

**EX:** The Sanhedrin weren't used to being ignored. They weren't used to having their demands refused. But they were going to need to get used to it. In this passage, we see God's people rising up against the powerful—the **righteous rebelling**. God had done a great thing—and He'd continue to do great things through John and Peter. And they weren't about to stop talking about it.

They tried pleas. They tried reason. They tried threats. But Peter and John rebelled. And *When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. (AC 4.23)* And when they did, they all prayed: *"Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, <sup>25</sup>who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? <sup>26</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'—<sup>27</sup>for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, <sup>28</sup>to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. <sup>29</sup>And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, <sup>30</sup>while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."*

In the face of disapproval and threats, the early church prayed to God not for protection from disapproval, threats, and even violence, but for strength and for boldness to keep on preaching in the face of it. And God immediately answered that prayer: *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (AC 4.31)*

#### **GOVERNMENT/New York City/The Hess Triangle – Message**

I thoroughly disagree. The reason this has survived isn't because we realize that change is important and that we need to remember what was there. It's a reminder of the importance of standing your ground for truth and right when the powerful stand against you. It's a reminder of when to rebel. For the church, we need to rebel against the casual worldliness—the calls to remain silent. It's a reminder that, like the Hess Triangle states in New York, we are **"PROPERTY OF THE LORD, JESUS CHRIST, and that we have NEVER BEEN DEDICATED FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES"**.

#### **INVITATION**

**AC 4.12** ~ *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

#650 [EXP-NTH]  
07/19/2025

**When to Rebel**

PC Pchd

AC 4.1-31

**QUESTION:** When should Christians rebel?

#### **TRN TO AC 3**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

**GOVERNMENT/New York City/The Hess Triangle - Description**

**GOVERNMENT/New York City/The Hess Triangle – Expansion**

**GOVERNMENT/New York City/The Hess Triangle – Creation**

This little triangle could be easily overlooked—and likely is—by the busy New York citizen, hurrying through their day in the Village. Yet to those in the know, it stands as a sign of the American spirit: the willingness to stand tall in stubborn rebellion. It reminds us that there is a time when we ought to rebel—a lesson that the church had to learn, as well, early in its life.

#### **BACKGROUND: God's People Were Doing Good (AC 3.1-10)**

**AC 2.46-47** ~ *And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

I don't know for sure how much time passes between **AC 2** and **AC 4**. It could have been a few days, or a few weeks. But while **AC 2** appears to show a church widely accepted by the community, **AC 4** begins to show the resistance by the ancient Jewish power center. Culminating in the priests, the Sadducees, and the captain of the temple locking up Peter and John in custody. **What changed?** We find the answer not in **AC 4**, but in **AC 3**.

**B.III—The Lame Beggar Healed—AC 3.1-6** (Peter and John go to the temple; encounter a 40 year old man lame from birth, begging for help) *And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. <sup>8</sup>And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. <sup>9</sup>And all the people saw him walking and praising God, <sup>10</sup>and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. (AC 3.7-10)*

With such amazing actions, it's easy to see why 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jerusalem was showing favor to the early church: after all, **God's people were doing good**. Peter didn't let the moment pass him by: he stood in Solomon's portico, preaching Christ—and not with easy words: *But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, <sup>15</sup>and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. (AC 3.14-15)* While the people marveled, the powerful began to stir, uncomfortably. **What would they do about these men and this growing movement?** For the answer, we turn the page.

#### **BD1: The Council Captures Christians (AC 4.1-6)**

**AC 4.1-2** ~ *And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, <sup>2</sup>greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.*

## JUDAISM/Temple/1<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership

**EX:** While Peter's words are recorded for us in **AC 3**, it appears he wasn't alone—both he and John were preaching Christ. And they were using dangerous words: “*times of refreshing*”, “*restoring of all things*”, and proclaiming a “**new Moses**” who would lead them and whom they should follow. Their eyes might have seen the **Christians doing good**, but to their ears, this sounded like rebellion—something that would undermine all their patiently plotted power and position.

**AC 4.3-6** ~ *And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. <sup>4</sup> But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. <sup>5</sup> On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, <sup>6</sup> with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family.*

**EX:** Here, the Jewish **Council captures Christians**. Best we can tell, this is the Sanhedrin—the Jewish leadership made of priests and elders. The church had gone from 120 in **AC 1.15** to 3,000 in **AC 2.41** to 5,000 men (not counting women or children). And they'd gotten the attention of the most powerful men in the nation.

**AP:** That shouldn't surprise us. When the church is doing its work, it doesn't do so quietly. You don't change lives and heal souls—bringing light to the darkness—without drawing attention of those who would choose darkness over the light. **We must ask ourselves: does anyone notice the light we are shining? Does the devil and his workers tremble at the light shown by God through us?** When **Christians do good**, the wicked will always notice and will fear—just as the **council** did when they **captured Christians** in **AC 4**. We cannot expect them to leave us alone when we're doing good. And if they do, it's likely because we're not doing enough to notice.

**AC 3.19-21** ~ *And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. <sup>21</sup> But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.*”

## **BD2: Peter Preached with Power (AC 4.7-14)**

### JUDAISM/Sanhedrin/Acts 4

**AC 4.7-12** ~ *And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” <sup>8</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, <sup>9</sup> if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, <sup>10</sup> let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. <sup>11</sup> This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. <sup>12</sup> And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

**EX:** I wonder if, in this moment, the simple fishermen remembered the words of Christ in **LK 12.11-12** ~ *And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, <sup>12</sup> for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what*

*you ought to say.*” God kept His promise! Peter and John had spent no long months in the schools of the scribes. They'd been too busy on the Sea of Galilee, fighting the winds and waves. And yet, as they came before the Sanhedrin—filled with men of higher education and training than they—**Peter Preached with Power**. He preached Christ—quoting scripture—and speaking with confidence what he'd learned at the feet of the Messiah and had revealed to him by His Spirit.

**AC 4.13-14** ~ *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup> But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition.*

**AP:** “**But I'm not educated. I'm not trained. I can't speak or testify before others.**” Neither was Peter; neither was John! “**But they were inspired!**” Brethren, when we proclaim the Inspired word of God and only the inspired Word of God, so are we. Not with a new and different inspiration, but with the timeless words of inspiration that Peter, John, Paul, and James spoke.

**2TM 3.16-17** ~ *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

## **BD3: The Sanhedrin Sought Silence (AC 4.15-18)**

**AC 4.15-16** ~ *But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, <sup>16</sup> saying, “What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.*

**EX:** They were in a massive “**pickle**”. They couldn't deny the miracle. They couldn't outmaneuver or outsmart these simple fishermen. They carried with them the wisdom and the word of Jesus! **What would they do?**

**AC 4.17-18** ~ *But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.” <sup>18</sup> So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.*

**EX:** Simple: **the Sanhedrin sought silence**. They couldn't deny that **God's people were doing good**. They couldn't argue with what they were saying. But if they could get them to shut up about it, their power and position would be saved.

**AP:** All too often, this is the strategy of wicked men. If they can just get the right and righteous to stay silent, they can win out. If they can just suppress the truth, darkness can prevail. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. (RM 1.18)* “**Don't talk about religion at Thanksgiving—no one wants to hear it**”; “**Don't bring it up at work—you'll end up in HR**”; “**Don't share it across the fence to your neighbor, they'll think you're a freak**”. In truth, the devil has no problem with you having religion. So long as it's neither seen, nor heard.

## **CONCLUSION: The Righteous Rebelling (AC 4.19-31)**

**AC 4.19-20** ~ *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, <sup>20</sup> for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.”*