

ACTS CHAPTER THREE

About 1 year may have passed between chapter 2 and chapter 3. There has been no persecution. Notice in 2:47 where it says that the believers had favor with all the people. Part of the peace that they enjoyed may have been because they were basically still living as Jews. They were now Christian Jews, but they were still going to the temple to pray and still living a very Jewish lifestyle. Notice in 3:1 that Peter and John were going to the temple. It was the hour of prayer and they were still doing the appropriate Jewish traditions.

Also, notice in 2:43 that many miracles were being performed by the apostles. Luke choose to tell us about this particular instance because of all the circumstances that surrounded it and because it specifically led to the first persecution. One thing that contributed to the persecution was that the men were in the temple teaching the people just as though they were rabbis. Since they were “unlearned” men, this would have been a thorn in the flesh for the Jewish leaders.

Read Acts 3:1-11

1. *Describe the situation of the man asking for alms.*

This is a pathetic picture. This man, whom we learn from chapter 4:22 is over 40 years old, has spent his entire life as a cripple. Every day he was carried by other people and left at the temple to beg. He is not expecting a miracle. When Peter and John pass by, he hopes that they will throw a few coins in his cup.

2. *Did the lame man demonstrate that he had faith to be healed?*

He had probably heard of Jesus since he lived in Jerusalem. He might have heard about the crucifixion. He had no reason to think that this Jesus would have any effect on his life. There are instances where the Bible clearly states that a person’s faith made them well. For instance, the woman who touches Jesus’ garment in Mark 5:34 and also blind Bartemaeus in Mark 10:52 came to Jesus for help. But this man is not asking for healing; he is just begging for money.

There are other places where it seems it is the Spirit working for some special demonstration as in John 9:1-11 and the faith or lack of it has nothing to do with the healing. Such is the case here. God has a plan to heal this man and to use him to validate the message that Peter is going to preach. Notice that the healing was immediate and it was complete.

3. *Describe the lame man's reaction to his healing.*

He is so excited and making such a commotion that a large crowd gathers. Remember, there would have been a large number of Jews present because it was the hour of prayer.

This is exactly why the miracle was done. God is going to bring honor to His name through this miracle. It was not about the man, his faith or his worthiness. It was for the glory of God.

Read Acts 3:12-26

4. *Peter took advantage of the gathering crowd to do what?*

It was a long sermon. In verse 1, it was 3 p.m. In chapter 4:3, it is now evening. Peter began his sermon with two questions: "Why does this surprise you?" "Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?" As the people of Israel, they should know that God does miracles. But knowing that God can do miracles and actually seeing this man healed right before their eyes was two different things. Peter also wants them to realize that he and John certainly didn't have any power to heal this man. He directs their attention to God.

5. *Of what nationality were the people? vs. 12*

See 3:26 where it mentions that God first tried to deal with the Jews. They were holding the key to the future. A pocket of them were saved, but it was not the national conversion and acceptance of the Messiah that God was watching for.

This is a fulfillment of the parable in Matt. 22:1-19. Please read the passage. In verses 1-4 of this parable we see a picture of the rejecting Jewish nation represented by the guests that were first invited but refused to come to the wedding feast.

In verses 5-7 we see that they not only refused to come, but they mistreated and killed the servants who brought the invitation. This represents the persecution that begins in Acts chapter 4. Verse 7 says the king was enraged and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. In AD 70, Jerusalem was burned and the temple was destroyed. Over a million Jews were killed during the siege.

In verses 8-10 we see the king opening up the banquet to anyone who would come. The servants go out into the street and invite strangers. The strangers who come to the feast represent the Gentiles who accept Christ's invitation. These verses represent the church age that is being ushered in throughout the book of Acts.

Finally in verses 11-14 we read about a man who slips into the wedding celebration, but he has refused to wear the garments that were provided by the king. He represents those people who think that they can enter heaven without first accepting the righteousness that God provides through His Son.

Reading the Matt. 22 parable gives us a glimpse of God's plan for the Jewish nation and their subsequent rejection of His offer. This opened the door for the church age when God

turns to work with the Gentile nations.

6. *Re-state in your own words Peter's explanation of the healing.*

Peter and John were in no way responsible. God had used them in this miracle, but only God has the power to do such a thing. If God had used them in this miracle, doesn't that prove that God is also using them to speak the words of this sermon? Peter wants them to listen to what he's about to say. God is showing His approval with the miracle.

7. *Now let's look at Peter's sermon. According in to vs. 13, Pilate had determined to do what with Jesus?*

Review Matt. 27:15-26 and Mark 15:15. What are your feelings about Pilate?

Pilate thought that Jesus was innocent and knew why He was on trial. In Mark 15:15, we see that he wanted to appease the crowd. It's difficult to feel any respect for him. Yes, Pilate had the authority to release Jesus, but of course, God was always in control. Even an ungodly man like Pilate is going to be used to fulfill scripture.

8. *Who is the murderer that Peter was talking about in vs. 14? See also Mark 15:6-15*

Barabbas had led a revolt and murdered someone in the process. The Jews were illustrating the depravity of man. They rejected and wanted to kill the author of life, but they wanted to free a man who took another's life. A depraved mind is always in direct conflict with God's desire.

9. *According to vs. 16, how complete was the healing? Why wasn't there any skepticism about the healing?*

When God does a miracle, the miracle always works and is always complete and is always immediate. God knows nothing about progressive miracles. Satan knows how to counterfeit miracles, but when God works, it is evident that it is from Him.

10. *In vs. 17, Peter says they called for the crucifixion out of their ignorance. Ignorance of what?*

God does take ignorance into account when it really is ignorance. See Acts 17:30 & Num 15:22-31. Sometimes ignorance is intentional and brought on by deliberate rebellion as in Eph. 4:17 & 18, 2 Peter 3:5. Notice also I Cor. 2:6-8 where it says that the rulers of this age wouldn't have crucified Jesus had they known what they were doing.

11. *Peter refers 5 times to Old Testament prophets. (vs. 18, 21, 22, 24, and 25) Why was this a logical approach with this audience?*

Peter was confirming what he was saying by the words of the Old Testament prophets which would seem like reliable proof to them. The Jews knew the Old Testament; it was the basis of their religion. The Holy Spirit was helping Peter with his sermon even as he preached it. The Spirit brought these scriptures to mind at just the right time. In Mark 13:11 Jesus had told them that this would happen.

The prophets did tell of a suffering Savior, as in Is. 53, but the Jews had always missed that part. Why do you think they were they so blind to this prophecy? (I Peter 1:10-12 says that even the prophets didn't know when it would occur and they wondered about it even as they were writing the Scripture.)

*Like all people, they heard what they wanted to hear. They wanted blessings, peace, power, riches, and justice and so they looked for the scriptures that told about the Messiah providing those things. Indeed, He will, but not until He returns to the earth to set up His kingdom. That's what the Jews wanted from Jesus, but there was more to His plan. He had to provide for their salvation first by offering his own life in payment. The Jews didn't want to admit that they needed salvation. They were **Jews**, they were God's **chosen** people and they were counting on that for their salvation. A suffering Messiah just wasn't what they were looking for.*

12. *Jesus will remain in heaven until the:*

Did you realize that even creation has been cursed and is waiting for the 2nd coming? See Romans 8:20-23 Creation is one of the things waiting to be restored by the removal of the curse caused by sin.

13. *Moses said Jesus would be a prophet "like unto me". (Acts 3:22 is a quote from Deut. 18:15.) Can you think of any similarities between Moses and Jesus? For additional study on this topic, consider these verses:*

Ex. 1:15-16 & Matt. 2:16-18, Ex. 3:7-10, Acts 7:23-25 & John 3:16, Ex. 2:14 & Matt. 12:13 & 14, Ex. 34:28 & Matt. 4:1 & 2, Ex. 17:6 & John 4:10-14, Ex. 16:4 & John 6:35, John 3:14, Heb. 3:16-4:11, Acts 3:22-23, Ex. 32:31-35 & I John 2:1-2, Ex. 17:1 & Heb. 7:25, Deut. 33:4-5 & Isaiah 55:4 & Heb. 2:10

14. *Read John 3:14-16 and Numbers 21:5-9 and make a few comparisons between the two passages.*

15. *How is Acts 3:26 a fulfillment of Acts 1:8?*

This is Peter's second sermon (the first one was in Acts 2). Once again he is speaking exclusively to the Jewish nation. Once again there will be many people saved, but as we will see in the next chapter, the leaders do not repent. The offer of salvation to individual Jews will continue and still continues today, but we see Israel as a nation rejecting their Messiah and the door of opportunity for them is swinging shut. Let this be a lesson to us all about the importance of leadership. If you are a leader, you have great responsibility to study the Word and to shepherd people according to its precepts.

16. *What was the result of the healing and the subsequent sermon? see Acts 4:4*

It is interesting to notice in Acts 3:26 and Acts 4:1 that the sermon was never finished. It is interrupted by the priests and the temple guard and the Sadducees. We'll study more about that in [chapter 4](#).