

Acts 4:6-32**Reading 1**

The rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem with Annas the high priest and Ca'iaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a cripple, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰ be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well. ¹¹ This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has become the head of the corner. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." ¹³ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they wondered; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴ But seeing the man that had been healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵ But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred with one another, ¹⁶ saying, "What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is manifest to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any one in this name." ¹⁸ So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; ²⁰ for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." ²¹ And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them, because of the people; for all men praised God for what had happened. ²² For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old. ²³ When they were released they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who by the mouth of our father David, thy servant,^[a] didst say by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? ²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'-- ²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against thy holy servant^[c] Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever thy hand and thy plan had

predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants^[a] to speak thy word with all boldness, ³⁰ while thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant^[e] Jesus.” ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness. ³² Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common.

2 Timothy 4:1-8 Reading 2

⁴ I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ² preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. ⁵ As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry. ⁶ For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Hebrews 11:32-40 Reading 3

³² what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. ³⁶ Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two,^[a] they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated— ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. ³⁹ And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.