

**Acts 3, The Healing of the Lame Man**  
**3:12-26, The Sermon**  
**November 20, 1991**  
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**Overview**

1. Four movements in the story in Acts 3-4, illustrating how when believers devote themselves to prayer, the Lord adds to their number:
  - a) Healing of the lame man (last week)
  - b) Peter's sermon (this week)
  - c) Reaction to the sermon (next week)
  - d) The church's response (later)
2. Overview of the Sermon  
Two halves, the first introduced by "Men of Israel" (v.12), the second by "Brethren" (v.17); the first pointing out their sin, the second offering them forgiveness.

*Application:* The gospel is a "bad news -- good news" story. People will never be saved unless they have something from which to be saved.

**A. 12-16, God has Glorified the One You Denied**

Chiastic, ABC-CBA, emphasizing three ideas:

1. God has healed the lame man--the point of contact with their interest.
  2. In doing so, God has glorified his Son Jesus,
  3. the same one whom they have denied.
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1. 12, the lame man is healed, and we certainly didn't do it by our strength. (That leaves only God.)
  2. 13a gives the reason that the healing did take place: because "God ... has glorified his servant [rather than AV 'Son'] Jesus." To understand this phrase, we must study both where Peter got it and what it means.
    - a) The phrase "glorified his servant" is from LXX Isa. 52:13, "Behold, my servant shall be ... extolled." Peter understands that Isa. 53 prophesies the sufferings and glorification of the Messiah: 1 Pet. 2:22,25.
    - b) What does it mean for Jesus to be glorified? The expression occurs in three different senses in the NT. Which has it here? *Only discuss third in sermon.*
      - 1) Jesus will be glorified in the coming kingdom, at his second advent: Matt. 19:28; Tit. 2:13. But Peter relates the healing to a *past* glorification of Jesus, not a future one. "God ... has glorified his servant Jesus."
      - 2) Miracles done by Jesus show his glory: John 2:11; John 11:4

(cf. 40). Might fit here, except that until Peter tells them, the people don't recognize that Jesus did this.

- 3) The most common description in the NT of the glorification of Christ refers to his ascent to heaven: John 7:39; 12:16, 23; 17:1; Heb. 2:9. Seen to begin with the cross, John 13:31. Notice especially John 7:39, "the Holy Ghost was not yet [given]; because Jesus was not yet glorified." Also John 14:12-14, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater [works] than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do [it]."
  - 4) This last explains Peter's words. Peter could heal the lame man because God glorified his son in the ascension, thus sending back the Spirit to empower his children and give them access to the power of Jesus' name, which Peter exercised in this healing.
- c) *Application*: 12-13 show us how to translate our successes into the glory of God--by acknowledging him as the source of our triumph.
3. 13b-15a, this is the same Jesus whom you rejected. The same OT prophecy that anticipates the glory of the Servant also tells of his rejection and death. So it is no surprise that he was killed--but that doesn't justify their sin.
- a) Peter emphasizes the enormity of their sin by twice accusing them of "denying" Jesus. This is a sin on which he is an expert! When he denied the Lord, he said, "I do not know the man," Matt. 26:72. Now he points out twice how they have failed to recognize a name of Jesus; each time he sets their sin in relief by introducing another individual into the picture. (NB: the two "deny"s aren't aligned with the two people or the two names.)
  - b) Their relation to *Pilate* shows how they deny him as "The Holy One and the Just." A gentile had better perception into these characteristics than did these Jews. He wanted to release the Lord, but they insisted on his death.
  - c) Their relation to *Barabbas* shows how they deny him as "The prince of life."
- "Prince" *arx8gos* is sometimes rendered "author" (Heb. 12:2), and has two aspects to its meaning: leader, and author. He leads his people and thus conveys his own experience to them.
- They preferred a murderer to the one who leads his people in the experience of life (he has life in himself, John 5; he

is the firstborn from the dead, Col 1:18), and thus provides them with life (John 1, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men").

4. 15b, we return to the glorification of Jesus, in his resurrection. God's control over Christ's death is thus seen not only in the prophecies that anticipated it (13a), but also in his ability to undo it through resurrection (15b).
5. 16, Back to the lame man. Now they can more fully understand what has happened to him.
  - a) It all centers around the "name" of Jesus. In 13-15, their actions have effectively denied the names of Jesus: "Holy," "Just," "Prince of Life." Their unbelief is here set in contrast with the belief of the lame man and its effect.
  - b) Build up the two sentences in this verse, phrase by phrase.
    - 1) First sentence: "And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know."
      - a> "his name ... hath made this man strong." Recall how Peter healed him in v.16, by the authority of the name of Jesus. A sovereign act of healing. And yet ...
      - b> "through faith in his name." The lame man had to receive what Peter offered.
      - c> Summary of first sentence: Faith is the means by which God's power is made available to us: Faith -> God's power.
    - 2) Second sentence: "yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."
      - a> "faith ... hath given him this perfect soundness." Sounds like the conclusion we reached in the first half of the verse, that faith is really responsible for the healing. But ...
      - b> This faith that sets loose the power of Christ's name is itself only brought into existence "by Him." It is "the faith which is by him."
      - c> Summary of second sentence: Unless the Lord gives us faith, we can never exercise it. So now Christ -> Faith -> God's power.
    - 3) This verse, like several others in Acts (2:23; 4:27,28) shows the utter mutuality of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. We *cannot* be saved apart from God; he *will* not save us apart from our faith.

6. Summary: The lame man has been healed by the power that the glorified Christ has given to his disciples who act in his name. Thus the healing is a judgment on those who deny the name of the Lord.

*The first section of the sermon effectively condemns the hearers, the "men of Israel." In the second section, Peter changes his form of address from this formal title to the more intimate "Brethren," and shows them how they can be cleansed from their sin.*

**B. 17-25, Now you must turn and receive the blessing he offers.**

Three sections, each built around a successively broader prophecy about the Messiah.

1. 17-18, Your ignorance was the means of fulfilling God's prophecies about the sufferings of Messiah.

a) Ignorance. Two things to notice.

- 1) On the basis of OT law (Num. 15), ignorance renders sin forgivable. There can be no question that they have sinned; what ought to give them hope is the possibility of forgiveness.
- 2) The verse appears to say that the priests sinned in ignorance, which is hard to countenance. But note the preposition: *kata agnoian*, not *dia* (as in Eph. 4:18) or *en* (as in 1 Pet. 1:14). They sinned "according to ignorance," in an ignorant manner, as though they were ignorant. A very tactful statement. Whether they actually were or not, Peter does not say, and that probably varies by the individual. *See further notes on the structured text against reading this as a legal idiom.*

*Application:* Our witness must walk a fine line. We must tell people that they are sinners, or they won't be saved, and that news may well be offensive to them. But we must be a courteous and encouraging to them as we can be.

- b) God's promises: "he has so fulfilled," fulfilled in this way, that is, by means of their ignorant sin. Cf. 2:23. Once again, the principle that God causes the wrath of man to praise him.

*If they truly grasp what Peter is saying, they will be in terror of God's wrath; thus he immediately shows them how to avoid this penalty.*

2. 19-24, Your repentance will lead to the coming kingdom that God promised.

- a) Twofold command: repent (judge their sin; reject it), and turn (sc. to God, cf. 26:20). These two must go together. Some abhor their sin, but never receive God's forgiveness; others think that they can come to God without first repenting of

their sin.

b) Two results, one immediate (sins blotted out), the other more remote. (AV "when" is really another word for "that.") The more remote result of their salvation is again twofold: "times [lit. seasons] of refreshing" (v.19), and "times of restitution" (v.21). These are to be distinguished from one another (Rackham):

1) The seasons of refreshing come from the Lord now, as we live in fellowship with him daily. They are available to us whenever we seek his presence (lit. face). Immediately after confronting them with their sin, he offers them the balm of forgiveness.

2) The times of restitution are the future kingdom, when the world is put back to its edenic state. 20-21 summarize 22-24.

a> 20 says that Jesus is the before-promised (not "preached") Messiah, and 22-23 contains the promise, through Moses in Deut. 18.

b> 21 says that the times of restitution were prophesied, and 24 says that all the prophets from Samuel on preached of "these days," the times of restitution. Certainly the coming kingdom is a major focus of the latter prophets. Samuel's contribution may be in recording 2 Sam. 7:12ff, the prophecy of the kingdom of David's descendant.

c> The point here, as in v.13, is to point them back to the OT prophecies to authenticate Jesus as the promised Messiah.

*In fact, the prophecies go beyond their sin and their salvation, and encompass all the earth.*

3. 25-26, You are the first recipients of God's promised blessing to all nations, as he said to Abraham in Gen. 12.

#### C. 26, Summary

This final verse is a densely packed echo of the various prophecies that Peter has presented, recapitulating his entire message.

1. "Their iniquities" are headed up by their role in denying the Lord Jesus.

2. As God promised to Moses (v.22), he has "raised up," made manifest, the Lord Jesus.

3. In characterizing Jesus as "his son," Peter again uses the word "servant" from v.13, recalling Isa. 53, the prophecy of

the death of Messiah.

4. The purpose of that death was to "bless" them in keeping with the promise to Abraham in Gen. 12. We are careful not to tell arbitrary unbelievers that Christ died for them; Peter's address here might lead us to soften that some. He does tell a mixed and still unbelieving audience that Christ came to bless them. But note the following qualification:
5. "in turning away," can be understood temporally: "when every one of you turns away from your sins." The verse is not promising that God will turn every one of them from their sins; he obviously didn't do that. It is promising that when *they* turn from their sins, the result will be heavenly blessing.

#### **Lessons for Evangelism:**

1. Grows out of an incident of Christian compassion. We need to cultivate such openings.
2. Thorough foundation of scripture.
3. Doesn't duck the sin issue; points out their responsibility clearly.
4. But also does it tactfully. "You probably didn't know it was wrong."
5. Immediately offers heavenly balm: "Repent, and enjoy the refreshing seasons from the Lord."

**Hymn:** Showers of Blessing

#### **Analysis**

- A. 1-11, the healing (previous study)
- B. quote p: Peter's sermon
  1. quote f: 12 i)dw\ n de\ o( Pe/tros a)pekri/nato pro\s to\ n lao/n,
  2. quote: [Note emphasis on names of Jesus, italicized]
    - a) chiasm: their sin, in contrast with the rtness of Jesus
      - 1) Healing of the lame man
        - a> )/Andres )Israhli^tai,
        - b> ti/ qauma/zete e)pi\ tou/tw|,
        - c> h)\ h(mi^ n ti/ a)teni/zete w(s i)di/a| duna/mei h)\ eu)sebei/a| pepoihko/sin tou^ peripatei^ n au)to/n;
      - 2) God glorified Jesus
        - 13 o( qeo\s )Abraa\ m kai\ [o( qeo\s] )Isaa\ k kai\ [o( qeo\s] )Iakw/b, o( qeo\s tw^ n pate/rwn h(mw^ n, e)do/casen

to\n pai^da au)tou^ )Ihsou^n,  
cf. v.25 for God of the fathers.

3) You betrayed Jesus

a> o(\n u(meis me\n [in contrast with Pilate? or w.r.t.  
v.15? or in contrast with v.14, two different measures  
of their wickedness--Pilate, and the Lord's own rtness]  
1> paredw/kate  
2> comment p  
a: text: kai\ h)rnhsasqe kata\ pro/swpon Pila/tou,  
b: comment <Pilate>: kri/nantos e)kei/nou a)polu/ein:

4) You denied Jesus

14 u(meis de\ to\n a(/gion kai\ di/kaion h)rnhsasqe,  
a> kai\ h)|th/sasqe a)/ndra fone/a xarisqh^nai u(mi^n,  
b> 15 to\n de\ a)rxhgo\n th^s zwh^s a)pektei/nate,

5) God glorified Jesus

a> o(\n o( qeo\s h)/geiren e)k nekrw^h,  
b> ou(^ h(meis ma/rture/s e)smen.

6) Healing of the lame man

a> 16 kai\ e)pi\ th^| pi/stei tou^ o)no/matos au)tou^  
tou^ton o(\n qewrei^te kai\ oi)/date e)stere/wsen to\  
o)/noma au)tou^,  
b> kai\ h( pi/stis h( di' au)tou^ e)/dwken au)tw^| th\n  
o(lokhlhri/an tau/thn a)pe/nanti pa/ntwn u(mw^h).

b) Coordinate p: their situation, in view of the OT prophecy.  
Three sections, each built around a successively broader  
prophecy about the Messiah.

1) 17-18, Your ignorance was the means of fulfilling God's  
prophecies about the sufferings of Messiah.

a> 17 kai\ nu^n, a)delfoi/, oi)^da o(/ti kata\ a)/gnoian  
e)pra/cate, w(/sper kai\ oi( a)/rxontes u(mw^h:  
Contrast *dia agnoian* Eph. 4:18; *en agnoiai* 1 Pet. 1:14.  
Their sin was in an ignorant manner, whether or not they  
were really ignorant. (*kata agnoian* is a legal formula  
in secular Gk, and LXX Lev. 22:14 is cited to show that  
it is used thus in biblical Gk as well, but this is a  
nonce construction in the LXX, where the usual reflex of  
Heb. *b\$ggh* is *akousiws*, which we would expect Peter to  
use if he were referring to the Heb. law of sin in  
ignorance. Certainly we would not expect him to be  
versed in the Gk of the courts. More likely he is using  
the construction as a matter of tact.  
b> 18 o( de\ qeo\s a(\ prokath/ggeilen dia\ sto/matos  
pa/ntwn tw^h profhtw^h paqei^n to\n Xristo\n au)tou^  
e)plh/rwsen ou(/tws.

2) 19-24, Your repentance will lead to the coming kingdom that  
God promised.

a> command: motive p

1> text:  
a: 19 metanoh/sate ou)^n  
b: kai\ e)pistre/yate

2> motive-1: ei)s to\ e)caleifqh^nai u(mw^n ta\s  
a(marti/as,

3> motive-2: o(/pws a)\n  
Two things expected: seasons of refreshing, and times  
of restoration. (See Rackham.)  
a: e)/lqwsin kairoi\ a)nayu/cews a)po\ prosw/pou tou^  
kuri/ou  
b: comment p  
20 says that Jesus was before promised, as  
substantiated in 22-23. 21 says that the times of  
restoration were promised, as substantiated in 24.

1: text: 20 kai\ a)postei/lh| to\n  
*prokexeirisme/non u(mi^n Xristo/n, )Ihsou^n,*  
2: comment-1 <Xriston>: comment p  
A. text: 21 o(\n dei^ ou)rano\n me\n de/casqai  
a)/xri xro/nwn a)pokatasta/sews pa/ntwn  
B. comment <xronwn>: ampl p  
1. text: w(^n e)la/lhsen o( qeo\s dia\  
sto/matos tw^n a(gi/wn a)p' ai)w^nos  
au)tou^ profhtw^n.  
2. ampl: men-de para.  
a) quote p  
1) quote f: 22 Mw+sh^s me\n ei)^pen  
o(/ti  
2) quote:  
a> *Profh/thn u(mi^n a)nasth/sei*  
*ku/rios o( qeo\s u(mw^n e)k tw^n*  
*a)delfw^n u(mw^n w(s e)me/:*  
b> *au)tou^ a)kou/sesqe kata\ pa/nta*  
*o(/sa a)\n lalh/sh| pro\s*  
*u(ma^s.*  
c> 23 e)/stai de\ pa^sa yuxh\  
h(/tis e)a\n mh\ a)kou/sh| tou^  
profh/tou e)kei/nou  
e)coleqreuqh/setai e)k tou^  
laou^.

b) 24 kai\ pa/ntes de\ oi( profh^tai  
a)po\ Samouh\l kai\ tw^n kagech^s  
o(/soi e)la/lhsan kai\ kath/ggeilan  
ta\s h(me/ras tau/tas.  
2 Sam. 7:12ff?

3) 25-26, You are the first recipients of God's promised  
blessing to all nations.  
a> 25 u(meis e)ste oi( ui(oi\ tw^n profhtw^n kai\ th^s  
diaqh/khs h(^s die/qeto o( qeo\s pro\s tou\s pate/ras  
u(mw^n,  
1> quote p  
a: quote f: le/gwn pro\s )Abraa/m,  
b: quote: Kai\ e)n tw^| spe/rmati/ sou  
[e)n]euloghqh/sontai pa^sai ai( patriai\ th^s



gh^s.

c) Summary of the prophecies:

26 u(mi^n prw^ton a)nasth/sas [22, Moses] o( geo\s to\n  
pai^da au)tou^ [13, Isa. 53] a)pe/steilen au)to\n  
eu)logou^nta u(ma^s [25, Gen. 12] e)n tw^| a)postre/fein  
e(/kaston a)po\ tw^n ponhriw^n u(mw^n.

Warrant for a gospel of God's love? Not all of those who  
heard Peter would receive this blessing or be turned  
away from their sins. Take *apostrefein* as intransitive,  
with subject *hekaston*, and *en* as temporal: "to bless  
you, when every one of you turns from your sins." Rom.  
11:26 (Isa. 59:20) suggests transitive. But Ezek.  
3:18-20 uses the verb intransitively in the same  
semantic domain; also Ezek. 18:23-27 (23 speaks of  
*apostrefein* with respect to *pon8ria*.

C. The twofold reaction (hinge paragraph btw. sermon and trial) (next  
study)

D. The trial (next study)