

Acts 4:13-22

New Revised Standard Version

Common English Bible

World English Bible

What has happened before this? Peter and John go to the temple. Peter heals a man “lame from birth” and the people who saw the healed man “walking and leaping and praising God” recognized him and were filled with wonder and amazement. Peter addresses the people and preaches until the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees arrested them. About 5,000 people were converted. The next day demanded by what authority Peter was preaching. Peter, in turn, preaches to them. Click here to see a video about the lame man who was healed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Fb-OVvAwyc>

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus. ¹⁴ When they saw the man who had been cured standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵ So they ordered them to leave the council while they discussed the matter with one another.

¹⁶ They said, “What will we do with them? For it is obvious to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable sign has been done through them; we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But to keep it from spreading further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.”

¹⁸ So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in God’s sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; ²⁰ for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

²¹ After threatening them again, they let them go, finding no way to punish them because of the

¹³ The council was caught by surprise by the confidence with which Peter and John spoke. After all, they understood that these apostles were uneducated and inexperienced. They also recognized that they had been followers of Jesus.

¹⁴ However, since the healed man was standing with Peter and John before their own eyes, they had no rebuttal. ¹⁵ After ordering them to wait outside, the council members began to confer with each other.

¹⁶ “What should we do with these men? Everyone living in Jerusalem is aware of the sign performed through them. It’s obvious to everyone and we can’t deny it. ¹⁷ To keep it from spreading further among the people, we need to warn them not to speak to anyone in this name.”

¹⁸ When they called Peter and John back, they demanded that they stop all speaking and teaching in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ Peter and John responded, “It’s up to you to determine whether it’s right before God to obey you rather than God. ²⁰ As for us, we can’t stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

²¹ They threatened them further, then released them. Because of public support for Peter and

¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled. They recognized that they had been with Jesus.

¹⁴ Seeing the man who was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. ¹⁵ But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

¹⁶ saying, “What shall we do to these men? Because indeed a notable miracle has been done through them, as can be plainly seen by all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we can’t deny it. ¹⁷ But so that this spreads no further among the people, let’s threaten them, that from now on they don’t speak to anyone in this name.”

¹⁸ They called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves, ²⁰ for we can’t help telling the things which we saw and heard.”

²¹ When they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them,

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people, for all of them praised God for what had happened. ²² For the man on whom this sign of healing had been performed was more than forty years old.

John, they couldn't find a way to punish them. Everyone was praising God for what had happened, ²² because the man who had experienced this sign of healing was over 40 years old.

because of the people; for everyone glorified God for that which was done. ²² For the man on whom this miracle of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

1. Verses 13-14: Who are the first group referred to as "they" and who are the second group referred to as "they"? Was this an open meeting? Who was present?
2. In verse 14, who was present that silenced the council? How did this person silence them? If you were this person, what emotions might you be feeling?
3. In verse 15, what does the council do? Why? If you were a member of the council, what emotions might you be feeling?
4. Verses 16-17: What would you say is the ultimate outcome the council would like to have happen? How confident do you think they are that they can accomplish this outcome? What is the challenge they are facing?
5. In verse 17, what action does the council decide to do? What can the council do to enforce its directive? If you were a member of the council, how effective do you think you might believe this decision will be?
6. Verses 18-20: What is the directive the council gives Peter and John? Do you think they intend it to apply to Peter and John only or to other followers of Jesus?
7. Verse 19-20: How do Peter and John respond to the council's directive? Do they say they will or won't follow their directive? What do they say they will do? Why?
8. Verses 21-22: How does the council react to Peter and John's response? What do they do? Why?
9. In verse 22, why does the writer mention the "man on whom the sign of healing had been performed was more than forty years old?"
10. Can you think of any episodes in the history of the church (universal, denominational, local, etc.) where a similar confrontation has happened? In your opinion and/or experience, what is the usual outcome of such confrontations?
11. If you were in the position of Peter and John, how would you act?

Behold the Lemmings, by Thomas Horton

A dictatorship of somnolence
Reigns over this modern world
Faithless followers sing idiot psalms
Their windward praises as hollow
As the poisoned air they breathe

Each one a heaven-bound blasphemy
A plainchant for beggars
Soaring to God on high
Beseeching him to reward
Their beguiling ugliness
With the vanity of prescience

These elegantly shabby pretenders
Throw sentient sparks
That spawn falsehoods
Even more egregious
That the follies of the Ancient