

SALVATION IS FOUND IN NO ONE ELSE

Acts 4:1-36

Key Verse: 4:12

Peter and John stood together. A crippled beggar had been healed by the power of Jesus, crucified by evil men and raised to life by almighty God. Peter and John were not only witnesses to the resurrection, but also they had been used by the Risen Jesus to heal the crippled beggar. So they challenged the crowd that gathered on Solomon's Colonnade to repent of their sins, turn to God and be renewed and refreshed by the power of the Risen Jesus. This was the time for which all the world had been waiting. It was the time about which the prophets had spoken. It was the time of salvation for all who believe.

First, No other name (1-12)

While Peter and John were speaking this message of good news, priests, temple guards and Sadducees came up. The Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They do not believe in life after death. They do not believe in heaven or in hell because they do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. So they were not only angry because they had been responsible for Jesus' death and the news of his resurrection made them look like enemies of God, but also because they opposed preaching about resurrection as a matter of principle. So they seized Peter and John and had them put in jail overnight, to await trial the next day. In the meantime, Peter's preaching had been effective. The Holy Spirit couldn't be stopped. The number of believers increased from 3000 to 5000 men. People who knew Jesus were just waiting for a chance to put their faith in Jesus.

The next day Peter and John faced the men who had sentenced Jesus to death: Annas, Caiaphas and members of the high priest's family. Their accusers asked them a very good question: "By what power or what name did you do this?" They were talking about the healing of the crippled beggar by the gate Beautiful. The cripple had been healed—there was no question about this. He was a well-known man in Jerusalem. Everyone knew that he had been a crippled beggar and everybody saw him jumping and dancing and clinging to Peter and John. Perhaps these religious leaders wanted to accuse the Apostles of healing this man by some demonic power. Perhaps they thought that the Apostles would realize the danger they were in and back down, pretending to know nothing.

What did Peter and John do? They wondered why they had been put in jail because a kindness done a crippled beggar. And they had an answer: it was by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth—the very man they had crucified and whom God raised from the dead—that this man was healed. Furthermore, Peter was ready to teach them the Bible. He opened his Bible to Psalm 118, then to Isaiah 28 and quoted a verse that exactly fit

these religious leaders. Jesus is: “the stone you builders rejected which has become the capstone.” Jesus himself had quoted this passage shortly before his death. He applied it to the tenants in the vineyard who had refused to give fruit to the owner, but rather had killed the prophets and finally, killed the son. The men who should be building God’s spiritual house, the men who should be offering God’s great gift of forgiveness and salvation to a dying world, had rejected the very stone God had prepared to be the corner stone and capstone of his redemptive history. So God picked up the rejected stone and used it in his holy building.

Some people think that it is being dogmatic and narrowminded to say that salvation is only through Jesus. What about the other religions? There is surely something good in Hindu religion and in the Muslim religion, and in the Jewish religion. Yes, there are bits and pieces of truth and goodness in these religions. But there is no salvation. God himself is the author of salvation. He is the one whom our sins have offended and saddened. He is the judge. He is the one who tells us if there is a way out. And if there is, he tells us how to find forgiveness and healing. And he did so in the Bible. Down through history he prepared the way, and finally, he sent his Son to be the Savior of mankind. Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man is the crown and climax of God’s redemptive history. Therefore, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Second, lives changed by Jesus (13-22)

They saw not only a crippled beggar changed by the power of Jesus’ name. They also saw two men, Peter and John, totally changed. They were no longer cowards, trembling in fear with the doors locked in the upper room. They were bold and courageous witnesses to Jesus. They risked their lives without any hesitation. And confronted the murderers of Jesus with the gospel of life and forgiveness and salvation. They had never been to seminary or Pharisee school or college or even high school, but they were preaching with power and fluency and their words were words of wisdom and truth. It was a miracle. These cowardly, self-seeking Galilean fishermen were transformed into bold and sacrificial men of God. They put their lives and their very salvation, their souls on the line. They risked everything. The old Peter and John were great, but they were also a bit selfish and somewhat competitive. They knew the Bible pretty well, but didn’t really know how to apply it. What had changed them? The Holy Spirit had filled them and they had been born again. The observers took note that these men had been with Jesus. They had been with him during his lifetime and they were still with him, for the Spirit of Jesus filled their hearts. People can argue about doctrines and ideas, but it’s very hard to argue with a changed life. These men witnessed to the resurrection power of Jesus, not only with words, but by the power of transformed lives. The beggar was also a man changed by the power of Jesus. He was standing there with them. These smart PhD’s in religion had nothing to say. They asked Peter and John to leave the room. Then they talked it over. They called the Apostles in again and told them to stop talking about Jesus. They threatened and warned. But Peter and John said, “Shall we

obey you or God?” “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” The religious leaders couldn’t do anything more because this event was too widely publicized.

Third, the believers’ prayer. (23-31)

when Peter and John reported everything that the chief priests and elders had told them, the believers were amazed at the sovereign power of God and his control of history. Psalm 2 describes how the rulers gather together against the Lord and his Anointed One. And this is just what had happened. It was clear that God is in control. So they asked him for two things. First, they asked for boldness to continue proclaiming the word of God. Second, they asked that God continue to work through them by the power of Jesus’ name to bring healing and blessing to needy people. God was pleased with this prayer and poured out his Spirit afresh. And they spoke the word with boldness.

Fourth, the believers love God and love each other. (32-37)

The believers were one in heart and mind. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching—to Bible study—and to prayer. They had real fellowship. They were open with one another. They ate together. They talked to God and they talked to each other in blessed fellowship. They became a holy nation people. They loved God and they loved each other. Selfishness disappeared. There was no needy person among them because they were mindful of each other’s needs. They did not love the world, so they could have everything in common. They sold their possessions and gave to those in need. Surely this was an expression of the love that Jesus commanded when he said, “Love one another.” It was an answer to Jesus’ pray that they all might be one. This was the kind of holy nation that God wanted when he called the Israelites, his own people, to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. This kind of fellowship is only possible when Jesus rules in every heart by the work of the Holy Spirit.