

"Dealing with Opposition"

Part 2

Acts 4

Introduction: In our study last week we were looking at how Peter and John managed the opposition from the Sanhedrin as they were threatened with physical harm for preaching in the name of Jesus Christ. Let us notice a brief review and then we will get to where we stopped last week.

I. The Apostle's Prayer

Notice Acts 4:23

A. The Petition

Notice Acts 4:29-30

B. The Foundation of the Prayer

Notice Acts 4:24

The foundation of the prayer could also be seen as the **"Omnipotence of God"** which means that God is all powerful. As we face the trials and the opposition in this world, we would do well to know who God is and to know of His power.

Jeremiah 10:10-13

¹⁰ But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.

¹¹ Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.

¹² He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.

¹³ When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

Jeremiah 32:17

17 Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

C. The Wisdom of their Prayer

The next part can also be seen as the "Omniscience of God" which means He is all knowing.

Notice Acts 4:25-26

Here the disciples who are praying reflect back to the Old Testament and quote from Psalm 2:1-2. Now I want you to see something interesting here. These verses from Psalm 2 are prophetic and they are speaking of something that is yet future. This is a reference to the Battle of Armageddon.

Revelation 19:15, 17-21

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

This is the battle which will end the Tribulation when the people of the Tribulation have joined forces with the Anti-Christ and will attempt to overthrow Jesus Christ as He returns from heaven. They will be rejecting His rule over them. They will desire to be

completely free from the sovereign rule of God. They want nothing to do with Him or His Kingdom. Let me show you a few more details as well as God's response to all of this.

Psalm 2:1-1-5

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

² *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,*

³ *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.*

⁴ *He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.*

⁵ *Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*

What would ever inspire man to gather against the Lord and believe that they can somehow defeat Him? You and I know that it is outrageous for someone to even believe this! Let me put something together and show you what I believe will happen.

Zechariah 14:1-5

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

² **For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle;** *and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.*

³ *Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.*

⁴ *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.*

⁵ *And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.*

Here in these verses we see that it is God who will gather the nations together to battle against the Lord. The people will have no idea that it is God who has led them to this place of defeat. Why would God do this to these nations?

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12

⁸ *And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:*

⁹ *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,*

¹⁰ *And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

¹¹ **And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:**

¹² *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

This text is referring to those in the Tribulation who have rejected the love of the Truth. God will send them the 2 witnesses, the 144,000 Jewish missionaries, the angel that will fly over the earth proclaiming the Gospel as well as the warnings through the judgments of the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls. Yet they will reject all of God's extensions of grace and therefore they will be sent a strong delusion and they will be convinced that they can defeat the Lord when He returns. They will be destroyed and damned because they rejected the Truth.

Now let us get back to Acts 4.

Notice Acts 4:27

Here the disciples make an application. The event in the previous verses is yet future but it did have an application to their day. What happened with Jesus was a small glimpse of how the nations will want to destroy the Lord when He returns at the end of the Tribulation. Notice the words of Whitcomb:

"These praying disciples made a very fitting application of Psalm 2 to their present situation. Psalm 2 was not fulfilled in Acts chapter 4, but the principles of Psalm 2 were appropriately applied to the situation in Acts chapter 4. Indeed, this is exactly what we should do with God's Word—understand its original meaning and then apply it to our particular situation."

Notice Acts 4:28

Just as sinners will be under a God sent delusion at the end of the Tribulation and therefore carry out the plan of God so those who condemned Jesus to death upon the cross were also carrying at the plan of God. There are examples of many in the Bible who carried out their own wicked plans and while they did, they fulfilled the plan and the purpose of God. There is great comfort in all of this for us today. Let us notice some examples.

- Judas carried out his own wicked plans when he betrayed the Lord.

Luke 22:21-22

²¹ *But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.*

²² *And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!*

- Joseph's brothers carried out their evil plan against Joseph, but God used it for good.

Genesis 50:19-20

¹⁹ *And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?*

²⁰ *But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*

The sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man work together and can be far too deep and complex to understand at times. Judas carried out his plans, the religious leaders carried out their plans, Joseph's brothers carried out their plans and those in the battle of Armageddon will carry out their plans and each will be held accountable and at the same time God purpose and plan was carried out in their actions.

Application:

In our day it is no different. Sinful man carries out his plans and God uses man's plans and actions to bring about His plan and purpose. Therefore we can rest in the Omnipotence and the Omniscience of All Mighty God. We can be sure that as out of control as things are in our day it is all being used to bring about the plan of God.

Romans 8:28-32

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

D. The Answer to the Prayer

Notice Acts 4:31

Here in this verse we see the Omnipresence of God meaning He is everywhere and here in this verse we see that He was in these believers. God was so pleased with this prayer that He brought about an earthquake that shook the place they were in. They were filled with the Spirit, and they were given boldness.

Conclusion/Application:

When God's people pray for things that really matter God is pleased. If God's people were to pray in the will of God as these disciples, we can be sure the entire world would be shaken in an effective way. But much of the church has lost sight of what is important to God.

Revelation 3:14-17

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

