

Study Notes and Questions for Acts 4:1-31

- What happens in 4:1–22, and how is the passage connected to the events of chapter 3?
- **Note: *Captain of the temple guard*** (4:1). Most priests worked in the temple only two weeks a year and lived in the countryside the rest of the time. However, a few powerful families whose men were eligible to become high priests resided in Jerusalem. The captain of the temple police was a member of one of those families and ranked second to the high priest.
- **Note:** The Sadducees were wealthy, aristocratic Jews who supported Roman rule in exchange for Rome's protection of their power.
- Why were the priests and other Sadducees so upset that the apostles were proclaiming Jesus resurrected?
- Why do you think they found it so hard to believe that Jesus was the Messiah?
- What assumptions and priorities make it difficult for various groups of people today to accept Jesus even when they can't refute the evidence?
- The Sanhedrin did not doubt that a healing had occurred; they only demanded to know by what authority (power or name, see Acts 4:7) the apostles were preaching and healing. Peter responded that his authority came from Jesus. Specifically, what did Peter claim about Jesus (see 4:8–12)?
- Peter and John were committed to obeying God rather than the Jewish leaders when commands conflicted (see 4:19). What had God commanded them to do (see 1:8)?
- According to 4:19, under what circumstances must Christians disobey human authorities, and when must we obey human authorities?
- Think of a modern situation in which a Christian should disobey the authorities and one in which he should obey.
- How does Acts 4:1–22 reflect Jesus' teaching in Luke 12:11–12 and 21:12–19?
- Peter and John had done nothing wrong, and the Sanhedrin couldn't deny the miracle, so at this point they could only issue a command and a warning (see 4:13–18). How did Peter respond (see 4:19–20)?
- What principles for Christian behavior before authorities do Peter and John exemplify (see 4:5–13, 18–20; 5:29–32)?
- How does the believer's prayer for boldness encourage you personally?