

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – August 15, 2021

Theme: The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit **Topic:** The Holy Spirit gives us boldness

Main Text: Acts 4:1-31

Key verse: Acts 4:31 *“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” (NIV)*

INTRODUCTION: Following the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Book of Acts chronicles the rapid spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to the whole Roman Empire, and from its Jewish roots to the Gentile world. This amazing growth was driven by the power of the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord Jesus promised to the disciples when He commanded them, *‘Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift He promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’* (Acts 1:4-5 NIV). And in Acts 2, the promised Holy Spirit is given, and the disciples are enabled to declare the wonders of God in the language of everyone present in Jerusalem at the time. In Acts 3, Peter and John use the occasion of a healing miracle to proclaim Christ in the Temple. And so, in Acts 4:1, they are confronted by the religious leaders, priests, the captain of the Temple guard and some Sadducees, who arrested them for questioning.

1. (a) Read Mark 12:18, Acts 4:1-2; 23:8. Why were the religious leaders offended by the Apostles’ teaching? (b) What other reason does John 11:48; Acts 4:13b, 17 give us for the hostility towards the Apostles? (c) What does this tell us about the gospel of Jesus Christ and why we need boldness? See John 15:18

Historical records show that the Sadducees form most of the ruling elite and priestly families. And these Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Also, the position of the captain of the temple guard was very powerful and usually occupied by a Sadducee. These officers are reputed for being harsh even to those under their command. Since Jesus’ death was only a few weeks prior, these were likely the group who questioned and determined that Jesus should be crucified. Apostles Peter and John were quite aware of their precarious situation in the hands of these men. Yet, when given the chance to defend themselves, they did not tone down their message. Instead, Peter audaciously seizes the opportunity to preach about Jesus Christ, *“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... 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.”* (Acts 4:10-12).

2. Compare the Peter in John 18:17, 25 – 27 and Acts 4:10-12. (a) In what ways are the circumstances and responses similar and or different? (b) What do you believe is responsible for the difference in response? (c) What can we learn from this as we contemplate opportunities to speak out for and or tell others about Jesus Christ?

In Matthew 26:56, we read that *“... all the disciples deserted Him and fled.”* That included Apostles Peter and John. Apostle Peter, who managed to follow to the house of the High Priest, denied Jesus three times. Not only did the disciples desert Jesus on the night of His arrest, but they also continued to live in fear of the Jewish leaders (John 20:19). But now, something was different about these once fearful disciples. Peter and John could now stand up to the same Jewish leaders they had once dreaded. The courage of Peter and John astonished their Jewish leaders. And it led them to note that *“these men had been with Jesus.”* (Acts 4:13). Even after the Council elders commanded Peter and John never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus, Peter in one final demonstration of courage asked, *‘Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than Him?’* (Acts 4:19). Confounded, the Council had no choice but to let them go.

3. (a) How would you evaluate the wisdom of Peter and John’s response before a hostile Council that could have had them killed? (b) How would your answer in (3a) be different in the light of Acts 4:19-20? (c) Consider the disciples’ prayer in Acts 4: 23-30. What and how should we respond to the hostilities the Church is facing from individuals, groups and or political authorities?

Prayer: *Father God, give us great boldness to preach Your word. Stretch out Your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus. In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.*