

The Acts of the Holy Spirit

Acts 4:1-31

Last week we ended in the Temple, with Peter proclaiming both Jerusalem's guilt and God's forgiveness not only of Jerusalem but of all who would believe. However, it's not the mention of Jesus in general that provokes the temple authorities. What element of Peter's message brings their wrath, and why? How do they make their wrath known?

When the high-priestly family investigates the healing, what is their main concern in the questioning? What answer from Peter does this set up, and what element from Peter's earlier speeches resurfaces here?

In Acts 4:13-22, the temple authorities are faced with a dilemma: on one hand, the healing event has happened, and people are not only aware of it but also praising God for it. On the other, the men who performed the healing are espousing (what Sadducees take to be) false and dangerous doctrines, and they're blaming the Temple authorities for the death of the Son of God. What course of action do they end up deciding on, and how do Peter and John respond to the same?

When Peter and John return to their friends, they sing together, first in praise of God the Creator and then from Psalm 2. Why is praise for creating the heaven and earth and sea especially appropriate after this incident? What is especially ironic about the opening lines of the Psalm, especially given the people with whom Peter and John have just contended? What key word towards the end of their Psalm-song stands out as a good place for Acts to end the quotation?

In Acts 4:27-28, what relationship do the disciples articulate between human action and divine providence? For what do they pray as they look ahead to further encounters with Temple authorities?