

MIRACLE, THEN THE MESSAGE

TEXT: ACTS 3:1-26

INTRODUCTION:

1. Acts 2:43 says, "And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles." We see one of these miraculous wonders here in Acts 3.
2. W. Graham Scroggie (*The Acts of the Apostles*) has outlined the beginning of this chapter this way:
 - (1) The Circumstances -- Peter and John went to the temple to pray "at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour, that is 3 PM" (3:1).
 - (2) The Case -- a man lame for over 40 years (cf. 4:22) met Peter and John at the gate of the temple (3:2, 3).
 - (3) The Cure -- he was wonderfully healed (3:4-7).
 - (4) The Consequences -- the man entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God (3:8-11).

I. THE MEETING

1. Peter and John were in the habit of going to the temple to pray. And the lame man was in the habit of being carried every day to the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask for alms from them that entered into the temple (3:1, 2).
2. In the Providence of God their paths crossed, and here we find the first recorded miracle in the book of Acts.
3. The apostles did not immediately stop going to the temple. The book of Acts is a transitional book.
4. Acts 2:46 says, "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple."
5. Referring to the lame man, Scroggie said, "In his helplessness he illustrates the inability of us all, in our unregenerate state, to walk with God" (*Acts*).

II. THE MIRACLE

1. The miracle was unexpected. The lame man was begging for money, not looking to be healed. Ephesians 3:20 says God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."
2. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none" (3:6). What Peter had to offer was far better than silver and gold. He was lame for 40 years but now he could walk, and leap for joy (3:6-9).

III. THE MESSAGE (3:12-26)

1. When God healed this lame man, Acts 3:10 says the people “were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.” Verse 11 says a crowd of people formed and they greatly wondered.
2. This was an excellent opportunity for Peter to preach Christ and that is what he did (3:12, 13). This is Peter’s second recorded sermon. We note three aspects of apostolic preaching:
3. First, Peter pointed out their sin. (Acts 3:14, 15, 19).
4. Secondly, Peter presented the Gospel of salvation (3:15-19).
5. Thirdly, Peter preached Christ as the sinner's only hope (3:16; 4:12).
6. Peter was very pointed in his remarks. He said to his audience (Jews assembled at the temple – 3:11) —“You delivered up Jesus, you denied Jesus, you insisted that Pontius Pilate crucify Jesus, you preferred Barabbas, a murderer, and you killed the Prince of life” (3:13-15). He was convincing them of the enormity of their sin.
7. Pontius Pilate “was determined” to let Jesus go, but the Jews insisted that Barabbas be released and that Jesus be crucified (3:13, 14). The apostle Paul refers to this in Acts 13:28-30.
8. Peter explained that they killed Jesus out of ignorance (3:17). God is merciful but once we are confronted with the truth we need to act upon it for God will hold us accountable. Peter says that now that they had heard the truth, it was time for them to repent and be converted (3:19).
9. "The times of refreshing" (3:19) and "the times of restitution of all things" (3:21) refer to the millennial kingdom. "And he shall send Jesus Christ" (3:20) refers to the second coming of Christ.
10. Peter stressed that our Lord’s death was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (3:18, cf. 3:21-24).
11. When we study the book of Acts we see over and over the proclamation of the Gospel; i.e., the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (2:23, 24, 32, 36; 4:10, 33, etc.).
12. How sad that the Gospel is rarely preached these days. Multitudes go to church starving for the bread of life and they are fed stones.
13. Sinners need to hear the Gospel proclaimed, and Christians love to hear the Gospel proclaimed.
14. *"I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song,*

'Twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.'

15. The Christian faith is built upon indisputable, historic facts.
Approximately 30 years after preaching this sermon in Jerusalem, Peter wrote his second epistle, and in that letter he wrote, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables" (II Peter 1:16).
16. All of the religions of this world are built upon cunningly devised fables, except for one and that is the Christian faith, which is built upon historical facts – Peter reminded his listeners that they had "killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:15).
17. The Lord Jesus Christ was the theme of Peter's sermon and He is the theme of all apostolic preaching. Christ is "His Son Jesus" (3:13, 26).
18. Christ is the theme of Bible prophecy (3:18, 24).
19. He is "the Holy One and the Just" (3:14). He is "the Prince of life" (3:15). These titles assert our Lord's equality with God the Father. These titles affirm His deity.
20. Notice Peter said that Christ was "glorified" (3:13). He was exalted. God glorified His only begotten Son when He raised Him from the dead. Christ was glorified when He ascended into heaven.
21. Philip P. Bliss put it this way, "Lifted up was He to die. 'It is finished,' was His cry; Now in heaven exalted high; Hallelujah! What a Saviour!"
22. True Bible preaching must magnify and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. A large letter *M* is engraved on the top of the pope's coffin. This letter *M* is in honor of Mary.
23. This is clearly unscriptural. The Bible says, "that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18).
24. If Mary herself could look down from the portals of heaven she would not be pleased with such misplaced zeal. She herself said in Luke 1:46, "My soul doth magnify the Lord."
25. She would be in total agreement with her cousin John the Baptist, who said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).
26. Peter demonstrated this same humble spirit when he said, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" (Acts 3:12b).
27. Peter used this miracle as an opportunity to point sinners to Christ. The lame man was healed in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (3:6; cf. 3:16; 4:7, 10, 12).
28. There is power in Jesus' name (3:6, 16).

29. And in His name people are not only healed, but more importantly they are gloriously saved from their sins – “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13).
30. The theme of all true Bible preaching is salvation in Christ (Acts 3:26).
31. Salvation is through the substitutionary death of Christ. We are saved by His blood – not by His miracles, not by His magnificent teachings, not by His exemplary life, not by the wonderful example He set – only by the blood of Jesus. This is the only way to have our sins “blotted out” (Acts 3:19).
32. Christ is the sinner’s only hope. Sinners must “repent...and be converted” (Acts 3:19). The words are similar. To “repent” means to “change your mind” and to “be converted” means to “turn around” (cf. Acts 26:18-20).
33. When a sinner truly repents of his wicked sins, he will turn around. There must be genuine repentance.
34. Our Lord said, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). First, the sinner must repent – and then turn to God (cf. I Thess. 1:9).

CONCLUSION:

1. God sent His Son Jesus to bless us (3:26). We do not have the time tonight to examine the consequences of Peter’s stirring message. Next week we will look at that, but I would like to mention two important results.
2. First of all, the devil’s crowd was stirred to action (4:1-3).
3. Secondly, many of those who heard were saved (4:4).
4. Which group are you in?