



## Acts 4:13-31 | Session 12 | Threats and Censorship

### Acts 4:13-31

Verse 13—

**When they saw the boldness of Peter and John.** The apostles were not intimidated in front of the 70 members of the Sanhedrin Council. It may have caught these elitists off guard since they **perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men**. The Greek word **unlearned** is *agrammatoi*. You can hear the word *grammar* in it. The learned men **perceived** these men as *without learning, or unlettered*. They didn't speak sophisticated words. And they **perceived** they were **ignorant**. That is the Greek word *idiotes*. They were not *book smart*. But never judge a book by its cover. Because of what the council **perceived, they marvelled** that these men could hold their own in front of them. Additionally, they recognized these men **had been with Jesus**. You are known by the company you keep! It had been only two or three months since Jesus had been crucified—the same council would have been in session when Jesus was on trial.

The name Jesus (Greek: iesous) is Jehoshua, or Joshua in Hebrew. It means “Salvation of Jehovah, or Jehovah the Savior.”

Verse 14—

We discover in this verse that three of them stood before the council; Peter, John, and the man who was healed. In regards to the man who was healed, **standing with them** (with Peter and John) the council **could say nothing against it**. “It” apparently referring to the miracle.

Verse 15, 16—

**They conferred.** Greek is *sumballo*. *Ballo* is to throw (like ball), and *sum* is translated elsewhere as ponder, confer. They had a back-and-forth discussion **saying, what shall we do to these men?** Question: “Why do anything to them? They did a good deed (that was Peter’s point in 4:9). The council could not **deny** this was a **notable miracle** which was **manifest** (openly seen) by **all them that dwell in Jerusalem**. These men of the Sanhedrin were politicians through and through. We may wonder how Luke got the information about this closed-door meeting—we can speculate there was a leaker or two in the group!

Verse 17—

Politicians are always worried about things spreading! **That it spread no further among the people, they threatened them that they speak henceforth** (from now on) **to no man in this name**. We have seen in our own U.S. political body how facts can be presented, and yet no one listens to them or investigates if they are true or false. The Sanhedrin did what all men whose power is threatened do—they chose to overlook the actual miracle and the name in which it was performed. Threatened by the apostles rising popularity and leadership of the people, they believed they could stomp out any further mention of Jesus of Nazareth, the one they crucified, and maintain their power.

Verse 18—

The Sanhedrin’s choice to control the situation? Censorship. Any government or religious body that censors its people must be disobeyed. As we have seen throughout history, suppression only makes people more determined to push back. Free speech is



what always brings balance. **Not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus** means not to speak as his representatives. They didn't want any attention going to the one they had put to death.

Verses 19-20—

Peter and John (and all the apostles) will disobey this mandate, but notice how they still use respect here, **whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken** (listen) **unto you more than God, judge ye** (you make the choice; or, you can pass judgment). But, **we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard**. Romans 13 tells us to be *subject unto the higher powers*. That doesn't mean to be *subject to politicians*. We are subject to the judgments that may come down from *higher power*. I think the key in Romans 13 is that Christians are not to go against the *ordinances of powers* in a malicious way. There are times to resist, and when you do, you are to be subject to the judgments that may come with that resistance (Romans 13:2 is not referring to *eternal damnation*). That is precisely what the apostles will do—they will resist the threats not to speak in Jesus's name, but they will face the judgment that comes with that resistance. Peter and John openly refuse to comply.

There are Old Testament accounts of civil disobedience that Peter and John would have been familiar with. Notably, in the book of Daniel: 3:1-18; 6:1-13). In each case they disobeyed, but were subject to the judgment, that is, fiery furnace and the lion's den, respectively. We will see later in the book of Acts more civil disobedience by Peter and the other apostles.

Verse 21—

After being **further threatened** they were let go. The political pressure of the thousands of **people** was too great since **all men glorified God for that which was done**.

Verse 22—

This healing is even more miraculous since the man had been born disabled; forty plus years have passed. Now he is walking and leaping. While God certainly can heal, miracles of healing like this were for the apostolic dispensation. We do not have this type of kingdom authority today. It was given only to the apostles. If you were with us during our study in 1 Corinthians, it is my belief that there are no manifestations of the Spirit given today. We have the Word of God. **Shewed** (different spelling of *showed*).

Verse 23—

**Company** is literally, *their own*. There is no indication how many were present. Today, if this were to happen to one of us, we would *go back to our own church and report* but there is no church at this point. There is no *body of Christ*. We will not see the church as we know it today until later in the book of Acts.

Verse 24-31—

What they didn't do should be pointed out; they didn't go out in the streets and march (not that there isn't a time and place for that). What they did was *pray*. **The lifted up their voice to God with one accord**. I don't think this means they all prayed out loud at the same time. Although, as we will see, they do quote a Psalm so it is possible they recited it together in the prayer. But it may mean they were like minded in their prayer. Even more literally, *they had the same passion!* They were following Jesus's command in Luke 6:28 to "Bless them that curse you, and pray for them with despitefully use you."

After addressing **God**, the Creator of **heaven, and earth, and the sea, and that is in them**; Psalm 2 is cited; a Messianic Psalm.

**Heathen...** (ethnos; nations) **against the Lord and against his Christ. Holy child** (Son, or Servant).

Prayer for **boldness** (vs. 29). Notice the Holy Ghost does the filling at his own bidding. Along with that filling came boldness.

