

# *Resurrection Life of Jesus Church*

## THE EARLY CHURCH

RLJ-2001

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### PART 5: POSTURING AND THREATS

#### **JOY AND SADNESS**

The ungodly religious leadership, perturbed at having to deal with the disciples of Jesus two months after His crucifixion, jailed Peter and John, intending to deal with them the next day. **Acts 4:1-3**

The remaining apostles were filled with joy at the new church members added by the Holy Spirit, but since five thousand Jewish men had come to faith in Christ, they also needed to be baptized in water. Since the ungodly Jewish leadership had finally noticed the work of Jesus' followers, water baptism had to be done over a period of time in order not to draw the ire of Caiaphas and his cronies. **verse 4**

In the meantime, Peter and John were filled with the memory of Jesus' arrest and subsequent murder on the cross. Was God going to set them free, or would they be killed as well? Short of giving in to despair, the only viable action was prayer.

Luke did not record the emotions of Peter and John and what they said during the night hours. Most likely they did not get any food or water since the guards hated them as troublemakers from Galilee.

#### **HOLY SPIRIT FACTOR**

The unofficial leadership rested with Annas, who had been high priest in the past and would continue to serve in that capacity. One of his daughters was married to Caiaphas.

*"And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year." (John 18:13)*

Annas had been appointed to serve as high priest from A.D. 6-15 by the Roman occupation forces. He continued in the role after the mandate ran out and was replaced by Caiaphas. Annas had created a powerful political family that ruled Jerusalem. Evidence of this can be seen in the fact that when Jesus was arrested, he was first taken to Annas, and then sent to Caiaphas. The Annas family had the power to arrest anyone they wanted with impunity. They were in every sense what we would call a modern-day crime family.

Peter and John were taken from the jail in the morning. Annas and Caiaphas had a special interest in stopping the gospel message, whose supernatural success reflected badly upon them. They had taken heat for the death of Jesus and now they had gathered a group of notable men such as John and Alexander. The members of the Annas crime family were present as well. It is noteworthy that no Pharisees or Sadducees were mentioned as being present.



John was probably Jochanan ben Zaccai, a famous Jewish man, who is mentioned favorably in the Talmud.

Alexander was probably Alexander Lysimachus, a wealthy Jew who donated generously to the temple and was highly favored by King Agrippa. He was brother to Philo Judaeus, and father of Alexander Tiberius, who married Berenice, the daughter of Agrippa the elder, and was governor of Judea after Cuspius Fadus.

The mere mention of their names proved they were men of authority and influence who had been gathered to silence Peter and John.

The array of men assembled were enemies of the early church. **verses 5-6**

Peter and John knew that these powerful leaders were capable of murder, but they showed no fear in confronting the same kangaroo court of ruthless individuals. Annas and Caiaphas expected to intimidate the two apostles, but something had changed since the God-man was convicted by the Sanhedrin two months earlier. The Holy Ghost, the third person of the Godhead, now stood with Peter and John to confront these renegade Jews.

The spokesman for the assembly questioned by what power the lame man had been healed. Was it natural or devilish? Was the lame man healed through medicine or the assistance of Satan?

The religious leadership had not sanctioned Peter and John to teach and they wanted to know who had authorized their actions. The council was convinced that the lame man had been healed supernaturally, but they were also convinced the source was the Devil. It never occurred to them that it was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **verse 7**

## **GOD SPEAKS**

No Christian can fully understand what took place that day unless they have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. Peter did not use his intellect to address these renegade Jews. He was just a Christian with the Holy Spirit speaking through him.

*“But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.*

*But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” (Matthew 10:17-20)*

I was baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1970. It was a strange experience and no one told me what would happen next. The first thing I noticed was that doubt and fear had been replaced with confidence in Jesus. I had a clarity of mind like never before. When I read the Bible, I could understand what I read.

But the strangest effect took place when I shared my testimony or preached. It was as if someone took control of my tongue and I spoke things not thought out in my mind. It

was unrehearsed, with an outside force speaking through me, and just as others were listening to what I was saying, I too was also listening to the words coming out of my mouth. It was like the Holy Spirit disconnected my brain, took control over my tongue, and delivered a message direct from heaven.

This is what happened to Peter when the Holy Spirit began to address these Jewish renegades. **Acts 4:8**

The apostles were being questioned for the miraculous healing of the lame man, and the means by which he was now walking – the real point of the investigation. **verse 9**

Peter could have evaded the question, but he boldly addressed the assembly:

1. The lame man had been healed by Jesus Christ of Nazareth!
2. The Messiah crucified by the Sanhedrin two months earlier!
3. The same Messiah resurrected by God!
4. Jesus' power had healed the lame man! **verse 10**

The ungodly religious leadership had literally fulfilled messianic prophecy with their rejection and crucifixion of the God-man. Jesus was the cornerstone discarded by the renegade leadership, but despite their evil works, God the Father has made the incarnated Son of God into the cornerstone. **verse 11**

*“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.” (Psalms 118:22-23)*

*“Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?”*

*Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.*

*And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.” (Matthew 21:42-45)*

Furthermore, it is solely through Jesus' name by which salvation is extended to mankind. Heaven and hell are the afterlife destinations and only Jesus can grant you access to heaven. **Acts 4:12**

## **JEWISH LEADERSHIP REACTS**

Annas, Caiaphas and the rest of the men must have been shocked. When Jesus had stood before them two months earlier, the God-man was meek and did not challenge them. Peter and John had courageously and without hesitation accused these men of being renegades in God's eyes. From the text, it appears that John also spoke as well

as Peter, though his words were not recorded. These Galileans were not afraid to bring up Jesus' murder and remind the assembly of their guilt.

The apostate leadership knew Peter and John were simple fishermen who could read and write, but they had not received any higher education. They held no office or notable station in life and this is why these influential men were so astonished to hear them articulate their case in an eloquent manner. Peter and John had been with Jesus, but it was the Holy Spirit that was filling their mouth with words and bringing conviction to the assembly. **verse 13**

What really irked them was the fact that the formerly lame man also stood next to Peter and John, testifying to supernatural power which the ungodly religious leadership did not they themselves possess. **verse 14**

They decided to confer amongst themselves and asked the three men to wait outside. **verse 15**

The Annas family and the other Jewish leaders were being confronted by the Holy Spirit and they did not like it. The power emanating from the third person of the Godhead was impressive and they could not control it, let alone disavow it. **verse 16**

Old Testament Jewish theology did not teach there was a Godhead which consisted of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

In the past when the Pharisees had encountered Jesus' supernatural power, they attributed the healing to Satan (Beelzebub).

*"Then was brought unto him (Jesus) one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he (Jesus) healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." (Matthew 12:22-24)*

These ruthless men held to the motto that "might makes right" and so they decided to threaten Peter and John if they continued to speak about Jesus being the Messiah. The crucifiers did not want to be reminded of their failed attempt to silence the God-man.

**Acts 4:17**

And it was on this account that they did not want to hear the gospel message being preached. Hearing "Christ crucified" was an ominous reminder that they had betrayed and murdered the Messiah promised to Adam some 4,000 years earlier. **verse 18**

Supernatural power was not part of Judaism after the return from exile in Babylon and they helplessly realized their predicament with the miracle of the lame man and the firm resolve of Peter and John.

## **PETER & JOHN RESPOND**

Peter and John had not heard the deliberations of Annas and the other Jewish leaders. When they were brought back, the renegade assembly tried to bully the apostles into compliance. Prudence would certainly dictate caution given the ungodly leadership's murderous track record, but the rebuttal of two men indicated they were bound to a higher mandate, one that superseded this renegade leadership.

And so, when it came to making a choice between God and mankind, the choice was clear, Peter and John would continue to obey the Holy Spirit. Anything less would be treason against God since the authority of Godhead – in all matters – is superior to mankind. **verse 19**

Peter and John were eyewitnesses to so many miracles that it was no longer morally possible to deny the One (Jesus) who had saved them. They had seen the resurrection of Lazarus, and of the God-man, and no amount of threatening was going to make them deny their Lord and Savior! **verse 20**

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***Peter and John were absolutely fearless and the threats of these renegade Jews did nothing to budge their resolve to serve the Lord!***

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The Jewish leadership repeated their threats for good measure, hoping to scare Peter and John. They did not want to release the two apostles, but there was no lawful reason continue holding them. Plus, the public knew what had taken place with the healing of the forty-year-old lame man and they were giving glory to God for the remarkable miracle that had taken place. **verses 21-22**

## **BACK TO THE UPPER ROOM**

It was natural for Peter and John to return to the upper room where the original followers of Jesus lived. The disciples must have been up all night praying for their safety and there was unified joy when they learned what had taken place with the Annas and his cronies. **verses 23-30**

The Holy Spirit cranked up His power in all of them and a spontaneous session of praise and prayer broke loose. This was not just one person praying, followed by another person; rather, it was a Holy Ghost prayer meeting when they all began to praise God and pray simultaneously.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a one-time event, but there are further infillings and refreshments. A prayer meeting like this is not over in just a few minutes; the Holy Spirit is never in a hurry and He loves to come in like a wave and repeatedly wash over people. It was such a powerful time that the building was shook to affirm the Holy Spirit's presence and confirm the early church was on the correct path. **verse 31**

If you have never experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, then you are also ignorant of the joy, faith, and power surge associated with such an event.

## **SUMMARY**

I became a member of the State Church of Sweden (Lutheran) as a baby. From the age four to thirteen, I attended the Mission Covenant church in my hometown of Husqvarna. Then I backslid and lived for myself from 13 to 26, when I came back to the Lord and joined a Southern Baptist Church in the United States.

I was baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1970 at the age of 31, and from that point in my life I have been controlled by Him. I attended different prayer meetings for two decades starting in 1970 and the highlight was when the Holy Spirit moved upon us and we would spontaneously burst into praise and worship for hours, interspersed with prayer, messages in tongues, interpretations, people being healed, people overpowered by the by the Holy Spirit, just laying still on the floor and unable to move.

It is impossible to fully understand what I'm stating unless you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit and taken part of powerful prayer meetings. You can read about it, hear someone talk about it, but until you experience it for yourself, it is just another story.

***Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!***

***Do you have an ear to hear with?***