

[Wed. Mar. 26, 2015] Acts Series, Acts 4:1-4 - Craig A. Thurman

Acts 4.1-4

Subsequent to the healing of the impotent man, now the apostles are taken notice of by their own national religious leaders

1 ¶ *And as they*

that is, Peter and John, 3.1, 3, 12

spake unto the people λαόν, the priests έιρείς, and the captain στρατηγός of the temple έεροϋ,

Some of these men are among the very same that had bargained with Judas Iscariot for a sum of money to gain an opportunity to apprehend and kill the Lord.

Lk.22.2 And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

Just over 2 months earlier (Lev.23.5-17 Passover to Pentecost), these would be the same that men who came out to Jesus in the Mount of Olives, in the night and took Him away to the high priest's house and ultimately delivered Him over to be crucified ... (Lk.22.4-6 **chief priests** and captains, 47-54 chief priests, **captains** of the temple, and **elders**)

*Ac 5:24 Now when the high priest and the **captain** of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. (verse 26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them [Peter and John] without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.*

*Captain, translated **magistrates** in Acts 16.20, 22, 35, 36, 38 who are civil judges.*

The captain of the temple might be considered a temple magistrate or keeper of the wards of the temple. There could be more than one. Luke uses the plural **captains of the temple**.

and the Sadducees, came upon them,

We know enough about what the Sadducees taught: they denied that there was **any** resurrection of the dead; that there was no resurrection; and they denied the existence of angels and spirits.

*Lu 20:27 Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, **which deny that there is any resurrection ...***

*Mt.22.23 ¶ The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is **no** resurrection ...*

Ac 23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

This religious group is now the ruling party in Israel.

The Sadducees had now the high priest and the executive or enforcer of the law (the captain of the temple). This represents the ruling political/religious party of Israel under the jurisdiction of Roman rule.

Ac 5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation ...

2 Being grieved

Literally, these men were *worked up* (or, *worked through*) over these two apostles.

διαπονέομαι, δια + πονέω; Acts 16.18. πονέω is not in the N.T., but it is often found in the LXX. Ge.49.15 *labor* KJV *bear*; Ex.31.6 *make*, KJV *make*; 1Sa.22.8 *sorry* (footnote *labors*), KJV *sorry*; 1Sa.23.21 LXX *grieved*, KJV gives almost a counterpoint *compassion*; Pr.16.26 LXX *,a man who labors, labors for himself ...* ; so also the KJV *laboreth laboreth*. Interlinear Bible has *being distressed*. A word

that comes to mind in this respect is an old English word; *belabored*. This is *to thrash* or *buffet* with all one's might. (O.E.D.) ... Given to laboring or thrashing. (O.E.D.) The Lord, through His men, the apostles, was giving these evil religious leaders a real *thrashing*.

that they taught

διδάσκειν, root διδάσκω, always translated as the verb *to teach* 97 times in the KJV. Also, the noun form, διδάσκαλος, is translated as *doctor* 1, *master* 5, *Master* 41, *teacher* 10. Mt.8.19 ... **Master**, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. Lk.2.46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the **doctors**, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

While the religious leaders were nothing but *blind leaders of the blind*, here the *unlearned* and *ignorant* apostles (vs,13) were the God-appointed ministers of the Scriptures that gave proper light to those who should repent and believe.

These fishermen were suited to the task of the declaration and teaching of the Word of the gospel of Christ, **not because of any learning acquired** through Rabbinical schools or, for us today, seminaries. Rather, they were suited for the task because *they had been with Jesus* (13), were called to the work, and were given gifts for the work.

*Ac 1:21 Wherefore of these men which have **companied** with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us ...*

*Joh 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and **ordained** you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

The disciples' calling to service in the apostolic office
*Lu 6:13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he **chose** twelve, whom also he named **apostles** ...*

*the people, and preached through ἐν Jesus the **resurrection from the dead.***

τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν , or *of the dead*

The real rub is that these fishermen would take it upon them to teach and preach through Christ *the resurrection of the dead.* What could these men know about a resurrection being they are so unlearned and ignorant?

Let us never forget that no matter how appealing a religion, how prosperous it might be in wealth or numbers the Lord has strong words against those whose teachings contradict the truth of the Word of God.

The force behind false teachings

*1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, **giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils ...***

The estimation of false teachings

*2Pe 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in **damnable heresies**, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

The proper attitude toward false teachers

*2Ti.2.16 But **shun profane and vain babblings**: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.*

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

*18 Who concerning the truth **have erred**, saying that **the resurrection is past already**; and overthrow the faith of some.*

19 ¶ Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

But so that you are prepared for the assault of the religious against you for your stand upon the truth, just know that to them YOU are the heretics.

*Ac 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which **they call heresy**, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:*

*15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow (referring to the sect of the Pharisees, Acts 23.6), that there shall be **a resurrection of the dead**, both of the just and unjust.*

Even some so-called Christians in the church at Corinth denied the resurrection of the dead.

1Co 15:12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

These, says the apostle Paul, have not the knowledge of God. (15.34)

The doctrine of the bodily resurrection is the pinnacle to the Christian faith. (1Co.15.13-58) In this section of 1Corinthians chapter 15 the resurrection is the height of the gospel declaration.

Verses 3-8 emphasizes the truth that our Lord was **seen alive from the dead**. It was upon this declaration that they had believed. (vs.11)

The essence of the Christian faith dissipates **if** there is no resurrection. (13-19) The **if** is introduced, not for doubt, but for reasonable purposes.

The affirmation of the resurrection of Christ and for all those in Him, is restated. (vs. 20)

The absolute reality of the resurrection; as real as the body dies in death is as real as the body rises in the resurrection. (vss. 21-22)

That our Lord Jesus Christ is the first to raise bodily in this resurrection. (vs.23a)

That all the saints of God that have died shall raise when He returns to this earth. (vs.23b)

The Holy Spirit goes so far as to show us the details of the great mysteries that would have otherwise enshrouded the bodily resurrection Christ and the saints. (35-49)

Describes the life of our present flesh as sowing a seed in the earth that in dying rises into new, physical life (vss.35-38)

Describes the distinctions we see between:

The variations of flesh in the earthly, creaturely bodies (men's flesh, beasts, fishes and birds) (vs.39)

The distinct glories of celestial and terrestrial bodies; the sun, moon, and stars. (vss.40-41)

Draws a parallel between the Christian's present human circumstance and his future blessing in the bodily resurrection: from corruption to incorruption; dishonor to glory; weakness to power; natural to spiritual. (do not miss this point ... there is a *spiritual body*) (vss.42-46)

Shows us the wisdom of God by revealing the pattern, order or arrangement from the natural to the heavenly.

The first man, Adam; the second man, the Lord. (vs.47)

Such that are earthy; then such that are heavenly. (vs.48)

And as we have borne the image of the earthy; we shall bear the image of the heavenly. (49)

Gives us the necessity of the resurrection: the new birth fit us to see the kingdom and to possibly enter it; but we must be

changed to inherit the kingdom of God. (vs.50) Note this is an essential distinction we should learn to draw for those who shall enter the kingdom of God in its executorial offices. While many shall enjoy the blessing of the kingdom it is very doubtful that all that are Christ's have lived worthy of the first resurrection and reigning privileges in the kingdom.

And gives us the 'when' of the first resurrection. (vs.51,-57)

Shows us the importance of faithful doctrine and practice in the N.T. church. While Satan cannot take us from the hands of our loving Lord, he can ruin our lives and greatly affect our eternal rewards should we deviate from the truth.

The resurrection being of such monumental import we should expect it to come under continuous and various attacks by those who have a guise of Christianity. No matter how close a friend, no matter who he or she is, pastor, brother, sister, deacon, greeter, song leader, whoever; if any come leaving the principals of the Christian faith we must rebuke them sharply, and after the first and second admonition, if there is no repentance from the heresy they hold, they must be rejected. **The denial of the bodily resurrection of Christ and the saints is one of those heresies.**

Denial of the Trinity, or any of the persons, 1Jn.2.22-24; 1Jn.5.7,8;
The resurrection, 1Co.15.12, 34; Bring another gospel, Gal. 1.8; have not love for Christ, 1Co.16.22; Tit.3.9

Some heretics, the first of which were these religious chief priests, fabricated the story that someone had stolen our Lord's body. (Mt.28.11-15) Later the Docetists denied a reality of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Cambridge Hist. of the Bible, vol. 1, p.286); that Christ's human nature was not real, but only an appearance; separated Jesus from Christ, that Christ remained incapable from suffering. (KJV Defended, p.34, 167) Other unbelievers claim that Christ Jesus didn't really die. That He simply swooned. And still others, that the resurrection is past (Preterists.)

Preterists' heresy is that we now live in the time of the new heaven and new earth. Everything is spiritual, ALL prophecy is fulfilled, the Devil is already in the lake of fire. We don't have to worry about him any longer. The resurrection is only a spiritual one, a bodiless one.

What is heresy? Heresy is sentiment or opinion. An heretic is one who holds and/or teaches those false sentiments as truth. It is slighting Scripture, wrangling the Word. Wresting the sense. It is almost always introduced through subtlety; difficult to get to the bottom of the deception; and finally, it is against clear teaching of Scripture, meaning it is confusing.

Too many are the biblical proofs of our Lord's bodily resurrection.

Ps 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

*9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: **my flesh** also shall rest in hope.*

*10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see **corruption**.*

Job 19.25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ...

*Joh 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, **Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.***

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

*21 But he spake of the temple of his **body**.*

*Joh 2:22 When therefore **he was risen from the dead**, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.*

Joh 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

*Lu 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that **it is I myself: handle me**, and see; for a spirit hath not **flesh and bones**, as ye see me have.
40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.
41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?
42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.
43 And he took it, and did eat before them.
44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.
45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,
46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:
47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
48 And ye are witnesses of these things.
49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.
50 ¶ And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.
51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.
52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:
53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.*

The saints shall raise from the dead in glorified bodies.

*Job 19.26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:
27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*

1Co 15:44 *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

2Co 5:1 *For we know that if our **earthly house** of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

2 *For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our **house which is from heaven**:*

3 *If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.*

4 *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but **clothed upon**, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

Re 20:4 *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were **beheaded** for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and **they lived** and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

Re 11:9 *And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their **dead bodies** three days and an half, and shall not suffer their **dead bodies** to be put in graves.*

10 *And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.*

11 *And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and **they stood upon their feet**; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.*

12 *And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.*

Joh 14:19 *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.*

Those who enjoy the first resurrection are called *blessed* and *holy*. We cannot overstate the blessedness of this time and event.

Re 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Those that enjoy this resurrection are accounted worthy to obtain that world. (αἰών, *aion*, age) This is the time of great blessing and reward to the faithful of Jesus Christ.

*Lu 20:35 But **they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world αἰών**, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:*

Lu 20:36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

The apostle Paul approaches this with a note of gravity that marks this occasion as one that we should hope for, but depend on the judgment of Christ to enjoy.

Phil.3.10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

*11 If by any means **I might attain***

καταντάω, come to or arrive ...*a sure state of qualification*;
Christ alone determines this of his servants

unto the resurrection of the dead.

*12 **Not as though I had already attained,***

λαμβάνω, to receive it

either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

15 ¶ Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

While there are things that I cannot answer who shall positively enjoy this resurrection we believe there is enough revelation of the word of God for me to make this statement:

It is preposterous and contrary to Scripture to think that a person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, gone through the waters of baptism, and joined with a true, N.T. church, who spent their whole life living just under the disciplinary radar, living like the world, has any hope of enjoying the blessings associated with the first resurrection, which blessings are particularly associated with the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. We ought to live like and speak like the apostle Paul. If anyone ever made a profession of faith in Christ, was baptized, and walked in one of the Lord's churches, and served as an example of suffering for the saints it was the apostle Paul. Yet he spoke in terms of hopeful expectation rather than certainty when it came to being accounted worth of that resurrection. We have ample warnings to be faithful servants of Christ:

*Re 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my **reward** is with me, to give every man according as his **work** shall be.*

*1Co 3:14 If any man's **work abide** which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive **a reward**.*

*15 If any man's **work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.***

*2Jo 1:8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we **have wrought**, but that we receive a **full reward**.*

*Lu 14:14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: **for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.***

Certain elements are strictly associated with the first resurrection. Faithfulness and blessing! The parable of a certain nobleman in Lk. 19.12-27; the parables of Mt.25 speak of the necessity to be *ready*.

2Ti 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us ... (Deny us what, or in what way? Certainly not eternal life ...)

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. While He cannot deny Himself in us, he can deny us the blessing of reigning.)

*Re 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.***

3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold

τήρησι, root τήρησις, KJV *hold 1, keeping 1, prison*. This was a place where they could *watch* them, *keep* them, *observe* or *preserve* them. (τηρέω)

unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

It was about 3:00p (the ninth hour of the day) when Peter and John had gone up to the temple at the hour of prayer. (3.1) The late hour makes it necessary for these leaders to detain them overnight until they could question them thoroughly the next day.

*4 Howbeit δὲ many of them which heard the word **believed**; and the number of the **men** was about five thousand.*

In Acts 2.41 there is no information about how many there were that gladly received the Word, or that believed. But it does give us an approximate number of those who were what? ... *added to the church. ... and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

Now, in this text, we have no idea how many were under the hearing of the gospel declaration. But we do have how many women there were that believed, right? No. Oh, we have how many children there were that believed, right? No. What is the fact before us? We are simply given the approximate number of the men that believed what they heard.

Clearly, some of those present, who were under the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ had received an opening of their ears to hear message that Jesus Christ had died for **their** sins, was buried, and rose again from the dead by the power of God. The Scriptures state, a number of times:

Mt 11:15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

‘Spirit of God! Who can convince of danger, convict of sin, and lead to Christ, but thee? Speak but the word, and there shall be light. Touch but the soul, and it shall awaken. “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.”’ – Octavius Winslow, The Inner Life, p.7. (referring to Ez.37)

...

‘No argument, no reasoning, no persuasion, however profound or affecting, can convince a corpse that it is lifeless.’ – Octavius Winslow, The Inner Life, (1850), p.3

This takes the sovereign work of God. (Jn.6.29) This takes the new birth. (Jn.3.6) It takes an opening the ears. (Pv.20.12; Mt.13.14, 15) Anything less than this is a work of the flesh produced by emotionalism, fear mongering, trickery, and self-will.

These religious leaders were grieved, that is, they were all worked up because Peter and John taught the people that through Jesus is the resurrection from the dead. And yet, in spite of their opposition, about

5000 men made it known that they believed this to be the truth concerning Jesus Christ.