

# Peter Tells the Sanhedrin About Jesus

Acts 4:5-14

In this passage, Peter and John are called before the elders and teachers of the Law to explain the healing of the disabled man described in Acts 3:1-10. This group of Jewish leaders (the Sanhedrin) was the ruling body of the Jews. It had authority in all religious matters and in certain legal matters granted to it by the Romans. One of the Sanhedrin's duties was to pronounce judgment in cases of blasphemy. Members of the Sanhedrin probably viewed Peter and John's actions as bordering on blasphemy. Peter and John claimed that they were able to heal a man—something only God could do—through the power of Jesus, who the Jews contended was dead. So they called Peter and John before them to hear the explanation firsthand.

When asked the source of his power to heal, Peter replied that the power came from Jesus and accused the Jewish leaders of crucifying Jesus, whom God then raised from the dead. The Jewish leaders were intent on getting rid of Jesus, but God nullified their actions by raising him from the dead. The Sanhedrin had tried to cover up the Resurrection (Matthew 28:11-15), but Peter contended that the healed man standing before them proved that Jesus is alive.

Notice that the disabled man was healed through Jesus' power and that Peter's forceful speech before this powerful group of religious leaders was made possible by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:8). God was with Peter in a special way, as Jesus had promised he would be when people were going about his work (Matthew 28:20).

Why didn't the Sanhedrin immediately denounce Peter and John? Perhaps the truth, told with such power, dumbfounded them—or even convinced them of what they really had done. And Peter hadn't finished yet!

In verse 12, Peter indirectly heaps on more accusation. By saying that salvation is only through Jesus, Peter was saying that all of the Jewish leaders' beliefs and actions were insufficient. He was saying that if they continued to deny Jesus, no other power was available to save them. He was saying that if they continued along this course, they were not only destroying themselves, but they were also leading their nation toward destruction.

What was the Sanhedrin's response? Astonishment! How could these simple men, with no training in the Jewish rabbinical schools, mount such a clear and convincing biblical and theological argument? The Jews' only answer was that "these men had been with Jesus"! They may have remembered the similar things they had thought about Jesus (John 7:15). Jesus had supported his claims through the miracles he had performed, and now the disciples had done the same. Everyone had seen the disabled man begging at the Temple, and now he stood before them, healed. What could they say? The Sanhedrin had no answer.

At least two things gave Peter courage in this intimidating situation. First, he was relying on the Holy Spirit, and second, he knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus is alive. This knowledge gave Peter full and ultimate trust in Jesus. We have the apostles' (and God's!) record in the Bible, and we have the same Holy Spirit that empowered Peter. What more do we need to be courageous in the situations we face today?

## **Devotion for Teachers**

**The One Thing:** Like any human friendship, as you spend time with Jesus, you'll grow to be more like him. People will look at you and conclude that you've "been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13)!

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** When troubles come, where do you turn for courage and strength? Refuse to follow popular culture's little-engine-that-could philosophy of trusting in yourself. Instead remind yourself daily, "I know God can, I know God can, I know God can!" Trust in the God who gave courage to Abraham, Ruth, Moses, Rahab, David, Esther, Daniel, Mary, Peter...and will give it to you!