

# When God Turns Up



... we'll experience persecution Acts 4:1-22

Birkdale Baptist Church  
Small group studies

*Jesus has returned to heaven before the very eyes of the astounded disciples. Matthias has been chosen to replace Judas. The Holy Spirit has descended upon the earth with great power and in ways that cannot be explained away by the religious leaders. Thousands are coming to Jesus. The believers of Jesus are together in love, fellowship and meeting each other's needs. Instead of the world rejoicing and embracing with open arms all the good things God is doing, resistance begins to build.*

*This resistance to the gospel of Jesus Christ continues today. The church needs to observe and learn from the early church how to remain faithful and active in the proclamation of truth, even though the cost is great—through the power of the Holy Spirit. Although the coming of the Spirit was a unique and unrepeatable historical event, all the people of God can now always and everywhere benefit from his ministry.*

## OPEN IT

1. How do you tend to respond to criticism?

2. When have you been persecuted for living or proclaiming truth about Jesus?

## DIG INTO IT

Read Acts 4:1-22

3. In spite of opposition, how did the early church fare? (Acts 4:4)

4. The Sanhedrin left Peter and John in prison overnight to ponder their fate (Acts 4:5, 6). No charge was brought against Peter and John. The examination by the authorities consisted of one question. What was it? (Acts 4:7)

5. How was Peter's reply to the Sanhedrin similar to his message to the crowd? (Acts 4:8-12; cf. 3:12-26)

6. Peter has given a comprehensive testimony to Jesus as one rejected by humanity but vindicated by God, as the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecy, as demanding repentance and promising blessing, and as the author and giver of life, physically to the healed cripple and spiritually to those who believe. This aroused the indignation and antagonism of the authorities. Why do you think this proclamation of Jesus was disturbing to the religious leaders?

7. What did the Sanhedrin have to admit to itself before warning Peter and John to teach no more in the name of Jesus? (Acts 4:13-18)

8. What evidence do you see of the power of the Holy Spirit throughout this section?

## GET IT

9. How did the following people respond to the miracle of healing and how is this a picture of how different people react today to the activity of God? The lame man (Acts 3:8, 9, 11; 4:14)

The crowd in the temple (Acts 3:10, 11; 4:4, 21)

The Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1-3, 15-18)

10. How would you explain the connection between the healed cripple and salvation (vv. 9-12)?

11. What are some of the risks in telling others about Christ?

12. How can we prepare ourselves for the costs we may have to pay for following Christ?

## APPLY IT

13. In what way could you strengthen your sense of courage about being a Christian in your place of work, neighbourhood or family?

14. To whom might you be able to tell the Good News this week? How?

15. Who could you pray for today who are facing opposition for their faith.

**Bibliography:** 1) Acts—Seeing the Spirit At Work, John Stott 1998 on Lessonworks. 2) Kingdom Power: Receiving the Power of the Promise (A Study in the Book of Acts) Jack W. Hayford 1993 on Lessonworks. 3) NT Lesson Maker, Navpress 1992.