

Outline

1. Peter, John, and (formerly) lame man arrested
 1. Specific mention made of the resurrection of the dead
 2. Held overnight
2. Before the Sanhedrin
 1. Peter's discourse termed inspired
 2. Linkage to the miracle in chapter 3
 3. Responsible for the death of Jesus
 4. Salvation is by no other
3. Deliberations
 1. Their uneducated backgrounds noted
 2. Recognition that they could not explain the miracle
4. Release
 1. Ordered not to speak of Jesus
 2. Peter replies
 3. Threatened and released
5. Peter and John return to the disciples
 1. Describe what happened
 2. Prayer for boldness and protection
6. Their community
 1. Together spiritually and physically
 2. Things sold to care for others with the money first given to the apostles

Commentary

The "captain of the temple" was at least a Levite, if not a priest. The priestly class tended toward Sadduceeism. Thus, Luke identifies for us the main antagonists along with the reason of their discomfort: "preached in Jesus *the resurrection of the dead*" (Acts 4:2). The

Sadducees did not believe in a coming resurrection. They had earlier used a rhetorical question about the resurrection in attempting to embarrass Jesus (Matt. 22:23-33) and Paul would later use the resurrection as the basis of his defense before them (Acts 23:6).

We cannot deny that the (formerly) lame man was with them. Peter states that he “stands here before you” in Acts 4:10, and Luke tells us that they could see “the man who had been healed standing with them” in Acts 4:14. When we remember that this man was more than 40 years old (Acts 4:22), it now appears unlikely that this man was unknown to as many of them as were regularly found in and around the temple. His presence was a powerful witness.

The prayer which follows the release of Peter and John blames all men for the death of Jesus: “the Gentiles and the people of Israel” (Acts 4:27), while also speaking of God’s plan for that death (Acts 4:28). Also, take note that they asked God to look upon the threats leveled against them, much like Zechariah, son of Jehoiada (2 Chr. 24:22), or Nehemiah did (Neh. 4:4, 6:14), and not ask for some specific punishment or calamity befall them.

We are not told of the general practice surrounding the donations mentioned beginning in verse 32. It is possibly a formalization of the sharing described in Acts 2:44-45. We may assume from the statement made about Barnabas that he gave the entire amount of the price for his land (Acts 4:36-37). However, the first mention of the practice is in Acts 4:35, immediately before that of Barnabas’ gift. So, it is possible that the general practice was to only give some of the sale prices with the specific mention of Barnabas giving all to denote the extraordinary nature of his gift.

Thought Questions

Consider the following questions

1. Why would the rulers be disturbed that the apostles preached “in Jesus the resurrection from the dead”?

2. What is the significance of “the name” (Acts 4:7, 10, 17, 18)?
3. Why would Peter and John be perceived as “uneducated, common men”?
4. Why do Peter and John invite the council to “judge” whether it is right to listen to them rather than to God?

5. What was the significance of laying things “at the apostles’ feet”?