**Lesson 5**

**Acts 4:5-31 Arrest and Trial**

*In last week’s lesson, Peter, through the power of Jesus Christ, healed a man on the steps of the Temple, who had been crippled since birth. 5000 people who witnessed the healing came to faith in Jesus Christ as a result. In this week’s lesson Peter and John, who was also present at the healing, were arrested by the Temple authorities. They must now face their accusers.*

1. **When did you feel closest to God this week? *Or* was there a particular verse or message in Acts 4 that inspired you?**
2. **Why would the Sanhedrin feel threatened or angered by Peter’s statements in**

**Acts 4:8-12?**

**Acts 4:8-128**Then Peter, filled with the holy Spirit, answered them, “Leaders of the people and elders: **9**If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a cripple, namely, by what means he was saved, **10**then all of you and all the people of Israel should know that it was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead; in his name this man stands before you healed. **11**He is ‘the stone rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.’ **12**[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+4&version=NABRE#fen-NABRE-31354c)]There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved.”

1. **Read Psalm 118:19-25, Matthew 21:42, 1 Peter 2:7 an Acts 4:11-12.**

**Peter uses a familiar Psalm to make a point in Acts. Who is Peter suggesting are the “builders” here? Who is the “corner stone” or foundation?**

**Psalm 118:19-25**

Open the gates of righteousness; I will enter and thank the Lord.
**20**This is the Lord’s own gate through it the righteous enter.
**21**I thank you for you answered me, you have been my savior.
**22**The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.
**23**By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes.
**24**This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad.
**25**Lord, grant salvation! Lord, grant good fortune!

**Matthew 21:42 42**Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the scriptures:

‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes’?

# 1 Peter 2:7

**7**Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith:

“The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”

1. **Reflection: The bold statement that Peter makes in verse 12 may have shocked the Jewish leaders of the Sanhedrin.**

**Was Peter referring to salvation in *this world* or in the next world?**

**What does this verse mean to us today in the 21st century? See Acts 4:12.**

**Acts 4:12 12**There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved.”

1. **What was it that kept the Sanhedrin from punishing the Apostles Peter and John for blasphemy? See Acts 4:13-17.**

**Acts 4:13-1713**Observing the boldness of Peter and John and perceiving them to be uneducated, ordinary men, they were amazed, and they recognized them as the companions of Jesus. **14**Then when they saw the man who had been cured standing there with them, they could say nothing in reply. **15**So they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, and conferred with one another, saying, **16**“What are we to do with these men? Everyone living in Jerusalem knows that a remarkable sign was done through them, and we cannot deny it. **17**But so that it may not be spread any further among the people, let us give them a stern warning never again to speak to anyone in this name.”

1. **Recalling that the Apostles were pious Jews, how difficult would it be to defy the authority of the Sanhedrin and the Temple? See Acts 4:15-17.**

**Acts 4:15-17 15**So they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, and conferred with one another, saying, **16**“What are we to do with these men? Everyone living in Jerusalem knows that a remarkable sign was done through them, and we cannot deny it. **17**But so that it may not be spread any further among the people, let us give them a stern warning never again to speak to anyone in this name.

1. **How did Peter and John respond to the Sanhedrin? Where does this courage come from?**

**See Acts 4:18-20.**

**4:18-20 18**So they called them back and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. **19**Peter and John, however, said to them in reply, “Whether it is right in the sight of God for us to obey you rather than God, you be the judges.**20**It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard.”

1. **Are there times in the Church today that Catholics choose to reject a specific teaching of the Church? Can you give examples from observation or personal experience?**
2. **When is it permissible to defy or reject a civil law or a law of the Church?**

**See Catechism references 1776, 1777, 1778.**

**1776** "Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment. For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God. His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths."47

**1778** Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed. In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right. It is by the judgment of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the divine law:

Conscience is a law of the mind; yet [Christians] would not grant that it is nothing more; I mean that it was not a dictate, nor conveyed the notion of responsibility, of duty, of a threat and a promise. . . . [Conscience] is a messenger of him, who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by his representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ.50

1. **Peter and John return to their community and tell the story of their ordeal.**

**What is the immediate response of their community?**

**How do they pray, and what do they pray for? See Acts 4:24-31.**

**Acts 4:24-31 24**And when they heard it, they raised their voices to God with one accord and said, “Sovereign Lord, maker of heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them, **25**you said by the holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David, your servant:

‘Why did the Gentiles rage
    and the peoples entertain folly?
**26**The kings of the earth took their stand
    and the princes gathered together
        against the Lord and against his anointed.’

**27**Indeed they gathered in this city against your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed, Herod[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+4&version=NABRE#fen-NABRE-31369d)] and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **28**to do what your hand and [your] will had long ago planned to take place. **29**And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and enable your servants to speak your word with all boldness, **30**as you stretch forth [your] hand to heal, and signs and wonders are done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” **31**As they prayed, the place where they were gathered shook, and they were all filled with the holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.