

GROWING BY TRIAL

Acts 4:1-31

PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT 1:1-26

The church's formation begins with the coming of the Holy Spirit.
Acts begins with the preparation for His coming (1:1-26).

TESTIMONY IN JERUSALEM 2-8:3

Foundation of the Church 2-4:31

Its birth 2:1-47

The Spirit's coming

Response by "rightly-religious" Jews, waiting for Messiah's coming.

They'd be O.T. saints, like Abraham, Moses, David, or Simeon.

Its growth 3-4:31

The sign 3:1-7

First message is confirmed by tongues;

Second is confirmed by the healing of a crippled beggar.

While the first message is directed to a select group of devout Jews, the second is delivered in the temple to a general group of Jewish people, from the generation that rejected their Messiah.

The response 3:8-11

They're amazed by what they see.

The explanation 3:12-26

Power not from them 3:12

Power from God to authenticate Jesus 3:13-26

Divine authentication and their rejection
3:13-18

Jesus, whom they rejected and crucified is Messiah.

They rejected and killed Him. 13, 14, 15a

But God raised Him from the dead. 15b

Divine authentication and their repentance

3:19-26

They did it in ignorance; they can still correct the wrong committed.

They must change their mind about Jesus and turn back to God. **3:19-20**

Their return to God is prerequisite for the kingdom to begin.

Therefore, they're urged to respond to God.

When they do this, God's plan for Israel will begin again.

This is *still* the next step for the nation.

They will never do it until God moves them (Rom. 11:25-27).

The results 4:1-31

Response from the leaders 4:1-22

Arrest **4:1-3**

The leaders don't like what they hear.

The leaders reject the message and put them in prison.

Hearing 4:4-22

Many people receive the message and trust Christ (**4:4**).

The next day the council meets to hear the matter (4:5-22).

The leaders question them concerning the source of their authority (**4:5-7**).

The answer to a more important question (that they never ask) is that the sign demonstrates that the One they rejected was raised by God.

He's the only means of salvation and they had better trust Him (4:8-12).

The leaders are unable to decide how to handle the problem (4:13-18).

Their discussion shows their unwillingness to hear the truth.

The apostles hear the threat and respect the authority of the leaders but recognize their higher responsibility to God (4:19-20).

The leaders can only threaten and release them (4:21-22).

Response from the church 4:23-31

Apostles' report 4:23

Church's prayer 4:24-30

They recognize God's sovereignty and man's opposition to it.

They don't ask God to deliver them.

They ask God for boldness to speak His Word.

God's answer 4:31

Their prayer is answered exactly as they asked.

They speak the Word with boldness.

LESSONS FOR US:

This passage is about how the new people of God grow.

The leaders continue to reject Him.

They don't want to listen and believe.

The common people—the unexpected ones—are convinced by the evidence.

Being religious doesn't guarantee a desire to know the truth.

It shouldn't surprise us when religious people aren't interested.

They're looking out for their own interests.

It's often the people we least expect—the “down and out”—who are anxious to hear good news about Jesus.

When God's people suffer for His name's sake, His people grow.

Persecution leads to growth.

It shouldn't surprise us if we suffer for His sake.

It shouldn't surprise us if our suffering leads to purification and growth.

When we suffer for Jesus' sake, the appropriate prayer is . . .

NOT for rescue or deliverance.

NOT for freedom, or even for life!

For boldness to speak God's Word!

That's what they ask for.

God's Spirit controls them and gives them boldness to proclaim God's Word.

We need that same boldness from Him—whether we face opposition or not!