

^{4:1} As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple *guard* and the Sadducees came up to them^a, ² being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they laid hands on them and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴ But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

⁵ On the next day, their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; ⁶ and Annas the high priest *was there*, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. ⁷ When they had placed them in the center, they *began to inquire*^b, “By what power, or in what name, have you done this^c?” ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of the people, ⁹ if we are on trial today for a benefit done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this *name* this man stands here before you in good health. ¹¹ He is the STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED by you, THE BUILDERS, *but* WHICH BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER *stone*. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved^d.”

¹³ Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and *began to recognize them as having been with Jesus*^e. ¹⁴ And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply^f. ¹⁵ But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they *began to*

^a 4:1 **As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them.** The Sadducees were a theologically liberal sect within Judaism that only accepted the books of Moses, denied the existence of angels and a future resurrection (Acts 23:8). It should be no surprise that they opposed the message of the gospel like they did the ministry of Jesus (Matthew 22:23-33).

^b 4:7 **When they had placed them in the center, they began to inquire.** Like a delivered drunk entering a bar for the first time since he went sober, Peter for the first time since he disowned his Lord stood before these authorities who had condemned his Lord that night. Would he again disown his Lord? If there is a question in the reader’s mind, he need not worry, for the following verses show a different Peter than the one who was afraid of little girls.

^c 4:7 **By what power, or in what name, have you done this?** The hardened hearts of the religious authorities were not moved by miracles, but uncertified teachers really got to them.

^d 4:12 **And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.** This is a very exclusive claim Peter is making. To believe that salvation is found only in Jesus is to say that Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus and adherents of most of the world’s other major religions are devoid of God’s salvation and therefore will suffer eternal punishment.

Many non-Christians and even some Christians bristle at this Christian *dogma*, an accepted body of truth that is accepted exclusively. Contemporary wisdom claims that no one has the truth and, therefore, no one has the right to be dogmatic.

But what about the realm of science and mathematics? Are some things absolutely true and therefore worthy of dogmatism? J. Vernon McGee remembered that he had a mathematics teacher who was very dogmatic about the sum of two and two.

^e 4:13 **Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.** Biblical Christianity has always been pro-education, despite claims to the contrary by the world. However, the final source of authority for a Christian’s education—namely Jesus Christ and His word—often contradicts worldly wisdom. Someone who has “been with Jesus” can declare propositional truth without blushing even when lies are in fashion.

^f 4:14 **And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply.** The worst complication for a person seeking to prove a point is when evidence

confer with one another, ¹⁶ saying, “What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it^a. ¹⁷ But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name^b.” ¹⁸ And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; ²⁰ for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard^c.” ²¹ When they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which to punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; ²² for the man was more than forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.^d

becomes overwhelming that he is arguing for the wrong side. Such was the case here. As when Jesus healed a blind man, the noteworthy change was undeniable (John 9:25).

^a 4:16 **What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.** This is a great question to have people ask about you. When God really works and brings change to your life, His enemies will not know what to do with you, but they will not be able to deny what has happened.

^b 4:17 **But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name.** When powerful people do not have the truth on their side they often resort to intimidation.

^c 4:19-20 **Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.** The apostles were only reporting what they had seen. They did not have to labor to turn conversations to spiritual things. For a Christian looking and praying for a “chance” to tell people about Jesus, a better attitude is to look and pray for eyes to see Jesus at work. When that happens a person cannot help but talk about it.

^d 4:1-22 If this man was forty years old, he must have been placed at the Beautiful Gate for many years. The Lord Jesus and His disciples must have entered the Court of the Women through the Beautiful Gate past him several times. As Jesus had left all but one man unhealed at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:3-9), in His providence He chose to pass this beggar without a healing, knowing that his time would come. Once when people searched for Jesus around Capernaum, presumably looking for more healings, Jesus said to His disciples, “Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for” (Mark 1:38).

One lesson from this apparent neglect is that there must be some things more important than physical healing. Certainly if this beggar had been placed daily at this location, he had heard some of Jesus’ powerful and authoritative teaching. He may have heard when Jesus preached from Solomon’s Porch about His sheep knowing Him, following Him and possessing eternal life (John 10:22-39). If the beggar was present and listening, he knew the identity of his healer

Another lesson is that a when the sovereign and loving Lord seemingly ignores our pleas for help we can be confident that He has something much better in mind

The greatest lesson for us is that which Peter is seeking to communicate to the Jews. Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. Peter made this exclusive claim (4:12) because Jesus made this exclusive claim (John 14:6). It is not possible to serve Jesus effectively if He is one among many ways to heaven. How can you find hope in this passage to give you confidence that you are on the “right” side and that Jesus is the only way to heaven?

1. You choose to believe Him and not His enemies. Jesus had made this claim for Himself. If it is true it affects the way you live and believe. You will be dogmatic—at least in this area. If it is not true, Jesus Christ is no better than any other religious huckster who ever deceived the masses.
2. You watch how His enemies live. The enemies of Jesus had nothing to offer but fear. They discredited themselves because they were more interested in preserving their

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system than in acknowledging the truth. Does that mean that all non-Christians live decadent lives? No. It means that they have no ability to be forgiven and reconciled to God. Evangelist Ravi Zacharias said, “Jesus didn’t come into this world to make bad people good. He came into this world to make dead people live.”

3. You watch how His friends live. Those who follow Jesus closely resemble him. They are given courage when they need it. Does that mean that all Christians behave like Christians? No. A study of Peter’s life will show that. But Peter’s life also shows what happens when people have been with Jesus.