

**Welcome to Promise Land Bible Church**  
**We're glad you're here!**



An open Bible is shown from a low angle, looking up at the pages. The pages are filled with text, which is slightly blurred. The background is a bright blue sky with wispy white clouds. The text "Call to Worship" and "Psalm 1" is overlaid in the center of the image in a large, bold, black font.

# Call to Worship

## Psalm 1

**Psalm** Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

# The Wonderful Cross

## Hymn 258



# Wounded for Me

## Hymn 282





## Praise and Prayer Request

**Philippians 1:3-6** I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

# Receiving of the Offering



**2 Corinthians 9:5** So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance for the gift you have promised, so that it may be ready **as a willing gift**, not as an exaction.

# ***Famous Quote:***

*“We cannot come to Christ to be justified until we have first been to Moses to be condemned. But once we have gone to Moses and acknowledged our sin, guilt and condemnation, we must not stay there.”*

**JOHN R. W. STOTT**



# Today's Message

## **“Before the Rulers”, Part 2**

*A Test, in which they passed. What about you?*

*How would you fare?*

**Scripture text: Acts 4:1-22**

**Their deliberation** (vv. 15–18). The council did not seek for truth, but rather **sought for some way to avoid the truth!** Had they honestly considered the evidence and meekly listened to the message, **they might have been saved, but their pride and hardness of heart stood in the way.** Some of the chief priests and elders had experienced a similar dilemma during Passover when they had tried to trap Jesus in the temple (Matt. 21:23–27). **Some people never learn!** But **their response is proof that miracles alone can never convict or convert the lost sinner. Only the Word of God can do that** (see John 11:45–53; Acts 14:1–20).

**Matthew 21:23-27** And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, "**By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?**" Jesus answered them, "I also will **ask you one question**, and if you tell me the answer, **then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things**. The baptism of John, from **where did it come? From heaven or from man?**" And they discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From man,' **we are afraid of the crowd**, for they all hold that John was a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

**John 11:45-50** Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the **chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Council** and said, **"What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."** But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, **"You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish."**

**Their conclusion.** They wanted to “let the thing die a natural death.” This meant threatening the Apostles and **forbidding them to teach and preach in the name of Jesus.** This official sentence shows how much the enemy fears the witness of the church, **for Satan has been trying to silence God’s people from the very beginning.** Sad to say, he has succeeded with far too many Christians, the “silent witnesses” of the church. Even the existential philosopher Albert Camus said, **“What the world expects of Christians is that Christians should speak out, loud and clear ... in such a way that never a doubt, never the slightest doubt, could arise in the heart of the simplest man.”**

**The council did not want the Gospel message to spread, and yet that is exactly what happened!**

From 120 praying men and women in Acts 1, the church increased to more than 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost; and now there were more than 5,000 disciples in the fellowship. In the days that followed, “believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women” (Acts 5:14; and see 6:1, 7).

**Satan’s attempts to silence the church only led to a stronger witness for the Lord.**

**The failure of the council (vv. 19–22).** This was evident when **Peter refused to be intimidated by their threats.** All of us need to follow Peter's example and make our decisions on the basis of **"Is it right?"** and not **"Is it popular?"** or **"Is it safe?"** However, we must be sure that we have the clear teaching of the **Word of God on our side before we take a stand against the authority of the government.** Peter knew what the Lord had commanded the believers to do (Acts 1:8), and he was going to obey Him at any cost.

**Act 1:8** But **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit** has come upon you, and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and **to the end of the earth."**

It is popular today to promote various causes by defying the government, disobeying the law, and defending these actions on the basis of conscience.

Since even some Christians are involved in this approach **to social action, it is important to understand the kind of “civil disobedience” practiced by people in the Bible.**

**Peter and John are not the only ones who disobeyed the authorities in order to serve God.**

**A list of “dedicated conscientious objectors” would include, among others:**  
the Jewish midwives (Ex. 1),  
Moses’ parents (Heb. 11:23),  
Daniel (Dan. 1; 6),  
and the three Hebrew children (Dan. 3).

**When you examine the records, you discover the biblical principles by which they operated, principles that are not always followed today.**

**Exodus 1:15-21** Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, "When you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him, but if it is a daughter, she shall live." **But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded** them, but let the male children live. So the king of Egypt called the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and let the male children live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "**Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.**" So God dealt well with the midwives. And the people multiplied and grew very strong. And **because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.**

Hebrews 11:23 **By faith** Moses, when he was born, **was hidden for three months by his parents**, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and **they were not afraid of the king's edict.**

**Daniel 1:8-9** But **Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank.** Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. And **God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs,**

**Daniel 3:16-20** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.** But if not, be it known to you, O king, **that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.**" Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and **to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.**

**To begin with, each of these “objectors” had a message from God that could not be questioned. The midwives and Moses’ parents knew that it was wrong to murder the babies. Daniel and his friends, and the three Hebrew men, knew that it was wrong to eat food offered to idols or to bow down to idols in worship. Peter and John knew that they were under orders from their Master to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth, and that it would be wrong to obey the Sanhedrin. All of these people were faithfully obeying a clear word from God and not just following some selfish personal whim of their own.**

**Second**, their convictions touched every area of their lives. In other words, they did everything “**with conscience toward God**” (1 Peter 2:19) **because they belonged to God**. The university student today whose conscience permits him to cheat on exams or drive while drunk, but not register for military service, does not convince me that he is really cultivating a healthy conscience.

**When a person’s total life is under the direction of a godly conscience, then I find it easier to have confidence in his unpopular decisions.**

**1 Peter 2:17-21 Honor everyone.** Love the brotherhood. **Fear God.** Honor the emperor. Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. **For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.** For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? **But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.** For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

**Note** also that our **examples from the Bible acted with respect and courtesy, even when they defied the law.** It is possible for Christians to respect authority and at the same time disobey the authorities (see Rom. 13; Titus 3:1–2; 1 Peter 2:13–25). Daniel tried to avoid getting his guard into trouble, and the Apostles used their **arrests as opportunities for witness.**

*This is quite a contrast to some of the modern “Christian objectors” who seem to major on denunciation and accusation rather than loving witness.*

**Titus 2:7-8 Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.**

**Titus 3:1-3 Remind them** to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and **to show perfect courtesy toward all people.** For **we ourselves were once** foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

Of course, **the greatest example of unjust suffering is that of Jesus Christ**, and we must imitate Him (see 1 Peter 2:13–25). Jesus teaches us that righteous protest against injustice always involves sacrifice and suffering, and **must be motivated by love**. God's people **must be careful not to clothe their prejudice** in the garments of “**righteous indignation**” and pass themselves off as courageous soldiers of conscience.

*We must examine our own hearts honestly to make certain we are not conducting a “holy war” just to satisfy inner frustrations.*

Because they had no real case to offer, **the council could only threaten the men and let them go.**

After all, when you have a **living miracle before you, as well as an approving public around you, you must be careful what you do!**

**May our choices and actions, be that which glorifies Almighty God!** May we strive to never do anything that is selfish and hurtful to the cause of Christ!

May He guide us in thought, word, and deed, and may we Magnify His Holy Name, in all that we do!

# Trust and Obey

## Hymn 454

