

## **The Book of Acts: WDYT? (*Where Do You Turn?*)**

### **Acts 4:23-31**

Pastor Carl Toti | May 23-24, 2015

#### **Acts 4:23 (AMP)**

*<sup>23</sup> After they were permitted to go, the apostles returned to their own company and told all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.*

#### **1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV)**

*Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."*

#### **The company you keep will determine the trouble you meet.**

*Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men (Prov. 4:13).*

#### **THE TRANSCENDENCE OF THEIR PRAYER**

*<sup>24</sup> And when they heard it, lifted their voices together with one united mind to God and said, O Sovereign Lord, You are He Who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything that is in them,*

#### **SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD** Adapted Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary

There is one thing the Bible is very clear on God possess all power and is the RULER over all things (Ps. 135:6; Dan. 4:34-35).

**CREATION:** Scripture testifies clearly to God's rule over His creation (Gen. 1; Mark 4:35-41; Rom. 8:20-21), including Christ's sustaining and governing of all things (Heb. 1:3, Col. 1:15-17).

**HUMAN HISTORY:** The Bible affirms also that God rules human history according to His purpose, from ordinary events in the lives of individuals (Judg. 14:1-4; Prov. 16:9,33) to the rise, affairs, and fall of nations (Ps. 22:28; Hab. 1:6; Acts 17:26).

**REDEMPTION:** Scripture depicts redemption as the work of God alone. God, according to His eternal purpose, takes the initiative in the provision and application of salvation and in enabling man's willing acceptance (John 17:2; Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:3-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:9-10).

#### **Sovereignty and Evil**

The Bible does not explain the relationship between divine sovereignty and evil. Scripture does teach that God neither does evil nor approves of evil (Hab. 1:13; James 1:13).

#### **Sovereignty and Free Will**

Some see contradiction between divine sovereignty and human free will, an often misunderstood term. Man's will is free in that he makes willing choices that have actual consequences. Yet man's will is not morally neutral; rather, it is in bondage to sin, and without divine grace he chooses freely and consistently to reject God (Rom. 3:10-11; Eph. 2:1-3; 2 Tim. 2:25-26).

#### **Sovereignty and Human Responsibility**

Though God is sovereign, man is still accountable to God for his actions (Rom. 2:5-11; 3:19). The relationship between these two concepts is mysterious but not contradictory. Paul raises the issue but, rather than resolving the tension, simply affirms both (Rom. 9:19-29).

#### **Sovereignty and Evangelism**

Jesus affirmed the absolute sovereignty of God and in the same context invited sinners to Himself for salvation (Matt. 11:25-30). Paul began his profound treatment of divine sovereignty by expressing his burden for his lost kinsmen (Rom. 9:1-5); in the same context he expressed his heartfelt prayer for their salvation (Rom. 10:1), and affirmed the promise of salvation to "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord" (Rom. 10:12-13 HCSB). Thus an affirmation of divine sovereignty is consistent with evangelism, with missionary labors (2 Tim. 1:12; 2:10), and with desiring and praying for the salvation of any lost person or people. —Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary.

## THE TRUTH OF THEIR PRAYER

<sup>25</sup> *Who by the mouth of our forefather David, Your servant and child, said through the Holy Spirit, Why did the heathen (Gentiles) become wanton and insolent and rage, and the people imagine and study and plan vain (fruitless) things that will not succeed?* <sup>26</sup> *The kings of the earth took their stand in array for attack and the rulers were assembled and combined together against the Lord and against His Anointed (Christ, the Messiah).* <sup>27</sup> *For in this city there actually met and plotted together against Your holy Child and Servant Jesus, Whom You consecrated by anointing, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and peoples of Israel,* <sup>28</sup> *To carry out all that Your hand and Your will and purpose had predestined (predetermined) should occur.*

**There are enemies of Christ today who are attacking the person and work of Christ. Political, Religious, and Cultural enemies.**

**POLITICAL:** Our President seems to be confused about his own faith as a professed “Christian” – on multiple occasions both he and his administration have attacked the tenants of the Christian faith through their policies and pronouncements.

**On multiple occasions Christianity has been slighted and Islam defended.**

**Most recent occurrence was at the National Prayer Breakfast (Feb. 5, 2015).**

*“And lest we get on our high horse and think that this is unique to some other place, remember that during the Crusades and Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ,”*

Both Catholic and Protestant leaders are interpreting those remarkable words as both an attack on Christianity and a defense of Muslim atrocities. The President’s remarks came just two days after the release of a video of the burning death of a captured Jordanian pilot by ISIS and just one day after word that the radical Islamic army is selling, as well as crucifying, children.

<http://www.wnd.com/2015/02/committed-christian-obamas-religious-history-unmasked/>

**RELIGION:** Whole denominations are denying the moral teachings of Scripture voting for a more tolerant view and interpretation of sexual sins such as homosexuality. Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Episcopal Church all affirm same sex unions. Methodist Church is beginning to debate on changing their position.

A solid majority of people who identify as mainliners now favor allowing gays and lesbians to wed. In a survey we conducted in September 2014, 60% of mainline Protestants now say they favor same-sex marriage, up from just 34% a decade earlier in 2004.

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/03/18/where-christian-churches-stand-on-gay-marriage/>

## HOLLYWOOD & THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY:

Christianity is under a daily assault from Hollywood as the traditional family and moral decency is mocked/ridiculed and undermined in nearly every movie script.

<sup>29</sup> *And now, Lord, observe their threats and grant to Your bond servants [full freedom] to declare Your message fearlessly,* <sup>30</sup> *While You stretch out Your hand to cure and to perform signs and wonders through the authority and by the power of the name of Your holy Child and Servant Jesus.*

## THE TNT OF THEIR PRAYER

<sup>31</sup> *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they continued to speak the Word of God with freedom and boldness and courage.*

**Where Do You Turn?**

- 1. GOD’S PEOPLE**
- 2. GOD’S WORD**
- 3. GOD’S THRONE IN PRAYER**