

Bible Study 12 – Acts 4:1-12

And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

5 On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, 6 with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10 let it be known to all of you 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—by him this man is standing before you well. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

1. The apostles are instructing the people in the gospel: And as they were speaking to the people

- a) The people’s curiosity was sparked by the healing of the crippled beggar.
- b) The apostles take advantage of the situation to communicate the good news concerning Jesus Christ.
- c) The apostles are thereby complying with Christ’s command to preach the good news to everyone...

2. The authorities are infuriated by the apostles’ proclamation of the gospel: the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

- a) The authorities are greatly annoyed that the apostles are communicating in the Temple area without their consent...
- b) The authorities are greatly annoyed that the apostles are communicating Jesus Christ whom they had condemned to death...
- c) The authorities are greatly annoyed that the apostles are communicating the resurrection contrary to their belief that there was no such thing. The priestly and Sadducean sects unlike the Pharisees rejected the doctrine of the resurrection. They also rejected most of the Old Testament scriptures as the word of God, believing instead that only the first five books of the Old Testament which constituted the Law (or Torah or Pentateuch) were canonical and hence authoritative.

3. The apostles are incarcerated for proclaiming the gospel: And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

- a) The authorities use their power to imprison the apostles...
- b) The apostles thus find themselves incarcerated for doing a good deed and for sharing good news...
- c) The apostles incur animosity and suffer for Love’s sake...

4. The apostolic church continues to increase in response to the gospel: But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

- a) Not all, but many believed the word proclaimed by the apostles concerning the Lord Jesus Christ... They accepted the gospel; they received Christ as Lord and Saviour...
- b) Those that believed were added to the church. And therefore, devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer (Acts 2:42). Those that

believed became part of the body of Christ... united to Christ and one another by the Holy Spirit in the church.

c) And so, the church grew, firstly in Jerusalem in compliance with Christ's last instructions. Go preach the gospel or go make disciples thereby, beginning in Jerusalem and Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

5. The authorities interrogate the apostles because of the gospel: 5 On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, 6 with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?"

a) The Temple authorities who exercised both religious and temporal power convene in council... These are the very people that caballed against and condemned Christ to death... at least who handed him over to the Roman Governor to be executed by crucifixion...

b) The apostles are set before their inquisitors...

c) The authorities demand to know by what power (how) and by whose authority they healed the crippled beggar and proclaimed Jesus?

6. Peter on behalf of the apostles insists on the exclusivity of Christ's gospel: 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, 10 let it be known to all of you 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—by him this man is standing before you well. 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

a) The apostle Peter filled with the Spirit courageously addresses and answers the apostles' inquisitors...

b) The apostle Peter guided by the Spirit confronts and condemns his inquisitors...

c) The apostle Peter enlightened by the Spirit confidently proclaims the exclusivity of Jesus Christ and his gospel...

Questions

1. How did the New Testament church increase in number?

2. How should we respond to opposition to the gospel?

3. Who or what is our leading authority in this matter?

4. What should be our response today to the biblical claim that salvation is exclusively found in Jesus Christ?