

## Digging Deeper: *Submerged – Dealing with Persecution*

by Robert Lee

Scripture Lesson: Acts 4:1-12

**Monday** – Pray for Spiritual Courage then read Acts 4:1-2. Who were the men who came up to meet Peter and John while they were speaking to the people about how Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah fulfilled prophecy? They were priests, the captain of the temple guard and Sadducees. These characters were responsible for killing Yeshua (Jesus), and were disturbed that Peter and John were proclaiming that in Yeshua, the dead will be resurrected. The Sadducees were also skeptics who rejected all Old Testament scripture except for the *Torah* (first five books of the Hebrew Bible).

**Tuesday** – Pray for Spiritual Understanding then read Acts 4:3-4. What was the reason for the religious leaders seizing Peter and John overnight? It was after praying that Peter and John spoke to the people about Yeshua fulfilling prophecy and of the resurrection. It was, therefore, too late to assemble the *Sanhedrin* together to investigate them. Therefore, the religious leaders ordered the guards to hold Peter and John in jail until the next day. Ironically, many who heard Peter and John teaching that day believed, and the number of followers grew to about 5,000.

**Wednesday** – Pray for Spiritual Faithfulness then read Acts 4:5-7. Who were the Sanhedrin in biblical times? Around the time of Yeshua, they were a council made up of 21 or 23 elders (rabbis) who were appointed to sit as a tribunal in major cities. The Great Sanhedrin were known as the final authority of the Jewish law. Death was the penalty for any biblical scholar who opposed the council's

Digging Deeper: *Submerged – Dealing with Persecution*  
by Robert Lee

Scripture Lesson: Acts 4:1-12

decisions. Pay special attention to the names *Annas* and *Caiaphas* in verse 7 and the question that they asked Peter and John. Annas was who Yeshua was brought to first to stand trial after he was arrested. In John 18:13-14, we find that it was Caiaphas who, as high priest at the time, was the one who had “advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man (Yeshua) died for the people.”

**Thursday** – Pray for the Presence of the Holy Spirit to Fulfill Your Life then read Acts 4:8. In this verse, we find that Peter spoke boldly and directly to the rulers and leaders after being filled with the *Holy Spirit*. This is the second time in the Books of Acts that mentions someone being filled with the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:4; 4:31; 9:17; 13:9). What special characteristics does the *Fruit of the Spirit* contain? Read Galatians 5:22-23 and pray for strength in all of these areas, especially when faced with life’s most difficult challenges.

**Friday** – Pray for Spiritual Boldness and read Acts 4:9-10. *Kindness* is one of many characteristics within the Fruit of the Spirit that Peter and John used in their response to the lame beggar’s request for money (read Acts 3:6-7). Take special note in verse 6 of chapter 3 that this miracle was only made possible “in the name of Jesus the Christ of Nazareth.” Peter reemphasizes this important point in verses 12 and 16 of chapter 3 when speaking to the onlookers at the place called Solomon’s *Colonnade*. This colonnade (or porch), by the way, was a popular gathering place for early believers in Jerusalem before Jewish Christians eventually “scattered” or “dispersed”

Digging Deeper: *Submerged – Dealing with Persecution*  
by Robert Lee

Scripture Lesson: Acts 4:1-12

throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria to avoid persecution. Those who were scattered, however, went everywhere preaching the Word.

**Saturday** – Pray The Lord's Prayer after reading Acts 4:11-12. This prayer appears in two of the four Gospels (Matt. 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4). I pray that all who receive this week's Scripture lesson will accept Acts 4:11-12 as truth, and remember to *apply faith* in these sacred words to life situations as you move on from this moment.