

Power to Be Bold

Key Verse: “Now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.”
—Acts 4:29

Selected Scripture:
Acts 4:1-4,23-31

boldness they did not possess prior to that time. Such boldness was needed as the leaders of Israel began to see the popularity of the apostles' message. Much as when Jesus had been in their midst, the leaders began to feel their positions of authority and influence among the people being threatened. So much was this the case that they took the apostles into custody. As the account states, they were “grieved that they [the apostles] taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now even-tide.”—Acts 4:2,3

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THE GIVING OF THE HOLY

Spirit at Pentecost had enlightened the minds of the apostles so that they had a clear understanding of God's plans and purposes and the ability to spread this message to others. Additionally, though, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit had given them a boldness to speak the Truth, despite those who opposed the message, a bold-

ness they did not possess prior to that time. Such boldness was needed as the leaders of Israel began to see the popularity of the apostles' message. Much as when Jesus had been in their midst, the leaders began to feel their positions of authority and influence among the people being threatened. So much was this the case that they took the apostles into custody. As the account states, they were “grieved that they [the apostles] taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now even-tide.”—Acts 4:2,3

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their questions, however, were quick and without reproach. The evidence of the healing of the lame man (see previous lesson) was irrefutable, and the response of the people so overwhelmingly positive toward the apostles, that the leaders concluded there was nothing they could do against them without running the risk of causing an uproar among the people. "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."—vs. 21

Upon their release, the apostles joined their fellow brethren and praised God for his overruling on their behalf. They quoted from the second Psalm, which prophesied that many would gather "together against the Lord [God], and against his Christ." (vs. 26) They recounted that Jesus had also been the object of threats from those who desired to kill him. "Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen." (vss. 27,28, *New International Version*) As the account states, everything that was done to Jesus by his enemies, even his death, had been foreknown by God, and was exactly in line with his plans and purposes. How faith-strengthening this was to the apostles, who were now facing similar experiences as Jesus' footstep followers.

The Key Verse indicates that the apostles recognized the need for their continued reliance on God and the power of his Holy Spirit, to give them boldness to continue to preach the message of the Gospel, and they prayed to God that this might be so. True to his faithfulness, God did not leave any doubt as to the answer to their prayer. The account states, "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness."—vs. 31 ■