

Acts chapter 4: The captain of the Temple guard, the priests and the Sadducees were alarmed to hear Peter preaching that Jesus was alive. They seized Peter and John and put them in prison. However, so many people were convinced Jesus had risen from the dead that the number of believers grew to over 5,000.



The next morning Peter and John were brought before Annas the High Priest, the elders and teachers of the law. 'By what power or what name did you do this?' they demanded to know.



Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, replied, 'It is in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who you crucified but God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.'



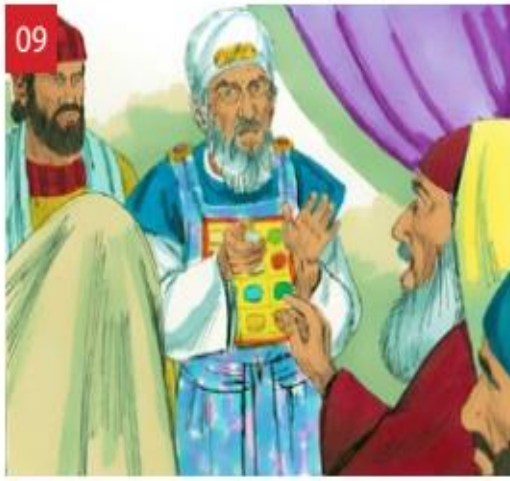
Peter continued, 'Salvation can only be in the name of Jesus. There is no other name with the power to save people from their sins.'



Those listening were astonished at the courage of Peter and John. As the healed man was standing before them they were lost for words. So they ushered Peter and John out while they discussed what to do.



'What can we do?' they asked. 'Everyone has seen them perform this miracle so we cannot deny it. We must stop them speaking about Jesus and doing things in His name.'



Peter and John were brought back in and commanded not to teach in the name of Jesus. They replied, 'Which is right in God's eyes, to obey you or to obey God? You be the judges.'



'As for us,' Peter announced, 'We are going to continue telling others what we have seen and heard.'



The temple leaders issued further threats not to speak about Jesus. However, they could not punish Peter and John because the people were praising God for what had happened.



Peter and John returned to the believers and reported what the chief priests and elders had told them. The believers responded by raising their voices in prayer, telling God about the threats that had been made against them.



They prayed for boldness to continue telling others about Jesus and do miracles in His name. When they had finished praying, the building they were in shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking bravely about Jesus to everyone.



The believers were united. None of them viewed their possessions as their own but shared what they had with each other.



From time to time, those who owned land and houses sold them and gave the money to the disciples to distribute to the poor and needy.



One such man was Barnabas, whose name means 'son of encouragement'. He sold a field he owned to help those in need.



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