

LESSONS THIS QUARTER

- 1) 6 March 2016..... Acts 1 Entrusted
- 2) 13 March..... Acts 2 Empowered and Unified
- 3) 20 March..... Acts 3 Benevolent
- 4) 27 March..... Luke 24 Resurrected!
- 5) 3 April..... Acts 4 Courageous**
- 6) 10 April..... Acts 5 Integrity & Faithful
- 7) 17 April..... Acts 6 Selfless
- 8) 24 April..... Acts 7 Forgiving
- 9) 1 May..... Acts 8 Obedient
- 10) 8 May..... Acts 9 Converted & Bold
- 11) 15 May..... Acts 10 Accepting
- 12) 22 May..... Acts 11 Engaging
- 13) 29 May..... Acts 12 Extraordinary

INTRODUCTION

- James and John are thrown into prison, and Church growth takes off. Why is it church persecution does the opposite of what is intended by those who hate the Gospel?
 - ♦ External threats seem to keep the church on its knees praying
 - ♦ Internal threats seem to keep the church on its heels stewing

Passage	Comments
Acts 4:1-4	<p>5,000 Men Saved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v1. Notice the Pharisees are missing. The Apostles were teaching in the temple courts, which was the domain of the priests, temple guard, and Sadducees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ How would you feel if Mormons or Muslims tried to teach their religious beliefs within our facility? ♦ The Apostles were proclaiming the resurrection according to Scripture. Many were fully aware of what transpired almost 60 days earlier, and no one could produce the missing body of Jesus, neither the Romans, the Pharisees, nor the Sadducees • v4. And “many” believed → “about 5,000 men” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ If you grab the man you often grab the whole family
A Little History On Sadducees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sadducees were a wealthy aristocracy who claimed their origin from Zadok, who was appointed high priest under Solomon (1Kings 2:35), but there is no conclusive evidence supporting this claim • Sadducees accepted only the 1st five books of the OT (the Torah) as authoritative, and they did not believe in the after-life, final judgment, angels or spirits, nor in the resurrection of the dead. That’s why they were Sad-you-see... • Christ never assailed the Sadducees with the same bitter denunciations he uttered against the Pharisees
4:5-12	<p>Peter Speaks in the Power of the Holy Spirit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v7. The authorities ask, “By what power or in what name have you healed this lame person?” What would you say? • Peter did not buckle under pressure, but he took control of the meeting, rebuking those who gathered to judge him • Peter was not interested in defending himself, but only logically proclaiming the risen Jesus as Savior & Lord • Logical Faith. Lame Man from Birth + Peter’s Faith + Name of Jesus = Healed Man...Therefore, only Jesus could perform such a miracle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ “Name of Jesus” – not a magical incantation, but acknowledgement of the authority of the risen Lord • The Christian faith is not a blind faith, but a logical and reasonable faith solidly based on substantial proof of a risen Savior, which is historically sound
4:13-17	<p>A Noteworthy (Provable) Miracle Has Taken Place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of rejoicing that a lame man from birth now walked, the religious leaders were more concerned with discrediting Peter, John, and the name of Jesus & their education • vv15-17. If the Apostles were asked to leave the room, how do we have a record of what was said after they left? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ In all probability since “many priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7) at least one of them made their comments known to fellow believers & Luke became privy to it

Passage	Comments
Is Higher Education Required?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we reach our highest potential for God without having Bible degrees and training? Yes & No <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Yes. God is not limited by the size of an army or by our degrees and certifications, or lack thereof ♦ No. We only limit God by our willful ignorance • We should always seek to improve ourselves (1Cor 7:21) and continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2Peter 3:18). We can grow either by self-study or formal study, but it always takes study.
4:18-22	<p>God’s Laws vs Man’s Laws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Apostles KNEW what they “saw and heard” – and were committed to living by it, even if it meant prison and death • Principle to Live By. It is only appropriate to break man’s laws when they supersede God’s laws – BUT be ready to pay the consequences. Recent Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christian doctors and nurses have lost their jobs for not performing “legal” abortions ♦ Christians have been sued, gone to jail, and even lost their businesses for not supporting “legal” same-sex marriages
4:23-31	<p>Freedom Promotes More Confidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vv23-28. When we are persecuted, we need to realize it is part of God’s plan to redeem many through Christ who was predestined to go to the Cross just as He did • vv29-31. Be like the Apostles and pray to be able to speak boldly while under persecution. BUT what about the part of asking God to continue healing and working signs and wonders and having buildings shake by His power? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Do we still have Apostles like Peter & Paul around today? If so, then the answer is YES. ♦ BUT, since Apostles have ceased, so have the “signs of an Apostle,” to include healings, signs, and wonders ♦ We’ll be delving more into this in the weeks ahead
4:32-37	<p>Not a Needy Person Among Them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • v32. “All things were common property to them.” Communal living is not mandatory, but it may prove beneficial when under intense persecution. Christians are often naïve, so must watch out for moochers who know how to play the system. • v33a. What “Great Power” (dynamite) did the Apostles use? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Keeping in line with what we see in Scripture, probably the Great Power was more healings and miracles of all sorts • v33b. What does “Abundant Grace upon them all” look like? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Again, keeping in line with what we know in Scripture, probably “all things worked together for their good”

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS

- If Almighty God is on our side what else do we need to be bold in our speech and actions for the Gospel?
- Our goals should be the same as Peter’s & John’s. We want lost people to clearly hear the truth of the Gospel from those who have been with Jesus

NEXT WEEK: Acts 5. Church discipline seems harsh, and the Apostles are thrown into jail for the 2nd time. Can anything good come out of this?

