

**The Acts of the Apostles**

**The Journey – 2020**  
Jim Hoffman

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Acts 4:16 “What should we do with these men?” they asked each other. “We can’t deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. 17 But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus’ name again.” 18 So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, “Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? 20 We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard.” 21 The council then threatened them further, but they finally let them go because they didn’t know how to punish them without starting a riot. For everyone was praising God 22 for this miraculous sign—the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty years. NLT

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- “What should we do with these men?” they asked each other. “We can’t deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it.”
- If there was any doubt before as to who this group is there should be no doubt now – CORRUPT!!
- They are not talking like men who have just seen a significant miracle – they are speaking like corporate board members trying to save a dying company.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- They fully acknowledge a miracle had taken place – it would have been supremely apparent as well that the life of the beggar was permanently improved.
- They surely put on their war room “whiteboard” these words, “**everybody in Jerusalem knows about it**”.
- If only they could hear themselves strategizing as to **how to cover up a miracle, and an improved life!**

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The Acts of the Apostles

- If only there were some excuse we could raise for them - perhaps they could obtain some measure of mercy.
- But, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:4 does not apply to them.
- “Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don’t understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.”

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The Acts of the Apostles

- It is not that the Sanhedrin cannot see that Jesus was God – they knew he was and fought against Him anyway.
- They decided that since all of Jerusalem knew about the miracle, they couldn’t deny it, but they could warn Peter and John not to do it again. 😊
- Seriously – is that a rationale act? To warn those who performed a miracle and improved a life never to do it again?

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The Acts of the Apostles

This would be tantamount to telling the person who just found the cure for cancer that she better not do it again!

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The Acts of the Apostles

Now pretend the naysayer is a pharmaceutical company with the latest and greatest cancer drug and you will have the picture.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey **you** rather than **him**?"
- This is the question I wish everyone in the world would ask themselves – Do we obey men over God?
- It's not that Christians are never to obey the laws of men, but we are to obey God over men when there is a conflict between two edicts.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Rom 13:1 Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. NLT
- **The above is the rule** – the event we just read about in Acts 4 is the exception to the rule.
- Most of us have never been in the position to have to choose between obeying God or man – however, we should always be prepared to choose wisely.

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- And then Peter and John add this – “20 We **cannot stop** telling about everything we have seen and heard.”
- I look at the phrase, “**cannot stop**” and am somewhat envious – I ask myself the question that perhaps many should ask.
- Is my mindset one of “**cannot stop**”, or have I grown accustomed to being saved from sin and its power?

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Perhaps you are like me – so many years have come and gone since the day we were saved that we’ve forgotten what it was like to be lost.
- When I read that Peter and John could not stop telling their world about Christ, I can become a bit concerned when I realize I’ve lost that newness.
- Maybe I need to be reminded of what it was like for me to be lost in sin and in danger of the fires of hell.

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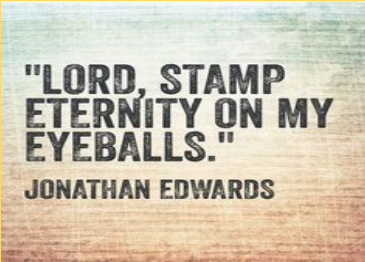
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**The Acts of the Apostles**



**"LORD, STAMP  
ETERNITY ON MY  
EYEBALLS."  
JONATHAN EDWARDS**

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Acts 4:23 As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. 24 When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: "O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them— 25 you spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant, saying, 'Why were the nations so angry? Why did they waste their time with futile plans? 26 The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.'" 27 In fact, this has happened here in this very city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, your holy servant, whom you anointed. 28 But everything they did was determined beforehand according to your will. NLT

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Psalm 2:1 Why are the nations so angry? Why do they waste their time with futile plans? 2 The kings of the earth prepare for battle; the rulers plot together against the Lord and against his anointed one. NLT
- What the Apostles are praying in Acts 4 is nearly word for word of what David wrote in Psalm 2.
- The next time you read Psalm 2, I hope your mind goes to the insanity of the Sanhedrin in Acts 4.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- In Psalm 2 David asks the exact right question – why would anyone be so angry and upset to see the Holy One promised by God show up in their lifetime?
- Unsaved people don't want to hear about the Rapture of the Church and the Sanhedrin didn't want a savior.
- For the Jewish leadership the coming of Messiah would mean the end of their business – that's why they wanted to quash any teaching about Jesus.

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The Acts of the Apostles

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of David's question was this – "Why do they waste their time with futile plans?"
- The definition of futile – "incapable of producing any useful result."
- They were knowingly fighting against God and his redemption plan – not just any plan, but the one that he gave up his own Son to bring to fruition.

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The Acts of the Apostles

• Acts 4:29 And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and **give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word.** 30 **Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.** 31 After this prayer, **the meeting place shook**, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness. NLT

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- The heat has been turned up so to speak – specifically the anger of the Sanhedrin.
- Never underestimate the actions from people who are frightened of losing what they have. 
- So naturally the reaction of the disciples is to pray – and pray they did. So intensely that when they had finished, the meeting place shook!

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- The shaking of the meeting place is one of those phenomena that is caused by God, but not repeated.
- There was a sound in Acts 2 from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm. (never repeated)
- Also in Acts 2 there were flames of fire that appeared and settled on all 120 believers. (never repeated)

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**The Acts of the Apostles**

- Again the Apostles are filled with the Spirit and again they will speak boldly for God – **this pattern of filling and boldness persists.**
- And this time there is another sign from God that would serve as a stamp of approval on the work of the Apostles.
- **The meeting place shook** – this is a “one off” event, but no doubt one from God to encourage His people.

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 4:32 All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. 33 The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God’s great blessing was upon them all. 34 There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them 35 and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need. 36 For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means “Son of Encouragement”). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. 37 He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles. NLT

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Once again, as we saw in chapter 2 the believers were living in a sort of communal state of mind.
- They were convinced the Lord was about to return – after all, that’s what he said just weeks ago.
- When you only have to sustain yourself for a few weeks why would you want hang on to any more than what would meet your needs in the short term?

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- They were wrong about the timing of his coming, but they were not wrong about the spirit of his promise.
- John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. KJV

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- “There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.”
- Based upon what we read here a question has been raised – “Is this what God has called us to do?”.
- Has God called the church to communal living where everyone shares all that they have with one another?

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- Acts 5:3 Then Peter said, “Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself. 4 **The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away.**
- Remember the widow’s mites? God has called us to be generous, but not foolish.
- Mark 12:40 Yet they shamelessly cheat widows out of their property and then pretend to be pious by making long prayers in public. NLT

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### The Acts of the Apostles

- If God calls you to give everything away by all means that do it – that is His will for you.
- But without such a leading from the Lord we should be generous, but not foolish because we are to take care of our family so as not to burden others.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Tim 5:8 But those who won’t care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers.

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The Acts of the Apostles



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