

ACTS 4 (vv1-22) This is shortly after Pentecost, the infant church; Peter and John are arrested by the religious leaders for the miracle Jesus did through them. They are let go, and return to their fellow believers.

We join the early church in a prayer for boldness and power in the face of the bitter persecution they have just encountered and will face in the future. What a privilege it is for us to 'eavesdrop' on a prayer of these believers in times of trial.

(vv23,24) *'...with one accord...'* this group recognizes God as the Creator. They are voicing to God their desire to follow and obey Him, not men, because He is worthy, and the Creator of the universe. **PSALMS 146:1-10; 29:1-11** God is worthy of our worship and obedience. The Hebrew word translated *'worship'* is *SHACHAH {shaw-khaw}* to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to touch the ground with the forehead.

Next time you are in trouble through persecution or temptation, follow the lead of the early church: join in prayer with other believers to Almighty God, the Creator; and worship Him; bodily, spiritually, and truthfully.

(vv24-28) A prayer to God of His Sovereignty. In this prayer they quote back to God His very own word:

PSALM 2:1-3 This Psalm is essentially a three-way conversation between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the first Messianic **PSALM**, it is spoken that the rulers of the earth would revolt against God and His *'Mashiyach'* or Christ. Fulfillment is found in **MATTHEW 27:1,2; JOHN 19:13-15**.

PSALM 2:4-6 God the Father speaks; the day will come when God's King, the Messiah, will rule forever. Once God makes this announcement, it is as good as if it has already taken place; **ISAIAH 9:6,7; DANIEL 2:44; 7:13,14; LUKE 1:26-33; REVELATION 11:15**. The believers in **ACTS** were praying to God the words of **PSALM 2** because, despite all the threatening, they recognized God was in control and will reign forever. **God desires us to put faith in His Word, and allow it to change the way we think and live.**

PSALM 2:7 Jesus is speaking now

PSALM 2:8,9 The Father speaks; the Millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ

PSALM 2:10-12 The Holy Spirit speaks, *'blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.'* The early church was proving their trust, reliance, and confidence in God in the face of persecution. **How about you?** **PSALMS 9:7-10; 17:7,8; 18:1-3; 31:19-24** These words need to be a reality in our lives, not just head knowledge; run to the Lord for shelter.

(v28) The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was pre-ordained before the Earth was made; before Adam was created. **HEBREWS 13:20; REV 13:8; LUKE 24:25,26,46**

When persecution or suffering arise in your life because of Jesus Christ, remember it is in accordance with the Word of God, and the will of God.

(v29) The prayer continues as they petition the Father: *'...behold their threatenings...'* Peter and John were threatened in a private meeting, yet God was there, looking upon everything that goes on. *'...grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak Thy word.'* We are the Lord's servants **1 CORINTHIANS 6:14-20; GALATIANS 2:19,20**. We also need to pray for boldness in the time that we live in.

(v30) *'By stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your Holy Servant Jesus.'* They also request of God that signs and wonders, and healing be done in the Name of Jesus; we need to pray for these things too. Repeatedly, Jesus told His followers to petition the Father in His name; this is exactly what they did as the Spirit led them. **JOHN 14:26,12-15; 15:7,26,27; 16:23,24** filled by the Holy Spirit, this group was asking.

(v31) *'And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.'* God answers in a visible way, the sign of being filled with the Spirit is boldness here.

(vv32-37) *'And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul...'* Spirit-filled believers are unified, loving, and caring believers. This group did this out of compassion, not compulsion. It was spontaneous and exciting, but it sets the stage for problems as revealed in **ACTS 5**.

LET'S CLOSE WITH THESE THOUGHTS:

- When we are filled with the Spirit, we are emptied of ourselves.
- When we are filled with the Spirit, great grace will come upon us all.
- When we live God's way, life will be filled with His joy, His excitement, His great grace!

THE STATE OF THE EARLY CHURCH:

(v32) unity - *'one heart and one soul'* -

(v32) sharing, fellowship - *'all things in common'* -

(v33) spiritual power - *'great power'* -

(v33) evangelization - *'gave...witness of the resurrection'*

(v33) God's gift to men - *'great grace'* -

(v34) eyes that were open to the needs of others - *'any among them that lacked'*

MATTHEW 6:19-21; COLOSSIANS 3:1-4
Father, show us your ways!