

## HOW MANY WAYS ARE THERE?

Acts 4:1-12

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### INTRODUCTION

No wonder that there is no overt response listed here as in chapter two, for it seems that the sermon was interrupted by the religious leaders of the Jews—“as they were speaking to the people.” Note that they “came upon them”—not to them in order to learn! They accosted the apostles in a very unfriendly way.

So has it ever been for “those who will live godly in Christ Jesus”—they will “suffer persecution.” As Peter tells us, we must not “think this to be strange.” Jesus reminded His disciples that they would be treated the same way as He was treated; if He was hated and mistreated, so would the apostles be hated and mistreated. **Are we so special that we think we should be absolved of all persecution, misunderstanding, and mistreatment?**

However, persecution should neither *discourage* nor *hold back* the servants of Jesus from their Gospel ministry. Jesus had promised to be with His disciples, and as we see here, He gives them **and us** both *BOLDNESS* and *SUCCESS* in carrying out the Gospel ministry.

**There will always be detractors; there will always be persecutors; there will always be those who forsake the work and prove unfaithful; there will always be those who are apathetic and lazy spiritually; there will always be those who are worldly and distracted by the things of this life.**

**BUT GOD WILL GIVE US SUCCESS IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST IF WE BUT SIMPLY TRUST HIM AND OBEY HIM.**

### I. PERSECUTION FOR THE NAME

A. The Reason for the Persecution—preaching the resurrection from the dead through Jesus (2) These Sadducees opposed the teaching of the resurrection. [But let’s be “real”—they were also **jealous of the influence** of these men in turning so many toward the worship of Jesus and away from loyalty to the priests and Sadducees—“they were teaching the people”. Note the numbers now “saved”, now “about **5,000!** (v. 4)

### B. The Leaders of the Persecution

- Priests
- Sadducees
- Captain of the temple guard.

### C. The Form of the Persecution

- They were treated roughly and arrested “laid hands on them.” [**Not to heal nor to bless!**]
- They put them in “jail”—confinement—until the next day; it was “evening”—late afternoon, too late for a trial (v. 3)
- They put them on trial before the “Sanhedrin”—“Rulers”, “elders”, “scribes”, “chief priests” (Here including Annas—the real “power”, Caiaphas—the actual high priest, John and Alexander, and “all who were of high priestly descent”—otherwise, **the chief priests**. (The three elements of the Sanhedrin—ch pr, elders, scribes)
- They put them “on the hot seat”—in the center” of their semi-circle of judges.
- They presented the case for the prosecution: “*By what **power** or in **what name** have you done this?*”
- Notice that they are still thinking of the amazing healing of the lame man (chapter 3) that had led to the response of so many to believe in the name of Jesus whose “name” had made the man well (3:16).

At this point, we see the amazing response of Peter—his **bold** reply and his **credit given to the Lord** for every benefit—both for physical healing and for eternal salvation.

## II. THE POWER OF THE NAME

### A. The Boldness of Reply (8-9) –Due to the **filling of the Holy Spirit**.

- The Lord wants us to be able to speak with such boldness—we need such power from the Spirit also!
- Peter spoke to the religious and political leaders of his people.
- These same people had condemned Jesus to die.

### B. Credit given to the Lord Jesus

#### 1. Credit as the physical healer of the lame man (9-10)

- The “sick” man was “made well” physically.
- The truth must be known not just to these leaders, but to “all the people of Israel.”
- The “name” of Jesus the Christ, the one from Nazareth—a weak and insignificant town despised by these leaders—this name or **person** has caused the lame man to “stand before” them “in good health.”
- Jesus—the one whose name means “Yahweh saves” has physically saved this lame man!
- “Christos”—the Messiah awaited for by the Jews—is this same Jesus.

- These leaders are guilty of crucifying their Messiah. **The accusers become the accused here as the Holy Spirit empowers Peter.**
- God stands opposed to their action—for He has raised Jesus Christ from the dead!
- Moreover, Jesus being raised from the dead has God's **approval** and **power!**
- Since Peter is Jesus' servant, Jesus has given Peter the power to heal the lame man!

## 2. Credit as the Exalted One of the Father (11)

- They have rejected the stone—their Messiah—who did not fit their plans for their “house” (temple and religious system). He could not find a place there. **Comment on the massive stones put into this temple!**
- The Psalm quoted (118:22) also refers to the “Hosanna”—save now”—shouted to the Messiah, and to the “blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord” (vv. 25-26). This is one of the best known and beloved Messianic psalms of the Jewish nation, and Peter **clearly and openly applies it to Jesus as their promised Messiah who has been rejected by them.**
- However, these leaders do not succeed in thwarting the Lords' plans, for he takes the rejected stone and makes it the new cornerstone of His own building—the New Testament Church!

## 3. Credit as the Saver of souls (12) “Many who heard the message believed” (4)

- Salvation may not be found in any other person!
- No other “name” under heaven can provide salvation.
- God himself has “given this one” to be the Savior.
- If we are to be saved, **we must be saved by this name—Jesus the Messiah!**

## CONCLUSION

*Yes, Christianity is an exclusive religion: all other religions are excluded; all other religious leaders are excluded. Only through Jesus Christ may anyone be saved and find a way to Heaven.*

This sounds “narrow” and “intolerant” to our “pluralistic and tolerant” society.

**SO BE IT!** Jesus told us that the way is narrow and that “few” would find it.

**Make sure that you find the way. Make sure that you accept this Savior!**

If you are a believer, make sure that you **boldly speak and act in His name—successfully.** God will give us success and make us bold!