

THE SOUTHEAST SOWER

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The Bravery of Peter and John (Acts 4:5-17)

Jordon Smith

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, ‘What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.’ So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’ So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no other way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.”

In the passage above, these two men (Peter and John, apostles of Christ) stood before the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the ruling body, council, of Jewish life and custom. Men who comprised this council made the final decisions over Jewish laws. They were educated men, teachers of the Mosaic Law. Peter and John were fishermen, not educated as these men were, and did not hold the same status in Jewish society as those of the Sanhedrin. Instead of fearing the Sanhedrin, if you read the beginning of this chapter, Peter and John spoke boldly to them and proclaimed Christ to them. They even went as far as to say in verse 10, when speaking of the authority by which they healed a lame man (as found in Acts 3), “...that by the name of Jesus Christ...whom you crucified...” Look at this bravery and boldness of these two men. Would you have this same bravery if you were in their position? We will not stand before the Sanhedrin, but we will

have to take a stand for the truth against many who will be opposed to the gospel of Christ.

We need to find the bravery and courage within ourselves to proclaim the gospel of Christ to all men. As Peter and John stood firm in their belief, we too need to be grounded in Christ to withstand any and all opposition. Do not keep the truth from any for fear of how they might respond to it, or because of their social status. All men are in need of salvation, and should at least have the opportunity to hear the truth.

As Peter and John were not fazed by the threats (v. 17-18) and command of the Sanhedrin “not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus,” we also cannot be fazed. Many will not be receptive to the truth, because it convicts them. Do not be overwhelmed by what any man threatens you with, but continue to teach the truth, confessing Christ to all, and teaching the plan of salvation. “Do not fear those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). Follow the example of Peter and John and be brave and courageous in standing for the truth.

In What Manner are We Created in the Image of God?

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The Bible says: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and

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female created he them.” (Gen. 1:27) Our querist asks, in what manner, fashion or nature, are we created in this image?

Man is a creature of a dual nature. One nature is created (Hebrew bara) which is the nature in the image and likeness of God; the other is formed (Hebrew yatsar) of the dust of the earth which nature is peculiar to man. (Gen. 2:7) At death these natures separate at which time the spirit of man returns to God who gave it (i.e. enters into hades) and the body returns to the dust from which it came. (James 2:26, Eccl. 12:7) The body of man is the formed nature of man; the spirit or soul of man is created in the image of God. The body is the abode of the soul (2 Cor. 5:1-8, 2 Pet. 1:13-14); the soul is the eternal nature of man (1 Pet. 3:4); “but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” (2 Cor. 4:16)

THE SOUL

It was with reference to the spirit of man that Jesus said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:5-6) Our bodies were born of our physical parents; God is the Father of our spirits. (Heb. 12:9) In being born again man “is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” (Col. 3:10) Knowledge of the gospel of Christ cannot change man’s physical appearance, but the soul is changed through the instruction by the Spirit. (1 Pet. 1:21) It is this nature, the soul, that is “after the image of him that created him.” God is spirit. (John 4:24) Man is created in a spiritual image of God.

THE BODY

The physical body is peculiar to man. This is seen by the fact that when Jesus came to earth He had to put on flesh. Jesus is theos, God. (John 1:1-3) Man was created and formed by Him in the beginning when the Godhead (composed of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) said, “Let us make man in our image.” (Gen. 1:26) Though man was already in the image of Jesus when He came to earth, yet He had to be made “in the likeness of men,” “put on flesh”. (Phil. 2:7, John 1:14) This proves that the likeness of man to God is not physical but spiritual.

MORTALITY AND IMMORTALITY

At death the body (the nature peculiar to man) returns to the dust from whence it came, and the spirit returns to God, i.e. to His disposition. The receptacle of disembodied spirits is called “hades.” (It was here that Jesus went at death —Acts 2:27, 31.) In hades the soul is conscious (Luke 16:23-31) — it is vital and incorruptible. (2 Cor. 4:16, 1 Pet. 3:4)

In the resurrection the corruptible body will be raised incorruptible. (1 Cor. 15:52-54) Then mortality (the condition of being subject to death) will be swallowed up of immortality (deathlessness). And so in the resurrection the righteous will ever be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:17).

Note: The above article was taken from: “Bible Answers,” by Gene Frost, Vol. I, pgs., 82-84