

Marvelously Obvious

Introduction: Perhaps it is part of our American heritage (though I think it is much more universal), but most of us relish and cheer for the “underdog.” We like to see the “small” or “disadvantaged” guy/team win instead of the “big” or “advantaged” one. This may well be why we/I gravitate to texts like Acts 4:1-13 (sorry, vv.14-22 won't be covered).

Background: Acts 4:1-12. Note that *Peter* and *John* (because they are still the principle characters since 3:1ff)...

- Were “*speaking to the people*” at the temple in the aftermath of healing a man “*lame from his mother’s womb*” that everyone knew, cf. 3:1-10; 4:1a;
- When the some Jewish *priests*, the *captain of the temple guard*, and some *Sadducees* “*came upon them*” and were “*greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead*” (in which the Sadducees did not believe, cf. 23:8), 4:1b-2;
- So, “*they laid hands on them, and put them in jail until the next day,*” 4:3;
- Then, “*on the next day,*” the Jewish *officials* (*rulers, elders, scribes, the high priest*, and other high-ranking officers) assembled to *investigate* this matter, and presumably decide what to do about these things and men, 4:5-6;
- They first asked Peter and John “*By what power, or in what name*” (basically, by what *authority*) they had done *this* (meaning, the *miracle AND teaching/proclaiming “in Jesus the resurrection from the dead,”* cf. vv.2,7; (this is the same group that denied Jesus was *the Christ* and had Him crucified);
- In v.12, Peter, “*filled with the Holy Spirit,*” then *let it be known* in very clear and plain language “*that by the name of Jesus **Christ***” (thus affirming what these men had denied) “*whom **you crucified***” (squarely placing guilt where it belonged) “*whom **God raised from the dead***” (which these men denied was possible and then tried to concealed once it occurred, cf. Matt.28:11-15), that “*by **this name***” (“*Jesus Christ*” v.10) “***this man***” (the one *everyone knew* had been *lame from his mother’s womb*) “*stands here before you **in perfect health***” (thus *healed* by the very power/Person whom these men denied and crucified);
- But Peter wasn’t finished- so he added that “***He***” (Jesus) “*is the **Stone***” (Savior/Messiah) “*which **you, the builders***” (again, including these very men to whom Peter is speaking) “***rejected***” (by denying who He was, and crucifying Him) “*which **became***” (by *resurrection*, thus proving who He was, Rom.1:4) “*the very **corner stone***” (without which there would be no *structure/building*), 4:11;
- Then to top it all off, Peter added that “*there is salvation in **no one else***” (including these men who presumed themselves not only the *access to* but *arbiters for* God Himself, Matt.23:2) “*for there is **no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we **must be saved*****” (just “*Jesus Christ,*” v.10), v.12. Now, all of that was to provide the necessary background for, and to get us to, v.13.

Several words/phrases/concepts stand out in Acts 4:13.

- “**Uneducated**”- *agrammatos: unlearned; has not acquired a formal education*; here means a “lack of formal rabbinic training,” Louw-Nida. These men are not assuming or accusing Peter and John of being “illiterate,” but of being “unlearned” or

“unschooled” **by them!** Now think about this for a moment: Where had these men’s *schooling* gotten them? They were ones that denied the obvious (“*convincing proofs*” 1:3; cf. 2:22) and *rejected* and *crucified* the One sent to save them. Tell me again exactly *who* is “*uneducated*” here? If you’re “**education**” requires or leads you to: *ignore contradictory evidence, reject the obvious facts, deny apparent conclusions, seek to destroy those proclaiming truth, and conceal your actions*, it’s not “education”- just propaganda, and “uneducated” is definitely the way to go, cf. Rom.1:18-23; 1Cor.1:18-25.

- **Untrained- idiots:** *ignorant, unskilled, one that has not acquired systemic information or expertise in some field of knowledge or activity*; according to the Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon, it generally refers to a *private person as opposed to a magistrate, ruler, or king*; a *common soldier as opposed to a trained military officer*; and in the N.T., an *unlearned man as opposed to the learned/educated one*; one who is thus, *unskilled*. Peter and John **were unskilled** in Jewish theology; they were not *trained as scribes, priests, or rabbis*, nor had they been “groomed” for seats on the prestigious *Sanhedrin Council* (as Saul/Paul had been). They were mere *fishermen!* And yet, they were also...
- **Confident- parrhesia:** *freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech; open, frank, clear, and without concealment or ambiguity; bold, confident, cf. v.31*. *Confidence and boldness*, as in vv.8-12, didn’t come to Peter and John from Jewish theology “education” or “training,” but from: 1) “*having been with Jesus*” (they had *been with Jesus* almost 24/7 for about three and a half years; they *walked with, ate with, observed, and listened to Him*; they *witnessed countless miracles* He did, and *understood who/what* He was; and, 2) being “*filled with the Holy Spirit*”- specifically in 2:1-4, and generally in 4:8,31. No, they weren’t *educated and trained* by Jewish “religious elites,” they were *trained* by the Son of God and *educated* by the Holy Spirit of God. This is the source of their “*confidence*”!
- **Marvelously Obvious-** “*marveling*” comes from *thaumazo-* *to wonder at, be amazed by, and to admire*; these Jewish theologians were *amazed, astonished, and impressed* by two fisherman for an *obvious* reason: **they had been with Jesus-** and **it showed**, cf. Ex.34:29-30; Matt.5:14!

Now here’s what we should get from all of this:

1. “Education”- *secular or theological* is not “bad” unless it causes/leads us to *ignore evidence, deny facts, cling to untenable/illogical conclusions, reject truth, and/or live disobediently*. Thank goodness spiritual understanding and wisdom is readily available to the “uneducated,” 1Cor.1:26-29!
2. Special “Religious Training” isn’t required to be spiritually right/upright, “on the job” training will do just fine, Matt.7:24-29!
3. “Confidence” stems from being *taught/educated by the Spirit* and *trained by and being with Jesus*, Acts 4:8,13. And,
4. When you have been thus *educated and trained*, it is *marvelously obvious* to everyone, cf. Matt.5:14!
5. Two questions remain: a) *Are you thus educated and trained?* If so, it should be *marvelously obvious* to everyone. And, b) *If not, why not start today, right now?*