

They certainly didn't want to hear what we had to say. It wasn't easy to say either. But we stood up to them. We told them what they needed to hear. It got us in trouble of course, but we couldn't back down. It wasn't right to back down. Salvation isn't found anywhere else. It has to be Jesus. Jesus is the name we need to speak of and they don't want us speaking about him. Their threats are real. They'll definitely come after us if we talk about Jesus in public again. We're back here to tell all of you and see where you stand.

While they listened the other apostles stared at Peter and John in amazement. It was happening just like Jesus said it would. Really powerful and important people were standing against them. In the first such showdown Peter and John stood strong. Now all of them were in agreement it wasn't right to back away from testifying about Jesus. Sharing Jesus was too important to stop. Everyone gathered around and joined in prayer. They knew that in times of stress and worry there was no better place to go than God.

Words from centuries earlier came to mind at the center of their prayer. **"Sovereign Lord you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David."** Look at Psalm 2 in your Bible and it won't list an author. David clearly wrote Psalm 23, Psalm 46, and many others because his name is on them. Psalm 2 isn't listed like that. The first two verses of Psalm 2 are quoted by the apostles in their prayer and attributed to David. The apostles look back at those words recognizing they didn't make sense completely until this very moment.

Imagine reading or hearing these words for the first time when David wrote them. **"Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One."** For people with no context and no thoughts about Jesus these words might seem to be talking about war or a battle to come. Nations and peoples make plans to seek out and destroy. Kings and rulers get together and fight. Important to notice who they fight against. The psalm says all these elements fight against and plot against the Lord and his Anointed One. Human beings going to battle against God.

Psalm 2's first two verses are prophecy. Peter and John make clear its prophecy. It pointed ahead to something to come. A time when great rulers and nations of the earth would unite forces against God and his Anointed One. For the nations think of any nation that is not Jewish. For the peoples think the Jews. The nations conspire. They are filled with rage, anger combined with opposition. The perception is something wants to hold them down and they're pushing back with rage. Nothing is going to tell them what to do. They're spitting mad. The Jews plot, make plans, try and figure out what they can do to oppose God. Kings and rulers work together against this force against them. Everything will be pointed and aimed directly at God and his Anointed One.

But what did the prophecy point ahead to? Anointed One is another way of saying Messiah, or Christ. When Psalm 2 was written his name was unknown. But Peter and John not only knew his name, they had at this point just spent three years with the Christ. They learned from him and watched him deliberately go to the cross. What Peter and John didn't realize at the time they now realized. This prophecy of David in Psalm 2 had been fulfilled. Living prophecy being fulfilled right in front of them in Christ Jesus, the promised Savior.

Not many months before this prayer, the apostles were at the center of the nations' conspiring and the peoples plotting. Jew and Gentile were rising up together and uniting against one thing, Christ. Jews hated him because Christ seemed to want to abolish their laws and take away their power. Gentiles were indifferent toward him because they largely didn't care. Kings and rulers got involved against the Christ. **"Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed."** What could make all these forces unite against one thing? A common enemy in Christ they spent endless amounts of energy to defeat and eliminate.

Prophecy being fulfilled this way may have seemed like events were out of control. Jesus was forcibly arrested by the Jews. He was put on trial before Pilate and Herod. The Jews shouted for his crucifixion. The Gentiles stood by not caring. Everyone plotting against Christ, everyone hating him, and the apostles helpless to stop anything. Now they understood. Now they saw clearly. They weren't supposed to stop it. Prophecy was being fulfilled. **"They [the enemies of Jesus] did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen."** Events weren't out of God's control. Prophecy was fulfilled. God set it up to happen. The evil done to Jesus wasn't God's doing. But he did make use of it for his plan. Through the most evil of actions when the Son of God was put to death, God saved the world from its sins. As much as the enemies of Christ wanted him gone, they became only more frustrated. Now after Christ was raised from the dead all they could do was arrest the apostles for speaking Christ's name. It didn't matter. It didn't slow God's saving at all. In Christ's name more people came to faith and were saved.

The connection between prophecy and fulfillment might be hard to see. It might be even harder to believe. We can read the portions of Scripture that are prophecy of what will happen and deny that any connection exists between that and what happened in the life of Jesus or what will happen in our lives. Our denial or struggle with prophecy and fulfillment might never rise to the level of the nations, peoples, kings, and rulers who fought against God. But we do fight against the Lord anytime we try and overthrow his rule in our lives. We are underneath the control of God. We are subject to his rules and commands. But our love of freedom and independence wants to fight this off. We don't want to think that everything in our lives is controlled and dictated. We don't want to believe that we are responsible to someone higher than ourselves. We do what we want and forget the rest.

Every promise of the Old Testament that related to the coming Messiah, the Anointed One, was fulfilled in Jesus. God made those promises of the Old Testament, gave the prophecy, so when we read about its fulfillment we know who he is. God's servant, Christ, came as the fulfillment of every prophecy. He came to minister for the very people who want to throw off his control. He serves those who fight against him. He completes his mission of a perfect life so completely opposite of yours and my imperfect life. Christ subjected himself to every law and command of God that we are under. He lived according to each one. He sacrificed himself, allowing enemies to work against him, allowing enemies to feel like they got the upper hand. But they had not. God was carrying out his plan, a plan he promised to you and me. It was part of the prophecy. Enemies celebrated, we have reason to be joyful. Jesus' death wasn't the action his enemies thought. His death was exactly what was needed to free you and me from our sins.

So what about prophecy and fulfillment? What's the big deal for us today? What's important is to notice how the apostles reacted. Knowing the prophecy was fulfilled in Christ allowed them to not pray for destruction of their enemies. They didn't want God to get back at those who threw them in prison. Instead they asked for boldness. Confidence to keep speaking about Jesus. Let that be your prayer too. As a Christian you are an offense to others. What you say stings them. So they strike back making things difficult or giving you trouble. Calling you insensitive or uncaring. Saying you don't tolerate and you're not open and welcoming to everyone no matter what. They'll try and make you doubt and question. But you need not ask God to get revenge on someone who opposes what you say about Christ. Instead ask for boldness. Confidence that because Christ fulfills the prophecies, because Christ finished his work, you can believe in him and speak of him. Speak boldly about Christ to others in their moments of need. Trust in God who gives confidence and boldness. Believe in his grace and power which strengthen faith to share Christ.

May it always be said about you and me the same as what happened for those apostles, **"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly."** Speak of prophecy and its fulfillment. Speak of David and Jesus. Boldly share how through Christ all God's promises have come true.