed.

Now our text tells us there is only one way of salvation. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for

there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” I shall take first

of all, *a negative truth taught* here, namely, that there is no salvation out of Christ. And then, secondly, *a*

*positive truth inferred*, namely, that there is salvation in Jesus Christ whereby we must be saved.

**I.** First, then, A NEGATIVE FACT.

“Neither is there salvation in any other.” Did you ever notice the intolerance of God’s religion? In

olden times the heathen, who had different gods, respected the gods of their neighbors. For instance, the

king of Egypt would confess that the gods of Nineveh were true and real gods, and the prince of

Babylon would acknowledge that the gods of the Philistines were true and real gods.

But JEHOVAH, the God of Israel, put this as one of His first commandments, “You shall have none

other gods besides me.” And He would not allow them to pay the slightest possible respect to the gods

of any other nation, “You shall hew them in pieces, you shall break down their temples, and cut down

their groves.” All other nations were tolerant the one to the other, but the Jew could not be so. One part

of his religion was, “Hear, O Israel, the LORD your God is one God.” And as the consequence of his

belief that there was but one God, and that one God was JEHOVAH, he felt it his bounden duty to call

all pretended gods by nicknames, to spit upon them, to treat them with insult and contempt.

Now the Christian religion, you observe, is just as intolerant as this. If you apply to a Brahmin to

know the way of salvation, he will very likely tell you at once, that all persons who follow out their

sincere religious convictions will undoubtedly be saved. “There,” says he, “are the Muslims, if they

obey Mohammed and sincerely believe what he has taught without doubt, Allah will glorify them at

last.” And the Brahmin turns round upon the Christian missionary and says, “What is the use of your

bringing your Christianity here to disturb us? I tell you our religion is quite capable of carrying us to

heaven, if we are faithful to it.”

Now just hear the text, how intolerant is the Christian religion! “Neither is there salvation in any

other.” The Brahmin may admit that there is salvation in fifty religions besides his own, but we admit no

such thing. There is no true salvation out of Jesus Christ. The gods of the heathens may approach us

with their mock charity and tell us that every man may follow out his own conscientious conviction and

be saved. We reply, “No such thing. There is no salvation in any other, “for there is none other name

under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Now, what do you suppose is the reason for this intolerance—if I may use the word again? I believe

it is just because there is the truth both with the Jew and with the Christian. A thousand errors may live

in peace with one another, but truth is the hammer that breaks them all in pieces. A hundred lying

religions may sleep peaceably in one bed, but wherever the Christian religion goes as the truth, it is like

a firebrand, and it abides nothing that is not more substantial than the wood, the hay, and the stubble of

carnal error.

All the gods of the heathen and all other religions are born of hell and therefore, being children of

the same father, it would seem amiss that they should fall out, and chide, and fight. But the religion of

Christ is a thing of God’s—its pedigree is from on high and therefore, when once it is thrust into the

midst of an ungodly and gainsaying generation, it has neither peace, nor parley, nor treaty with them, for

it is truth and cannot afford to be yoked with error. It stands upon its own rights and gives to error its

due, declaring that it has no salvation, but that in the truth, and in the truth alone, is salvation to be

found.

Again it is because we have here the sanction of God. It would be improper in any man who had

invented a creed of his own to state that all others must be damned who do not believe it. That would be

an overwhelming censoriousness and bigotry, at which we might afford to smile. But since this religion

of Christ is revealed from heaven itself, God, who is the author of all truth has a right to append to this

truth the dreadful condition, that who so rejects it shall perish without mercy, and in proclaiming that,

apart from Christ, no man can be saved. We are not really intolerant, for we are but echoing the words of

Him who speaks from heaven, and who declares that cursed is the man who rejects this religion of

Christ, seeing that there is none salvation out of Him. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is

none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Now, I hear one or two persons saying, “Do you imagine then, sir, that none are saved apart from

Christ?” I reply, I don’t imagine it, but I have it here in my text plainly taught*.* “Well but” says one,

“how is it concerning the death of infants? Do not infants die without actual sin? Are they saved? And if

so, how?” I answer, saved they are beyond a doubt, all children dying in infancy are caught away to

dwell in the third heaven of bliss forever. But mark this, no infant was ever saved apart from the death of

Christ. Christ Jesus has bought with His blood all those who die in infancy. They are all regenerated, not

in sprinkling, but probably in the instant of their death a marvelous change passes over them by the

breathing of the Holy Spirit. The blood of Jesus is applied to them and they are washed from all original

corruption which they had inherited from their parents, and thus washed and cleansed, they enter into the

kingdom of heaven.

Otherwise, beloved, infants would be unable to join in the everlasting song, “Unto Him who loved

us and washed us from our sins in His blood.” If infants were not washed in the blood of Christ, they

could not join in that universal song which perpetually surrounds the throne of God. We believe that

they are all saved—every one of them without exception, but not apart from the one great sacrifice of

the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another says, “But how about the heathen? They know not Christ, are any of the heathen saved?”

Mark, Holy Scripture says but very little concerning the salvation of the heathen. There are many texts

in Scripture which would lead us to infer that all the heathen perish. But there are some texts which, on

the other hand, lead us to believe that there are some out of the heathen race who, led by God’s secret

Spirit, are seeking after Him in the dark, endeavoring to find out something they cannot discover in

nature.

And it may be that the God of infinite mercy, who loves His creatures, is pleased to make to them

these revelations in their own heart. Dark and mysterious revelations concerning the things of heaven, so

that even they may be made partakers of the blood of Jesus Christ, without having such an open vision

as we have received, without beholding the cross visibly elevated, and Christ set forth crucified among

them.

It has been observed in many heathen lands that before the missionaries have gone there, there has

been a strong desire after the religion of Christ. In the Sandwich Islands, before our missionaries went

there, there was a strange commotion in the minds of those poor barbarians. They did not know what it

was, but they were all of a sudden discontented with their idolatries and had a longing desire after

something higher, better, and purer than anything they had hitherto discovered. And no sooner was Jesus

Christ preached, than they willingly renounced all their idolatries and laid hold upon Him to be their

strength and their salvation.

Now we believe this was the work of God’s Spirit secretly inclining these poor creatures to seek

after Him. And we cannot tell but that in some sequestered spots where we had thought the Gospel never

has been preached, there may be some lone tract, some chapter of the Bible, some solitary verse of Holy

Writ remembered, which may be sufficient to open blind eyes and to guide poor darkened hearts to the

foot of the cross of Christ.

But this much is certain, no heathen, however moral, whether in the days of their old philosophy or

in the present time of their barbarism, ever did or ever could enter the kingdom of heaven apart from the

name of Jesus Christ. “Neither is their salvation in any other.” A man may seek after it and labor after it

in his own way, but there he cannot possibly find it, “For there is none other name under heaven given

among men, whereby we must be saved.”

But after all, my dear friends, it is a great deal better when we are dealing with these subjects not to

talk upon speculative matters, but to come home personally to ourselves. And let me now ask you this

question, have you ever proved by experience the truth of this great negative fact, that there is none

salvation in any other? I can speak what I do know and testify what I have seen when I solemnly declare

in the presence of this congregation that it is even so.

Once I thought there was salvation in good works and I labored hard and strove diligently to

preserve a character of integrity and uprightness, but when the Spirit of God came into my heart, “sin

revived and I died.” That which I thought had been good, proved to be evil, wherein I thought I had been

holy I found myself to be unholy. I discovered that my very best actions were sinful, that my tears

needed to be wept over, and that my very prayers needed God’s forgiveness. I discovered that I was

seeking after salvation by the works of the law, that I was doing all my good works from a selfish

motive, namely to save myself, and therefore they could not be acceptable to God.

I found out that I could not be saved by good works for two very good reasons. First, I had not got

any, and secondly, if I had any, they could not save me. After that, I thought salvation might be obtained

partly by reformation and partly by trusting in Christ. So I labored hard again and thought if I added a

few prayers here and there, a few tears of penitence, and a few vows of improvement, all would be well.

But after forging on for many a weary day, like a poor blind horse toiling round the mill, I found I

had got no farther, for there was still the curse of God hanging over me, “Cursed is everyone that

continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” And there was still an

aching void in my heart the world could never fill—a void of distress and care, for I was sorely troubled

because I could not attain unto the rest which my soul desired.

Have you tried those two ways of getting to heaven? If you have, I trust the Lord, the Holy Spirit,

has made you heartily sick of them, for you shall never enter the kingdom of heaven by the right door,

until you have first of all been led to confess that all the other doors are barred in your teeth. No man

ever will come to God through the straight and narrow way until he has tried all the other ways, and

when we find ourselves beaten, and foiled, and defeated, then it is, that pressed by sore necessity, we

betake ourselves to the one open fountain and there wash ourselves and are made clean.

Perhaps I have in my presence this morning some who are trying to gain salvation by ceremonies.

You have been baptized in your infancy. You regularly take the Lord’s Supper. You attend your church

or chapel. And if you knew of any other ceremonies, you would attend to them. Ah! my dear friends, all

these things are as the chaff before the wind in the matter of salvation. They cannot help you one step

towards acceptance in the person of Christ. As well might you labor to build your house with water as to

build salvation with such poor things as these.

These are good enough for you when you are saved, but if you seek salvation in them, they shall be

to your soul as wells without water, clouds without rain, and withered trees, twice dead, plucked up by

the roots. Whatever is your way of salvation, for there are a thousand different inventions of men

whereby they seek to save themselves, whatever it may be, hear you its death knell tolled from this

verse, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among

men, whereby we must be saved.”

**II.** Now, this brings me to the POSITIVE FACT which is inferred in the text, namely, that there *is*

salvation in Jesus Christ.

Surely, when I make that simple statement, I might burst forth with the song of the angels and say,

“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will towards men.” Here are a thousand mercies

all bound up in one bundle in this sweet, sweet fact that there is salvation in Jesus Christ. I shall

endeavor now merely to deal with any soul here present who entertains a doubt as to his own salvation

in Jesus Christ. I shall single him out and address him affectionately and earnestly, and endeavor to

show him that he may yet be saved and that in Christ there is salvation for him.

I know you, sinner! You have long been trying to find the road to heaven and you have missed it.

Hitherto you have had a thousand dazzling cheats to deceive you and never yet one solid ground of

comfort for your poor weary foot. And now, encompassed about by your sins, you are not able to look

up. Guilt, like a heavy burden, is on your back and your finger is on your lip, for you dare not cry for

pardon. You are afraid to speak, lest out of your own mouth you should be condemned.

Satan whispers in your ear, “It is all over with you. There is no mercy for such as you are, you are

condemned and condemned you must be. Christ is able to save many, but not to save you.” Poor soul!

What shall I say to you but this—Come with me to the cross of Christ and you shall there see something

which shall remove your unbelief. See you that man nailed to yonder tree? Do you know His character?

He is without spot or blemish, or any such thing. He was no thief, that He should die a felon’s death. He

was no murderer and no assassin, that He should be crucified between two malefactors. No His original

was pure, without a sin and His life was holy, without a flaw. Out of His mouth there proceeded only

blessing. His hands were full of good deeds and His feet were swift for acts of mercy. His heart was

white with holiness. There was nothing in Him that man could blame. Even His enemies, when they

sought to accuse Him, found false witnesses, but even they “agreed not together.”

Do you see Him dying? Sinner, there must be merit in the death of such a man as that, for without

sin Himself, when He is put to grief, it must be for other men’s sins. God would not afflict and grieve

Him when He deserved it not. God is no tyrant that He should crush the innocent. He is not unholy that

He should punish the righteous. He suffered, then, for the sins of others

***“For sins, not His own, He died to atone.”***

Think of the purity of Christ and then see whether there is not salvation in Him. Come now with

your blackness about you and look at His whiteness. Come with your defilement and look at His purity.

And as you look at that purity, like the lily, and you see the crimson of His blood overflowing it, let this

whisper be heard in your ear—He is able to save you, sinner, inasmuch as He was “tempted in all points

like as we are,” yet He was “without sin.” Therefore, the merit of His blood must be great. Oh, may God

help you to believe on Him!

But this is not the grand thing which should recommend Him to you. Remember, He who died upon

the cross was no less than the everlasting Son of God. Do you see Him there? Come, turn your eye once

more to Him. See you His hands and feet trickling with streams of gore? That man is Almighty God.

Those hands that are nailed to the tree are hands that could shake the world. Those feet that are there

pierced have in them, if He willed to put it forth, a potency of strength that might make the mountains

melt beneath their tread. That head, now bowed in anguish and in weakness, has in it the wisdom of the

Godhead and with its nod it could make the universe tremble. He who hangs upon the cross is He

without whom was not anything made that was made, by Him all things consist—Maker, Creator,

Preserver, God of providence, and God of grace—He who died for you is God over all, blessed forever.

And now, sinner, is there any power to save in such a Savior as this? If He were a mere man, a

Socinian’s Christ, or an Arian’s Christ, I would not bid you trust Him. But since He is none other than

God Himself incarnate in human flesh, I beseech you, cast yourself upon Him.

***“He is able,***

***He is willing, doubt no more.”***

“He is able to save unto the uttermost, them that come unto God by him.”

Will you recollect again, as a further consolation for your faith, that you may believe that God the

Father has accepted the sacrifice of Christ? It is the Father’s anger that you have the most cause to dread.

The Father is angry with you, for you have sinned and He has sworn with an oath that He will punish

you for your offenses. Now Jesus Christ was punished in the room, place, and stead of every sinner who

has repented, or ever shall repent. Jesus Christ stood as his Substitute and Scapegoat. God the Father has

accepted Christ in the stead of sinners.

Oh! ought not this lead you to accept Him? If the Judge has accepted the sacrifice, sure you may

accept it too. And if He is satisfied, sure you may be content also. If the creditor has written a full and

free discharge, you, the poor debtor, may rejoice and believe that that discharge is satisfactory to you,

because it is satisfactory to God.

But do you ask me how I know that God has accepted Christ’s atonement? I remind you that Christ

rose again from the dead. Christ was put into the prison-house of the tomb after He died and there He

waited until God should have accepted the atonement

***“If Jesus ne’er had paid the debt,***

***He ne’er had been at freedom set.”***

Christ would have been in the tomb this very day if God had not accepted His atonement for our

justification. But the Lord looked down from heaven and He surveyed the work of Christ, and said

within Himself, “It is very good. It is enough.” And turning to an angel, He said, “Angel, My Son is

confined in prison, a hostage for My elect. He has paid the price. I know He will not break the prison

down Himself—go, angel, go and roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher and set Him at

liberty.” Down flew the angel and rolled away the massive stone. And rising from the shades of death,

the Savior lived. “He died and rose again for our justification.” Now, poor soul, you see God has

accepted Christ, surely then, you may accept Him and believe on Him.

Another argument which may perhaps come nearer to your own soul is this—many have been saved

who were as vile as you are and therefore, there is salvation. “No,” you say, “none are so vile as I am.”

It is a mercy that you think so, but nevertheless it is quite certain that others have been saved, who have

been as filthy as yourself.

Have you been a persecutor? “Yes,” you say. Ay, but you have not been more blood-thirsty than

Saul! And yet that chief of sinners became the chief of saints. Have you been a swearer? Have you

cursed the Almighty to His face? Ay, and such were some of us who now lift up our voices in prayer and

approach His throne with acceptance. Have you been a drunkard? Ay, and so have many of God’s

people been for many a day and many a year, but they have forsaken their filthiness and they have

turned unto the Lord with full purpose of heart.

However great your sin, I tell you, man, there have been some saved as deep in sin as you are. And if

none have been saved, who are such great sinners as you are, so much the more reason why God should

save you, that He may go beyond all that He ever has done. The Lord always delights to be doing

wonders. And if you stand the chief of sinners, a little ahead of all the rest, I believe He will delight to

save you, that the wonders of His love and His grace may be the more manifestly known.

Do you still say that you are the chief of sinners? I tell you I do not think it. The chief of sinners was

saved years ago, that was the apostle Paul, but even if you should exceed him, still that word “uttermost”

goes a little beyond you. “He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him.”

Recollect, sinner, if you do not find salvation in Christ, it will be because you do not look for it, for it

certainly is there. If you shall perish without being saved through the blood of Christ, it will not be

through a want of power in that blood to save you, but entirely through a want of will on your part—

even that you will not believe on Him, but do wantonly and willfully reject His blood to your own

destruction. Take heed to yourself, for as surely as there is salvation in none other, so surely there is

salvation in Him.

I could turn to you myself and tell you that surely there must be salvation in Christ for you, since I

have found salvation in Christ for myself. Often have I said I will never doubt the salvation of anyone,

as long as I can but know that Christ has accepted me. Oh! how dark was my despair when I first sought

His mercy seat. I thought then that if He had mercy on all the world, yet He would never have mercy on

me. The sins of my childhood and my youth haunted me. I sought to get rid of them one by one, but I

was caught as in an iron net of evil habits and I could not overthrow them. Even when I could renounce

my sin, yet the guilt still clinged to my garments. I could not wash myself clean. I prayed for three long

years, I bent my knees in vain and sought, but found no mercy.

But at last, blessed be His name, when I had given up all hope, and thought that His swift anger

would destroy me and that the pit would open its mouth and swallow me up, then in the hour of my

extremity did He manifest Himself to me and teach me to cast myself simply and wholly upon Him. So

shall it be with you, only trust Him, for there is salvation in Him, rest assured of that.

To quicken your diligence, however, I will conclude by noting that if you do not find salvation in

Christ, remember you will never find it elsewhere. What a dreadful thing it will be for you if you should

lose the salvation provided by Christ! For “How shall you escape if you neglect so great a salvation?”

Today, very probably, I am not speaking to very many of the grossest of sinners, yet I know I am

speaking to some even of that class. But whether we are gross sinners or not, how fearful a thing it will

be for us to die without first having found an interest in the Savior!

Oh sinner! This should quicken you in going to the mercy seat, this thought that if you find no mercy

at the feet of Jesus, you can never find it anywhere else. If the gates of heaven shall never open to you,

remember there is none other gate that ever can be opened for your salvation. If Christ refuses you, you

are refused. If His blood is not sprinkled on you, you are lost indeed.

Oh! if He keeps you waiting a little while, still continue in prayer. It is worth waiting for, especially

when you have this thought to keep you waiting, namely, that there is none other, no other way, no other

hope, no other ground of trust, no other refuge.

There I see the gate of heaven and if I must enter it, I must creep on my hands and knees, for it is a

low gate. There I see it, it is a straight and narrow one, I must leave my sins behind me and my proud

righteousness, and I must creep in through that wicket. Come sinner, what do you say? Will you go

beyond this straight and narrow gate, or will you despise eternal life and risk eternal bliss? Or will you

go through it humbly hoping that He who gave Himself for you will accept you in Himself and save you

now and save you everlastingly?

May these few words have power to draw some to Christ and I am content. “Believe on the Lord

Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

# Unbelievers Despise the Glory and Excellency of Christ

### by Jonathan Edwards, May, 1736 at [*https://www.monergism.com/unbelievers-despise-glory-and-excellency-christ*](https://www.monergism.com/unbelievers-despise-glory-and-excellency-christ)

### "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders.**" -- Acts 4:11**

Subject: Unbelievers set nothing by all the glory and excellency that is in Christ.

In the foregoing chapters we have an account of the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, and of its extraordinary effects in their speaking boldly in the name of Jesus, and speaking many strange languages, and so being made the instruments of the sudden conversion of vast multitudes. And in the chapter immediately preceding, there is an account how Peter and John miraculously healed a man who had been a cripple from his birth; which, together with the word which they spake to the people that flocked together on the occasion, was the means of a new accession to the church; so that the number of them that heard the word believed , as we are told in the fourth verse of this chapter, was about five thousand.

This sudden and extraordinary progress of the gospel greatly alarmed the priests and scribes, and other chief men among the Jews; so that they laid hands on Peter and John, and put them in hold, and the next day brought them forth to appear before them, and called them to an account for what they had done. They asked them particularly by what power, or by what name, they had wrought the miracle on the impotent man. Upon which Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, makes answer, “Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, — Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner.” The apostle quotes to them as now fulfilled, Psa. 118:22, “The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner.” This text, in that psalm, the apostle applies by telling them:

I. That This is the stone, i.e. this person of whom he had spoken in the foregoing verse, viz. Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and whom God had raised from the dead.

II. That they were the builders spoken of. They before whom the apostle then was, and to whom he was speaking, were rulers, and elders, and scribes of the people, the high priest and other priests. They, as they were set to be rulers and teachers among God’s people, by their office, were called to be builders of the church of God.

III. That they set this stone at nought. They had so done by refusing to accept of him. Christ came to his own, and his own received him not. And not only so, but they had openly manifested the greatest contempt of him. They had mocked him, scourged and spit upon him, and in derision crowned him with a crown of thorns, and arrayed him in a mock robe, and then had put him to a most ignominious death.

IV. That notwithstanding this, he was become the head of the corner. In spite of all that they could do, he had obtained the chief place in the building. God had made him the main foundation of it, by raising him from the dead, and so putting great honor upon him; by pouring out his Spirit, and enduing his disciples with extraordinary gifts; by suddenly converting so many thousands to be the followers of Christ. — They put him to death, that he might have no followers, concluding that that would utterly put an end to his interest in Judea. But they were greatly disappointed. For the gospel had incomparably greater success after Christ’s death than before. God had accomplished that very thing which they endeavored to prevent by Christ’s crucifixion, viz. Christ’s being believed in and submitted to, as the great prophet of God, and prince of his people.

**DOCTRINE**

Unbelievers set at nought the glory and excellency in Christ.

I. They set at nought the excellency of his person. — Christ is a great and glorious person, a person of infinite worthiness, on which account he is infinitely esteemed and loved of the Father, and is continually adored by the angels. But unbelievers have no esteem at all for him on that account. They have no value for him on account of his being the Son of God. He is not set the higher in their esteem on the account of his standing in so near and honorable a relation to God the Father. He is not valued at all the more for his being a divine person. By his having the divine nature, he is infinitely exalted above all created beings. But he is not at all exalted by it in their esteem. They set nothing by his infinite majesty. His glorious brightness and greatness excite not any true respect or reverence in them.

Christ is the holy One of God. He is so holy that the heavens are not pure in his sight. He is possessed of all that holiness which is the infinite beauty and loveliness of the divine nature. But an unbeliever sets nothing by the holiness of Christ. — Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God, 1 Cor. 1:24. But an unbeliever sets nothing by his power and wisdom. The Lord Jesus Christ is full of grace and mercy. The mercy and love of God appear no where else so brightly and gloriously as they do in the face of Jesus Christ. — But an unbeliever sets no value at all upon the infinite grace of Christ.

Neither do unbelievers set anything by those excellent virtues which appeared in Christ’s human nature when he was upon earth. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He was meek and lowly of heart. He was patient under affliction and injuries. When he was reviled, he reviled not again. But unbelievers set nothing by these things in Jesus Christ. — They very often hear how excellent and glorious a person Christ is. They are told of his holiness, and grace, and condescension, and meekness, and have the excellencies of Christ plainly set forth to them; yet they set all at nought.

II. They set at nought his excellency in his work and office. They are told how glorious and complete a mediator he is, how sufficient to answer all our necessities, and to save sinners to the uttermost. But they make light of it all; yea, they make nothing of it. They hear of the wonderful wisdom of God in contriving such a way of salvation by Christ. They have the manifold wisdom of God set forth to them. But they make no account of the excellency of this way of salvation.

The unbeliever hears what a wonderful thing it was, that he who was in the form of God, and esteemed it no robbery to be equal with God, should take upon him the human nature, and come and live in this world in a mean and low condition. — But he makes nothing of this. He hears much of the dying love of Christ to sinners, how wonderful it was that so glorious a person, who is infinitely above the angels, should so set his love on such worms of the dust, as to come and be made a curse for them, and die a cruel and ignominious death in their stead. But he sets nothing by all this. This dying love of Christ is of no account with him. Those great things that Christ hath done and suffered are with him light matters.

Unbelievers not only set little by the glory and excellency of Christ, but they set nothing by these things. Notwithstanding all the shows and pretenses which many natural men make of respect to Christ, by speaking honorably of him in their prayers, and in their common conversation, and by coming to sacraments, and attending other ordinances of Christ; yet indeed they do not set so much by all the glory and excellency of Christ — either of his person, or of his work as a Savior — as they do by the smallest earthly enjoyment.

I proceed now to mention some evidences of the truth of this doctrine.

First, they never give Christ any honor on account of his glory and excellency. They may, and often do, pay Christ an external and seeming respect; but they do not honor him in their hearts. They have no exalting thoughts of Christ, no inward respect or reverence towards him. All their outward worship is only feigned; none of it arises from any real honor or respect in their hearts towards Christ. It is either only for fashion’s sake, and in compliance with custom, or else it is forced, and what they are driven to by fear, as we read, Psa. 66:3, “Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.” In the original it is, shall thine enemies lie unto thee, i.e. yield a feigned obedience. Through the greatness of Christ’s power, and for fear of his wrath, his enemies who have no respect or honor for him in their hearts, will lie to him, and make a show of respect when they have none.

An unbeliever is not sensible that Christ is worthy of any glory, and therefore does not at all seek the glory of Christ in anything that he does. He does nothing in religion out of respect to Christ’s glory, but wholly for other ends; which shows that he sees not Christ to be worthy of any glory. — Christ is set last and lowest in the heart of an unbeliever. — He has high thoughts of other things. He has high thoughts of created objects and earthly enjoyments, but mean and low thoughts of Christ.

The unbeliever shows the mean and contemptible thoughts that he has of Christ, in refusing to accept of him, and in shutting the door of his heart against him. Christ stands at the door and knocks, and sometimes stands many years knocking at the door of his heart, but he refuses to open to him. — Now it certainly shows that men have a very mean thought of a person, when they shut him out of their doors. Unbelievers show the mean and dishonorable thoughts they have of Christ, in that they dare not trust him. They believe not what he says to be true. They will not trust the word of Christ, so far as the word of one of their honest neighbors, or of a servant whom they have found to be faithful. It also appears that they have no real honor for Christ in the hearts, in that they refuse to obey his commands. They do nothing from a spirit of obedience to him. And that external obedience which they render is but a forced, feigned obedience, and not from any respect to Christ’s authority or worthiness to be obeyed.

Second, they have no love to him on account of his glory and excellency. If they saw any excellency in Christ, they would have some measure of love to him. But the truth is, they see no form or comeliness in Christ, and hence they have no love at all to him. An unbeliever never exercises one act of true love to Christ. All that he is told of his divine perfections, of his holiness, his meekness, and grace, has no influence at all to draw forth any love. The display of these things doth no more draw forth love out of the heart of an unbeliever than it draws forth love from the stones and rocks.

A natural man hath no love of benevolence towards Christ. Notwithstanding all that is declared to him of the excellency of Christ, he has no good-will toward him. He rejoices not in his glory and happiness. He would not care what became of Christ, if he could but escape hell. If Christ should be dethroned, or should cease to be, he has not so much goodwill to Christ, as would make him concerned about it. And if the kingdom and interest of Christ in the world should go to ruin, it would be nowise grievous to the unbeliever, provided his own interest could be secure.

So also an unbeliever has no love of complacency in Jesus Christ for his excellency. He takes no delight in the consideration of that excellency of Christ of which he is told. — He is told that it is exceedingly beautiful and glorious. But the thoughts of the glory of Christ are nowise entertaining to him. He has no delight in the thoughts of it, or in any contemplations upon it. He takes delight in thinking of earthly objects. But when he comes to turn his mind upon Jesus Christ, if ever he so does, this is to him a dry and barren subject; he finds nothing there to feed and delight his soul; no beauty or loveliness to please or gratify him

Third, unbelievers have no desires after the enjoyment of Christ. If they did set anything by the excellency of Christ, they would have some desires after him on account of that excellency; especially when he is offered to them, and is from time to time set forth as the proper object of their choice and desires. That which men prize, they are wont to desire, especially if it be represented to them as attainable, and as fit and suitable for them. But unbelievers only desire to be delivered from hell, but not to enjoy Christ.

They cannot conceive what happiness there can be in beholding Christ and being with him, in seeing his holiness, and contemplating his wonderful grace and divine glory. They have no relish for any such thing, nor appetite after it.

Fourth, they show that they set at nought the glory and excellency of Christ, in that they seek not a conformity to that glory and excellency. A natural man may seek to be holy, but it is not for holiness’ sake, it is only that he may escape wrath. He has no desires after holiness, nor is it indeed holiness that he seeks, because he is all the while an enemy to holiness. A natural man has no desires to have his soul conformed to the glorious beauty and excellency of Christ, nor to have his image upon him.

If he prized or delighted in the excellencies of Christ, he would necessarily desire to be like him so far as he could. — This we see in ourselves and in all men. When we see any qualifications in others that are pleasing to us, it is natural for us to endeavor to imitate, and to be conformed to those persons. Hence men are apt to learn of those for whom they have a great esteem; they naturally fall into an imitation of their ways and manner of behavior. But natural men feel within themselves no disposition or inclination to learn of Christ, or to imitate him. Their tempers and dispositions remain quite contrary to Christ’s. Neither do they grow at all better or more conformed to him, but rather worse. 2 Tim. 3:13, “Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.”

**APPLICATION**

I. This doctrine may teach us the heinousness of the sin of unbelief, as this sin sets all the glory and excellency of Christ at nought. It often appears strange to natural men, that unbelief should be spoken of as such a heinous and crying sin. They cannot see such evil in it. There are other sins which often trouble their consciences, when this troubles them not at all, though it be that which brings far greater guilt upon them, than those sins about which they are more troubled.

What has been said may show why unbelief is spoken of as a heinous sin, John 3:18, and Chap. 16:9, and 1 John 5:10. For thereby all the glory of Christ is set at nought, though it be so great, though it be infinite, though it be the glory of the Godhead itself, and though it has been so gloriously manifested in what Christ has done and suffered. Natural men, in their unbelief, cast contempt on all this glory, and tread it under foot, as being nothing worth. Their unbelief treats the excellency of Christ as being of less value than the meanest earthly enjoyments.

II. This doctrine may convict natural men in four particulars.

First, hereby you may be convinced of the greatness of your guilt. Consider how great and excellent that Person is, whom you thus set at nought. Contempt of any person is heinous in proportion to the worthiness and dignity of the person contemned. Though we are but worms of the dust, and very vile, sinful creatures; yet we take it grievously when we are despised. Consider how you yourselves are ready to resent it, when any of your neighbors seem to slight you, and set light by what you say and do, and to make no account of it, but to treat you as if you were good for nothing, or not worth minding. Do you take this well of your neighbors and equals, when you observe anything of this nature? Are you not ready to look upon it with resentment, to think very ill, and to judge that you have great cause to be offended?

But if it be such a crime to despise you and set you at nought, what is it to set at nought the eternal infinitely glorious Son of God, in comparison with whom you and all nations are nothing, and less than nothing, and vanity? You dislike it much to be contemned by your equals. But you would take it yet more grievously to be despised by your inferiors, by those whom, on every account, you must excel, — What a crime is it then for a vile, sinful worm, to set at nought him who is the brightness of the glory of the King of kings!

It would be a crime inexpressibly heinous, to set little by the glory and excellency of such a person. But it is more so, to set nothing at all by it, as you do. You have no value at all for it, as has been shown. And this is the more aggravated, as Christ is a person whom you so much need, and as he came into the world out of infinite grace to sinners, to lay down his life to deliver them from hell, and purchase for them eternal glory. How much has Christ done and suffered, that you might have opportunity to be saved! Yet you set nothing by the blood of Christ, even that blood that was shed for such poor sinners as you are, and that is offered to you for your salvation. But you trample under foot the blood of the Son of God. If Christ had come into the world only to teach us, it would have been a heinous thing to trample under foot his word and instructions. But when he came to die for us, how much more heinous is it to trample under foot his blood!

Men take it hardly to have any of their qualifications or actions despised, which they esteem commendable. But especially do they highly resent it when others slight their kindness. And above all when they put themselves out of their way, and have denied themselves, and suffered considerably to do others a kindness; then to have their kindness despised and set at nought, is what men would above all things resent. How heinous then is it, and how exceedingly provoking to God must it be, thus to set at nought so great kindness and love of Christ, when from love to sinners he suffered so much!

Consider how highly the angels, who are so much above you, do set by the glory and excellency of Christ. They admire and adore the glory of Christ, and cease not day nor night to praise the same in the most exalted strains. Rev. 5:11, 12, “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing”. The saints admire the excellency of Christ, and the glorious angels admire it, and every creature in heaven and earth, but only you unbelieving children of men.

Consider not only how much the angels set by the glory of Christ, but how much God himself sets by it; for he is the darling of heaven, he was eternally God’s delight; and because of his glory God hath thought him worthy to be appointed the heir of all things, and hath seen fit to ordain that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. — Is he thus worthy of the infinite esteem and love of God himself? And is he worthy of no esteem from you?

Second, hereby you may be convinced of your danger. You must needs think that such guilt will bring great wrath. Dreadful destruction is denounced in Scripture against those that despise only the disciples of Christ, Mat. 18:6. What destruction then will come on them that despise all the glorious excellency of Christ himself ?

Consider that you not only have no value for all the glory and excellency of Christ; but you are enemies to him on that very account. The very ground of that enmity and opposition which there is between your hearts and Jesus Christ, is the glorious perfections and excellencies that there are in Jesus Christ. By being such a holy and excellent Savior, he is contrary to your lusts and corruptions. If there were a Savior offered to you that was agreeable to your corrupt nature, such a Savior you would accept. But Christ being a Savior of such purity, holiness, and divine perfection, this is the cause why you have no inclination to him, but are offended in him.

Instead of being a precious stone in your eyes, he is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to you. That he is a Savior who hath manifested such divine perfections in what he hath done and suffered, is one principal reason why you set nothing by him. Consider how provoking this must needs be to God the Father, who has given his only-begotten Son for your salvation; and what wrath it merits from the Son whom you thus treat. And consider how you will hereafter bear this wrath.

Consider that, however Christ be set at nought by you, he shall be the head of the corner. Though you set him low, yet he shall be exalted even with respect to you. It is but a vain thing for you to make light of Christ and treat him with contempt. How much soever you contemn him, you cannot break his bands asunder, nor cast his cords from you. You will still be in his hands. While you despise Christ, God will despise you, and the Lord will have you in derision. God will set his King on his holy hill of Zion in spite of all his enemies; Psa 2:1-6. Though you say, We will not have this man to reign over us, yet Christ will rule over you; Psa 110:2, “Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.” If you will not submit to the scepter of his grace, you shall be subject to the rod of his wrath, and he will rule you with a rod of iron; Psa 2:9-12.

Third, you may hence be led to see how worthless many of those things in yourselves are, that you have been ready to make much of. Particularly, if you set nothing by all the glory of Christ, what are those desires that you have after Christ good for? And that willingness that you think you find to come to Christ? Sinners are often wont to excuse themselves in their unbelief, because they see not but that they are willing to come to Christ and would gladly come to him if they could. And they make much of such desires, as though God were unjust to punish them for not coming to Christ, when they would gladly come if they could. But this doctrine shows that your willingness and desires to come to Christ are not worthy to be mentioned as any excuse. For they are not from any respect to Christ, but are merely forced. You at the same time set nothing by all his excellency and glory.

So you may hence learn the worthlessness of all your pains and endeavors after Christ. When sinners have taken a great deal of pains to get an interest in Christ, they are wont to make a righteousness of it; little considering that at the very time they are taking so much pains, they set nothing at all by Christ for any glory or excellency there is in him; but set him wholly at nought, and seek him out of respect to their own interest.

Fourth, hence learn how justly God might forever refuse to give you an interest in Christ. For why should God give you any part or interest in him whom you set at nought, all whose glory and excellency you value not in the least, but rather trample it under your feet.

Why should God give you any interest in him whom you so despise? Seeing you despise him, how justly might you be obliged to go without any interest in him! How justly might you be refused any part in that precious stone, whose preciousness you esteem no more than that of the stones of the street! Is God obliged to cast such a pearl before swine who will trample it under their feet? Is God obliged to make you possessors of his infinitely glorious and dear Son, when at the same time you count him not worth the having, for the sake of any worth or excellency that there is in him; but merely because you cannot escape hell without him?

# The First Opposition (Acts 4:1-31)

Deffinbaugh at [*https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31*](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31 )

### Introduction[1](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P10_158)

For 40 days after His resurrection, the risen Lord Jesus appeared to men in very convincing ways. He particularly ministered to His disciples, for they would play a key role in His on-going ministry in and through the church. He spoke with them about the kingdom of heaven and told them to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit. He commissioned them to be His witnesses when they were clothed with power from on high. Then Pentecost came, and the Spirit came in great power. Peter’s preaching produced 3,000 converts. As a result of the healing of the man who was lame from his mother’s womb, Peter seized another opportunity to preach the gospel to those who had gathered.

[Acts 3](javascript:%7b%7d) ends somewhat abruptly, for we are not yet given any indication of the impact of Peter’s message in the temple precincts. [Acts 4](javascript:%7b%7d) begins with a strong and sudden reaction, especially from those who were Sadducees. This is the first instance of opposition and persecution in the Book of Acts. It should not, however, come as a surprise, to us or to the apostles. Jesus had forewarned the disciples that persecution was coming. Men would react to the apostles and their teaching because they had rejected Jesus and His teaching:

18 “If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you do not belong to the world, but I chose you out of the world, for this reason the world hates you. 20 Remember what I told you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they obeyed my word, they will obey yours too. 21 But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me” ([John 15:18-21](javascript:%7b%7d)).[2](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P14_2533)

11 “But when they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you should make your defense or what you should say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you must say” ([Luke 12:11-12](javascript:%7b%7d)).

12 But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you, handing you over to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. 13 This will be a time for you to serve as witnesses. 14 Therefore be resolved not to rehearse ahead of time how to make your defense. 15 For I will give you the words along with the wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict ([Luke 21:12-15](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Among other things, our text has much to teach us about opposition and persecution. But there is much more to it than that, as I hope to demonstrate in this lesson. Let us listen carefully to the words of our text, for it clearly declares the gospel, and it models the boldness and confidence which we should have as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission.

#### A Mixed Response [Acts 4:1-4](javascript:%7b%7d)

*1 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests and the commander of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, 2 [greatly annoyed]**[3](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P20_4669) because they were teaching the people and announcing in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3 So they seized them and put them in jail until the next day (for it was already evening). 4 But many of those who had listened to the message believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.*

Luke begins by describing the response of the opposition to the preaching of Peter. The priests, the commander of the temple guard, and the Sadducees all “**came up to them**,” “**greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead**.” These seem to be the folks who would have been present at the time Peter began to preach to the crowd. Most likely, they embraced the theology of the Sadducees. This means that they did not believe in the supernatural, in angels, or in the resurrection of the dead (see [Acts 23:6-8](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Two things “**greatly annoyed**” these Sadducees. First, they were annoyed that these unauthorized men were teaching the people in the temple precincts. In the minds of the priests and the Sadducees, this was their turf, and they had not authorized anyone to come and preach there without authorization. It was like setting up business without obtaining a permit to do so. The religious establishment had a monopoly on what took place here.

Secondly, the establishment was “**greatly annoyed**” because of the content of the teaching that was done on their turf. They were distressed because the resurrection of the dead was being taught. This was something the Sadducees did not believe, and thus they did not want the people taught that the dead would rise. Even more than this, Peter and John were proclaiming the resurrection of the dead “***in Jesus***” (verse 2). The dead would rise again, Peter and John proclaimed, because Jesus had risen from the dead. The implications of this were staggering to those Sadducees who had rejected Jesus and taken part in His death.

Because of the intensity of their opposition, I believe the rendering “**came up to them**” in verse one is an understatement. They came stomping up[4](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P25_7054) to Peter and John, seizing them and putting them in jail for the night. It was already evening, so they would hold them in confinement until they could hear their case in the morning. We might therefore expect that when these religious leaders authoritatively pushed their way through the crowds, seized Peter and John, and led them off to jail, that those in the crowd would be reluctant to identify with Jesus and His apostles. Such was not the case, however. In spite of the opposition, Luke informs us that many more came to faith as a result of this miracle and the preaching of the apostles, preaching for which they were arrested. Now there are 5,000 men in Jerusalem who have come to faith.

In [Acts 2:41](javascript:%7b%7d), Luke informs us that 3,000 people came to faith on the day of Pentecost. Here, Luke tells us that the number of believers has grown to 5,000 *men*. Thus, the total number of believers would seem to be even greater than 5,000. It is possible that more came to faith in [Acts 4](javascript:%7b%7d), in spite of the opposition, than came to faith in [Acts 2](javascript:%7b%7d), where there was no opposition. The lesson here should be clear: opposition to the gospel does not hinder evangelism when the gospel is boldly and clearly proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### A Challenge and a Bold Response [Acts 4:5-12](javascript:%7b%7d)

*5 On the next day, their rulers, elders, and experts in the law came together in Jerusalem. 6 Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and others who were members of the high priest’s family. 7 After making Peter and John stand in their midst, they began to inquire, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, replied, “Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are being examined today for a good deed done to a sick man—by what means this man was healed— 10 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, this man stands before you healthy. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, that has become the cornerstone [*[*Psalm 118:22*](javascript:%7b%7d)*]. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved”* ([Acts 4:5-12](javascript:%7b%7d)).

### Observations

*Our first observation in these verses is that this is the account of a closed door confrontation.* In [Acts 2](javascript:%7b%7d) and 3, the gospel is proclaimed in the open. Here, Peter and John are brought before the Sanhedrin to give account for their preaching. Either Peter or John must have been the source of some of this information, but even they were not present when the members of the Sanhedrin conferred privately, behind closed doors ([Acts 4:15-17](javascript:%7b%7d)). Some information in this account would therefore appear to have been divinely revealed. No doubt, the church, composed primarily of new believers, looked on with great interest as Peter and John were seized and hauled off to jail and then brought before the Sanhedrin the next morning to stand trial. They must have waited with great interest to learn what had happened, and the outcome of it all.

*Our next observation should be the identity of those who opposed Peter and John in verses five and six of our text*. Luke is very specific as to the identity of those before whom Peter and John stood:

5 On the next day, their rulers, elders, and experts in the law came together in Jerusalem. 6 Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and others who were members of the high priest’s family ([Acts 4:5-6](javascript:%7b%7d)).

These are the very same men who, just a couple of months earlier, had Jesus arrested, tried Him before the Sanhedrin, and then demanded that He be executed.

57 Now the ones who had arrested Jesus led him to Caiaphas, the high priest, in whose house the experts in the law and the elders had gathered. 58 But Peter was following him from a distance, all the way to the high priest’s courtyard. After going in, he sat with the guards to see the outcome. 59 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were trying to find false testimony against Jesus so that they could put him to death ([Matthew 26:57-59](javascript:%7b%7d))

1 Early in the morning, after forming a plan, the chief priests with the elders and the experts in the law and the whole Sanhedrin tied Jesus up, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate ([Mark 15:1](javascript:%7b%7d); see also [Luke 22:66-23:1](javascript:%7b%7d); [John 18:12-28](javascript:%7b%7d)).

These are the most powerful Jews in all of Israel. [Acts 4:5-6](javascript:%7b%7d) is the “Who’s Who” of Judaism in that day. These are men who would settle for nothing less than the death of Jesus. There was no reason to assume that they were not just as committed to kill those who preached the resurrection in Jesus.

*A third observation is that I believe our text indicates the Jewish religious leaders did not immediately recognize Peter and John as disciples of our Lord.* Notice carefully the way Luke has written verse 13:

When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and discovered that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized these men had been with Jesus ([Acts 4:13](javascript:%7b%7d), NET Bible).

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 ([Acts 4:13](javascript:%7b%7d), NASB, emphasis mine).

The imperfect tense is used to convey past action in a variety of ways. Here, I believe the translators of the NASB have rightly captured the inference of the imperfect tense when they rendered, “**began to recognize**,” rather than merely “recognized.”[5](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P41_13598) We must remember that the top religious leaders would have had little or no direct contact with the disciples of Jesus. They fled at the time of our Lord’s arrest ([Matthew 26:6](javascript:%7b%7d)). It was even necessary for the religious leaders to have Judas present to identify Jesus at the time of His arrest ([Acts 1:16](javascript:%7b%7d); [Matthew 26:48](javascript:%7b%7d)). It would thus appear that initially Peter and John were simply viewed as two unauthorized men, authoritatively teaching that the dead are raised on account of Jesus. Peter’s preaching was so powerful and so skillful that they would not have known he was not trained in a religious school. They seem shocked to learn who Peter and John are.

*Fourth, I believe that the intent of the Jewish religious elite was to so intimidate Peter and John that they would be permanently silenced.* We should recall from the gospel accounts that the religious leaders had great authority, and that the people (even those in leadership) greatly feared them:

11 So the Jewish leaders were looking for him at the feast, asking, “Where is he?” 12 There was a lot of grumbling about him among the crowds. Some were saying, “He is a good man,” but others, “He deceives the common people.” 13 However, no one spoke openly about him for fear of the Jewish leaders ([John 7:11-13](javascript:%7b%7d)).

20 So his parents replied, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. 21 But we do not know how he is now able to see, nor do we know who caused him to see. Ask him, he is a mature adult. He will speak for himself.” 22 (His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jewish religious leaders. For the Jewish leaders had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. 23 For this reason his parents said, “He is a mature adult, ask him.”) ([John 9:20-23](javascript:%7b%7d))

42 Nevertheless, even among the rulers many believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they would not confess Jesus to be the Christ, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue ([John 12:42](javascript:%7b%7d)).

38 After this, Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus (but secretly, because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission, so he went and took the body away ([John 19:38](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Peter and John were abruptly interrupted and hauled off to jail. The next morning they were brought before the highest Jewish court in the land. This was the court that found Jesus guilty of blasphemy and which managed to accomplish the crucifixion of Jesus, even though Pilate was intending to release Him ([Acts 3:13](javascript:%7b%7d)). They purposely put Peter and John in their midst, so that they were encircled by their accusers. It was all about intimidation. They employed “shock and awe” tactics, expecting to silence these two, just as they had silenced countless others who disagreed with them.

*Fifth, observe how they carefully crafted their question to Peter and John:* “**By what power or by what name did you do this?**” (verse 7) They carefully avoid naming the miracle, even though it is an undisputed fact (verses 14-16). Neither do they mention Jesus, His resurrection, nor their teaching on the resurrection. I believe their hope is that Peter and John will “get the message,” recant, and slip away in silence.

*Sixth, we should observe that Peter’s response is that of a man who is* ***“filled with the Holy Spirit****”* (verse 8).I take it this means that God gave special enablement to Peter at that moment to answer the accusations of the enemies of the cross. This is just as our Lord had promised:

12 But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you, handing you over to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. 13 This will be a time for you to serve as witnesses. 14 Therefore be resolved not to rehearse ahead of time how to make your defense. 15 For I will give you the words along with the wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict ([Luke 21:12-15](javascript:%7b%7d)).

*Seventh, observe that there is an implied link between the power of the apostles and the resurrection of Jesus.* Peter makes it clear that the lame man was healed in the name of Jesus. He also makes it clear that Jesus has been raised from the dead. Who could doubt the power of one who was raised from the dead? I am fascinated by Herod’s response to the reports of Jesus’ words and deeds after the death of John the Baptist:

1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard reports about Jesus, 2 and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead! And because of this, miraculous powers are at work in him” ([Matthew 14:1-2](javascript:%7b%7d); see also [Luke 9:7-9](javascript:%7b%7d)[6](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P53_18570)).

Herod is no saint, and no theologian. Yet somehow he concludes that Jesus is really John the Baptist raised from the dead. John the Baptist performed no miracles in his earthly ministry ([John 10:41](javascript:%7b%7d)), and yet when Jesus began to minister in great power, Herod assumed it was John, raised from the dead. I find that fascinating.

### Peter Turns the Tables

Are these fellows ever in for a surprise! Peter and John do not cower in fear, but courageously turn the tables on their opponents. The very things that appear to give the Sanhedrin the advantage suddenly work against them. First, Peter points out the incongruity between their actions and the religious leaders’ reaction. Since when is it a crime to do something kind for one in need? What charges can possibly be made against them for helping a lame man to walk? (It is the Jewish leaders who “do not have a leg to stand on” here!) Next, Peter’s response raises the question of why they are brought for trial before such an esteemed group. The Supreme Court of the United States does not hear traffic cases, so why is the Sanhedrin ruling on the actions of Peter and John?

These men have made it abundantly clear to Peter and John that they are “in charge.” They are the leaders. Peter begins by acknowledging this fact: “**Rulers of the people and elders . . .**” (verse 8). The fact that they are leaders makes their guilt even greater. These men were the leaders who rejected Jesus as the Messiah and orchestrated His death:

10 “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, this man stands before you healthy. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, that has become the cornerstone” ([Acts 4:10-11](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Here is Peter’s bold and direct answer to the question these leaders have raised. By whose power[7](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P60_20710) has this man been healed? He was healed by the power of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene.[8](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P61_20873) This Jesus is the One they, as Israel’s religious leaders, crucified. God raised Jesus from the dead. And it is through the name of Jesus that this man, who was lame for “**forty years**,” now stands before them. Whether the healed man was arrested with Peter and John, whether he was summoned independently, or whether he came on his own, we are not told. But we do know that he “stood” there in their midst. He was healed, and Jesus did it!

Peter now draws upon the prophecy of [Psalm 118:22](javascript:%7b%7d).

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, that has become the cornerstone ([Acts 4:11](javascript:%7b%7d)).

The scope of this message will not allow me to pursue the broader implications of Peter’s citation of [Psalm 118](javascript:%7b%7d), but it seems to me that there are elements in that psalm beyond verse 22 (the verse cited) which are relevant to Peter and his situation.[9](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P65_21988)

What is relevant is that this psalm prophesies not only that Messiah will be rejected, but that He will be rejected by “**the builders**,” the leaders of the nation. What is also relevant to Peter’s situation, standing before the Sanhedrin, is that God has made the Messiah the chief cornerstone. The opposition of the Sanhedrin is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. They thought they were in control, and they wanted Peter and John (and the rest who followed Jesus) to know this. But the psalmist declares that God is in control, for their rejection of Messiah was the fulfillment of God’s purposes. Their rejection failed to achieve what they had hoped, for instead of being rid of Messiah, they must now deal with Him as the One who sits at the right hand of the Father, waiting for His signal to return to the earth to deal with His enemies ([Psalm 110:1](javascript:%7b%7d); [Acts 2:34-35](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Verse 12 is the knockout punch of this brief word from God to Israel’s leaders:

“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved” ([Acts 4:12](javascript:%7b%7d)).

The lame man was healed in the name of Jesus, the same Jesus the Jewish religious leaders rejected, the same Jesus God raised from the dead. It is in this name and this name only—the name of Jesus – that men must be saved. There is salvation in no other name. If these men would be saved, they must repent; they must change their minds about Jesus. They must embrace Him as God’s Messiah and trust in Him for salvation. To reject Jesus, therefore, is to reject God’s only means of salvation. To reject Jesus is to embrace eternal damnation. Here is true authority. No wonder Peter does not fear these men, even though they are laboring to intimidate him.

We might sum up Peter’s response in this way: “There are three things you ought to know. First, Jesus the Nazarene is the source of the power that has accomplished this man’s healing. This is the same Jesus you rejected and crucified, but God raised Him from the dead. Second, what you did was foretold in the Old Testament, specifically in [Psalm 118:22](javascript:%7b%7d). Third, the One you rejected is the only One through whom you must be saved. He is the only way to heaven.

#### Truth or Consequences [Acts 4:13-22](javascript:%7b%7d)

*13 When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and discovered that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized these men had been with Jesus. 14 And because they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say against this. 15 But when they had ordered them to go outside the council, they began to confer with one another, 16 saying, “What should we do with these men? For it is plain to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable miraculous sign has come about through them, and we cannot deny it. 17 But to keep this matter from spreading any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” 18 And they called them in and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, “Whether it is right before God to obey you rather than God, you decide, 20 for it is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard.” 21 After threatening them further, they released them, for they could not find how to punish them on account of the people, because they were all praising God for what had happened. 22 For the man, on whom this miraculous sign of healing had been performed, was over forty years old (*[Acts 4:13-22](javascript:%7b%7d)).

If there ever was a time for the claims of our Lord’s resurrection to be silenced, it was here and now. All these men had to do was to produce His body and that would have been the end of it. By divine revelation, Luke takes us beyond the appearances the religious leaders wish us to see to the reality of the situation. Luke takes us behind closed doors to overhear the conversation of these men after they put Peter and John outside, so that they could talk among themselves. They were taken aback by the boldness of Peter and John. Never before had they seen men stand up to them as these two had done. Peter and John were not intimidated. The religious leaders thought they held the keys to the kingdom and that by excluding men from the synagogue they were condemning them to eternity in hell. Now they are told that Jesus is the key to heaven, and they have rejected and crucified Him.

Because of the boldness of Peter and John and the irrefutable message they proclaimed, no one would have imagined that they were men without formal theological training. To hear them speak was to be impressed with both content and delivery (remember, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit as he spoke). It was only when the religious leaders began to inquire about the identity of these two men that they learned, to their amazement, these were simple fishermen and not highly trained clerics. It was at this time, I believe, that the religious leaders became aware that these two men were disciples of Jesus. In other words, Jesus was not only responsible for the miracles performed by their hands, but He was also the explanation for their great knowledge and skill in proclaiming the gospel.

If this were not enough, they were painfully aware that the man who ***stood*** with Peter and John was the man who was lame from his mother’s womb. A great miracle had been performed in their midst. Jesus was given the credit for it. How could these religious leaders possibly punish the two apostles for what they had done, when the crowds were on their side praising God for the miracle that had been performed? The only thing they could do at this point in time was to instruct the apostles not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus, threatening them with punishment if they persisted to proclaim Jesus ([Acts 4:18](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Peter and John made it clear they had no intention of being silent. In fact, they declared that it would be impossible for them not to speak of those things of which they were witnesses ([Acts 4:20](javascript:%7b%7d)). One must be careful not to misinterpret the apostles’ words in verse 19:

“Whether it is right before God to obey you rather than God, you decide” ([Acts 4:19](javascript:%7b%7d)).

They are ***not*** saying, “We don’t know whether to speak about Jesus or not, so you tell us; you be the judge.” They are saying, “There is no way that we can be silent about the things we have heard and seen regarding Jesus of Nazareth. Whether this is a crime that you must punish is a matter for you to decide. Either way, we will continue to preach Jesus.”

Several things should be said about the apostles’ response to the religious leaders’ threats. First, this instance of “civil disobedience” (if that is what you wish to call it) is the exception and not the rule. The rule is that we should obey those in authority over us ([Romans 13:1-7](javascript:%7b%7d); [1 Peter 2:13-17](javascript:%7b%7d)). Second, their disobedience is selective. In other words, they do not feel free to disobey in any and every way, but only in those specific instances where obedience to men would be disobedience to God. Third, their attitude is still one of submission. They do not seek to overthrow these leaders. They do not speak abusively to them, or of them. They are willing to suffer the consequences of their actions. Fourth, they are honest and forthright about what they intend to do. Let all those who advocate civil disobedience take note of what Peter and John are doing here, for it is a model for us all.

There is really nothing the Sanhedrin can do other than to utter threats and let the apostles go. How ironic. This confrontation did not silence the apostles; it left the religious leaders speechless. They had nothing more to say. They surely didn’t want to talk about this to anyone.

Notice one more thing about what happened when the Sanhedrin faced off with the apostles. The religious leaders had no evidence on their side; all the evidence was in favor of the apostles. The Sanhedrin could not refute the claim that Jesus had risen from the dead. They could not explain away the incredible miracle that had just taken place. They could not refute the words of Peter and John. All the evidence was against them, and yet they only became more resolute in their opposition to the truth. These men did not believe. This was not because the evidence was lacking; it was in spite of the fact that all of the evidence supported the apostolic preaching of the cross. Men don’t fail to believe for lack of evidence; they refuse to believe in spite of the evidence:

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth by their unrighteousness, 19 because what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world his invisible attributes—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, because they are understood through what has been made. So people are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or give him thanks, but they became futile in their thoughts and their senseless hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an image resembling mortal human beings or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles ([Romans 1:18-23](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine).

The enemies of the cross were not interested in knowing the truth and following wherever it led them. They were intent on covering up their error and containing the damage resulting from what they had done wrong. In other words, they rejected truth because they cared only about immediate and earthly consequences.

#### A Pious Response to Persecution [Acts 4:23-31](javascript:%7b%7d)

*23 When they were released, Peter and John went to their fellow believers and reported everything the high priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices to God with one mind and said, “Master of all, you who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them, 25 who said by the Holy Spirit through your servant David our forefather, ‘Why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot foolish things? 26 The kings of the earth stood together, and the rulers assembled together, against the Lord and against his Christ.’ 27 “For indeed both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, assembled together in this city against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, 28 to do as much as your power and your plan had decided beforehand would happen. 29 And now, Lord, pay attention to their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your message with great courage, 30 while you extend your hand to heal, and to bring about miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31 When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God courageously* ([Acts 4:23-31](javascript:%7b%7d)).

You can imagine that there was great concern in the church over the fate of Peter and John, and likely over the implications of their fate for the church. Peter and John were arrested, jailed, and then put on trial (of some sort) before the highest religious court in the land, the same court that condemned Jesus to death. What a joy to see Peter and John emerge from their “trial” without a scratch. It must have been amusing for them to hear the apostles’ report of what took place in that meeting.

What fascinates me is the word “**they**” in verse 24: “**When *they* heard this *they* raised *their* voices to God with one mind. . . .**” “***They***” refers to the saints, not to the apostles. Peter does not give them a sermon on facing persecution (though he will teach on this subject in his first epistle, First Peter). These folks praise God with one heart and mind, and they petition God for the right things. Let’s first consider their praise.

Notice that the praise offered up by the church is grounded in Scripture. They cite from two of the Psalms. The church first praises God as the Creator:

23 When they were released, Peter and John went to their fellow believers and reported everything the high priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices to God with one mind and said, “Master of all, you who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them” ([Acts 4:23-24](javascript:%7b%7d)).

This most likely is a reference to [Psalm 146:6](javascript:%7b%7d), but there are many texts which speak of God as the Creator of the heavens and the earth.[10](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P91_35099)

The question is, “What does God being the Creator have to do with the persecution of the saints in Jerusalem?” There are many ways that the creation theme is employed in the Bible, but for the church in Jerusalem, the primary biblical truth that sustains them is a realization that God is sovereign, even in their suffering. Look at the entire psalm from which this citation seems to be drawn:

1 Praise the Lord!   
Praise the Lord, O my soul!   
2 I will praise the Lord as long as I live!   
I will sing praises to my God as long as I exist!   
3 Do not trust in princes,   
or in human beings, who cannot deliver!   
4 Their life’s breath departs, they return to the ground;   
on that day their plans die.   
5 How happy is the one whose helper is the God of Jacob,   
whose hope is in the Lord his God,   
6 the one who made heaven and earth,   
the sea, and all that is in them,   
who remains forever faithful,   
7 vindicates the oppressed, and gives food to the hungry.   
The Lord releases the imprisoned.   
8 The Lord gives sight to the blind.   
The Lord lifts up all who are bent over.   
The Lord loves the godly.   
9 The Lord protects those residing outside their native land;   
he lifts up the fatherless and the widow,   
but he opposes the wicked.   
10 The Lord rules forever,   
your God, O Zion, throughout the generations to come!  
Praise the Lord! ([Psalm 146:1-10](javascript:%7b%7d))

The psalmist exhorts us to put our trust in God, rather than in men. It is God who can and who will protect us. Mortal men come and they go, but God is eternal. God made the heavens and the earth. There is nothing outside of His control. There is nothing beyond His power. The Lord particularly looks after the needy and the oppressed. Why, then, should the saints in Jerusalem fear mere men who rage against the gospel, when their all-powerful God is with them?

The second text they cite is also from the Psalms, this time from [Psalm 2](javascript:%7b%7d):

1 Why do the nations cause a commotion?   
Why are the countries devising plots that will fail?   
2 The kings of the earth form a united front;   
the rulers collaborate against the Lord and his chosen king.   
3 They say, “Let’s tear off the shackles they’ve put on us!   
Let’s free ourselves from their ropes!”   
4 The one enthroned in heaven laughs in disgust;   
the sovereign Master taunts them.   
5 Then he angrily speaks to them   
and terrifies them in his rage.   
6 He says, “I myself have installed my king   
on Zion, my holy hill.”   
7 The king says, “I will tell you what the Lord decreed.   
He said to me: ‘You are my son!   
This very day I have become your father!   
8 You have only to ask me,   
and I will give you the nations as your inheritance,   
the ends of the earth as your personal property.   
9 You will break them with an iron scepter;   
you will smash them as if they were a potter’s jar.’”   
10 So now, you kings, do what is wise!   
You rulers of the earth, submit to correction!   
11 Serve the Lord in fear! Repent in terror!   
12 Give sincere homage! Otherwise he will be angry,   
and you will die because of your behavior, when his anger quickly ignites.   
How happy are all who take shelter in him! ([Psalm 2:1-12](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine)

What is interesting about the use of this psalm in our text is that it originally spoke of the folly of Gentile kings plotting against the Lord and His Christ. The church understands that the psalm likewise applies to the Jewish leaders who conspired together against Jesus Christ. In effect, they are no better than Gentiles when they reject Jesus as the Messiah. As the psalm goes on to say, God laughs at the futile efforts of men to resist Christ because He has installed Him as His king. The best thing those who have foolishly resisted Him can do is to repent and seek His favor, lest He return and destroy them. How appropriate this is to the situation at hand.

The saints spoke of Jesus as God’s “**servant**” ([Acts 4:27](javascript:%7b%7d)). Surely this is a reference to Him as the “Suffering Servant” of Isaiah. Once again the opposition of wicked men to Jesus is seen as part of God’s sovereign plan, accomplishing what He had foreordained long beforehand ([Acts 4:27-28](javascript:%7b%7d)).

The saints did not ask for God’s vengeance upon their opponents. Neither did they ask to be delivered from all suffering and adversity. Instead, they prayed for boldness to proclaim the gospel, and for His attesting signs and wonders which would manifest the presence and power of Jesus in their midst ([Acts 4:29-30](javascript:%7b%7d)). Then, after they prayed, the place where they were staying shook, and all were filled with the Holy Spirit. The manifestation of the Spirit was courageous proclamation of the gospel ([Acts 4:31](javascript:%7b%7d)).

### Conclusion

This is a great text, with many applications and implications for us. Let me highlight a few of them.

*First of all, the opposition of the Jewish religious leaders to the apostles is a virtual rerun of their opposition to the ministry of Jesus.* Notice the similarities between our text in [Acts 4](javascript:%7b%7d) and Luke’s account of the opposition to Jesus as recorded in [Luke 20](javascript:%7b%7d):

1 Now one day, as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courts and proclaiming the gospel, the chief priests and the experts in the law with the elders came up 2 and said to him, “Tell us: By what authority are you doing these things? Or who it is who gave you this authority?” 3 He answered them, “I will also ask you a question, and you tell me: 4 John’s baptism—was it from heaven or from people?” 5 So they discussed it with one another, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ 6 But if we say, ‘From people,’ all the people will stone us, because they are convinced that John was a prophet.” 7 So they replied that they did not know where it came from. 8 Then Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by whose authority I do these things.” 9 Then he began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenant farmers, and went on a journey for a long time. 10 When harvest time came, he sent a slave to the tenants so that they would give him his portion of the crop. However, the tenants beat his slave and sent him away empty-handed. 11 So he sent another slave. They beat this one too, treated him outrageously, and sent him away empty-handed. 12 So he sent still a third. They even wounded this one, and threw him out. 13 Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What should I do? I will send my one dear son; perhaps they will respect him.’ 14 But when the tenants saw him, they said to one another, ‘This is the heir; let’s kill him so the inheritance will be ours!’ 15 So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16 He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When the people heard this, they said, “May this never happen!” 17 But Jesus looked straight at them and said, “Then what is the meaning of that which is written: ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone’? 18 Everyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and the one on whom it falls will be crushed.” 19 Then the experts in the law and the chief priests wanted to arrest him that very hour, because they realized he had told this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people ([Luke 20:1-19](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine).

Luke even uses some of the same words when describing these two instances of persecution. Luke introduced the Book of Acts with these words:

1 I wrote the former account, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after he had given orders by the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen ([Acts 2:1-2](javascript:%7b%7d)).

The inference is that what Jesus “***began****”* to do and to teach, the apostles continue to do and to teach after His ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Just as the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem opposed Jesus, so they opposed the apostles. This was just as Jesus had indicated before His death:

18 “If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you do not belong to the world, but I chose you out of the world, for this reason the world hates you. 20 Remember what I told you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they obeyed my word, they will obey yours too. 21 But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me” ([John 15:18-21](javascript:%7b%7d)).

There is one significant difference between the gospels and Acts, however. In the Gospels, the disciples fled when things got rough, and Peter even denied His Lord. Here, the apostles stand firm, boldly proclaiming the gospel.

As the argument of the Book of Acts unfolds, I believe we can see a crisis ahead. On the one hand, the Jewish religious leaders have closed their eyes to the truth and have determined in some way to silence those who would preach Christ and the resurrection. On the other hand, the apostles have been transformed by the events that have taken place in the past few months, and especially by the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. They are no longer afraid of the Jewish religious leaders, or of any retribution they might mete out because of their preaching about Jesus. Both the church and the Jewish religious leaders have become strong in their resolve. A confrontation is coming soon.

*Second, the opposition of the Jewish religious leaders provides Peter with the opportunity to demonstrate his own repentance.*One way of defining repentance would be to say that it is a change of mind which would result in a different decision if you had the opportunity to do it all over again. This was the case with Joseph and his brothers in [Genesis 37-45](javascript:%7b%7d).[11](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P111_45447) Joseph orchestrated a situation in which his brothers could relive (so to speak) their decision to betray him, but this time, it was his younger brother Benjamin whom they must embrace or deny. When Judah offered himself in his younger brother’s place ([Genesis 44:18-34](javascript:%7b%7d)), it was clear that he had truly repented of his earlier sin ([Genesis 37:25-28](javascript:%7b%7d)). Only when this repentance was evident could Joseph truly enter into fellowship with his brothers ([Genesis 45](javascript:%7b%7d)).

As I was preparing to teach this text, it occurred to me that our Lord was exceedingly gracious to Peter to give him this opportunity to stand firm in his commitment to Jesus. In the Gospels, Peter had spoken with great confidence concerning his commitment to Jesus. He had assured Jesus that he would be true to Him, even unto death ([Luke 22:33](javascript:%7b%7d)). Jesus knew better; we do too. At the time of His arrest, Peter fled from His Lord[12](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P113_46484) and later denied Him three times. Peter had great remorse for doing so ([Luke 22:62](javascript:%7b%7d)). What a gracious thing it was for God to give Peter this opportunity to face greater opposition and danger and to stand fast in his faith. Now, instead of denying His Lord, He boldly proclaimed Him to be God’s Messiah and the only means of salvation.

*Third, we should learn something from the early church about our response to persecution.* The church (which was composed primarily of new believers) was not shocked by the opposition of the religious leaders. They did not find suffering for the sake of Jesus an unexpected surprise. They did not pray for it to end, or for their adversaries to be banished to hell. They rejoiced. After Peter and John were released, the church joyfully praised God and asked for the gospel to be advanced. They were convinced that God is sovereign, and that any opposition was in accordance with His will.

I would like to suggest another factor in their joyful celebration in the face of opposition. Because they believed in the sovereignty of God, they were assured that their persecution was a sure sign of the progress of the gospel. I see similar themes elsewhere in Scripture:

3 Not only this, but we also rejoice in sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance, character, and character, hope. 5 And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. 6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 (For rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person perhaps someone might possibly dare to die.) 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, because we have now been declared righteous by his blood, we will be saved through him from God’s wrath. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, since we have been reconciled, will we be saved by his life? 11 Not only this, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation ([Romans 5:3-11](javascript:%7b%7d)).

18 For I consider that our present sufferings cannot even be compared to the glory that will be revealed to us. 19 For the creation eagerly waits for the revelation of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility—not willingly but because of God who subjected it—in hope 21 that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of decay into the glorious freedom of God’s children ([Romans 8:18-21](javascript:%7b%7d)).

11 For we who are alive are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our mortal body. 12 As a result, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. 13 But since we have the same spirit of faith as that shown in what has been written, “I believed; therefore I spoke,” we also believe, therefore we also speak. 14 We do so because we know that the one who raised up Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus and will bring us with you into his presence. 15 For all these things are for your sake, so that the grace that is including more and more people may cause thanksgiving to increase to the glory of God. 16 Therefore we do not despair, but even if our physical body is wearing away, our inner person is being renewed day by day. 17 For our momentary, light suffering is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison 18 because we are not looking at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen. For what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal ([2 Corinthians 4:11-18](javascript:%7b%7d)).

10 My aim is to know him, to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings, and to be like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already attained this—that is, I have not already been perfected—but I strive to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also laid hold of me ([Philippians 3:10-12](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I fill up in my physical body—for the sake of his body, the church—what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ ([Colossians 1:24](javascript:%7b%7d)).

3 We ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith flourishes more and more and the love of each one of you all for one another is ever greater. 4 As a result we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions you are enduring. 5 This is evidence of God’s righteous judgment, to make you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which in fact you are suffering. 6 For it is right for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to you who are being afflicted to give rest together with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. 8 With flaming fire he will mete out punishment on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will undergo the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his strength, 10 when he comes to be glorified among his saints and admired on that day among all who have believed—and you did in fact believe our testimony ([2 Thessalonians 1:3-10](javascript:%7b%7d)).

12 Dear friends, do not be astonished that a trial by fire is occurring among you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice in the degree that you have shared in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice and be glad. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory, who is the Spirit of God, rests on you ([1 Peter 4:12-14](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Suffering for the sake of Jesus and the proclamation of the gospel is a privilege, for which we should rejoice. It is also grounds for rejoicing because it demonstrates the power of the gospel and anticipates the victory our Lord has won at Calvary, which will be fully realized at His return. Opposition to the gospel often begins with intimidation, but when that fails to accomplish the desired end (silencing those who proclaim the gospel), then persecution comes. Persecution is the result of failed opposition on a lower level. We see this a little later on in the Book of Acts with the persecution of Stephen:

8 Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and miraculous signs among the people. 9 But some men from the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, as well as some from Cilicia and the province of Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. 10 Yet they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. 11 Then they secretly instigated some men to say, “We have heard this man speaking blasphemous words against Moses and God.” 12 They incited the people, the elders, and the experts in the law; then they approached Stephen, seized him, and brought him before the council. 13 They brought forward false witnesses who said, “This man does not stop saying things against this holy place and the law. 14 For we have heard him saying that Jesus the Nazarene will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us” ([Acts 6:8-14](javascript:%7b%7d)).

In the end, the only way to silence Stephen was to kill him. They tried to oppose him by debate, and this failed, so they intensified the level of opposition to persecution, and then death. My point is that when we are persecuted, we should rejoice, just as the early church did, because they saw this as a sign of victory, not of defeat.

*Fourth, power and authority are found in the name of Jesus.* I was impressed when I discovered how often our Lord instructed His disciples to ask and to serve in His name. In our text, Peter is very specific in his choice of words; he makes it very clear to all that this lame man was healed in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This is what Peter reaffirmed to the religious leaders who were members of the Sanhedrin. The New Testament epistles also speak of doing all in the name of Jesus:

And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him ([Colossians 3:17](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Somehow I have tended to react to ending every prayer, “in Jesus’ name,” but God has used this text to exhort me to do so, every time I pray. It has also encouraged me to minister in His name, being sure that others know it is by His power or to His glory that ministry is done.

As we approach the Christmas season, we can observe the many ways our culture is seeking to remove the name of Jesus from our conversation and communication. Merry Christmas has all too easily become “Happy Holidays.” Let us not cease to name the name of Jesus, for it is He who is to be preeminent ([Colossians 1:18](javascript:%7b%7d)), and only in His name can men be saved.

*Fifth, our text has a very clear and concise declaration of the gospel*:

“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved” ([Acts 4:12](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Look no further than Jesus for salvation. Look to no other than to Jesus for salvation. It is by faith in His name that we must be saved. What does this mean? It means that we must acknowledge that apart from Jesus, we will never be able to earn our way to heaven. It means that by means of His death, burial, and resurrection, the punishment for our sins has been paid. It means that His righteousness can be ours, if we accept it. Among all of the good things we find in our text, don’t forget that it all begins when you acknowledge your sin, and when you accept the salvation which Jesus offers freely to all who believe.

*Sixth, take note of what happens when men and women are filled with the Spirit.* To be filled with the Spirit does not mean that we become exempt from the trials and tribulations of this life. Indeed, those who are Spirit filled may experience greater trials and testings than others. They will likely experience persecution (see [2 Timothy 3:12](javascript:%7b%7d)). Spirit-filled Christians may not experience health and wealth. But what Spirit-filled Christians will experience is joy in their faith and boldness in their witness. At least that is what we find in this text.

*Finally, I want you to take note that it is not the Holy Spirit who is prominent in our text; it is Jesus.* If there is any book of the Bible in which the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is emphasized, it is the Book of Acts. And yet it occurred to me that here in our text, where the Spirit’s work is so evident, the Spirit Himself is not the center of attention. It is not the Spirit’s task to glorify Himself; it is the work of the Spirit to glorify Jesus:

26 “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me, 27 and you also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning” ([John 15:26-27](javascript:%7b%7d)).

13 “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak whatever he hears, and will tell you what is to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you” ([John 16:13-14](javascript:%7b%7d)).

There is a chorus that we sometimes sing. It begins, “Father, we love you. . .” and this stanza ends, “Glorify Thy name, Glorify Thy name, Glorify Thy name in all the earth.” The next stanza says the same thing, but now it is the Son of whom we sing. My problem comes in the third stanza. Is it right to sing that the Spirit should glorify His name? I think not. His mission is to glorify the Son, just as the Son’s passion is to glorify the Father (see also [John 7:18; 8:49-50](javascript:%7b%7d), 54; 12:28; 12:31-32; 14:13; 15:8; 17:1, 4).

As I close, I think that American Christians are beginning to experience intimidation for the sake of the gospel. This should not silence us. And when it does not, persecution will follow, here, as it has elsewhere. We should expect persecution, and when it comes, we should rejoice in it, because it has come as part of the divine plan, and it is an indication that victory is ahead. May God give us boldness to proclaim the name of Jesus to a lost and doomed generation.

[1](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P10_159) Copyright © 2005 by Community Bible Chapel, 418 E. Main Street, Richardson, TX 75081. This is the edited manuscript of Lesson 8 in the *Studies in the Book of Acts* series prepared by Robert L. Deffinbaugh on December 11, 2005. Anyone is at liberty to use this lesson for educational purposes only, with or without credit. The Chapel believes the material presented herein to be true to the teaching of Scripture, and desires to further, not restrict, its potential use as an aid in the study of God’s Word. The publication of this material is a grace ministry of Community Bible Chapel.

[2](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P14_2534) Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the NET Bible. The NEW ENGLISH TRANSLATION, also known as THE NET BIBLE, is a completely new translation of the Bible, not a revision or an update of a previous English version. It was completed by more than twenty biblical scholars who worked directly from the best currently available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. The translation project originally started as an attempt to provide an electronic version of a modern translation for electronic distribution over the Internet and on CD (compact disk). Anyone anywhere in the world with an Internet connection will be able to use and print out the NET Bible without cost for personal study. In addition, anyone who wants to share the Bible with others can print unlimited copies and give them away free to others. It is available on the Internet at: [www.netbible.org](http://www.netbible.org).

[3](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P20_4670) I have chosen to replace the word “**angry**,” chosen by the translators of the NET Bible, and to replace it with the expression “greatly annoyed,” which is indicated in a footnote as an alternative rendering. This term is found elsewhere only in [Acts 16:18](javascript:%7b%7d), where it is rendered “**greatly annoyed**.”

[4](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P25_7055) This term literally means to “stand over.” With the exception of three occurrences in 1 Thessalonians and 2 Timothy, the term is only found in Luke and Acts. Every time it is employed in Luke, it describes a more intense or dramatic “coming up” or “appearing.” It is used of the appearance of the angel of God in [Luke 2:9](javascript:%7b%7d). It is used of Anna’s dramatic appearance in the temple in [Luke 2:38](javascript:%7b%7d). It describes Jesus as “standing over” Peter’s mother-in-law when He commanded her fever to leave her ([Luke 4:39](javascript:%7b%7d)). It is used to describe the time when the Jewish religious leaders “**confronted**” (the same word, in the NASB and NKJV) Jesus for His teaching in the temple. It is used of the dramatic return of our Lord, which may catch some unprepared in [Luke 21:34](javascript:%7b%7d) (and here the NET Bible renders the word, “**come down upon**”). In [Acts 6:2](javascript:%7b%7d), the term is used to describe the approach of the religious leaders who drag Stephen off to trial, after which they will kill him.

[5](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P41_13599) While the NET Bible does not render it this way in verse 13, it does render the imperfect tense in this way in verse 7: “**After making Peter and John stand in their midst, they began to inquire, ‘By what power or by what name did you do this?**’” The NASB renders verse 7 in the same way.

[6](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P53_18571) In the Book of Matthew, the emphasis falls on Herod, who interprets the miracles of Jesus as evidence of John’s resurrection. Luke informs us that Herod was not alone in this conclusion. A number of people thought the same thing.

[7](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P60_20711) I understand that doing something in Jesus’ name is to do it in His power.

[8](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P61_20874) I was fascinated to find how often Jesus is identified as the Nazarene. Those who sought to arrest Jesus were looking for “**Jesus the Nazarene**” ([John 18:7](javascript:%7b%7d)). The sign on the cross identified Jesus as “**Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews**” ([John 19:19](javascript:%7b%7d)).

[9](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P65_21989) For example, the psalmist speaks of the Lord’s help when nations surrounded him and pushed him violently ([Psalm 118:10-14](javascript:%7b%7d)). Does Peter see any parallels to his circumstances, surrounded by these Jewish religious leaders? He speaks with assurance that he will live and not die, and thus he will proclaim the works of the Lord ([Psalm 118:17-18](javascript:%7b%7d)). Is Peter speaking of his confidence that these men will not succeed in killing him? I wonder. This psalm would be a source of great comfort to one suffering persecution.

[10](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P91_35100) Here are a few references to God as the Creator for your consideration and study: [Genesis 1:26; 2:4; 5:1-2; 6:6; 7:4; 14:19,22](javascript:%7b%7d); [Exodus 20:11; 30:17](javascript:%7b%7d); [Deuteronomy 4:32-40; 5:8; 32:6](javascript:%7b%7d); [2 Kings 19:45](javascript:%7b%7d); [2 Chronicles 2:12](javascript:%7b%7d); [Nehemiah 9:6](javascript:%7b%7d); [Psalm 74:17; 89; 104:14, 24, 30; 115:15; 124:8; 134:3; 135:7; 139:13, 15; 146:6; 148:5](javascript:%7b%7d); [Proverbs 8:26](javascript:%7b%7d); [Ecclesiastes 12:1](javascript:%7b%7d); [Isaiah 13:13; 27:11; 37:16; 40:18-31; 41:20; 42:5-13; 43:1-7](javascript:%7b%7d), 15; 44:24; 45:4-18; 48:7; 54:5, 16; 57:16, 19; 65:17-18; 66:22; [Jeremiah 10:11-12; 27:5; 31:22; 32:2, 17; 51:15](javascript:%7b%7d); [Ezekiel 28:15](javascript:%7b%7d); [Amos 4:13](javascript:%7b%7d); [Habakkuk 3:6](javascript:%7b%7d); [Malachi 2:10](javascript:%7b%7d); [Acts 14:15; 17:24, 26](javascript:%7b%7d); [Revelation 4:11; 14:7](javascript:%7b%7d).

[11](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P111_45448) The story of Joseph and his family actually continues to the end of Genesis, but these chapters focus on the point I am seeking to make.

[12](https://bible.org/seriespage/8-first-opposition-acts-41-31" \l "P113_46485) We should not forget that it was Peter who drew his sword at the time of our Lord’s arrest, removing the ear of the high priest’s servant ([John 18:10](javascript:%7b%7d)). He was willing to die with Jesus, it would seem, but he could not cope with our Lord’s surrender to death at the hands of His enemies.