



The Book of Acts

Bringing in a New Dispensation

Acts 3:1-26 | The Miracle at the Temple Gate

Acts 3:1-11: An Apostolic Miracle in the Temple

Verse 1 —

Peter and John went up together into the temple. The events of Acts 3 take place in the Temple. We often overlook its significance. However, there is a difference between Peter's and John's visit to the Temple and our visit to church today. We shouldn't try to apply everything in the Book of Acts to our present time, as it will only confuse us and we will be wrong. But we should question why Peter and John went to the Temple in the first place. Jesus died, was buried, and resurrected, and some say the Church has begun, yet they are still going to the Temple to worship. Is the dispensation of the Law over? Is the Book of Acts describing what some now call The Church Age? The answer to both questions is "no".

Let's look at the background of the The Temple Mount, the place where they are headed and see if we can figure out what is going on here.

The Temple Mount has a long and ancient history.

We first read about the place that we call The Temple Mount in Genesis 22:2, where Scripture records the well-known account of God telling Abraham,

"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

According to Genesis 21:33, Abraham lived in Beersheba and it took him three days to travel to Moriah. In 2 Chronicles 3:1, it is mentioned that Moriah is in Jerusalem. Therefore, Abraham traveled north from Beersheba to Moriah. This event happened over 4,000 years ago according to Biblical chronology. God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his only son on Mount Moriah. Abraham obeyed, but just as he was about to kill Isaac, God stopped him. Instead of Isaac, God provided a ram, which Abraham offered as a burnt offering. Thus we have the first historical account of the Temple Mount.

One thousand years after Abraham, King David bought a threshing floor from Araunah, the Jebusite king for fifty shekels of silver. A threshing floor was not a shed or a building, and not covered with a roof, but rather a circular piece of ground in the open air where grain was separated from the plant. 2 Samuel 24:25 states,

"And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings..."

David's son Solomon built the First Temple near the spot where David's altar stood. First Kings 6:1 records the exact date,

"And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD."

Solomon's Temple stood on Mt. Moriah for about four hundred years until the Babylonians destroyed it in B.C. 586 (2 Kings 25:8). Those Jews in Judah and Jerusalem were taken away into captivity for 70 years when they were granted permission to go back to their land and rebuild their Temple led by the High Priest Jeshua, and Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:2). The building project consisted first, of building the altar, then a new foundation was laid and was finished in B.C. 515.

That Temple was not destroyed but underwent a massive reconstruction, beginning in B.C. 19, by Herod the Great. According to the historian Josephus, *the reconstruction raised the building to a more imposing height, among other extraordinary work (Antiquities 15:380)*. This is the Temple in our passage. This Temple would stand until A.D. 70, when it was destroyed by the Romans. Nineteen hundred and fifty-four years later, there is still no Temple in Jerusalem. The Islamic Dome of the Rock stands in its place. There is much more to be said about the Temple. For example, it replaced the Tabernacle in the wilderness. But that is a study for another day.

The Temple was unique and different from other buildings. This is the main point I want to emphasize in our passage. It was the representative dwelling place of God and the focal point of Israel's worship for centuries. It was the most holy place and Jews today long for their Temple. Jews were compelled to go there regularly for prayer *and sacrifice*. In the temple courtyards they could sing psalms as they saw their offerings presented to Yahweh on His great altar.

What were Peter and John doing when they went up to the Temple? They were following Jewish Law, going up to the Temple to pray, and although Luke didn't mention that they sacrificed, we should assume that they did. Later in Acts 21, we see that even Paul went up to the Temple and after *taking a vow and purifying himself, he entered the temple where offerings were sacrificed*. We have noted that the Book of Acts is a transition from the Law to Grace—it did not happen overnight and, it was still in the transitional process with Paul.

Notice in verse 1 that John mentioned second, Peter was the leader. Jesus Christ put him in charge and had given him the *keys of the kingdom of heaven* (Matthew 16:19). Peter and John went **up together** just as Jesus had sent them, two by two. in Mark 6:7.

The hour of prayer...the ninth hour. If time was reckoned by 12-hour day/night segments, beginning at 6 PM for night, and 6 AM for day, the **ninth hour** would be 3:00 PM. There were several times for prayer; 9 AM, 12 noon, and 3 PM. A lamb sacrifice took place daily in the temple, one lamb in the morning and one in the evening, i.e., the ninth hour (Exodus 29:39; See also 1 Kings 18:36, Ezra 9:4,5; Psalm 141:2; Daniel 9:21; Acts 10:30). Luke is writing about familiar Jewish customs and laws. Peter and John continued going to the temple because they were still practicing Judaism and following the law of Moses.

Verses 2,3—

The apostles had power from Jesus, to cast out demons, *heal all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases* (Matthew 10:1). Jesus was able to impart this power to his disciples because "All power had been given unto Him" by the Father (Matthew 28:19; John 3:35).

The word "**certain**" is possibly used to indicate that this man was well known, not just a random person. It could be translated as "a man" or "some man", but the translators chose "**certain man**". Dr. Luke emphasizes that this man had never walked and was carried and laid daily at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. It is certainly likely that Jesus had walked by this man many times while going into the temple, but never healed him. Luke may be showing us that this specific moment was reserved by God for the certain man to have an encounter with Him. **Lame from his mother's womb** tells us that he had never walked, and that he was alive in his mother's womb. Life begins at conception, and abortion is murder. Abortion, while abhorrent, is not the unpardonable sin. Women who were duped by the world's agenda and blinded by Satan's schemes are forgiven by the blood of the cross and will experience everlasting life if they put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ and received His gift of salvation. Nevertheless, we should always speak up for the unborn.

The exact location of this gate is unknown, but Luke describes it as the **gate of the temple which is called Beautiful**. That description gives us something to go on. The first-century historian, Josephus, identifies the East Gate "*of Corinthian brass and greatly excelled those that were only covered with silver and gold.*" Certainly, that must have been **Beautiful**. **Alms** means money for the poor. Alms were given as people **entered into the temple**. The man **seeing Peter and John**. Luke uses the Greek word *oida*, which could mean he recognized them, as noted above. Did he see them with Jesus? Did he know of the blind man Jesus healed (John 9)? Perhaps, but if that's the case, it seems like he wasn't expecting to be healed. Instead, his reason for speaking to them was not to be healed, but only to ask for alms.

Verse 4 —

Peter, fastening his eyes upon him. We often overlook the less fortunate in our society and those who are on the streets. In the first century, people probably made little eye contact with poor, disabled beggars either. However, here it seems that the man at the gate wasn't looking up at Peter and John either. Yet, Peter **fastened his eyes upon him with John** and told the man **look on us**.

Verse 5, 6 —

Expecting to receive something of them. The man's expectations must have been high. Why else would these men be speaking to him if not to give him money? **Peter said**, (the spokesman, as usual), **Silver and gold have I none...in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk**.

This is clearly an apostolic, Kingdom, miracle. Many faith healers today build their doctrine of miraculous healing from this passage. But this healing does not apply to the *ekklesia* today. It is just as wrong read the current day *ekklesia* and its doctrine into this passage as it was when Peter gave his speech to the Jews to *repent and be baptized for the remission (or forgiveness) of sins (Acts 2:38)*. This miracle that is about to take place at the gate Beautiful is of a different dispensation. A dispensation is *God's System of Order. The way God deals with man changes in each dispensation*. We cannot twist and bend scripture to try to make it fit our dispensation. Rather, we need to study it and then teach it unswervingly. We must read and teach God's word in the same way a carpenter who builds a house. His cuts must be straight. So, too, with God's Word, we must cut this passage straight. We have to realize this is a different dispensation from ours. We should note that the dispensation of grace that we live in has not been revealed yet (Not until the apostle Paul, Acts 13:38,39; Ephesians 3:2). We cannot build our doctrine and theology for Christian living from a prior dispensation.

Notice Peter identifies which Jesus he is speaking of, **Jesus Christ of Nazareth**.

Verse 7,8 —

Took him by the right hand. There may be no significance in Luke recording the **right hand** other than the right side was always highly regarded (maybe a sign of an agreement, or a covenant), while the left hand was sometimes considered *unprofitable, or unfortunate* (Genesis 48:13-14; Exodus 15:6,12). Or, the man was likely right-handed and reached out to receive alms with that hand, and then Peter grasped it.

Immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. There was no strength training needed. He was **immediately** healed, and the Dr. describes his **feet and ankle bones** being healed. So much so the man, **leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God**.

We fake healers try to mimic this real healing. It happens often in charismatic circles. But this was real healing. This man's feet and ankles (and his legs) would have been atrophied. He was *lame from his mother's womb*. But now, completely restored to the degree he did not even have to learn to walk. He could walk and leap. This was a truly

apostolic miracle. Luke includes **leaping** in the description since [Isaiah 35:6](#) records a kingdom promise of what it will be like in the Messianic Kingdom when Jesus Christ rules and reigns on earth.

Verse 9-11—

All the people saw...and they knew that it was he. There was no question who this man was. Every single day he was laid at the gate, day after day. He was likely a fixture there and was recognized by everyone. After standing and rejoicing, he **held Peter and John**, that is he did not let them out of his sight, and he could not let go of them, most likely in thanks and praise for what had happened to him.

They (the people) **were filled with wonder and amazement....** this would be a typical response even for us today. **Ran together unto them in the porch...called Solomon's.** A covered area where large groups of people could gather to be protected from the sun or inclement weather. Greek and Roman buildings had these kinds of *porches*. It was a long outdoor hallway supported by pillars. This may be where the Jewish assembly met *with one accord* in Acts 2:46.

Acts 3:12- | Peter Accuses the Men of Israel Killing the Messiah

Verse 12 —

And when Peter saw it, that is when he saw the people running to the scene, and that they were **greatly wondering**, he gave his second speech. Earlier, Peter explained why the men of the city were hearing the disciples speak in their own languages. Now he is explaining what has happened to the certain lame man. **Why marvel?** This miracle was not by man's **power**. Peter ensures that he and John do not get any credit. It wasn't by **our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk**. This **wondering** and **marveling** was a phenomenon seen by all who saw apostolic miracles performed. Later in Acts, Paul and Barnabas, had to fend off crowds wishing to elevate them as deity instead of God (See Acts 14:8-15).

Verse 13 —

What has happened here is that God **hath glorified his Son Jesus**. Remember him? The one you delivered up to Pontus Pilate even though Pilate **was determined to let him go** (Luke 23:20).

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Verses 14,15 —

They had three problems. 1) They **denied the Holy One and the Just One**. 2) They **desired a murderer to be granted...** 3. They **killed the Prince of life**. But, the one they killed, **God raised from the dead whereof we are witnesses**. Peter and John had seen the risen Christ (Acts 1:3,4). The people could see they weren't crackpots since they backed up their belief by healing this lame man.

Acts 3:17-26 | Peter Calls for Israel's Repentance and Preaches the Risen Christ

Verse 16 —

Faith. This is the first-time **faith** appears in the book of Acts. We have determined that the 3,000 who were added to the *number of disciples* in Acts 2:47 were not *saved* like we are saved today. Their salvation was not salvation to everlasting

life by grace through faith, rather it was a call for them to *save yourselves from this untoward generation* (Acts 2:40). There is no salvation or justification by grace through faith to be found yet. So, what has this man's faith done for him here? It has **given him this perfect soundness**. Do not read into the Scripture what is not there. It does not say; He was saved by grace through faith, since that would have been impossible at this point in time.

Verse 17—

I wot (know), translated as *seeing* (vs. 3) and *know* (vs. 16), **that through ignorance ye did it**, that is, put Jesus to death. Their **ignorance** was that they simply did not understand the crucifixion, or the resurrection. In **ignorance** they did not recognize their Messiah, which is why Jesus prayed on the cross, *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do* (Luke 23:34). The Jews did not believe in Jesus as Messiah when he walked on the earth; now the kingdom miracle just performed by Peter and John, and Peter's speech to them, is providing another opportunity for the nation of Israel to repent.

Verse 18—

God before shewed (showed) **by the mouth of the prophets...he hath so fulfilled**. The death of Christ was prophesied. How did God fulfill his prophecy of the suffering Messiah? He did it through the *ignorance* of the men of Israel.

Verses 19, 20, 21 —

Why, if they were ignorant, does Peter command them to **repent ye therefore, and be converted**? Repentance means a *change of mind*. We have revised the meaning to indicate a *change in one's behavior*. The idea Peter is conveying is, *it's time to stop being ignorant and realize what you have done*. The word **converted** does not mean "become Christians" as in the way we think of it. It is literally to *turn back*. If the nation as a whole would do this, their collective sins of killing their Messiah would be **blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord**. Notice again it does not say *repent and be converted and you will be saved by grace through faith*. We should remind ourselves this is not about *individual salvation*, that will come later, this is about the national salvation of Israel (God's elect, his chosen people, his saints)—when God **shall send Jesus Christ** who will set up his kingdom—the kingdom will be *the times of refreshing* for Israel. The **times of restitution of all things** (vs. 21) will begin with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, proceeding (as first prophesied in Genesis 3:15) until *death is swallowed up in victory* (See 1 Corinthians 15:54).

Verses 22, 23 —

Another indicator of the early part of Acts being solely directed toward the nation of Israel and the Jews is the many references to Moses. He is referred to 19 times in the book. Thirteen references are found in the first 13 chapters. An interesting side note in verse 22 is that it confirms Moses as the author of Deuteronomy (Deut. 18:15,18-19). Because of the book of Acts we discover the Deuteronomy passage is referring to Jesus Christ who *will speak...all that I shall command him*. Jesus, in the gospel of John, confirms he was speaking the very words of God the father (John 8:28). **Every soul which will not hear...shall be destroyed**; a reference to Israel as a nation rejecting the Messiah (the dispensation of grace has not come yet. See also Mark 16:16).

Verses 24, 25, 26—

Peter continues to hammer home that fact that the work of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, was prophesied over and over in the Hebrew Scriptures in **all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after...foretold these days**.

What they did not *foretell* was individual salvation *by grace through faith* and that the *Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel* (See Ephesians 3:1-6). **Ye are children of the prophets**, this is directed to the Jews and only the Jews—they are the children of the prophets...not us. At this point, the Gentiles still have no hope! (See Ephesians 2:11-13). The promise or **covenant which God made** is found in Genesis 12:3, *“all the kindreds of the earth will be blessed.”*

Unto you first... The Jews were given the opportunity to believe that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah). Jesus was *sent* only *unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel* (Matthew 15:24). When they rejected him, as he hung on the cross, he forgave them (Luke 23:34), and now they are presented with a second chance.