

Time Audit Chronicles: Persecution Begins – Peter and John Arrested (Acts 4:1-31)

Prologue: The First Sign of Opposition

The Presswood family sat together, reading **Acts 4:1-31**, where the apostles, **Peter** and **John**, face the first wave of persecution for preaching about Jesus. Ariel had been thinking about how the early church was growing, but also about how it must have been difficult for the apostles to face such strong opposition. Alice, still holding Mr. Fluffernutter, was imagining herself standing beside Peter and John, hearing the angry voices of the religious leaders.

“Daddy,” Ariel asked, “Why were the religious leaders so upset that Peter and John were preaching about Jesus? What did they do wrong?”

Ryan sighed, acknowledging the weight of the question. “That’s a great question, Ariel. The religious leaders were upset because Peter and John were preaching something that **threatened their authority**. They were proclaiming that **Jesus**—the man they had condemned and crucified—was the **Messiah**, and that His resurrection was proof of His divine authority. This message challenged everything the religious leaders believed, and it posed a **threat** to their power and control over the people.”

Ariel nodded slowly. “So, they were scared that people would stop listening to them and start following **Jesus** instead?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “The religious leaders had rejected Jesus, and now they saw His followers growing in number and **boldness**. They couldn’t stand that the apostles were speaking with such authority about Jesus’ resurrection. This moment in Acts marks the beginning of the **persecution** that the apostles would face as they boldly spread the message of the gospel.”

Ariel’s eyes sparkled with curiosity. “So, they arrested Peter and John to stop them from preaching?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “But Peter and John were filled with the **Holy Spirit** and would not be silenced. Let’s use the **Time Audit Machine** to go back and see how the apostles responded to this first wave of opposition.”

The Journey Begins: Arrest and Questioning (Acts 4:1-7)

The **Time Audit Machine** powered up, and with a flash, the family found themselves outside the **temple courts** in Jerusalem. It was a scene of great tension: Peter and John had just healed a man who had been crippled from birth, and the crowd had gathered in awe of the miracle. But the **religious leaders**, including the **Sadducees**, were furious. They had Peter and John arrested, and they were now being brought before the **Sanhedrin**, the Jewish ruling council.

Ryan pointed to the scene. “Peter and John were **arrested** because they were preaching about Jesus’ **resurrection**, which the religious leaders didn’t believe in. The **Sadducees**, in particular, denied the resurrection, so Peter and John’s message was a direct challenge to their teachings and authority.”

Ariel watched closely as the apostles stood before the council, accused of disturbing the peace. “So, the leaders were really mad because Peter and John were teaching something they didn’t believe in? They thought it would cause trouble?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “The religious leaders were worried that this message about the **resurrection** and the **Kingdom of God** would upset the status quo. They didn’t want the people to believe in a **resurrected Messiah** because it threatened their **power**. So they brought Peter and John in for questioning, hoping to silence them.”

Peter’s Bold Declaration: “We Cannot But Speak” (Acts 4:8-12)

As Peter and John stood before the council, Peter, filled with the **Holy Spirit**, spoke boldly. “**Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.**” (Acts 4:9-10).

Ariel’s eyes widened. “Peter didn’t back down at all! He told them straight up that the **healing** happened in **Jesus’ name**—the same Jesus they had crucified!”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “Peter wasn’t afraid to speak the **truth**. He used the healing of the lame man as a powerful opportunity to boldly proclaim the **name of Jesus** and the **resurrection**. And notice how Peter also says, ‘**Jesus Christ of Nazareth**’—he made it clear who he was talking about. There was no confusion about who had healed the man, and no attempt to soften the message.”

Ariel was amazed. “So, even though Peter and John were in trouble, they were still bold and told the leaders exactly who had healed the man and why—because of Jesus!”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Peter made it clear that the healing came **through the power of Jesus**—the same Jesus the religious leaders had rejected and crucified, but whom God had **raised from the dead**. Peter was declaring that Jesus was the **Messiah**, and that **salvation** is found only in His name.”

Peter continued, quoting from the Psalms, saying, “**This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**” (Acts 4:11-12).

Ariel looked at her father in awe. “Peter is saying that **Jesus is the only way** to be saved—there is no other name but Jesus!”

“Yes,” Ryan said, “This is one of the most powerful statements in all of Scripture. Peter boldly declared that **salvation** comes only through **Jesus Christ**. There is no other path to God, no other name through which we can be saved. It’s a **declaration** of the **exclusive power** of Jesus to save.”

The Religious Leaders' Dilemma: Unable to Deny the Miracle (Acts 4:13-18)

The religious leaders were stunned. They saw that Peter and John were **unschooled** men, yet they spoke with such boldness and authority. The healing of the lame man was a **public miracle**—everyone in the city knew about it. The leaders couldn't deny that a miracle had happened, but they didn't want the message of Jesus to spread any further.

Ryan pointed to the scene. “The **Sanhedrin** was in a tough spot. They couldn't deny the miracle because the healed man was standing right in front of them. But they also didn't want the apostles to continue preaching about **Jesus**. So they ordered them to stop preaching in Jesus' name.”

Ariel was surprised. “They wanted Peter and John to **stop** preaching, even though they had healed a man? They didn't want people to believe in **Jesus**?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “The religious leaders were more concerned with **protecting their own power** and authority than with acknowledging the truth of Jesus' resurrection. But Peter and John were unwavering. They refused to stop proclaiming the message of **Jesus Christ**.”

The Church Prays for Boldness (Acts 4:23-31)

After being released from their interrogation, Peter and John returned to the believers, and they all gathered together to pray. They prayed for **boldness** to continue preaching the gospel, knowing that persecution would continue. They asked God to stretch out His hand and perform more signs and wonders through the name of **Jesus**.

Ryan smiled as he watched the prayer unfold. “Notice how the early church responded. Instead of being intimidated by the opposition, they prayed for **boldness** to keep going. They knew that the mission was too important to back down from, and they trusted that God would give them the strength to continue.”

Ariel watched the prayer, her face thoughtful. “So, they didn't pray for the persecution to stop—they prayed for the strength to keep speaking boldly about Jesus.”

“That's right,” Ryan said. “They understood that **persecution** was part of following Jesus, but they trusted in God's power to strengthen them. And notice how the **Holy Spirit** responded. The place where they were praying was shaken, and they were all filled with the **Holy Spirit** again, empowered to continue their mission.”

Takeaway: Boldness in the Face of Persecution

In **Acts 4:1-31**, Peter and John are arrested for preaching about **Jesus** and performing a miracle in His name. They are confronted by the **religious leaders**, who try to stop them from preaching, but Peter boldly declares that there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved—**only Jesus**. The early church responds to this persecution with prayer, asking God to give them the **boldness** to

continue proclaiming the gospel, no matter the opposition. In response, the **Holy Spirit** fills them with renewed strength and power, and they continue to speak the word of God with boldness.

This passage teaches us that when we face opposition for our faith, we are called to **boldly declare the truth** of the gospel, just as Peter and John did. We must rely on the **Holy Spirit** for courage and strength, and we must remember

that **Jesus' name** is the source of our **salvation** and our boldness. Like the early church, we are called to keep speaking the truth of Jesus, even in the face of persecution, knowing that God will give us the strength to carry out His mission.