

Report

Peter, and those jailed with him, were released by the Jewish leaders when they could find nothing wrong in what they did. There was no rule about irritating these leaders, and healing a lame man certainly was not an evil deed. Of course, the real reason the rulers wanted to silence Peter and the rest was because they felt they were losing their power over the people. They were jealous of how the people were paying attention to Peter (John 11:47—48; Acts 5:17).

These jailed Disciples went back to their friends/cohorts, after being released, and reported to them all the events surrounding their confrontation with the chief priests and elders. I could imagine that they were excited at how God was working through them, but frustrated that the leaders wanted nothing to do with Jesus Christ. After their report, they prayed.

Prayer

The prayer that they pray is prophetically significant. It's also interesting to note that they all lifted their voices up to God, seemingly in unison. They were able to do this, I believe, because they were actually praying one of the Psalms and they all had memorized this particular Psalm. It's also possible that the Holy Spirit had supernaturally caused them to pray together.

The prayer that they are praying is very appropriate and significant for where they were within the prophetic timeline. According to Daniel's prophecy, they were only a few months, or even weeks, away from the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation. They began their prayer by acknowledging that God is the creator of all things, and then seemingly express amazement that there are those who are raging against Him. They were actually praying Psalm 2, which first speaks of the very things that were happening to the Disciples in Jerusalem by the religious leaders, and then continues to describe God's wrath, which was soon to come upon them.

Psalm 2:1—2 1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, (see Psalm 46:6; 83:2—5)

The heathen are non-Jews throughout the world. The second verse points out how the kings of the earth and the rulers work together. According to the prayer being prayed by Peter and those with him, they were interacting with the rulers spoken of in Psalms. These rulers took counsel with the rulers of Rome to put Jesus Christ to death. They are still taking counsel against God and against His anointed (the Messiah, Jesus Christ). They desired to be free of anything that has to do with God. This is indicative of man's heart in all generations. Man desires to be autonomous, free from all restraints, even if it means being free from righteousness. Unfortunately, man will then remain a slave to sin (Romans 6:16—18).

Psalm 2:4—5 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

God is watching mankind railing against Him, and laughs at their foolishness. However, there is coming a time when His wrath will be poured out on the world. This wrath is prophesied in the Old Testament (Isaiah 54:8; Zephaniah 1:14—15), and the account of God's wrath is found in the book of Revelation, a book of history written before the events have taken place (Revelation 6:17; 14:10, 19; 19:15). This time of wrath is the seven-year Tribulation.

Psalm 2:6—9 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8 Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Following the seven-years of God's wrath comes the Second Coming and the setting up of the Millennial Kingdom. Jesus Christ will be set up as King by the Father, and He will rule the world with a rod of iron.

Peter's prayer is so significant because the time is so short. Those who have not believed in Jesus Christ as Israel's Messiah will be heading to the Tribulation without protection from Satan, while those who flee from Jerusalem, at the middle of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:15—22) will be given a place of safety by God (Revelation 12:6). The fate of these unbelievers is recored in Revelation 6:15—16. The beginning of the Tribulation is scheduled prophetically to happen after Stephen is killed in Acts 7. When Jesus is seen standing (Acts 7:56), it is to pour out His wrath on the world (Psalm 7:6; 9:19; 110:1).

Boldness

The main purpose of their prayer is found in verse 29. They weren't praying that the leaders would believe, that went without saying. They didn't pray that Satan be bound, even though they were given the power to pray for anything and it would be answered (Mark 11:24). They prayed for boldness in proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom. Not only to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, but that signs would accompany them as they preached. Signs, healings, wonders and miracles are always connected to the Gospel of the Kingdom.

They were already perceived as being bold by the religious leaders (Acts 4:13). However, Peter and the Disciples were only human, and they had the same fears any of us would have in doing even half of what they were doing. After this encounter with the leaders of Israel, They were naturally shaken from the experience. It would be similar to the fear Elijah felt after finding out that Queen Jezebel wished to kill him (1 Kings 19), or even the agony that Jesus felt in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44). It's natural to fear and feel distress, but we can't let those things be the determining factor in deciding what we do. Fear may cause us to withdraw while the desire to serve God may drive us to serve Him instead. Paul found that a deep understanding of God's love drove him to continue to faithfully serve Him throughout his life.

Their prayer for boldness was answered almost immediately. The place where they were praying was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Scripture then says they spake the word of God with boldness. This prayer was answered because the Disciples were given the promise that every prayer would be answered if they would not doubt. They fully believed they had this power even while Jesus was with them before His death. They were going to use their power when they were once rejected by the people in a Samaritan town. They asked Jesus if they should command fire to come down from heaven to consume those who had rejected them (Luke 9:54).

Matthew 7:21—22 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. 22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

With confirmation from the Holy Spirit that God was with them, they were now ready to continue to preach Jesus Christ, contrary to the orders from the leaders of Israel.

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