

JESUS IS THE SAME

BY DR. JERRY VINES

By the Book™ A Chapter by
Chapter Bible Study Series
from Jerry Vines Ministries
2295 Towne Lake Parkway
Suite 116 #249
Woodstock, GA 30189

Let's Begin

With the glow of Pentecostal fire still warming their hearts, Peter and John are now seen going up to the temple for the 3 o'clock prayer meeting, observing Jewish custom (Dan. 6:10; Ps. 55:17). In today's language, they were simply headed to church. No wonder a great blessing awaited them. One is always in for a blessing when his or her life is turned toward Christ!

Before they get there, however, the opportunity arises to preach the good news concerning Jesus. After Peter preaches, a miracle takes place that fixed in the apostles' minds the presence of Jesus. Just as He promised, He would be with them and empower them to minister. Consequently, the mold is set to teach the church that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

As we unpack this chapter, let's make use of the following outline:

- I. The Past Jesus (vv. 1-18)**
- II. The Promised Jesus (vv. 19-21)**
- III. The Present Jesus (vv. 22-26)**

I. The Past Jesus (vv. 1-18)

It's always helpful when the preacher's sermon is preceded by a miracle! That is precisely what happened with Peter and John. As they make their way to the temple, they approach a sad scene, "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 of them that entered into the temple" (v. 2). A cripple needed help. And he was not embarrassed to stop Peter and John in their tracks, begging for alms (v. 3).

We discover later that the man had a congenital birth defect for well over 40 years (4:22). We can only imagine the sadness and sorrow in his life. His parents never witnessed that thrilling first step of their little boy. They waited for it; but it never came. As a young child, the cripple could not play as normal children; instead he watched while they played.

Now, as a man, things were no different. Then, he could not play. Now, he could not work. The condition of this man is illustrative of every person outside of Christ. We live in a world crippled by sin. All around us are different kinds of crippled people. Moral, emotional, and spiritual cripples stop us and cry in various ways, "I need help!" The question we must answer is, are we willing to help them?

The fact is, Peter and John were very willing to help this man. Peter looked at him and said, "Look on us" (v. 4). Only three words, but a powerful statement. They were speaking as representatives of the Lord Jesus. Already, they were ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). Like it or not, we represent Jesus to those around us who do not know Him. You very well may be the only picture of Jesus someone will ever see.

Observe, however, that whether or not Peter and John were willing to help, the man already had huge expectations, "And he gave heed unto

Reflection Connection

Imagine the sorrow of this man. At no point in his life had he ever been able to make it by himself. He always depended on others for the simplest activities of life. Do you think that elderly people in nursing homes feel in some way like this man? Why or why not? What ministry activity could your group do to assist elderly people? Explain.

Reflection Connection

Think for a moment and consider how many people you meet every day. Write that number down. That number represents how many times you represent Jesus. Do you think you represent Him well? Why or why not?



them, expecting to receive something of them” (v. 5). While we may not think about it often enough, lost people have the right to expect something from those who represent Jesus. Jesus helped everyone with whom He came in contact. Do you think people often times come to the church looking for something but finding nothing? The greatest lesson we can learn from the cripple is an answer to this question: *Where can men go today to find the answers to the deepest longings of their heart, if not to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ?*

Peter’s answer is our answer, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (v. 6). No surer answer can be found than in Jesus Christ. Ultimately, He is the answer no matter the question.

As we’ve observed the context for Peter’s message, let’s now note the first of three wonderful views of the Lord Jesus. We’ll begin with *the past Jesus* (vv. 13-18). It is impossible to overstate the fact that Jesus actually entered human history. And it is about history that Peter first turns in his Spirit-anointed message.

*Ultimately,
He [Christ]
is the answer
no matter the
question.*

With sharp, clean-cut sentences he brings them face to face with their part in the death of Jesus. Note well Luke’s words, “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go” (v. 13). Imagine bringing up to the very Jews who called for Jesus’ death their sinful actions against the Son of God. Even more, imagine what shot through Peter’s heart as he spoke of denial.

Furthermore, Peter brought accusations against them that they killed “the Prince of Life” (v. 14). Even so, God raised Him from the dead and it is this same Jesus about whom they now witness! The resurrection was God’s answer to the cross and the cross is our answer for sin. Faith in the name of Jesus is now the way to life (v. 16). And, faith in the name of Jesus is the way—the only way—any cripple can be helped.

II. The Promised Jesus (vv. 19-21)

The Father sent Jesus the first time, and we know He will send Him again. Heaven received Him back for an indefinite period. One day the gates of heaven will swing open and the Son of God will step down from Glory. In relation to this wonderful second coming of Jesus, two “times” are mentioned. First is mentioned the times of refreshing, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord” (v. 19).

Some think this time could refer to a mighty revival prior to His second appearing. However, it probably refers to the time when men can repent, be converted, and turn to the Lord. This is the time of grace. You have the opportunity to be saved now.



Reflection Connection

What do you think of when you think of repentance? Do you think repentance inevitably brings negative images? Why or why not?

Reflection Connection

How often do you contemplate the second coming of Jesus? Is the second coming a comfort to you? Or, does thinking about the second coming of Christ solicit feelings of dread within you? Explain.

Observe the instruction Peter gives: “repent... be converted.” This represents both the negative and the positive side of salvation. One turns *from* sin, and one turns *to* God. The result is your sins will be “blotted out.” When we come to the Lord, He wipes the slate clean. How wonderful to know we can start all over!

Second, there are “the times of restitution” (v. 21). Notice Peter’s heavenly wisdom, “Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Restitution implies restoration (see Golden Greek Nugget). Restoration means something or someone is restored to a former condition. The term was used in ancient inscriptions to refer to the repairs of the temple. Also, the term was used medically, referring to a complete restoration of health. One day God is going to do for the world what was done for the crippled man—restoration!

Jesus talked about this wonderful restoration (Matt. 19:28). As we look farther in Scripture, we find a three-fold restoration process revealed. First, there will be a *spiritual* restoration (Matt. 17:11). Also, the Bible reveals a *national* restoration (Acts 1:6; Ezek. 37:1-10). Finally, a *physical* restoration awaits the entire cosmos (Rev. 21:1; Rom. 8:20-23). When Jesus comes again, the world will turn into a garden of roses under His feet!

*When we
come to the
Lord, He
wipes the slate
clean.*

III. The Present Jesus (vv. 22-26)

Not only is Jesus the Jesus of history and of prophecy, but He also is the Jesus of today. Luke says it like this, “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days” (v. 24). Jesus is the Jesus of “these days.” He is present—*now*. He can meet your present need.

In fact, there are *three ways* Jesus is evident among us. The first way we know He is here is because He is *speaking to men*, “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (vv. 22-23).

According to Peter, we are able to “hear in all things.” An often repeated platitude among churches is that the Bible is sufficient for faith and practice. What is meant by that? Simply this: everything God wants us to know about Him, about life, and about eternal life is found in that book. We do not need to worry if something He wants us to know is available to us. God still speaks to men.

We should also know that when He speaks, He speaks to our deepest needs. Whether it is our fear, our worry, our doubt, our faithlessness, it does not matter. We can be of good cheer. For as He has overcome the world, so shall we!



Reflection Connection

When you say, “God speaks to me,” what do you mean by that? Do you think what you mean is commonly what others mean? Why or why not?

Another way we know Jesus is present among us is because He is *sending men*. Listen carefully to Luke: “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed” (v. 25). God purposed to send Israel as a blessing to the people of the earth (Gen. 12:1-2). It is God’s plan to bless men through other men. When Jesus wants to touch the lives of people, He touches their lives through other people. Every believer should perform a serious examination at this point. “Can the lord use me?” is a question we must ask.

At the latter part of the 19th century, God was using D.L. Moody in a mighty way. He was only a shoe salesman, but just as God used fishermen to fish for men, God used a shoe salesman to sell the gospel. No person in the modern world has been instrumental in bringing more people to Christ than D.L. Moody. Moody once said, “The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through a man who is fully and holy consecrated to Him.” Do we possess that kind of attitude?

When Jesus wants to touch the lives of people, He touches their lives through other people.

A third way we know Jesus is present among us is because He is *saving men*, “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (v. 26). We know Jesus is here. Why? For the simple reason He still saves! Indeed saving people is His primary work in the world today.

Peter’s message brings us face to face with the whole reason for our consideration of Jesus. He wants to save you. Some people mistakenly believe they must beg Jesus to bestow grace and forgiveness of sin. Nothing is farther from the truth. The fact is, Jesus desires your salvation, your forgiveness, and your deliverance from sin. The question is, will you turn from sin and turn to Jesus?

Golden Greek Nugget

In Peter’s message, Luke records the term “restitution” (v. 21). The Greek word behind this literally means “restoration.” It was used 200 years before the birth of Jesus as a description for the repair of public roads or township statutes. The Jewish historian, Josephus, speaks of the “restoration” of the Jews from exile. Thus, Peter is proclaiming that, in the end, the entire cosmos will be repaired by the coming of the Lord. Sin will be eradicated, evil will be contained, and righteousness will reign freely forever and ever.

Wrap Up

From the teaching of the New Testament, no doubt remains: Jesus is the same today as He was yesterday, and will be tomorrow. Whether we are talking about the past Jesus, the promised Jesus, or the present Jesus, there’s no difference. He healed the crippled man and He desires to heal you. In addition, when He saves you He sends you to your neighborhood, your community, your city, your world. He does not send you empty-handed. Instead He sends you with the gospel—the good news of deliverance—to all people. Will you commit yourself to go for Him?

