

March 5, 2023
Acts 4:1-22 Part 1 “Opposition Arises”

The priest were primarily Sadducees. They were super upset with Peter and John for preaching the resurrection of Jesus. Because they denied the resurrection of the dead, they were SAD-YOU-SEE. Jealousies, politics, and greed used by Satan, then and now.

At first they were enjoying the favor of all people. However, it was no secret that persecutions would come, Jesus spoke of them in [Luke 21](#); [John 16](#).

The Jews themselves were divided, there were three sects within Judaism. The Sadducees believed only the Tora, the Pharisees followed oral traditions and were considered more liberal than the conservative Sadducees. The Essenes were a communal group, took the Sabbath very seriously, kind of mystic and practiced asceticism. They are the ones who had the library recently discovered known as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Persecution then and now serves to purify and strengthen the church. The Martyrs gave testimony of fearlessness in the face of their tormentors, this rattled them. A church under persecution is a maturing church. It was said by Tertullian that the blood of martyr's is the seed of the church. We will soon be introduced to the first martyr in the church.

This persecution gave them opportunity to preach to the Sanhedrin. Sanhedrin, 71 members including the high-priest. As they stood in a semi circle around the accused they asked, by what power/name have you done this? This opened the door for Peter to preach, didn't take much. This was the same way the same people did Jesus.

Priests were on the scene. These were Levites. They served in the temple, they would perform services within the temple but were not of the same order as the High Priest although both came from the tribe of Levi.

This priesthood was not designed to last forever, a change would come and all believers would make up the priesthood of believers, see [I Peter 2:9](#); [Hebrews 7:11-8:13](#), meditate on this!

Application:

With no hesitation or fear, the apostles respond. They leave no implication that they may possibly obey the Sanhedrin's verdict not to speak in Jesus' name. They did not say, we'll think it over. They face the issue like men, squarely, openly with no thought of compromise or consequence. As men and women of God we MUST do the same.