

WHAT MADE THEM STRONG?

Read Acts 4:1-13

What made the apostles strong, brave, and confident? Perhaps it was the miracles they saw. But if seeing miracles makes one strong, then the Israelite nation would have been strong after they saw the ten plagues and the Red Sea open for them and close on the Egyptian army.

Perhaps it was being delivered from an angry sea by the simple words of Jesus. But again, being delivered by God in a personal manner on several occasions did not make the Israelites brave and confident.

Perhaps it was the apostles' education or their training in public speaking and polemics that made them strong. But wait, we just read that it wasn't (Acts 4:13).

Oh! Perhaps it was the fact that they were filled with the Holy Spirit in a miraculous measure. No... if that were the case, then Paul would not have written of his struggles in Romans 7 and Peter would not have been overpowered by peer pressure in Galatians 2.

Hmmm. Wait. Let's read Acts 4:1-13 again. Speaking to a hostile crowd who had the power of life and death over them, Peter and John speak out bravely that nothing else can save their souls but Jesus (v.12).

Then the Holy Spirit makes a comment about the high priest and his entourage along with the scribes and Pharisees. "Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus" (v. 13).

"...having been with Jesus." That's it! The source of their confidence (the same word is translated "boldness" in v.31) is simply that they were with Jesus. We cannot "be with" Jesus literally. But we can "be with" Him spiritually. We can believe the same things the apostles believed (John 17:20; 20:29-31). We can gain the same confidence the apostles gained by our faith which is created by time spent in the word of God (Romans 10:17). And others can observe your confidence and know who is your King!

Read again Acts 4:1-13. Where is **your** confidence?

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