

Review & Introduction (Acts 2:41-47)

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

- Only some people received the message and were baptized.
- The new believers continually devoted themselves to the four things listed there.
 - The apostles' doctrine.
 - Fellowship: *koinonia*, which means sharing things.
 - The breaking of bread.
 - They continued steadfastly in prayers.
- The fear of the Lord was present and the power of the Lord was present!

44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

- The first Christians supported each other out of compassion.
- God was adding to the church daily the people who were being saved.

Chapters 1 and 2 are foundational material. As we move now into the next few chapters, we're going to see the church witnessing for Christ in Jerusalem, the first circle of witness: "...you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8b).

At the Beautiful Gate (3:1-3)

1 Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; 3 who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms.

The hour of prayer

- The believers were meeting from house to house, but also at the Temple. When people came to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, they didn't cease to be Jews!
- It wasn't for 10-12 years that Gentile salvation grew into a major dispute. But there was no division yet between Judaism and something called Christianity.
- The apostles and the other believers still prayed at the Temple, etc.
- Every day at the Temple, there was a morning and evening sacrifice, and a morning and afternoon hour of prayer.

Alms at the Beautiful Gate

- Luke's language seems to indicate this man had a congenital problem.
- In the ancient world it was common to see people begging. Giving of alms, or charity, was something highly valued by the Jewish people.
- The Early Church also prized that value. Paul would later say, "...when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do" (Galatians 2:9-10 ESV).
- Being laid at this gate was very practical – this was a high-traffic area!
- Many scholars seem to think that this particular gate was an inner gate that led from the Court of the Women into the Court of Israel.
- This was a gate that was called Beautiful because it was made of special brass that was more appealing than the gates that were of silver and gold. It was said to be 50 cubits high: 75 feet!

Rise Up And Walk (3:4-10)

4 And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." 5 So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, leaping up, stood and

walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

- Peter and John might not have been completely lacking in money, but they must have been living very simply, as Jesus had taught them.
- Peter in his prayer of command adds the title *Christ*, meaning Messiah, because he is making the point that Jesus is the Christ. That was very provocative!
- Here we see Luke’s powers of observation, using the specific term ankle bones.
- When Peter pulled him up, something happened!
- This is not only a healing, this is a creative miracle. God has to not only heal but create something that wasn’t there. When we study the Gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12, we see that there is not only something called *gifts of healings*, or cures, but also *workings of miracles*.
- God healed the man that everybody walked past every day, and that every religious Jew might have been able to identify by sight!

The Power Of Jesus’ Name (3:11-16)

11 Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon’s, greatly amazed. 12 So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this

man walk? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. 14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. 16 And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

- See the effect of what we call **power evangelism**. Evangelism, coupled with the power of the Holy Spirit in signs and wonders, is especially powerful!
- Signs and wonders do several important things: (1) they get your attention; (2) they testify of God's goodness; (3) they testify of the power in Jesus' Name.
- We should share Christ not only in word, but in the power of the Spirit. *"And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons'" (Matthew 10:7-8a).*
- Acts 1:8, the real theme of Acts, says: *"You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses..."*
- Peter immediately refuses any credit that might have come to him and John.
- Peter connects this event to the activity of God and the Messiahship of Jesus.

Peter says that His Name, through faith in His Name, is what has produced this miracle of healing. Deeds of power done in Jesus' Name show us that God has raised Jesus and invested Jesus' Name with power!

The Suffering Servant

- God has glorified His Servant, Jesus. Peter was claiming that Jesus was the Suffering Servant of the Lord, prophesied by Isaiah.
- Isaiah contains at least four of what we call “Servant Songs.” Perhaps the most famous one is found in Isaiah 53, which prophesies of Jesus’ sufferings so powerfully that many Jewish people try to avoid it. The New Testament writers often refer to Jesus as the Servant, as Peter does here.

God Sent Him First To You! (3:17-26)

17 “Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. 22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ 24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ 26 To you first, God, having raised up His

Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”

- The Bible made a distinction between sins that were done ignorantly and sins done with deliberate and knowing disdain for God.
- First, he states that the Messiah was going to have to suffer. So, he tells them to repent and convert, so that God would blot out their sins and send them spiritual refreshing.
- He says that God will send Jesus again. God prophesied that that restoration would come, and now, because of Jesus, it's on the way soon!

The Prophet Like Moses

- Moses prophesied concerning this Prophet: *“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.’ And the LORD said to me: ‘What they have spoken is good. I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him’”* (Deuteronomy 18:15-19).
- Peter says this Prophet actually came, and you killed Him! Be converted because God will require it from you if you don't listen to Him.

Sent to them!

- Peter encourages them that these things are actually **for** them. God sent the Risen Messiah to them first.
- We will see the pattern in Acts and in the letters that the Gospel goes first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.

The First Arrest (4:1-4)

1 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

- Peter and John are arrested for the first time.
- Several groups:
 - Priests, who served in the Temple.
 - The captain of the Temple, who headed the Temple police.
 - The Sadducees, a small but powerful group of priestly families who did not believe in the supernatural or the Resurrection, unlike the Pharisees.
 - The number of men who believed in Jesus had come to be around 5,000!

All quotes NKJV except as noted. New King James Version®

Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.