25. The Book of Acts—4:12-22

(10/28/26)

Acts 4:1–3; 7-12 (NKJV)
[1] Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, [2] being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. [3] And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening…
[7] And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" [8] Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: [9] If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, [10] let it be known to 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, by Him this man stands here before you whole. [11] This is the *'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'* [12] Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Peter is stating the most exclusive claim of Jesus Christ—that it is only by Him that we can be saved.

Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

So, Peter is simply saying about Jesus what Jesus said about Himself—that He is the only way to the Father (heaven) and there is salvation in none other than in the name of Jesus Christ—**"For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we <u>must</u> be saved!"**

In the Greek, the word **"must"** means "<u>100% essential</u>"—in other words, it's not optional and there isn't any other name by which a person can be saved—not the name of Mohammed, nor Buddha, nor Confucius—

"And there is salvation in <u>no one else</u>; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we <u>must</u> [100% essential] **be saved."**

I'm stressing this because we are living at a time (prophesied in the NT) where people want to believe what they want to believe to get to heaven—even if it denies the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 2:1–2 (NKJV)
[1] But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. [2] And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.

2 Corinthians 11:1–4 (NKJV)
[1] Oh, that you would bear with me…[2] For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. [3] But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. [4] For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

2 Timothy 4:3–5 (NKJV)
[3] For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; [4] and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. [5] But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Paul said, **"The time will come…"**—well the time has come—we are in those times right now!

We're living in an age where many people basically believe that—*'Everybody is right in whatever they believe whether you come to God through Jesus or not, it really doesn't matter as long as you're sincere.'*

There's a doctrine out there called ***Inclusivism***, that teaches as long as a person is seeking God with a sincere heart and living up to the light they have grown up with in whatever culture they have grown up in—they're okay in God's eyes.

They're trying their best and so whether they're a Muslim, a Buddhist or whatever else—even if they've never heard the name of Jesus Christ and have no idea what He did for them to purchase their salvation—they're saved!

That's inclusivism!

Tony Evans, who you can hear on the radio and who has a lot of good things to say, wrote a book some years ago entitled, *"Totally Saved Understanding, Experiencing, and Enjoying the Greatness of Your Salvation."*

In that book, Tony basically embraced inclusivism when he said that *'people can be saved, whether they know the name Jesus or not.'*

Robert Schuller (former pastor of the Crystal Cathedral) was interviewing Billy Graham one day on his TV program "Hour of Power" and he asked Billy the question, *"Tell me, what is the future of Christianity?"*

Let me stop and say that I have a lot of respect for Billy Graham and for the Graham family in general.

I know people personally that were saved at a Billy Graham Crusade—he was a great evangelist who gave the gospel to millions of people around the world.

Which is why I'm confused at his response to Shuller's question about the future of Christianity—Billy said:

"Well, Christianity and being a true believer, you know, I think that's the body of Christ which comes from all the Christian groups around the world, or outside the Christian groups. I think that everybody that loves Christ or knows Christ," (watch this now), *"whether they are conscious of it or not, They're members of the body of Christ. And I don't think we're going to see a great, sweeping revival that will turn the whole world to Christ at any time...and that's what God is doing today. He is calling people out of the world by his name. Whether they come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, or the non-believing world..."*

Please understand that Billy isn't talking about people getting saved <u>out of</u> those groups—he's talking about people seeking their version of God while <u>in those groups without the name Jesus</u> and that *"...they are members of the Body of Christ because they have been called by God…they know in their hearts that they need something that they don't have and they turn to the only light that they have and I think they're saved and they're going to be with us in heaven."*

Schuller said: *"This is fantastic. I'm so thrilled to hear you say that. There's a wideness in God's mercy!"*—to which Billy Graham responds, *"There is."*

Well, Jesus talked about a 'wideness' that people think will lead to God, He called it the *'broadway'* in Matthew 7, and it doesn't lead to God it leads to hell!

The gospel of Jesus Christ is very *exclusive* which teaches that there is salvation in no one other than Jesus Christ—**"the only name by which we must be saved."**

If people are saved simply because they're sincere and are living up to whatever pagan 'light' they've grown up with—why train missionaries and send them out onto the mission field where they can be tortured and killed for sharing the true gospel of Jesus Christ?

And in fact, isn't that worse for these pagan cultures who are saved for being sincere to their faith if when a missionary shares the gospel with them and they reject Jesus and are now held accountable and condemned to hell—isn't it better to just leave them alone!

And if so, wasn't the Great Commission a huge mistake? (Elaborate)

So that's why what Peter said in Acts 4:12 is so important—let's continue:

Acts 4:13 (NKJV)
13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

Right up front, I need to correct a couple of misperceptions with regard to Peter and John.

First of all, these religious leaders in Jerusalem (Sadducees) perceived that Peter and John were **'uneducated and untrained men.'**

In other words that they didn't have any formal training in Judaism from the university that they (the Sadducees) had attended and gotten their degrees from.

Their first mistake was assuming that because they didn't have a formal degree, that Peter and John were unqualified to serve God in ministry.

Let me say that I believe Peter and John were more qualified than these men because—they were saved and the Sadducees weren't!

Also, they were filled with the Holy Spirit whereas the Sadducees were not.

And finally, as they themselves said—**"They had been with Jesus!"**

And as such, I believe that Peter and John had a better working knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures than did the Sadducees because after all—they had had 3 years of private tutoring from Jesus Himself!

In fact, being a disciple of a teacher back then meant you lived with him to not only learn his teachings but also to study his life so as to emulate the way he lived.

Because of it, they were with Jesus day and night, listening to Him teach and expound the Scriptures like no one else could!

After all, they had the Word in human form with them—the Author of the Scriptures teaching them, instructing them, and opening their understanding to the exact meaning and interpretation of the Word of God!

With that in mind—the Sadducees and not Jesus' disciples were the **"uneducated and untrained men!"**

The second misconception that the Sadducees were harboring under was revealed in the statement—**"…they realized that they <u>had been</u> with Jesus."**

This was a misconception in that, their relationship with Jesus was not past tense—they were still with Jesus through the indwelling Holy Spirit!:

John 14:15–18 (NKJV)
15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Jesus Himself said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."* (Matt. 18:20)

So it wasn't that they **'had been'** with Jesus—they ***'were and continued to be'*** with Jesus serving Him in ministry!

They just didn't see Jesus, but He was standing right there with them!

Acts 4:13–14 (NKJV)
13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. **14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.**

Implying they were looking for a reason to say the disciples had made it all up—that they were liars and conmen!

But they had a dilemma on their hands—the man who was healed was standing right there, so they couldn't deny it or say anything against it!

Mark it down—the greatest testimony of the power of God at work is the witness of lame men and women who are standing having been made whole!

And of course I'm speaking in the spiritual sense.

Pastor Chuck Smith—

"I think the thing that has caused so many people to be drawn to Calvary Chapel is that God has made so many lame people whole. People whose lives were so totally messed up. People whom the world had written off. But to see them now whole, to see them out ministering, seeing them pastoring some of the largest churches in the United States. It is hard to say anything against it. When you have a child who has destroyed his life on drugs, really spaced out. When the psychiatrists say there is no hope, he will never be sane, you might as well just forget that he's your son (Mike Macintosh). When you sit in the congregation and see him ministering to thousands of people, what can you say against it? You can't say anything, you just have to rejoice at what God has done!

I received the most precious letter from Mike's mother rejoicing at what God did in Mike's life here at Calvary Chapel. The transformation and all. Her thanking us for the part that we had in seeing Mike healed and transformed. What can you say against it?"

Acts 4:15–17 (NKJV)
15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, "What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*. 17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name."

People today say that if they could only see a miracle, they would believe—but that's not true.

Jesus did more miracles than anyone else in the Bible—He walked on water, turned water into wine, multiplied small amounts of food to feed thousands of hungry people.

He healed the sick, raised the dead, calmed the storm—in fact He did so many miracles that John said at the end of his gospel—

John 20:30-31 (NKJV)
30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Jesus did more miracles than anyone else in the Bible—but when it was all said and done—most people remained unbelievers and even wound up demanding that Pilate crucify Him.

We also see how God continued to work miracles during the Book of Acts—primarily through Peter and Paul—but also through others like Stephen and Philip but many refused to believe.

One author said,
"This crowd wouldn't believe, and you have the same human nature as these people had. The problem is not a problem of the mind. It is a problem of the will and of the heart. It is the heart that is desperately wicked. Unbelief is not from a lack of facts; it is the condition of the human heart."

A word of caution with regard to miracles

We need to be careful concerning our concept of miracles—we must be careful not to assume that if a person has the power to perform miracles they must be from God.

I say be careful because Satan can perform miracles and so can those whom he empowers—

2 Thessalonians 2:9 (NKJV)
9 The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders [Comment]

Now even though miracles don't necessarily prove that a man has been sent by God—they do add considerable weight to his claim if his character and message are consistent with the character and message of Jesus Christ (Deut. 13:1-5)!

In Jesus' case He Himself pointed to the miracles He had done as proof He was in fact the Messiah—

Matthew 11:2-6 (NKJV)
2 And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples 3 and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" 4 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: 5 *The* blind see and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised up and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them. 6 And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

In saying this Jesus was reminding John the Baptist of what the prophets had prophesied concerning the Messiah's ministry—

Isaiah 35:5-6 (NKJV)
5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing…

And again, Jesus pointed to the miracles He had done as proof He had come from the Father and was one with the Father—

John 14:11 (NKJV)
11 Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

One more thing about miracles

Miracles won't force a person to believe who doesn't want to believe.

It is worth noting that five of the miracles that Matthew records were performed in Capernaum—a city that ultimately rejected Him (Matt. 11:21–23).

But for those with an open-heart Jesus' miracles were *"sermons in action"* that led them to faith or confirmed the faith that was already in their hearts—that Jesus was exactly who He claimed to be—God incarnate, the Messiah and King of Israel!

Acts 4:17–20 (NKJV)
17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name." **18 So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."**

In other words, ***"You've told us not to speak; God has told us to speak. You have to judge for yourselves who we should obey—you or God! But as for us, we cannot stop proclaiming the things which we have seen and heard. And so, we have no intention of listening to you more than to God!"***

This reminds me of Daniel's 3 friends in Daniel 3 who refused to bow to Neb's golden image.

Now in a sense, this was civil disobedience because they believed that the laws of God were superior to the laws of men—and therefore must be obeyed when the laws of man conflicted with the Word of God.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his famous "letter from the Birmingham jail" rightly declared, *"One has not only a legal, but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God."* He went on to explain, *"An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law [the law of God]."*

Jewish believers and Christians over the centuries have exercised a rich legacy of peaceful civil resistance to tyranny over conscience (Daniel, Mordecai, Christ's apostles, the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Martin Luther King Jr. etc.).

Even Ben Franklin (who wasn't a Christian) invented the motto that mobilized many Christians to fight against the King of England during the Revolutionary War—*"Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God."*

Acts 4:21–22 (NKJV)
[21] So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. [22] For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

This man had been lame for forty years, but his healing came at the exact moment that would bring maximum glory to God and confirm the fact that although Jesus was no longer seen physically—He was still working through His Church!

One pastor said,
"So often we wonder, *Lord, why aren't You working? I've been praying. I've been believing. Where are You, Lord?* It's been forty minutes, forty days, or perhaps even forty years. Take hold, dear saint. Don't give up. At the right time, the Lord will work to His glory. You watch. You wait. You'll see!"

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