

THE SERVANTS OF SATAN

ACTS 4:13-31

Text: Acts 4:27-28

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²⁷ For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, ²⁸ For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Introduction:

Review what had just recently taken place:

The great miracle that had taken place in Acts 3

Acts 3:1-11

¹ Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*. ² And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; ³ Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. ⁴ And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. ⁵ And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. ⁶ Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. ⁷ And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸ And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God: ¹⁰ And they knew that it was he which sat for

alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. ¹¹ And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

The truth is God never does a great work without stirring up the devil. And that's exactly what happened.

That brings us our passage here in Acts 4:13.

(READ TEXT)

Notice verse 27

Acts 4:27

²⁷ For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

I want to share with you a message on those who enter into the service of Satan, or the servants of Satan.

Notice these people who are praying and some others:

1. THE PEOPLE

A. Peter

Luke 22:31-32

³¹ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: ³² But I have prayed for

thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Satan himself wanted to sift Peter.

Remember this – God desires to strengthen; the devil desires to sift.

Notice others:

B. Joseph (Genesis 37, 39-40)

Was hated by his brothers

Was thrown into a pit, and then sold as a slave

Was then wrongfully accused of something he didn't do and was thrown into prison.

While in prison he was forgotten all about.

Those who were used by Satan

- His brothers
- Potiphar's wife
- The Kings Butler

C. Samson

Judges 13:1-5

¹ And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years. ² And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren, and bare not. ³ And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou *art* barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. ⁴ Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean *thing*: ⁵ For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

Read Judges 16:4-21

Note again those who were used by Satan

- Delilah

- The lords of the Philistines

D. Paul

2 Corinthians 12:1-7

¹ It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. ² I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. ³ And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) ⁴ How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. ⁵ Of such an one

will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

⁶For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but *now* I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me *to be*, or *that* he heareth of me.

⁷And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

We are not certain what Paul's physical problem was but we are certain of its source – the messenger of Satan.

2. THE PERCEPTION

On the surface this looks as if we have little hope.

On the surface it appears that the righteous suffer unfairly.

On the surface it seems if Satan and his servants are unstoppable, doing whatever they please.

- A. Peter was a direct target of Satan's sifting
- B. Joseph was mistreated, and misunderstood.
- C. Samson was blinded just fulfilling his God given task.

D. Paul, one of the great leaders in the early days of the church, was also directly targeted by a messenger of Satan.

Why you may be asking yourself

May we understand that we have not been left alone in this life, and no matter what the circumstance or situation might be God is aware of it.

Notice finally:

3. THE PLAN

If we get nothing from this but this never forget, what we read in verse 28.

Acts 4:28

²⁸ For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

While it is true these people were involved in the service of Satan, the Bible says that as they served Satan, they accomplished God's will.

Acts 2:22-23

²² Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: ²³ Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Notice:

A. Peter

He had to learn that he was not as spiritually strong as he thought he was.

God allowed the sifting in his life to reveal that to him.

In other words, the servants of Satan brought to pass the will of God.

In that message on the day of Pentecost and in the two letters that God used him to pen – (1 & 2 Peter) he was fulfilling God's will for him to strengthen the brethren.

B. Joseph

In the case with Joseph he learned and stated:

Genesis 50:18-22

¹⁸ And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, *we be* thy servants. ¹⁹ And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God? ²⁰ But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive. ²¹ Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them. ²² And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.

C. Samson

Though Samson wasn't a great picture of a man with character, at the close of his life speaks volumes in his fulfilling God's will.

Judges 16:22-30

²² Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven. ²³ Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. ²⁴ And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. ²⁵ And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars. ²⁶ And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them. ²⁷ Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. ²⁸ And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. ²⁹ And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. ³⁰ And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life.

D. Paul

Though Paul was greatly used by God he came to understand that without the messenger of Satan to buffeting him he would be exalted above measure.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. ⁸ For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. ⁹ And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

He understood that God knew exactly what he needed to be used to bring the greatest honor to Himself.

He learned that his strength was made perfect in weakness.

Close

When these attacks comes let's not try to figure out what the devil is up to, but rather what God is trying to accomplish.

Often it's after an encounter with Satan that causes us to fulfill God's purpose or Will.