



Acts Chapter 4

Wolves In Sheep's Clothing:

We've been talking about Acts chapters 3 and 4 for the last couple of weeks, and all of what is contained in these chapters has to do with a crippled man who sat at the Beautiful Gate asking for alms... who was crippled from birth, and yet was fully restored and healed and made whole again because of his faith in the Messiah Yahshua.

And I want us to remember that everything that's taking place in these two chapters all happened because of this one healing. It was because of the healing of the crippled man at the Beautiful Gate that Peter and John had the attention of these religious Jews who were headed to the Temple for worship.

And I want us to remember.. that this crowd of Jewish believers had no problem understanding what had just happened or why it happened.. and in fact.. we see in verse 4 of chapter 4... that over five thousand men that very day turned and believed.. not to mention the women and children. So the crowd of Jewish believers had no problem with the gospel message that Peter and John were announcing to them.

The Gospel message of Yahshua was being received through out the people that day, and it wasn't the crowd of Jewish believers that had a problem with the message, but rather it was the hierarchy of the Temple police and the Sanhedrin and the Saducees and the Pharisees that had the problem with the message that they were teaching.

In other words my friends... it was the Pastors and Priests of their time who shunned and hatted the Gospel message of Yahshua that Peter and John were preaching and teaching and pointing too. And we spoke a little bit about this last week, but I want to reiterate what we learned about this monolithic hierarchy of misfit leadership that were doing all they could to silence Peter and John.

You had three main players that were at play that day. You had the Saducees, you had the Pharisees, and you had the Essene's that were there chastising the Gospel message that Peter and John were delivering that day. And it's important that we understand who these brood of vipers were.

This was the exact same group of men that had hung Yahshua on a tree just about a month ago. And they were well aware of who Yahshua was, and they were well aware of who Peter and John were as well. They knew that Peter and John were followers of Yahshua. So once again it's important for us to know and understand who this hierarchy of men were.

Now as far as a resurrection was concerned... of any kind... the Saducees did not believe in any kind of resurrection. They believed that life ended at the death of the body, and that was it.

The Saducees also believed in strict adherence to the Torah.. and they did not believe in the oral law or the writing of men, but the Torah alone. So this Gospel message of the death, burial, and resurrection of a Messiah went directly against what they believed.

The Pharisees on the other hand... did believe in resurrection, and life after death. But... they also believed in their own man made man created man fabricated oral laws as well... and often times they put these man made, man created, man fabricated oral laws above and beyond the Torah and the laws given by the prophets which were given by Yahovah God the Father himself.

And the Essen's which were another separate group of religious men that were intermingled through out the crowd did not believe in a resurrection either. So this Gospel message of the death, burial, and resurrection of this Jewish Messiah was not well received by them either.

And so that's just a little bit about the belief systems of each of these three groups of men that were opposing Peter and John. Now I want to get into the validity or the validation of these men who called themselves "High Priests" and this monolithic anti Torah, man, made, man created, man fabricated, Sanhedrin, and these Temple police... who were they really, and why did this Gospel message that Peter and John were preaching and teaching alarm them so much?

It's important to recognize that Yahshua (Jesus) himself had the most contention for these men, and for this very hierarchy that they themselves had built up.

E1

Mat 15:1 Then some P'rushim and Torah-teachers from Yerushalayim came to Yeshua and asked him,

Mat 15:2 "Why is it that your talmidim break the Tradition of the Elders? They don't do n'tilat-yadayim before they eat!"

Mat 15:3 He answered, "Indeed, why do you break the command of God by your tradition?"

So here we see these exact same Pharisees and Scribes trying to condemn Yahsuas Talmidim or his Apostles for not washing their hands before they ate. But you see the Torah never instructs a man to wash his hands before he eats... this was purely a man made, man created, man fabricated law that these Pharisees had written.. not what God had written...

And so our Messiah fires right back at them and asks them “why do you break the command of God by your tradition?”.

You see it was all about this demonically inspired man made, man created, man fabricated oral law that they themselves had written in order to have control over Gods people that Yahshua absolutely hated and detested.

How Did Yahshua Feel About This Leadership of Men?

Now just to make this perfectly clear... I want us to read together the 23rd chapter or Matthew, and I want us to hear the names that our Messiah called these wicked men... names like “You brood of vipers” and “you two fold children of hell”, “you blind guides”, “you whitewashed tombs”, and so on... lets be clear about what our Messiah thought about these men, and lets see if they really have any authority over Peter and John:

E2

Mat 23:1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,

Mat 23:2 "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat,

Mat 23:3 so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.

Note:

2Ti 3:16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

2Ti 3:17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

He was talking about Torah, there was no “New Testament” written yet!

Mat 23:4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

Mat 23:5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,

Mat 23:6 and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues

Mat 23:7 and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.

Mat 23:8 But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers.

Mat 23:9 And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.

Mat 23:10 Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.

Mat 23:11 The greatest among you shall be your servant.

Mat 23:12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

E3**Note:**

Eph 4:11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

Eph 4:12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Eph 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

Eph 4:14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

E4

Mat 23:13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.

Mat 23:15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

Mat 23:16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.'

Mat 23:17 You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred?

Mat 23:18 And you say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.'

Mat 23:19 You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?

Mat 23:20 So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it.

Mat 23:21 And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it.

Mat 23:22 And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it.

Mat 23:23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

Mat 23:24 You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

Mat 23:25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Mat 23:26 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

Mat 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.

Mat 23:28 So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Mat 23:29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous,

Mat 23:30 saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.'

Mat 23:31 Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the

prophets.

Mat 23:32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.

Mat 23:33 You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?

Mat 23:34 Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town,

Mat 23:35 so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.

Mat 23:36 Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Mat 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

Mat 23:38 See, your house is left to you desolate.

Mat 23:39 For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

So our Messiah had already prophesied about what these men were going to do to his Apostles in verse 34 through 35:

Mat 23:34 Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town,

Mat 23:35 so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.

So our Messiah had already prophesied about these Saducees, and Pharisees, and this wicked Sanhedrin and this group of men and what they would do to Peter and John. Peter and John in Acts chapter 4 were standing in the prophecy of their Messiah that very day. And they were well aware of this.. this is why Peter and John tell these wicked men in Acts 4 verse 19 and 20 that they need to judge whether its right to obey them rather than God:

E5
Act 4:18 So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Act 4:19 But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge,

Act 4:20 for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

True Wolves In Sheep's Clothing:

So now with all of that in mind lets go back and really examine this hierarchy of leadership that was questioning Peter and John and trying to stop them from preaching the gospel message

because I really really want to tighten the screws down tight here. I want us to understand who these wolves in sheep's clothing really were, and I know we touched on this last week but I want to really nail this understanding down tight so that every time these Pharisees and Saducees and these so called "High Priests" and Scribes open their mouths I want you to know who they are and what they're about.

And... I want you to understand what is going on today in our modern day world, and I want us to understand that nothing has changed my friends... nothing has changed between the so called Pastors, Priests, and Bishops of Yahshua's time, and the Pastors, Priests, and Bishops of our time. There is nothing new under the sun, it's all been done before my friends:

E6

Ecc 1:9 What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.

Ecc 1:10 Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has been already in the ages before us.

You see the Saducees generally agreed with Yahshua when it came to the oral "Tradition" of the Pharisees. The Saducees were strictly Torah observant, where the Pharisees knew the Torah, and in many cases many of them even had the Torah committed to memory... we have to remember the Apostle Paul was a Pharisee himself! He sat at the feet of Gamliel one of the most revered Rabbi's of his time and it was said to even be able to sit at the feet of Gamliel one had to commit the Torah to memory.

E7

Note:

Rom 9:30 What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith;

Rom 9:31 but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law.

Rom 9:32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone,

Rom 9:33 as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

Gods laws are not bondage... they are a protective hedge against evil the laws, commandments, precepts and appointments of God are the wings of Yahovah God that are spread over us to protect us from slipping into the darkness of evil.

So even Paul himself had committed the Torah to memory and yet even he could not see the Messiah in his own time until he was knocked off of his horse on the way to Damascus and struck blind... that's what it took for this Pharisee full of his own wisdom, who had more theological degrees than a thermometer hanging on his wall to finally see. And it was then and

only then that he could finally see and know the Messiah, and the same is true for these Pharisees as well. They are forever learning and never understanding, they eyes but can not see, and ears that do not hear. (2nd Timothy 3:7)

You see they knew the Torah as far as how to recite it like a parrot.. but they did not have it written in their hearts and in their minds.. it was simple words on a scroll to them. It didn't really mean anything to them. It was all about obeying the letter of the law in order to earn their way into the kingdom...instead of taking it to heart and making it their lifestyle because they loved God with all their heart, mind, and strength.

Think of it this way... if they removed the penalty for the speed limit law in my town tomorrow.. and there was no more penalty for speeding up and down my street. They would essentially be removing the law right? If there is no penalty then there is no law right?

Thats what Yahshua did... he removed the penalty from the law there by doing away with the law its no longer a law technically speaking because there is no more penalty.

So would I then speed up and down my street because there is no more law? Think about that. If I were to speed up and down the street I would be putting children, and pedestrians in great danger... I could kill some one or worse yet cripple them for life.

You see I would be smart enough to keep the speed limit even though there was no penalty for breaking the speed limit because I knew it was the right thing to do because I love and care for the children on my street and the people who I live with in my community.

And this is the same with Gods Laws. You see we call them laws but they really are not laws because there is no penalty for breaking them. We keep what used to be called Gods laws because we love him and our brothers and sisters and we know that it is right in they eyes of Yahovah our God to keep them.

Once again we are smart enough to know and understand through his Ruach Hadodesh that it is his laws that protect us from evil, and becoming the seed of Satan himself. They are indeed the wings of Yahovah God over us.

And so it is... that we do not keep the laws of God to be saved... we keep the laws of God... because we are saved and are determined to stand until the end so that we may be counted as worthy to receive the gift of salvation that our Messiah laid his life down to give us.

E8

1Jn 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.

1Jn 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments

are not burdensome.

1Jn 5:4 For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

1Jn 5:5 Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

So the Saducees were far ahead of the Pharisees because they were more in line with what Yahshua came to teach which was the Torah. He came to write it on their hearts and in their minds so that it would mean something to them instead of simply being a law... it would become a way of life... it would become who they were... a part of them.. a part of their very fabric, woven into them.

The Pharisees on the other hand put their own oral laws and traditions and their Talmud and their Mishnah and all of these man made, man created, man fabricated trash... ahead of the Torah, and Yahovah's laws, commandments, precepts, and appointments.

So it's important for us to understand that the Saducees were the head of the Temple.. and the Pharisees were the head of the Synagogues. And so it was that the Temple and the Synagogue were at odds with each other most of the time. The Temple and the Synagogues were rival systems competing for authority.

So in other words these men were divided in their theology and their understanding, because neither group really received their understanding from Yahovah or his Ruach. They leaned on and stood on their own understanding rather than God the Fathers, and they wanted themselves to have all the authority over Gods people rather than God... you see they thought of themselves as the mediators between God and man. And Yahshua came to destroy them, and he did.

For those of us who know the truth.. we know who these men are... even to this very day, and yet still.. as long as they are breathing in and out... even they have the opportunity to turn... if they will.

The Essen's wanted no part of either the Temple or the Synagogues, because they knew that the Temple Priesthood was totally corrupt. The High Priest according to Torah was supposed to be in the direct blood line of Aaron, and since the Macabeein revolt, the Hasmon family under the rule of Judas Maccabee took over the Priesthood and it became a political seat of men rather than the God ordained blood line of Aaron.

The Priesthood became a seat that was often sold or traded, and once you were named “High Priest” you always retained that title... so there were often many “High Priests” walking around. Just like the President of the United States... once you've been named President you are always revered to as President Reagan, or President Clinton, or President Bush and so on. And it was just like that with these so called “High Priests”, who were not really “High Priests” at all

according to what the Torah mandated through the commands of Yahovah God the Father.

And of course we know that not much later, just a generation after Peter died... the Romans destroyed the Temple and took down Jerusalem and the Priests were out of a job, and the Saducees became an old relic never to be heard of again. The Pharisees became what is known today as the Rabbi's as the Synagogue system continued to lived on. And so here we are today with what is truly a mixed bag of rag tag man made, man created, man fabricated Jewish charter of men who still to this day claim authority over Gods people today.

The traditions and oral laws of men were written down into an authoritative work called the Mishnah, which itself turned into the source document for the Halakah also known as the "Rabbinic Law" that all Jews are expected to observe.

And to this day Rabbi's now rule over Judaism with out opposition, or competition except among themselves. And Christianity is no better with it's thousands of splintered denominational charters of men all pining for theological authority and stature among Gods people.

By the way the Sanhedrin did not even exist until after the Maccabeen revolt around 160B.C. And even it's existence would end in 70A.D. With the Roman defeat of Jerusalem and the Temple.

In those days the sitting "High Priest" was Caiaphas, you will hear of Annas being called "High Priest" in Acts 4:6 but he was a previous "High Priest" that actual sitting "High Priest" was Caiaphas who was appointed "High Priest" by Rome.

And if you think that's bad, all you have to do is look at the other side of the isle and you'll find all kinds of Christian Pharisees and Sanhedrin as well... the only difference is that they call them Popes and Bishops and Fathers.

E6

Ecc 1:9 What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.

Ecc 1:10 Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has been already in the ages before us.

Hierarchy: (take them to the definition)

hi·er·ar·chy

'hī(ə), rärkē/
noun

1. a system or organization in which people or groups are ranked one above the other according to status or authority.

- the upper echelons of a hierarchical system; those in authority.
- an arrangement or classification of things according to relative importance or inclusiveness.

<https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=Hierarchy>

You see for these men.. that's what it's all about my friends. It's not about God the Father... Yahovah our Elohim or Yahshua his son, or their Ruach Hakodesh. It's about building a hierarchy for themselves.. a platform to stand on, high above the rest.

E2

Mat 23:1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,

Mat 23:2 "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat,

Mat 23:3 so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.

Mat 23:4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

Mat 23:5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,

Mat 23:6 and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues

Mat 23:7 and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.

Mat 23:8 But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers.

Mat 23:9 And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.

Mat 23:10 Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.

Mat 23:11 The greatest among you shall be your servant.

Mat 23:12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Mat 23:13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.

E9

Rev 3:9 Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you.

Rev 3:10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.

Rev 3:11 I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

Rev 3:12 The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall

he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

Hold fast to what you have... so that no one may seize your crown, for the evil day is at hand, and we are closer now than when we first believed... and indeed... the sand is leaving the hourglass even as we speak.

We are all brothers and sisters, one body, one mind, one house, and through our Messiah and only through our Messiah....can lead other to... the way.

Love Yahovah with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength!
