

ACTS 4:23-35

A. The Apostles pray for boldness -

Acts 4:23-30 - And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. Acts 4:24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Acts 4:25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? Acts 4:26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. Acts 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, Acts 4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. Acts 4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, Acts 4:30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

1. It is a prayer for boldness, **not** a prayer to get **out** of the problems they are in. It is a prayer that even in the pressure, problems, and difficulties, they would stand true and be bold witnesses in speaking the Word of God.
2. They prayed with an **intelligent** understanding of just where they stood in the program of Almighty God and the dispensation they were in.

*It wasn't a simple prayer to get them out of their persecuting circumstances. With the Tribulation **soon** to be upon them (in their thinking), they do not pray for relief but pray for boldness to be who God wanted them to be. They are following a **pro**hibited course that the religious rulers had told them they better not follow (4:17-18).

3. Note their prayer:
 - a. Verse 24 - It was a prayer of **unity** and acknowledgment that God, and He alone, was God.
 - b. Verse 25 - It was a prayer that David prayed in Psalm 2, asking why the Gentile nations hated God and fought Him so **hard**.
 - c. Verse 26 - It was a prayer about man's foolishness in thinking he **could** stand against God (Psalm 2).
 - d. Verse 27 - It was a prayer that revealed Christ's **enemies** - the Romans and the religious Jewish rulers. The Jews had joined hands with the Gentiles to crucify Christ.
 - e. Verse 28 - It was a prayer about God's unthwarted purpose.
*God is sovereign! Jesus Christ was crucified on **God's** schedule.

Isaiah 46:9-11 - Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me, Isa. 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Isa. 46:11 Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

f. Verse 29 - It was a prayer for boldness to speak the truth, not for safety and deliverance. They **knew** what they would be facing. They wanted boldness to stand and be a testimony for Christ.

g. Verse 30 - It was a prayer to be able to **demonstrate** miraculous signs and wonders.

- (1) ***Note*** - [thy holy child Jesus] is a wonderful confirmation of the **deity** of Jesus Christ. Also, the signs would confirm Christ's name above all other names - once again proving Him to be Israel's Messiah.

John 1:41 - He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

- (2) Verse 26 - [against His Christ] Why does it say His Christ?

Luke 2:25-26 - And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. Luke 2:26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Matthew 24:21, 23-24 - For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. Matt. 24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not. Matt. 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

*These Jewish Apostles, believing they would soon be going into the Tribulation, knew what they were praying. They (in their belief) understood that they would be facing the ultimate false Christ, the **anti**-Christ! They were making it clear they were following God's Christ and not the **wrong** one! They knew what they were facing.

**Paul prayed a similar prayer in, and for, today's dispensation.

Ephesians 6:18-20 - Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; Eph. 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, Eph. 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

B. The Father's response -

1. God does not fail to honor their faith, courage, and prayer. God physically **shakes** where they were assembled, demonstrating that He was with them (I Cor. 1:22). God continues to fill them with

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| <p><u>Acts 4:31</u> - 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.</p> |
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the Holy Ghost, and showed them that the supernatural never operates apart from the moving of the Holy Spirit.

2. The signs and wonders done by Christ confirmed His Messiahship. Now His disciples **continue** these miracles to authenticate their kingdom offer message.

*Note: Acts 5:12-16 - And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. Acts 5:13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. Acts 5:14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Acts 5:15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. Acts 5:16 There came also a multitude *out of the cities* round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

*This healing ministry was just another sign that the kingdom **offer** had come. The fact that this does not go on today is clear evidence that the kingdom is not here today. To those who say we are spiritual Israel, one of the clear ways to see that is not true is that the kingdom healing ministry is **not** happening today.

C. A foretaste of Kingdom living and blessing -

Acts 4:32-35 - And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of *them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. Acts 4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Acts 4:34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, Acts 4:35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

1. We have already seen some of this in Acts 2:42-47. There is a oneness that these people were experiencing in their ministry, and this oneness causes them not to be selfish but to have a **sharing** heart. They spontaneously, instantly, completely live for one another.

*Jesus prayed for this:

John 17:17, 20-22 - Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. John 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; John 17:21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. John 17:22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

Luke 12:32 - Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

2. Here in verses 32-35, they (Little Flock) were experiencing a **foretaste** of the kingdom reign of Christ - a foretaste of the world to come. They are supernaturally motivated and **controlled** by the Spirit. They are beginning to sample what the kingdom will one day be like when Jesus Christ returns.

*Remember?

Acts 3:19-21 - Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; Acts 3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Hebrews 6:4-6 - For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, Heb. 6:5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, Heb. 6:6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

3. Many today also take the Sermon on the Mount and say it is to the Body Church today. But they do **not** practice selling everything and giving their money to the poor, like in these verses. Here, it is not a question whether or not they felt led to give their all for the common good. This was **expected** of them and **most** all did it.

4. These disciples in verse 33 gave witness to Christ's resurrection.

*They had seen Him, been with Him, touched Him, and even witnessed His ascension into heaven (1:9-11). Why was this so **im**portant?

a. Acts 2:30-33 - Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; Acts 2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. Acts 2:32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Acts 2:33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

*It confirms God's Word was **true**.

b. He had to arise in order to ascend to the right hand of God and receive **glory**, so He could **then** send down the Holy Spirit.

John 16:7 - Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

5. In verse 33, it says [great grace was upon them all]. It is important to understand that there has **always** been grace in **all** dispensations. But, there is **only one** Dispensation of Grace.

John 1:17 - For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

*The operating principle to carry out the New Covenant with Israel is the grace of God. Israel's law (O.T.) showed how Israel did not qualify to be part of the kingdom, because it showed them their **sin**. But by grace, they were shown how to spiritually become **fit** by believing the resurrected Christ was their Messiah (Ezk. 36:24-28). If Israel, as a nation, would believe in Christ here in early Acts, they could then go into the Tribulation. After the 7 years, the New Covenant could become a **reality** for Israel. Israel is witnessing a foretaste of what could be, because of God's **grace**.

6. In verses 34-35, there is a great **distinction** between Israel and the Body (us). For believers today to try and live this Jewish passage, they are completely in **error**.

II Thessalonians 3:10 - For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

I Timothy 5:8 - But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

D. The introduction of Barnabas?

Acts 4:36-37 - And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, Acts 4:37 Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

1. Selling and giving to the Lord's people continues as Luke gives a **particular** case of an individual he wants us to know. Barnabas is showing an act of faith in the program he is involved in.
2. Now notice Acts 11:27-30 -[And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. Acts 11:28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Acts 11:29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Acts 11:30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

*Here we have some Gentile believers who were to take up an offering for the **saints** in Jerusalem. Why would those in Acts 4 need some assistance? If everyone had their needs met, then why **help**?

Romans 15:25-26 - But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. Rom. 15:26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

It is showing something **catastrophic had taken place. What had taken place was Israel's **final** rejection of Jesus as their Messiah (in Acts 7). The Little Flock had sold their possessions and now were hurting. These verses demonstrate the **transition** from Israel's Kingdom Program to the Mystery Body Program.

3. Barnabas is used as an **example** of a godly believer truly living out the **kingdom** lifestyle. His name was Joses, but the Apostles named him Barnabas (Son of Consolation), evidently because he was sympathetic to their cause.
 - a. It has been suggested that this is the Joseph Barsabas who, along with Matthias, had been with the **Lord** from John's baptism until His ascension. The lot fell on Matthias to replace Judas, not Barnabas. But now he is **respected** and loved, and he helps with collecting money to assist the saints at Jerusalem.
 - b. Barnabas later will be sent to Antioch upon hearing about the report of the conversion of the Gentiles. It is from **Antioch** that he sends for **Saul** of Tarsus! Barnabas will become an important figure.