

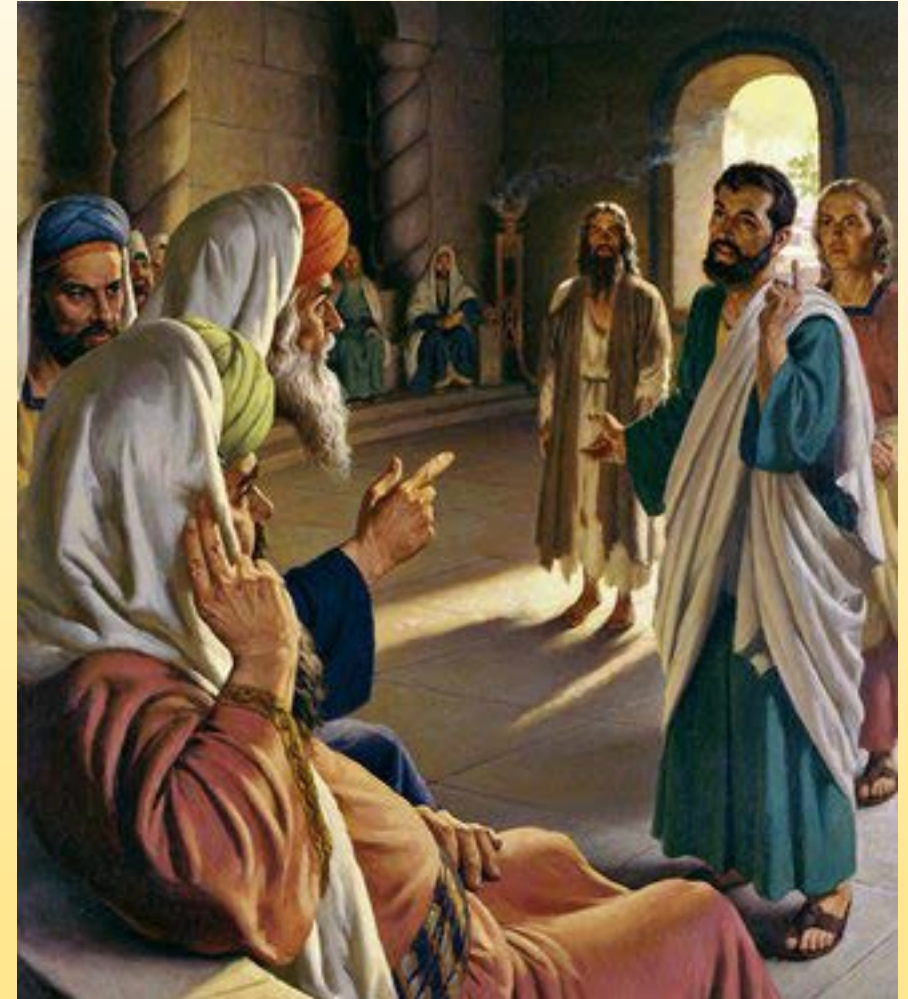
# The Great Controversy and the Early Church

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Acts 4: 13

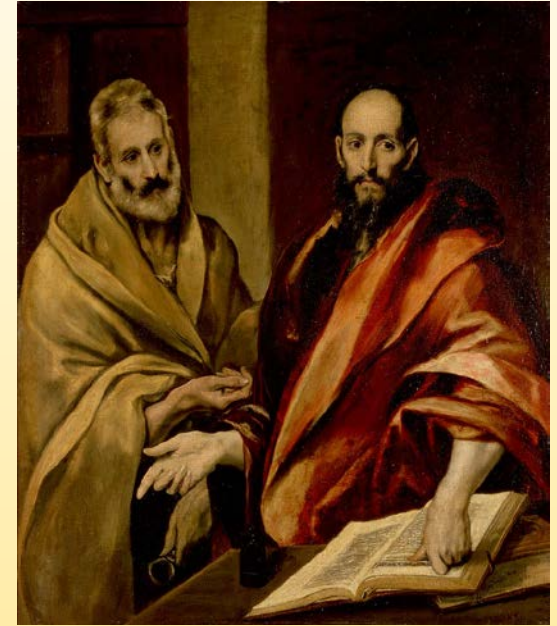


“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”  
Acts 4: 13.



# I. Introduction: DISCRIMINATION

The tendency of human beings is to discriminate. Their prejudices are giving them the wrong perspective, precluding them to see others as God's children with the same dignity. This was the case of the members of the Sanhedrin when they cross-examined the apostles Peter and John. They knew of their lack of academic education, of their life in simplicity. The astonishment of the Jewish leaders came from the transformed life of Paul and John, and from their superior education received in the presence of Jesus.



“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.”

Martin Luther King

The extensive education of the members of Sanhedrin should help them to think critically and to honor the opinion of those who were not sharing the same values and ideas. Unfortunately their excellent academic education didn't eliminate their wrong preconceptions.





If the discrimination is the mark of uneducated people, it is not sure who was more 'uneducated': the members of the Sanhedrin or the apostles.

"We do not know that any mark more certainly distinguishes the well educated from the uneducated, than the habit of discriminating."  
Charles Hodge, The Biblical Repertory and New Princeton Review, 1857, p. 616.

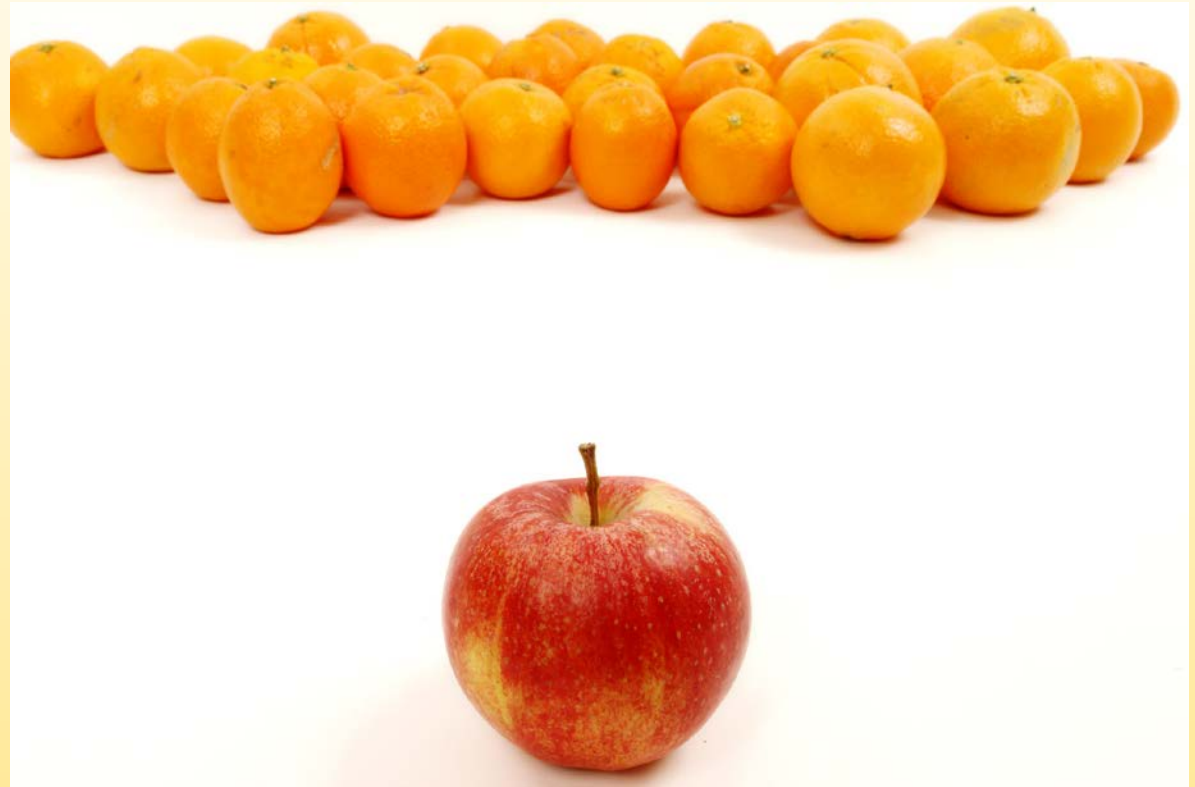


"Education is the most powerful  
weapon which you can use to  
change the world."

Nelson Mandela



“God's religion is love and the light of love sees no walls. Anybody who unconditionally loves another human being for the goodness of their heart and nothing more is already on the right side of God. True honor is being truthful, humble, selfless and compassionate towards all living creatures. Those filled with discrimination, prejudice, hatred, egotism, and pride stand the furthest away from God.”  
Suzy Kassem





“People are always  
afraid of anything  
different. They are  
afraid of change”  
Sandy Fussell





“The only difference between man and man all the world over is one of degree, and not of kind, even as there is between trees of the same species.

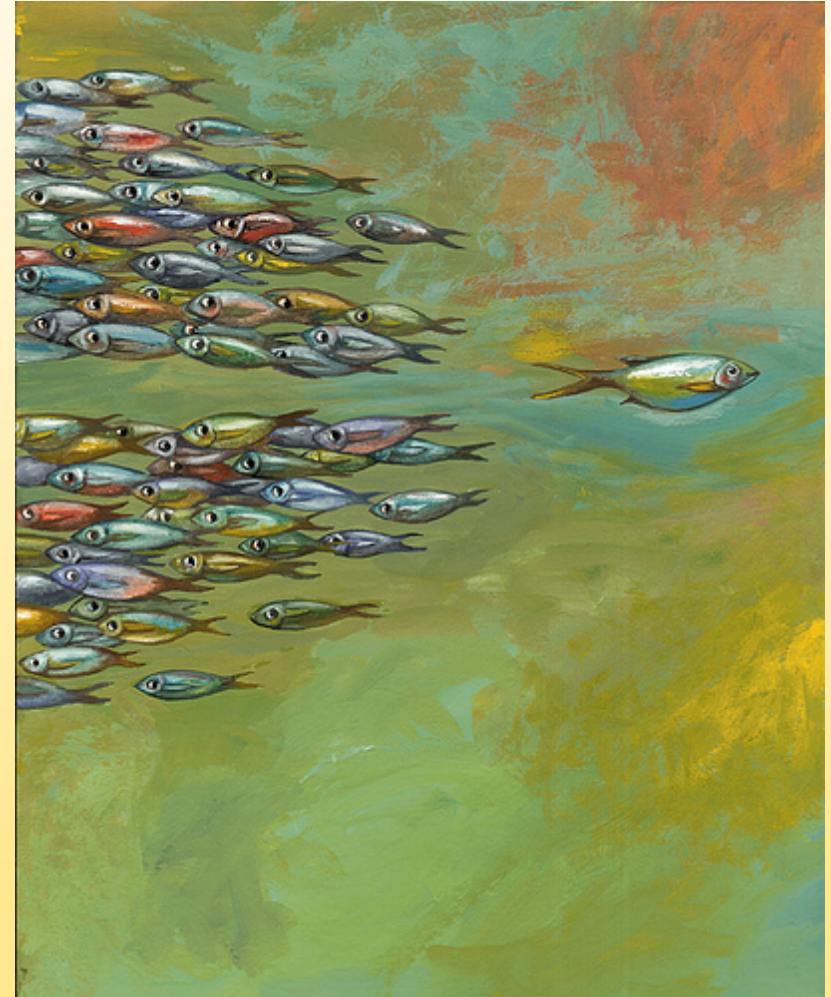
Where in is the cause for anger, envy or discrimination?”

Mahatma Gandhi



"Our society tends to regard as a sickness any mode of thought or behavior that is inconvenient for the system and this is plausible because when an individual doesn't fit into the system it causes pain to the individual as well as problems for the system. Thus the manipulation of an individual to adjust him to the system is seen as a cure for a sickness and therefore as good."

Theodore J. Kaczynski



## II. Context





The miracle of the healing at the temple gate in Jerusalem and all consequences are showing us that the first apostolic church put in the center of all plans the spreading of God's word. The structure of the chapters 3 and 4 is confirming this focus of the text. The power of the Word is stronger than all human decisions, civil, political, or spiritual.



# Acts of Apostles 3: 1 – 4: 31

A	3: 1	Time of Prayer for Peter and John
B	3: 2 - 9	Miracle and Speaking Praises
C	3: 10	Wonder and Amazement of the People
D	3: 11 - 26	Sermon of Peter in Front of the people of Jerusalem
E	4: 1 - 3	Peter and John in Custody
F	4: 4	The Power of the Word
E'	4: 5 - 7	Interrogation of Peter and John by the Sanhedrin
D'	4: 8 - 12	Sermon of Peter in Front of the Sanhedrin
C'	4: 13 - 14	Wonder and Amazement of the Sanhedrin
X	4: 15 - 18	Deliberation of the Sanhedrin and Threatening of the Apostles
X'	4: 19 - 21	Answer of Peter and John: Listen to God more than to Men
X	4: 21 - 23	Liberation of the Apostles by the Sanhedrin
A'	4: 24 - 30	Time of Prayer for the Entire Church
B'	4: 31	Miracle and Speaking with Boldness

The deliberations of the Sanhedrin are out of the regular chiastic structure. This fact confirms that the focus is still on the proclamation of the Word. Human rules and policies trying to make all things nice and convenient cannot have the last word. This is why Peter replaces the word of God above the word of the Sanhedrin





# The Narrative of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts

Jesus' Birth (Decree of Caesar Augustus, Roman Empire)	Jesus in Galilee (Country of Gentiles, with important Jewish presence)	Jesus in Samaria and Judea	Jesus In Jerusalem	Passion, Death, Burial, Resurrection and Ascension	Church in Jerusalem	Church in Judea and Samaria	Church among the Gentiles	Church in Rome
Luke 1 - 2	Luke 3 - 9	Luke 10 - 18	Luke 19 - 21	Luke 22 - 24	Acts 1 - 7	Acts 8 - 10	Acts 11 - 26	Acts 27 - 28

III. In the context of the Great Controversy the best attitude is to stay strongly attached to Jesus and to do His will. Human decisions can never disturb God's plans



1. The Boldness in all  
circumstances is one  
of the essential  
characteristics of  
Jesus' followers

"Now when they saw the  
boldness of Peter and John"





“How could they be both unschooled and so bold? This was absolutely astonishing to the leaders. But why was it astonishing? It has everything to do with what “boldness” means. It’s more than a general confidence. It doesn’t mean zeal enough to holler. Peter and John’s “boldness” was in what they said about Jesus. Or more specifically, their boldness was in how they were so outspoken about the identity of Jesus in their use of the Old Testament... And this blew the minds of the Jewish leaders. How in the world do these untrained fisherman know how to read the Scriptures like this? How can they be so frank and open about who this Jesus is? So the Jewish leaders were astonished. Astonished, that is, until they recognized that Peter and John had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).”

John Piper

"Past boldness is no  
assurance of future boldness.  
Boldness demands continual  
reliance on God's spirit."  
Andy Stanley



“Prayer gives you a  
supernatural boldness  
that you cannot get by  
any other means”  
Sunday Adelaja





## 2. God Qualifies the Chosen

“And perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled.”



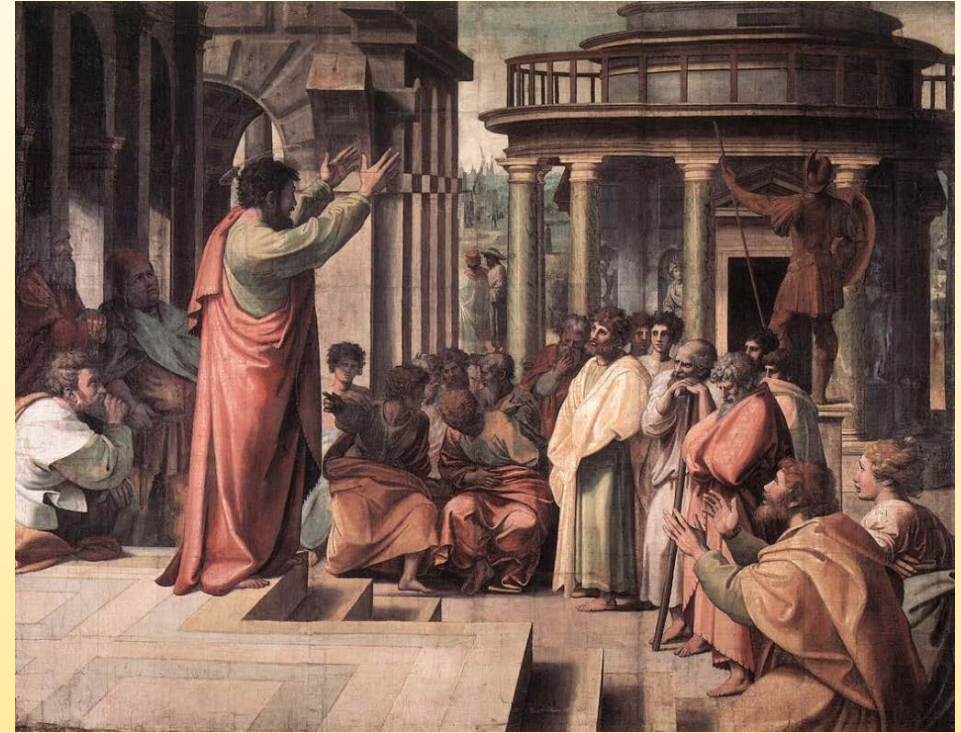
“The members of the Sanhedrin were experienced jurists and could readily discern between true and false testimony. Peter and John impressed them as true witnesses who knew what they were talking about... Most Jewish youngsters were well grounded in the Torah through home schooling or by classes taught at the local Rabbi's home. Peter and John were fishermen from Galilee and had little need for formal education beyond the primary level. In this case the Sanhedrin recognized knowledge and understanding beyond what would be expected of ordinary men. Mark 1:16-20.”

Robert C. Denig

"The members of the Sanhedrin perceived that [the apostles] were unlearned ignorant men, not by what they now said, but by what they heard and understood of them before: they were informed that they were "unlearned" men, or who did not understand letters; not but that they had learned their mother tongue, and could read the Scriptures; but they had not had a liberal education; they had not been brought up at the feet of any of the doctors, in any of the schools and universities of the Jews; they were not trained up in, and conversant with, the nice distinctions, subtle argumentations, and decisions of the learned doctors, in the interpretation of the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders."

John Gill

“No longer were they ignorant and uncultured. No longer were they a collection of independent units or of discordant and conflicting elements. No longer were their hopes set on worldly greatness. They were of “one accord,” of one mind and one soul. Christ filled their thoughts. The advancement of His kingdom was their aim. In mind and character they had become like their Master; and men “took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13. Ellen G. White, Education, p. 95.





"God takes the  
unqualified and gives  
them a platform of  
significance to show  
how big God is!"  
Shaun Koch



### 3. The best education possible is in the presence of Jesus

"And they realized that they had been with Jesus."





"We are also to learn how to do his works. But the center of discipleship isn't gaining theological knowledge or practical ministry skills. Rather, it is being with Jesus."  
Mark D. Roberts



“Being with Jesus is about relationship. In fact the life of faith concerns, first and foremost, relationship with Jesus. As such, it is not just knowledge of Jesus and his ways that is crucial, but also growing in intimacy with him.”  
Thomas D. Stegman





“The first practice for knowing Jesus is tucked innocently into the opening words about Jesus’ call of the Twelve: “He appointed twelve . . . so that they might be with him.” That was the main thing, the great secret of becoming an apostle, someone sent by Jesus to change the world. They had to be with him day in and day out, walking and talking, watching and listening, eating and sleeping for three years. They grew in their knowledge of Jesus simply by being with him. As a result, the Twelve were able to continue Jesus’ mission even when he wasn’t with them anymore.”

Stan Mast

# V. Conclusion



“Under the training of Christ the disciples had been led to feel their need of the Spirit. Under the Spirit’s teaching they received the final qualification, and went forth to their lifework. No longer were they ignorant and uncultured. No longer were they a collection of independent units or discordant, conflicting elements. No longer were their hopes set on worldly greatness. They were of “one accord,” “of one heart and of one soul.” Acts 2:46; 4:32. Christ filled their thoughts; the advancement of His kingdom was their aim. In mind and character they had become like their Master, and men “took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13.

Ellen G. White, Acts of Apostles, p. 45.

“The followers of Christ should act so that all who converse with them, may take knowledge that they have been with Jesus. That makes them holy, heavenly, spiritual, and cheerful, and raises them above this world.”  
Matthew Henry





“Let us be today’s Christians. Let us not take fright at the boldness of today’s church. With Christ’s light let us illuminate even the most hideous caverns of the human person: torture, jail, plunder, want, chronic illness. The oppressed must be saved, not with a revolutionary salvation, in mere human fashion, but with the holy revolution of the Son of Man, who dies on the cross to cleanse God’s image, which is soiled in today’s humanity, a humanity so enslaved, so selfish, so sinful.”

Oscar A. Romero, *The Violence of Love*



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Acts 4: 13

