

A lame man has just been healed through Peter and John. The authorities are angry and have arrested the two Apostles and they are conferring among themselves as to what is to be done...

'But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.' Verse 16

Acts 3:17: *'But, (they conferred among themselves,) that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.¹⁸ And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.'*

To threaten 'straitly' means: clearly, unambiguously... like: 'give it to me strait, Doc!' To threaten in such a way that there is no question as to their meaning: 'If you continue to do what Jesus did, we will, to you, do what we did to Him!'

Verse 19: *'But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.'*

'If what you say and command is more important than what God says and commands... you judge! You decide! This is on you and you will stand before God to give an answer!'

It's interesting to see the difference in Peter's courage; just a couple of months ago, he was too afraid to even admit that he knew Jesus. Now, after having been baptized with the Holy Spirit, at Pentecost, he is strong and courageous; he does not tremble, is not dismayed for he knows the Lord his God is with him wherever he may go. Joshua 1:9

Verse 20: *'For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.'*

When God, the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit are real and living within a person, they cannot help but speak the Truth:

Jeremiah said: *'Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.'* (I could not be still!) Jer 20:9

This time, this people, the hardness of their hearts before Jesus Christ, before His Apostles and before God Almighty; we've seen it referenced earlier but it was prophesied in Isaiah 6:

'In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ² Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³ And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. ⁴ And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. ⁶ Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: ⁷ And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. ⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. ⁹ And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. ¹⁰ Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.' Isaiah 6:1

We always know it when God is urging us to speak on His behalf, to share the Gospel or to pray with someone and we always do respond; our response is either 'Yes, I will!', 'No, I won't!', or 'Maybe later, Lord', which is really: 'No, I won't!'

Verse 21: *'So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. ²² For the man was above forty*

years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.'

All Jerusalem is glorifying God... everyone, that is, except this hard-hearted, nasty little group of religious leaders who want nothing more than to shut down the voices giving glory to God but God caused them to fear the people. Later, we'll see that their motivation is actually jealousy; they are envious of the throngs of people turning to the Messiah, leaving their hypocritical religion of following the traditions created by themselves which are often contrary to the revealed Word of God... just like so many today.

Why is it important for God to tell us that this man is more than 40 years old? Remember, this is only a small number of weeks since the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

This man had been lame from more than 7 years before Jesus was even born! Everyone in Jerusalem knew who he was even if they had always tried to ignore him. Also... Jesus had seen him every time He came to Jerusalem and to the Temple with His family. The lame man had been a young man, sitting at the Temple gate when Jesus, aged 12, was left behind when His family came back, after 3 days, to find Him speaking with the elders: *'And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. ⁴⁸ And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. ⁴⁹ And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?'* Luke 2:46

Jesus had always known of this lame man but He never healed him, during all His 3.5 years of Ministry... why? The answer is the same as when Jesus did heal another man who had been born blind: *'And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. ² And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? ³ Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: **but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.**'* John 9:1

The man born blind was meant to bring glory to God. This man, born lame, had been kept, by God, for just this moment, that, again, God would be glorified in him.

Verse 23: *'And being let go, they (Peter and John) went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. ²⁴ And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.'*

Peter and John have just been arrested and threatened by the ruling authorities but they and all those who were waiting for their release know full well Who the true Authority is: in Jerusalem, in Israel and over all Creation: the Lord God Almighty, Maker and Ruler over all that is!

Verse 25: *'Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? ²⁶ The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.'*

Here, they are recalling David's Psalm 2:

'Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, ³ Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. ⁴ He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. ⁵ Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. ⁶ Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. ⁷ I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. ⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. ⁹ Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. ¹⁰ Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.'

This Prophecy has a secondary fulfillment in the rejection of God, Almighty and crucifixion of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ but it's primary fulfillment is in the Last Days, what we are privileged to watch all around us now.

David writes: the heathen, Gentiles, rage and the people imagine a vain thing. They rage against God and His

Son; they rage against true Christians and they rage and plot the destruction of God's People and His Land, Israel. Now get this: *The kings of the earth... set themselves... and **the rulers take council together!***

The 'vain thing,' which they are imagining now, is that they can force the division and then destruction of Israel but ultimately, the 'vain thing,' which they imagine will be that they can, in fact, finally defeat the returning Rightful King, the Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, Lord over all Creation.

All of the kings, all of the presidents, prime ministers and all the rulers behind the thrones and high offices... they are, even now, taking council together in secret meetings like Davos, the World Economic Forum, the Bilderbergers and many others. They plot their takeover of the entire World; then they will willingly give their power, authority and allegiance to one man whom we know will be the Antichrist.

This is prophetically referencing the Tribulation, the 7 years before the Return of the Lord Jesus Christ in all Power, Might and Majesty to destroy all His enemies and then set up His Earthly Kingdom as He rules and reigns for 1000 years and then forever! And, we're told, we will rule and reign with Him forever!

At the height of Satan's power as he rules the Earth through the Antichrist, he will inspire the kings of the Earth to gather their armies in the Valley of Megiddo, for the great, final Battle of Armageddon, thinking that they will *'...break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us...'* They will actually imagine that they will successfully defeat the returning Rightful King of Creation. They will be destroyed and the Lord Jesus Christ will rule, for 1000 years, with a Rod of Iron, demanding perfect adherence to His Law.

Here in Acts 4, they know, from God's Word, as we do, that there really is a World-wide conspiracy against God, against His Son and against all who belong to Him: Jews and Gentiles alike.

Verse 27: *'For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,'*

Here is that secondary fulfillment: all were gathered together against the Lord Jesus Christ and they were allowed, by God, to crucify Him...

But here is a monumental truth:

Verse 28: *'For to do whatsoever **thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.**'*

Evil men did nothing, at all, to God's Son, except that which God had, from the foundation of the World, planned and determined to be done. God did not simply look forward and see what would be done; He is the One Who planned it all... why?... to the glory of God and His Son.

'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' Rom 8:32 **God delivered Him up for us all.**

*'In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him **who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.**'¹² That we should be to the praise of his glory...'* Eph 1:11

'... I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:' Isa 46:9

God knows all the future because He has planned all the future... all things... and He will accomplish all that He has planned. God is Sovereign! He plans, controls, determines and accomplishes all things, at all times, in all places, in all people... all things which are tiny, small, large and gargantuan... He determines and does it all... for the Glory of God and of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's a terrible thing when people/teachers/preachers diminish God, His Person and His Power, weakening Him, considering Him as but a victim of circumstances, always trying to pick up the pieces of Man's work, trying desperately to make something good come from it.

Verse 29: *'And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,'*

This is the first priority and the last thing Jesus said: *'Go into all the World and preach the Gospel.'*

Verse 30: *'By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy*

holy child Jesus.'

Signs and wonders, miracles of healing... these are all secondary; their purpose is to verify and confirm the Word of God which He inspires the Apostles to preach: their #1 primary mission: Preach the Word!

This is the first generation Church with signs and wonders confirming the Word these Apostles will preach and teach until they are killed for the Word. To the next generation, which will have the written letters, Gospels and The Revelation... that and following generations will not, necessarily, have signs confirming:

Paul wrote: *'I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; ² **Preach the word**; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴ And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. ⁵ But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.'* 2Timothy 4:1

We, in these Last Days, are surrounded by the 'church', at large, whose pastors do not reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. We see so much of the 'church,' whose 'members' will not endure sound doctrine; but they do, after their own lusts, heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; ⁴ And they do turn away their ears from the truth, and they are turned unto fables.

Satan was watching, biding his time, waiting for the moment to strike; when the preaching of the Word was no longer being confirmed with sign and wonders following, regularly, as it surely was in the beginning... when what was available to pastors and evangelists, was only the written Word, people began to fall away; even during the ministries of the Apostles. Paul, John, Peter and Jude all wrote to combat the false teachings coming in from unscrupulous false teachers:

John wrote: *'We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.'* 1John 1:6

Peter wrote: *'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. ³ And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.'* 2 Pet 2:1

Jude wrote: *'... (I) exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. ⁴ For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.'* Jude vs 3

And, again... once the rest of the Word of God, the Gospels, the Epistles and The Revelation were all completed, written and available, the need for miracles, signs and wonders ceased... they were no longer necessary to confirm the spoken Word; God had inspired His written Word and He had determined to preserve it... forever!

*'The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but **the word of our God shall stand for ever.**'* Isa 40:8

The Word of God shall stand forever; It shall be preserved and revered forever! It shall stand throughout the 7 years of the Tribulation, throughout the 1000 years of the Millennial Reign of the Lord Jesus Christ and then forever throughout the ever-increasing, ever-expanding rule and government of the Lord Jesus Christ as His Rule and Reign grows outward to the farthest reaches of His never-ending Universe!

When we are given our new, glorified, eternal bodies, like the Lord Jesus Christ's own Body, we will, very quickly, with our perfect new and brilliant minds, completely memorize all of the written Word of God and we will have instant recall of every Word He will have ever spoken to us. Then will the verse be unquestionably certain: *'But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. ¹⁶ For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? **but we have the mind of Christ.**'* 1 Cor 2:15