



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Triumph over Tyranny: Persecution = Greater Boldness

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Acts 4:16-31

“What shall we do with these men? For indeed a notable sign has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17) But in order that it may not spread any further among the people, let us threaten them to speak no more to any man in this name.’ 18) And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19) But Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; 20) for we are not able to stop speaking what we have seen and heard.’ 21) And when they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which they might punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened; 22) for the man was more than forty years old on whom this sign of healing had been performed. 23) And when they had been released, they went to their own companions, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24) And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, ‘Absolute Sovereign, it is Thou who DIDST MAKE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, 25) Who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Thy servant didst say, “WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE VAIN THINGS? 26) THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST.” 27) For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy Holy Servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along

with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28) to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur. 29) And now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant that Thy slaves may speak Thy Word with all boldness, 30) while Thou dost extend Thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy Holy Servant Jesus.’ 31) And when they had prayed, the place where they had assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and were continually speaking the Word of God with boldness.”

“THESE TWO VERSES [19-20] CONTAIN AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE IN FAVOR OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY—THE LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE AND OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT. THEY CONTAIN THE GREAT PRINCIPLE OF CHRISTIANITY AND OF THE PROTESTANT RELIGION, THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MEN FOR THEIR RELIGIOUS OPINIONS IS DIRECT TO GOD, AND THAT OTHER MEN HAVE NO POWER OF CONTROL. THE OPPOSITE OF THIS IS TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION.”

ALBERT BARNES

Do the Scriptures normally teach obedience to government? Why is disobedience to government both modeled and blessed by God in this passage? Are there other examples in the Bible where God blessed disobeying tyrannical governments? Is this exact same tyranny in our passage practiced in America?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- MARCH 6: DELEGATE KIRK COX 11 BIBLICAL TESTS OF GENUINE SALVATION
- APRIL 16: ACTS 4:32-37 COMMUNISM OR GENEROUS CHRISTIAN CARE IN THE CHURCH?

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 4:30 PM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB ROOM 312 SENATOR CARRICO’S OFFICE

Virginia

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Peter and John had been unjustly imprisoned and unfairly placed on trial before the Sanhedrin, the Congress of Israel, for healing a lame man in Jesus' name. This undeniable proof of the resurrection had given them an unrivaled opportunity to preach to the leaders from Ps. 118:22, proving these leaders were unqualified and could only be saved through Jesus Christ, their "*Cornerstone*," whom they had just crucified. Suddenly they were mute.

"THE SANHEDRIN WAS RELIVING ITS WORST NIGHTMARE. THEY HAD EXECUTED JESUS FOR CLAIMING TO BE THE MESSIAH. UNDAUNTED BY THAT, HIS FOLLOWERS WERE GOING EVERYWHERE REPEATING THOSE CLAIMS. WORSE, THEY WERE PROCLAIMING WITH IRREFUTABLE PROOF THAT HE HAD RISEN FROM THE DEAD. AND THEY HAD PERFORMED A **NOTEWORTHY MIRACLE TO AUTHENTICATE THEIR CLAIM TO REPRESENT GOD. THE SANHEDRIN FELT COMPELLED TO TAKE ACTION IN ORDER **THAT THIS TEACHING MAY NOT BE SPREAD AMONG THE PEOPLE.** THEY HAD TO STOP THE INCRIMINATING TRUTH THAT THEY HAD EXECUTED THEIR MESSIAH." JOHN MACARTHUR**

I. OPPRESSING JESUS' NAME ACTS 4:15-18

After sending out Peter, John and the healed lame man, they deliberated, "*What shall we do to these men? . . . Let us threaten them to speak no more to any man in this name.*" These tyrannical leaders, though they have been proven Jesus is God, will not accept Him as God, "*commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.*"

"FOR EVEN THOUGH THEY KNEW GOD, THEY DID NOT HONOR HIM AS GOD, OR GIVE THANKS; BUT BECAME FUTILE IN THEIR SPECUALTIONS, AND THEIR FOOLISH HEART WAS DARKENED. PROFESSING TO BE WISE, THEY BECAME FOOLS."
ROMANS 1:21-22

II. OBEYING GOD ABOVE MEN ACTS 4:19-22

Though Peter later taught obedience to the government in I Peter 2:13-17, he sets the example for all to follow in obeying God rather than men, particularly when God's commands conflict with those of the government. Such tyranny was overcome by the Hebrew midwives (Abortion-Ex. 1:15-17), those facing the fiery furnace (Idolatry-Dan. 3) who answer immediately as Peter does on this occasion, and Daniel facing the lions (Regulation on Prayer-Dan. 6). Are there tyrannical regulations today in America, forbidding those who lead our children from teaching and praying in Jesus' name? Why wouldn't God say the same to us in Hosea 4:6? Peter answered correctly, "*We are not able to stop speaking what we have seen and heard.*" These political tyrants were restrained "*on account of the people, because they all were glorifying God.*"

"MY PEOPLE ARE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE. BECAUSE YOU HAVE REJECTED KNOWLEDGE, I ALSO WILL REJECT YOU FROM BEING MY PRIEST. SINCE YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN THE LAW OF YOUR GOD, I ALSO WILL FORGET YOUR CHILDREN." HOSEA 4:6

III. OBTAINING JESUS' BOLDNESS ACTS 4:23-31

Upon release the Apostles report "*to their own*" what had happened and their first response was prayer. That prayer is all about God as the "*Absolute Sovereign*," the Creator of all, the Holy Spirit who, by David, predicted this very tyranny and oppression against His "*Holy Servant Jesus Christ*" and His people, through both the Gentile leadership and the Jews. Their greatest comfort when threatened is in the sovereignty, power and plan of God. Finally they request as "*slaves*" for the Lord to "*look on their threats.*" Not asking for protection, they ask for boldness and miracles of mercy and they are answered with an earthquake! All the threats bring greater boldness!

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you boldly sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ or with tyranny seeking to oppose all who do?
- 2) Will your legacy as a legislator increase the liberty found only in Jesus Christ for the next generation?
- 3) Are your prayers humbly all about God, His power, His plan and His Holy Servant Jesus Christ or your wants?