

Acts 4
Persecution and the Filling of the
Holy Spirit

CBCSD/LG

Review

Acts 3:

- **Wonders and Signs by Faith thru Jesus**
 - Healing of a 40 year old lame man since birth.
 - Walking and leaping and praising God.
 - A solid witness that everyone recognized.
 - Peter preached to the Jews for repentance.
 - 2000 receives Christ (4:4)

Acts 4: The scene has suddenly changed. Darkness has fallen upon the apostles. Intimidation and Threats.

All too familiar because it just happened to Jesus.

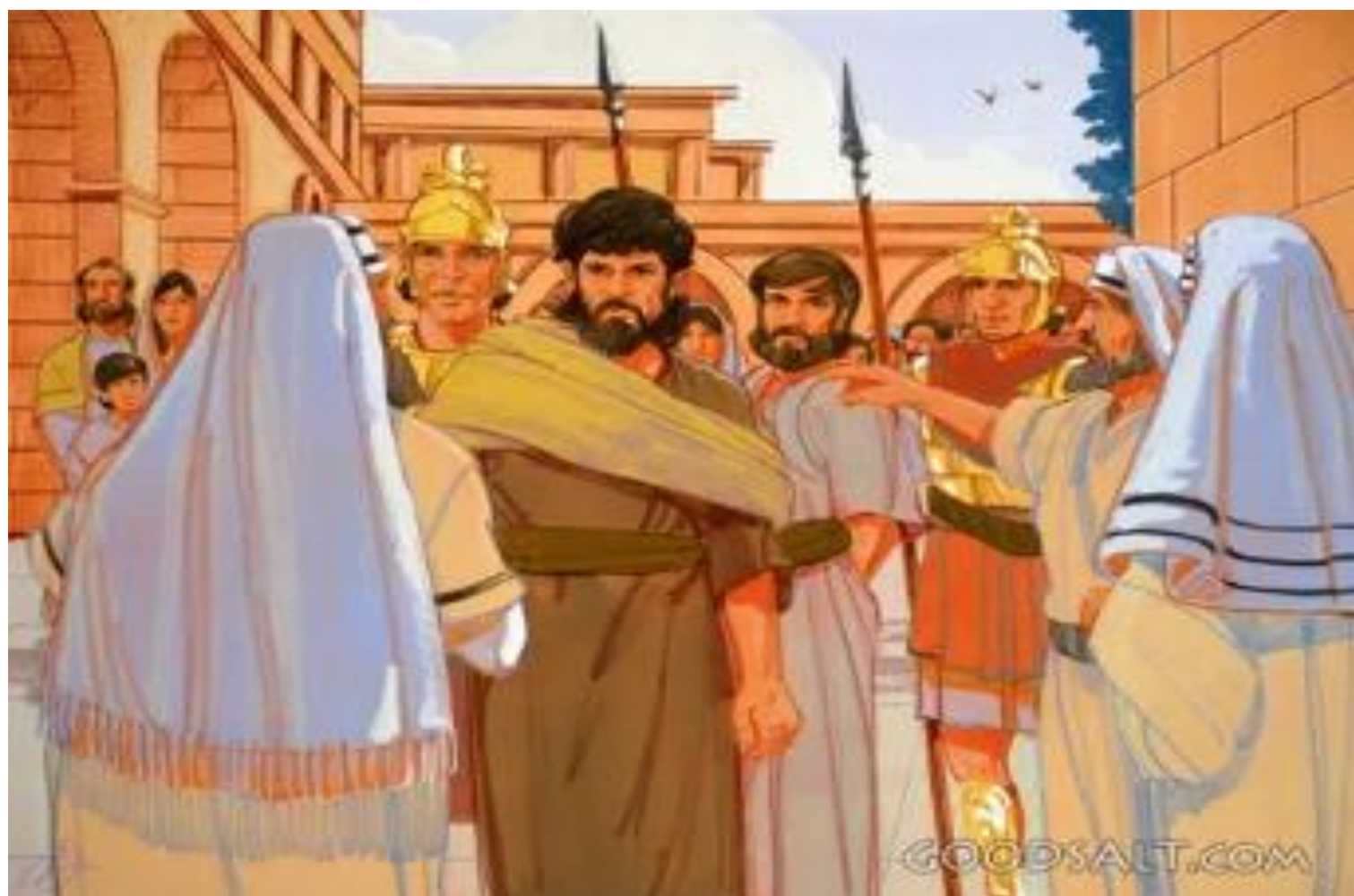
Acts 4:1-4

And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them,

2 greatly annoyed because they were **teaching** the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

3 And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

4 But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.



Sadducees

Spurgeon on Sadducees - The Sadducees, as you know, were the Broad School, the liberals, the advanced thinkers, the modern-thought people of the day. If you want a bitter sneer, a biting sarcasm, or a cruel action, I commend you to these large-hearted gentlemen. They are liberal to everybody, except to those who hold the truth; and for those they have a reserve of concentrated bitterness which far excels wormwood and gall. They are so liberal to their brother errorists that they have no tolerance to spare for evangelicals.

(The Sadducees were men of position and often wealthy landowners (aristocrats). The irony is that while they were the dominant religious force in Israel, they were worldly minded, materialistic secularists with little genuine interest in religion.)



文A



Acts 4:5-7

5 On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem,

6 with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family.

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?”

Jesus' examples:

1) Matt 12:22-24 Challenge from the Pharisees about Jesus' power to heal. What is your “source”?

2) Matt 9:2-6 Challenge of Jesus' authority to forgive sins.

Acts 4:8-12

8 Then **Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders,

9 if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed,

10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by **the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well.

11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

12 **And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (READ TOGETHER)**

Observe Acts 4:5-12

Peter's Defense and Attitude (filled with the Spirit)

- Is it rational or reasonable for imprisonment and interrogation due to a good deed? A counter question.
- Direct answer. Reason of healing. Jesus' Name and Power to heal.
- Indict the rulers using Scriptures. (Ps 118:22)
- Proclamation: His name not only can heal but to save the whole world: "Jesus is the only name, under heaven, by which we must be saved."

Note: the **Boldness** in Peter!

Acts 4:13-17 Peter and John before the Council

13 Now when they saw the **boldness** of Peter and John, and perceived that they were **uneducated, common men**, they were **astonished**. And they recognized that **they had been with Jesus.**

14 But **seeing the man** **who was healed standing beside them,** **they had nothing to say** in opposition.

15 But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another,

16 saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that **a notable sign** has been performed through them is **evident** to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we **cannot deny** it.

17 But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us **warn them** to **speak no more** to anyone in this name.”

Acts 4:13-22 The best defense of the Gospel

Warren Wiersbe writes:

"The best defense of the truth of the Christian faith is a changed life. The healed beggar was "Exhibit A" in Peter's defense of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In his evangelistic ministries, the Methodist preacher Samuel Chadwick used to pray for "a Lazarus" in every campaign, some "great sinner" whose conversion would shock the community. He got the idea from John 12:9-11. God answered his prayers in meeting after meeting as infamous **wicked men trusted Christ and became witnesses** through their changed lives. Let's go after the "hard cases" and see what God can do!

Acts 4: Themes and Key Words

- 1) Persecution
- 2) Boldness
- 3) Filling of the Holy Spirit

Discussion On Challenges Christians faced today

- 1) Why are Christians being persecuted most?
- 2) What core principles Christian stands for that this culture adamantly disagrees. Name a few.
- 3) How do you cope with such pressure and isolation in this culture?

Jesus is the only way to Heaven!

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

- Acts 4:12



On Persecution

- 1) More than 388 million Christians globally face high levels of persecution and discrimination. (John 16:33)
- 2) Countries where Christians persecuted most. (North Korea, Somalia, Yemen, Sudan....)
- 3) Example of intense Interrogation and Intimidation. China Missionary: Pam

On Persecution

Over 388 million Christians experience high levels of persecution and discrimination

worldwide, according to the Open Doors 2026 World Watch List.

Global Statistics and Impact

Scale: Approximately 1 in 7 Christians face persecution globally—rising to 1 in 5 in Africa and 2 in 5 in Asia.

Violence: Recent data documents 4,849 Christians murdered, 4,712 detained or arrested, 3,302 abducted, and 3,632 churches or property attacks worldwide.

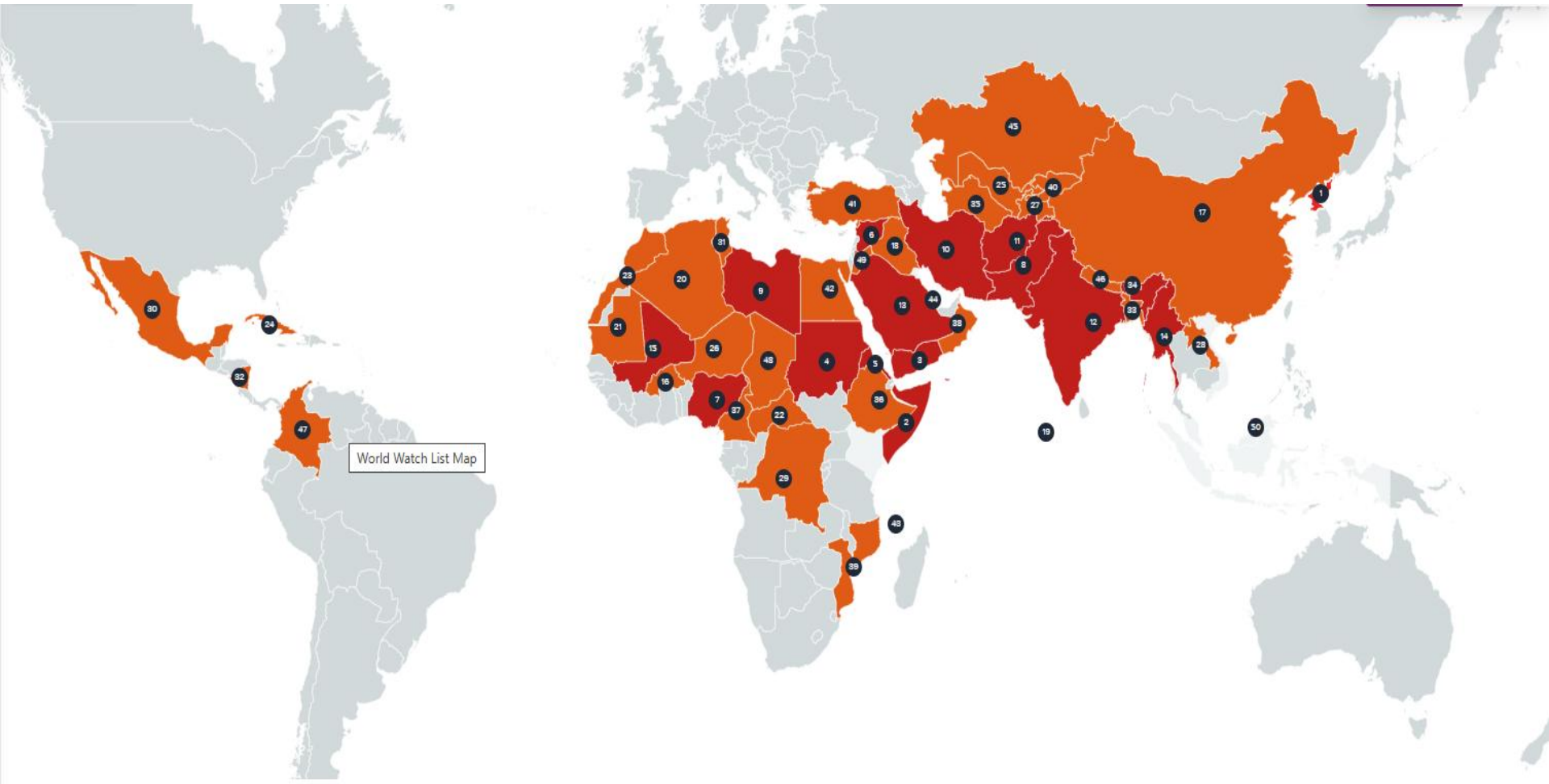
Vulnerable Groups: Millions of women, girls, and minors under 15 make up a significant portion of those affected by targeted abuse and displacement.

Most Dangerous Countries (Open Doors International)

North Korea (ranked as the most dangerous nation)

Somalia, Yemen, Sudan, Eritrea, Syria, Nigeria, Pakistan, Libya, Iran

Pray for the Persecuted Church



Acts 4:18-22

18 So they called them and charged 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 the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,
20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”

21 And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people, for all were praising God for what had happened.

22 For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old.

A Prayer for boldness (Acts 4:29-31) Not safety

29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to **continue to speak your word with all boldness,**

30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31 And when they had prayed, **the place in which they were gathered together was shaken,** and they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit** and continued to speak the word of God with **boldness**.

On Boldness

- 1) One thing obvious is “boldness” when Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. (v13)
- 2) The word “boldness” appears at least 3 times in this chapter (4:13,29,31). All related to the filling of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) “Boldness to speak” was implied. Have you ever intimated by this culture and its trend. Afraid to speak up? What shall we do in situation when our core beliefs are being challenged?

Discussion on the filling of the Holy Spirit

- 1) What is your understanding of “filling with the Holy Spirit”?
- 2) In what circumstances here that Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit?
- 3) How can we allow the “filling of the Spirit”? How?

Ephesians 5:18-6:9	Colossians 3:16-4:1
Be filled (present imperative)	Let...dwell within you richly (present imperative)
THE SPIRIT	THE WORD OF CHRIST
Speaking to ONE ANOTHER Eph 5:19	Teaching & Admonishing ONE ANOTHER Col 3:16-note
In PSALMS and HYMNS and SPIRITUAL SONGS Eph 5:19	With PSALMS and HYMNS and SPIRITUAL SONGS Col 3:16
SINGING and making melody with YOUR HEART to the Lord Eph 5:19	SINGING with thankfulness in YOUR HEARTS to God Col 3:16
Always GIVING THANKS for ALL things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father Eph 5:20-note	Do ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus, GIVING THANKS through Him to God the Father Col 3:17-note
WIVES BE SUBJECT to your own husbands Eph 5:22-24-note	WIVES BE SUBJECT to your husbands Col 3:18
HUSBANDS LOVE your wives Eph 5:25-33-note	HUSBANDS LOVE your wives Col 3:19-note

Observe Acts 4:8-12

Filling with the Holy Spirit:

- 1) Eph 5:18 "... be filled with the Spirit,"
- 2) Col 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,..."

Note: A habit of meditation and obedience of the scripture invites the filling of the Holy Spirit.

On Meditation

Charles Spurgeon (Morning and Evening):

Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make but slow advances in the divine life? Because they neglect their closets, and do not thoughtfully meditate on God's Word.

They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it.

From such folly deliver us, O Lord, and be this our resolve this morning, "I will meditate in thy precepts."

Acts 4:32-37 Everything in common

32 Now the **full number of those who believed** were of **one heart and soul**, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had **everything in common**.

33 And with **great power the apostles** were giving their **testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus**, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold

35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

36 Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles **Barnabas (which means son of encouragement)**, a Levite, a native of Cyprus, 37 sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Summary:

1) Persecution –

John 15:20 Persecution came to Jesus and will come to his followers. Don't be surprised. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

2) Boldness – Pray for boldness to Speak and proclaim Jesus in this pluralistic culture.

3) Filling of the Holy Spirit –
Filling with the word of Christ.
The Spirit gives boldness.

Final words:
God can use
anyone.

1 Corinthians 1:27 -29

But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise;

God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.