

REFLECTION GUIDE

ACTS 4:1-22 - WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS?

KEY TERMS

The priests, the captain of the temple, and the

Sadducees - Some of the most influential people in Jerusalem. The *captain of the temple* was the second highest ranking priest (after the Chief Priest) and was responsible for policing the temple. The Sadducees were a group of rabbis and priests who did not believe in future bodily resurrection for human beings.

Rulers, elders, and scribes - Groups who question the apostles including, but not limited to, the above groups. *Rulers* refers to the highest ranking priests, *elders* refers to influential priests and laymen, and *scribes* refers to Pharisaic teachers. Included in this group is *Annas*, who previously served as high priest, his son *Caiaphas*, the current high priest, and *John* and *Alexander*, of whom we know nothing about.

Uneducated, common men - When the Jewish leaders call Peter and John *uneducated, common men* (v. 13), they use the words *agrammatoi* (literally "unable to write") and *idiōtēs* ("an unskilled laymen"), which is where we get our English word "idiot."

BACKGROUND

As Peter is addressing the crowd after healing a lame man in Acts 3, the Jewish leaders interrupt Peter and arrest he and John because they were *greatly annoyed* (v. 2). Part of this annoyance was theological (the Sadducees didn't believe in resurrection), but it was also likely political (uprisings disrupted the peace and undermined their power). The leaders want to know *by what power or what name did you do this?* (v. 7), and Peter tells them what he told the crowd, *by the name of Jesus...this man is standing before you well* (v. 10). Peter then tells the leaders that Jesus is the *stone that was rejected* that has become the *cornerstone* (v. 11), written about in Psalm 118, and that the leaders are the *builders* who rejected the stone. Peter says *there is salvation in no one else* (v. 12), and the leaders are *astonished* (v. 13) and that something miraculous took place they *cannot deny it* (v. 16), but their response is that they *charged (Peter and John) not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus* (v. 18). Peter and John refuse, however, and the Church continues to grow.

GOING DEEPER

Read John 14:1-7, Romans 10:5-13, and 1 Timothy 2:1-6. What do these verses teach about the way to salvation? How would you respond if someone told you, "I just can't believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven. Surely God lets all good people in"?

DID YOU KNOW?

When Peter says *this man has been healed* (v. 9), the word he uses for *healed* is not the typical word for physical healing, *therapeuō* ("to heal" or "to serve").

Instead, Peter uses *sōzō* ("to save" or "to rescue"), which suggests that this healing was more than physical.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

ACTS 4:1-22 - WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS?

LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read Acts 4:1-22. What about this story jumps out to you?
2. Why were the Jewish leaders "greatly annoyed" at Peter and John's teaching?
3. Read Psalm 118:19-24. In what ways is Jesus a fulfillment of verse 22, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone"?
4. What reasons do Peter and John give for refusing to stop teaching about Jesus?

LIVING THE WORD

5. Why do you think most people today, whether they are religious or irreligious, never really answer the question, What do I believe about Jesus?
6. How does Peter's claim "there is salvation in no one else" motivate you to tell others about Jesus and the salvation he offers all people?
7. What aspect of your salvation is most exciting to you? How do you experience that aspect of your salvation right now and how will your experience change when Jesus returns?
8. What big life questions are you facing right now? How does what you believe about Jesus help you answer those questions?