

A MIRACLE AND ITS AFTERMATH
ACTS 3:1-4:31

The main theme in Acts 3-5 is that the preaching and deeds of the apostles lead to conflict with the Jewish leaders who fruitlessly try to stop them (Marshall, 92). The story that follows provides an example of the signs and wonders done at the hands of the apostles that resulted in amazement and awe in the early church (2:46). Chapters 2 and 3 are also similar in that both start with a miracle; then there is an impact and a large crowd; there is the preaching of Jesus Christ; and there are many converts (Acts 4:4).

Some aspects of the story that need to be kept in the forefront are:

(1) the miracle is solely attributed to Jesus, not the apostles. In Acts 1:1 the author Luke had said that the first account he composed (the Gospel of Luke) was about all that Jesus *began* to do and teach. The implication is that the Book of Acts is a continuation of Jesus' work and teaching. The miracles performed by the apostles were authenticating signs that they were the accredited servants of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 12:12 Paul says, "The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles." The miracles in the NT belong to a significant age in God's outworking of redemptive history and were the accredited signs that reveal these men to be the appointed servants of God.

(2) it is the message, not the miracle, that persuades people. In Acts 2:37 it says, "when they heard this (that is, when they heard 'that God has made Him both Lord and Christ' - Acts 2:36), they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'" Peter responded by saying that they needed to repent and be baptized. Then in Acts 2:41 it says, "So then, *those who had received his word* were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls." The same is said in Acts 4:4: "*many of those who had heard the message* believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand." The miracle drew their attention but the message changed their hearts.

(3) it is a scene of prophetic fulfilment. Isaiah 35:4-6, in referring to the effects of Messiah's coming says, "Say to those with anxious heart, 'Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; the recompense of God will come, But He will save you.' Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then *the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy.*" The once-lame man leaping for joy was a token of Jesus' messianic credentials and authority. When John the Baptist was in prison he began to wonder if Jesus was the coming one. He had told the Pharisees in Matthew 3:12 that Jesus "will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." But what he saw in Christ didn't match what he expected to see; John had seen a lot of love and compassion from Jesus but not any judgment. Therefore, he sent word to Jesus by his disciples. When they found Jesus they asked Him, "Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?" (Lk. 7:20). And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. Blessed is he who does not take offense at Me." (Lk. 7:22-23). Jesus

would judge the world but was doing what Isaiah had said Messiah would do. He was telling John's disciples to tell John that He was displaying messianic credentials. This lame beggar was leaping and praising, proof that God kept His promises through Christ.

I. THE HEALING OF THE LAME MAN (3:1-10)

3:1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer.

Verse 1 reaffirms that the new Christian community met in the temple (Also Acts 2:46).

going up to the temple: The temple was elevated, on the top of the hill, so it's natural to speak of going up to the temple. The OT temple is under the old dispensation of God. When the Spirit was poured out on Pentecost a new temple was made; the people of the church became the dwelling of God. Paul said to the church in Corinth in 1 Corinthians 3:16, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" The "you" is plural. He is addressing the church and says, "Collectively, you all form the temple of God." But Peter and John lived at the intersection of the ages. They were in the midst of an age that was passing away and a new age that was dawning. It would take a little time for the transition to take place.

the hour of prayer: There were two main times of prayer in the temple area, 9 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. This was the latter which was also the time of the afternoon burnt offering. In Acts 10 it is also the hour when Cornelius saw his vision (Acts 10:3, 30).

3:2 And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple.

a man who had been lame from his mother's womb: Peter meets a man who was lame from birth. The fact that he had been lame from birth demonstrates the longevity and severity of the man's condition.

"The man has never known anything else, nor can he do anything. So each day he is set in the temple precincts in the hopes of obtaining financial aid for his condition. The imperfect verb "used to set down" is an example of a habitual imperfect (Bock, 160).

the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful: A gate by this name is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible or in other literature. Therefore, its location is debated. The man was there to ask for alms from the people who were entering the temple to worship. The giving of alms was the responsibility of Jews and an expression of compassion for others; it was perceived by them to be a particularly meritorious act. Being at the gate when people were in a state of sensitivity toward God would be advantageous to those seeking help.

3:3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms.

3:4 But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!"

3:5 And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

As Peter and John entered the temple the lame man began asking the apostles for money. The imperfect tense verb stresses that he was making repeated appeals. Verse 4 says that Peter fixed his gaze upon him; that is, he demanded that the man give him his full attention; which the man did, hoping to receive something financial.

3:6 But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene-- walk!"

Peter's response is not what is expected; he flatly states that he doesn't have any money but what he does have he is more than willing to give. Through the power of Jesus of Nazareth the man could be healed.

The miracle is clearly tied to Jesus. Though Peter is doing a similar work to what Jesus had done, he makes no claims for himself; rather, he makes it clear that Jesus is the one who has the authority to do this; Peter is only the mediator for Christ.

3:7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.

3:8 With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

Peter takes the man by the hand, and he stands to his feet. The passive verb "*were strengthened*" makes it clear that it was divine power that healed him.

The healed man then walks into the temple by his own power for the first time in his life, and he does so with Peter and John. "He walks, leaps, and praises God, enjoying the gift of his newfound ability. The overload and repetitiveness of movement verbs stresses the healing's complete success. Jesus' work has changed this man's life forever. The miracle portrays what Jesus can do and the joy such work brings" (Bock, 162, 163). What would normally take months of rehabilitative therapy due to muscular atrophy happens instantaneously.

The verb for "leap" appears three times in the New Testament – twice in Acts (the parallel healing in 14:10 also uses this verb). Then in John 4:14 it was used of water leaping up to eternal life. Isaiah 35:6 LXX uses this verb regarding what will happen in the time of salvation, "then the lame shall leap like a deer" (Isa. 35:1–10; Luke 7:22; Bock, 163).

But what we must keep in mind is that though this man was exuberant over what had happened, exuberance isn't the measure of praise; it is the reality in the heart.

**3:9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God;
3:10 and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.**

Verses 9 and 10 give the reaction to the healing. As the man walks through the temple people begin to recognize him as the one who begged for alms by the Beautiful Gate. The once-lame man leaping and walking was all the evidence that was necessary to demonstrate that a miracle had taken place. The people were filled with wonder and amazement.

As was the case with tongues in Acts chapter 2, the miracle required some sort of explanation. "The healing has the potential, however, to awaken faith and to create controversy (Acts 4:16). At least, admiration for the work of the apostles exists" (Bock, 164). The verses that follow give that explanation.

"In sum, this first miracle by the apostles shows how Jesus can give new life and brings the new era to people. Jesus is now at work through His apostolic representatives. The lame man receives far more than silver and gold could give him. Now he can have a new, full life. Compassion led Peter to meet the man's needs at a spiritual and physical level and to make clear that it was the power of Jesus that enabled the man's new mobile life. Mission led Peter to go where people in need were and to respond. Earlier, Jesus had called Peter to be a "fisher of men" (Lk. 5:1–11; 24:47). God took the initiative to bring needy people to Peter. Peter took the initiative to bring Jesus to someone who needed Him. By doing so, God was working and speaking about His work through His servant Jesus, who in turn is working through His own servants (Acts 3:13–16). None of this took place in a corner. God was impressively at work. In addition, God's promise was being realized, and people were changed as a result" (Bock, 164).

II. PETER'S SECOND SERMON (3:11-26)

A. Jesus Had Healed the Man (3:11-16)

3:11 While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement

With a miraculous healing taking place, it didn't take much time for word of it to spread.

While he was clinging to Peter and John: The healed man clearly associates himself with Peter and John. He has a willingness to be associated with people who were allied with a discredited Christ. It is a sign of true faith to align oneself with those whom the world hates.

portico of Solomon: Solomon's portico was on the east side of the court of the Gentiles. "It was a famous location for commerce and discussion" (Bock, 167).

3:12 But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?"

Peter sees the gathering of the crowd as an opportunity to proclaim Jesus.

Evidently, according to verse 12, the people who saw the miracle thought that it was the apostles' own power and piety that made the man walk. Peter corrects this misunderstanding and asks them why they are so surprised. Had they been present and paying attention to the events that had transpired in the past days they would have understood what was taking place. Credit for the healing had nothing to do with anything in the apostles; it was the power of Jesus. "The power was Christ's; the hand was Peter's" (Stott, 91).

Peter will next move immediately from the miracle to the person of Jesus. The great need of these people who had just witnessed this phenomenal event wasn't to be enthralled with the miraculous, but to be brought to faith and repentance in Jesus Christ.

3:13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.

"When Peter mentions the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he invokes the God of promise and the God of the nation. When he says the God of *our* fathers, he identifies himself as a member of the nation and an object of that promise along with his audience. God is at work in a fresh way for his people. The work includes the glorification of God's servant Jesus" (Bock, 168).

God's servant is a term that is used of the Messiah within the book of Isaiah (Isa 42:1-4; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11). Normally, in the Bible God is the one who is glorified; here, Peter says that His servant Jesus is glorified. This is a clear reference to Jesus' resurrection /ascension which attests to the fact that Jesus was approved by God and is now seated in glory.

God's treatment of Jesus contrasts the treatment that He received from His own people. God glorified Him; the people denied Him and delivered Him up to Pilate to be crucified. It was their act that prevented Pilate from releasing Jesus. The idea of Jesus being given over, or giving Himself over, is reminiscent of Isaiah 53.

3:14 "But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

God sent His Son; the Jews disowned Him. It was their hostility toward Jesus that resulted in the Holy One being given up to be crucified and a murderer, named Barabbas, being released in His stead.

The title "Holy One" is used of Jesus in a number of places in the New Testament. Fundamentally,

the word means that Jesus was set apart; however, some see in it an allusion to the title for God (Lev. 11:44–45; Psalm 78:41).

Calling Jesus the Righteous One is also significant. "This term points to a title that has roots in Isaiah 53:11. The righteous one was a messianic description in Judaism. This description of Jesus looks back at the cross in Luke 23:47 when the centurion declared Jesus to be innocent/righteous. The title reappears in Acts 7:52 and 22:14. An innocent was put to death, one who was righteous before God. Peter holds the audience responsible for this before God" (Bock, 170-171).

3:15 but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.

"The charge continues in an even more tightly constructed contrast. You [all] killed the Author/Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead" (Bock, 171).

The term used for "prince" can also mean "author," so the meaning of the term is debated. Though the NASB has translated it as "prince," considering that Jesus just healed the man, and that the expression stands in contrast to a murderer who takes life, it seems more likely that Peter is saying that Jesus is the Author of life (see ESV); that is, He is the Source of life. They chose to have one who takes life spared, and the one who gives life killed.

Needless to say, to have crucified one whom God has sent is to be in a very bad position before God. The case against the Jews is building. They rejected Christ; God attested to who Jesus was by signs and wonders (Acts 2:22). They disowned the Servant of God; God glorified Him (3:13). They were given One who was Holy and Righteous; they chose an unrighteous murderer instead. They crucified the Author of Life; God raised Him from the dead.

a fact to which we are witnesses: Note how Peter claims to be a direct eyewitness of the things he speaks about (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:49).

"In sum, there are four charges in verses 13–15: (1) the Jews of Jerusalem handed Jesus over to be killed; (2) they disowned Him before Pilate; (3) they asked for a murderer instead of the Author of Life; and (4) then they caused the death of the Author of life in the sense that their actions lead the way to His death" (Bock, 171–172 quoting Stott, 92).

3:16 "And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

Verse 16 reveals who the source of the healing is. Twice in the verse the "name" of Jesus is mentioned and twice the connection of faith in Him is mentioned.

Although initially the lame man responded to Peter's invitation to be healed, his response to his healing shows that he saw it as a gift from God and was thankful for it. Having been healed by Jesus, the man gave a strong testimony of God's work through Jesus.

in His name: in Scripture, a "name" is much more than a tag that identifies someone and distinguishes him or her from other people. Rather, "names were generally descriptive of the person, of his position, of some circumstance affecting him, hope entertained concerning him, etc., so that "the name" often came to stand for the person" (ISBE under "name"). An easy to understand example of this is in Matthew 1:21: "... you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins. "Jesus" was the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "Joshua." In its long form, Joshua (Exo. 24:13) means "Yahweh is salvation" and in its short form (Neh. 7:7) it means "Yahweh saves." "For" in Matthew 1:21 tells us WHY He is to be called "Jesus" – *for* He IS God who saves us. "Jesus" was therefore descriptive of the person. His name ("Yahweh saves") described His nature (it is He who will save His people from their sins).

The apostles were acting in Jesus' name and the man was healed in Jesus' name. Doing something in someone else's name has two implications:

First, if you come in someone's name you come by the authority of that person. You are not coming in your own authority, but because someone else authorized you to take these actions. When David fought Goliath, he came to him "in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (1 Samuel 17:45). He was not coming in his own power or authority, but in that which belonged to God alone. This gave David the authority and ability to fight against the giant Goliath... and win.

Second, when you come in someone's name, you come in his stead. The person to whom you come is expected to react to you, not on the basis of who you are, but as if the person who sent you was there himself. They are to treat you as they would treat the one who authorized you to come. When David sent servants to Nabal to ask for food, "they spoke to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David" (1 Samuel 25:9). Therefore, when Nabal insulted David's servants (who came in David's name), he insulted David just as directly as if he had spoken to him to his face.

In the present passage it is in Jesus' name that the man was healed; the healing was from His person, but this also shows that the apostles were acting in His authority.

B. The Suffering of Jesus Fulfilled His Messiahship (3:17-18)

3:17 "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.

3:18 "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

In verse 17 Peter calls those to whom he is speaking "brethren." He is referring to the Jewish heritage that he shared with them; he wasn't referring to them as Christians.

Peter recognizes that the populace acted out of ignorance just as the leaders of Israel had. Even so, it wasn't as if they hadn't had the opportunity to know the truth; they had willfully rejected the truth though they didn't understand what they were doing. Peter isn't excusing their wickedness (for in verse 26 he tells them to turn from their wicked ways), but their sin was the sin of ignorance, much like the sin of Paul. In 1 Timothy 1:13 Paul says, "though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief." This is what was spoken of in Numbers 15:27-31:

27 'Also if one person sins unintentionally, then he shall offer a one year old female goat for a sin offering.

28 'The priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may be forgiven.

29 'You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them.

30 'But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people.

31 'Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt will be on him.'"

In other words, the Bible differentiates between open-eyed, willful, defiant sin and sin that is less culpable. When Jesus was on the cross He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Lk. 23:34). 1 Corinthians 2:8 says, the wisdom of God was not understood by the rulers of the world, for "if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8). Hebrews 10:26-27 says, "if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment."

At the same time, what took place had been predicted by God; it was part of His plan (vv. 17, 21, 24).

Once again, in the Book of Acts, human responsibility and divine sovereignty are placed side-by-side. Even though it was the plan of God that Jesus be crucified, and even though the people acted in ignorance, they were still responsible for their actions and they would bear the penalty for them if they did not repent. The good news was that if they responded positively to the message of salvation, they could be forgiven for their actions.

The healing of the lame man was an act of grace, not only to the man, but also to the people. It was through his healing that the people were given another opportunity to understand what they had done and repent and be saved.

C. The Delay in Establishing the Messianic Blessings Was Due to Jewish Unbelief (3:19-26)

3:19 "Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

Verse 19 introduces the application to what has been said. They are called upon to repent and turn.

repent and return: Repentance stresses the need to change direction; in this context it is to change their thinking and attitude about who Christ is. Repentance is a favorite word of Luke's to express what is necessary to have salvation and forgiveness of sins.

The idea of turning emphasizes that one needs to align himself with God. Peter had mentioned the need of faith earlier which illustrates that there are many terms used to properly describe one's need to respond to God.

so that your sins may be wiped away : If one repents and turns he will have his sins blotted out (Col. 2:14–15; Rev. 3:5; 7:16–17; 21:3–4; Exo. 32:32; ps. 109:14; Jer. 18:23; Isa. 32:15). "The term means to 'wipe away,' 'erase,' or 'obliterate.' It was used of washing papyri to remove letters written in ink. In ancient times ink did not soak into the paper but remained on the surface so removing writing was straightforward. This then became the metaphor. Thus it means an obliteration that leaves no trace. Peter offers the opportunity to have the penalty of sin removed completely" (Bock, 175). Simply stated, having one's sins blotted out is another way of describing forgiveness.

in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord: Israel's experience of repentance and forgiveness of sins will result in times of refreshing that come from God.

The "times of refreshing" could very well be referring to the rule of God over Israel that the disciples asked about in Acts 1:6-7 (Marshall, 99-100). It is the period of Messianic refreshment that begins now but will culminate in its fullness when Christ returns (v. 20). In other words, repentance and forgiveness received today results in participation in the messianic age that will reach its consummation with the return of Christ.

3:20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you,

3:21 whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

The second result of Israel's repentance and forgiveness will be the return of Christ. He is designated as "the Messiah foreordained for you," (Marshall, 100) that is, for the Jews.

"That is to say, the coming of the Messianic age or the future kingdom of God, for which the Jews long, was dependent upon their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah" (Marshall, 100).

This restoration is called the restoration of *all* things. It is anticipated that the original creation, now marred by the effects of sin, will be restored to its Edenic, pristine condition. In the New Testament this idea is spoken of in Matthew 19:28, Romans 8:18–23, and Hebrews 2:5–8, as well as Revelation 21 and

22. In the Old Testament, Isaiah 65 and 66; 34:4; 51:6, Jeremiah 15:18–19:16:15; 23:8; 24:6, Ezekiel 17:23 and Amos 9:11–12 would come to mind to Peter's audience when he spoke these words.

"In summary, three blessings are offered in verses 19–21: the forgiveness of sins, the promise of times of refreshing, and the opportunity to participate in the return of the Messiah. Jesus brings all of this over time. Stott (1990:94) calls these total forgiveness, spiritual refreshment, and universal restoration. The process starts with forgiveness and runs through Jesus's return" (Bock, 178).

3:22 "Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you.

3:23 'And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

The quote in 3:22 is from the Torah, specifically Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and Leviticus 23:29. There God had said that a great deliverer like Moses would be raised up among the people by God (Deut. 18:15).

The expectation of a Moses-like figure coming in the end time was common in Judaism. In 3:23 the proper response to this leader is given, but it is given in terms of a negative warning: "every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed."

As Marshall says, "God would raise up a prophet for them with the same ability as Moses to know and declare God's will, and the people should obey what the Prophet said; if anybody refused to obey, God would hold him responsible and cut him off from the people. The original sense of the passage may have been that God would raise up prophets on different occasions as required. . . In the present passage Peter implicitly assumes that Jesus is the prophet in question (cf. 7:37). Moses, therefore, is a prophet of the coming of Jesus, and gives his backing to the warning against disobeying Jesus" (Marshall, 101).

In a subtle way, Peter is once again describing God's approval of his servant, Jesus; Jesus, the prophet and leader, came into His position by the will of God and fulfilled the prophecy of Moses.

3:24 "And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days.

"But the same thing is also true of *all the (other) prophets*. They also looked forward to the days which had now proved to be the days of the fulfilment. The whole of the Old Testament could thus be seen to bear witness to Jesus and the setting up of the church. For all the prophets were concerned with eschatological events and not simply with what was to happen in their own time. This was the accepted understanding of the prophets in New Testament times. . ." (Marshall, 101).

Mention of Samuel in particular could very well conjure up images of David and the promise of David's son, the Messiah.

3:25 "It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.'

you who are the sons of the prophets: "These prophetic promises were made for the Jewish people. They were the 'descendants of the prophets', and therefore they could expect to see the fulfillment of the promises made to the people of Israel and to benefit from them" (Marshall, 102).

you who are the sons of . . . the covenant which God made with your fathers: Not only does the Old Testament speak of Christ in terms of eschatological and messianic promise, but there is also God's covenant commitment stretching all the way back to Genesis (Bock, 180). To Abraham God said, "in your seed (in Abraham's descendants) all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED: Those who heard Peter speak were children of the covenant that God made to Abraham. But the promise made to Abraham extended beyond his physical descendants. God had told Abraham that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. God's promises were made to and for Israel first of all (Acts 13:46; Romans 1:16–17; 2:8–10). The people of Israel are the natural recipients of the blessing to Abraham, but the blessings weren't just for them; they were also for all the nations of the earth.

"The appeal to the old promises is important. It shows that although this community is a seemingly new entity, it is rooted in old promises. In the ancient world, for religion to be old was a virtue because it meant that the religion had the benefit of experience. Peter's appeal to the past is a form of legitimization of the new community" (Bock, 181).

3:26 "For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways."

In verse 26 Peter specifies that the blessing of the seed of Abraham is for them. God raised Jesus first for the Jews. He also sent Christ to bless the nation by turning the people from their sins.

Not only are they to receive the material blessings promised to Abraham, they are heirs of the spiritual blessings as well. They can receive the Abrahamic blessing by turning from their wickedness. The Servant of God has come to turn them from their sins. To turn from wickedness is to turn to God; it is to turn to the Holy One; it is to have one's sins blotted out and receive complete and perfect forgiveness.

"In sum, Acts 3 preaches Jesus from the Torah. Here He is the promised seed-servant-prophet-leader like Moses who is the Author of life. God both knew He would suffer and exalted Him into heaven at God's side until the time of His return, when the rest of God's promise will be completed. To receive the right to participate in this divine refreshment and the realization of all things, one must repent and turn so that sin might be blotted out. But to reject this promise is to guarantee that one will not be among God's people. The opportunity to share in the blessing God gave to Abraham is available only for those

who turn to the One whom God sent to them. Blessing is a gift from God, but it requires conscious reception of itself. Everything is at stake, namely, covenant relationship with God and the deliverance it brings. Salvation is not by human right or by ethnic origin; it comes through response to the promise of God. This salvation was designed for Peter's listeners, and so they should be encouraged to respond. . . . When it comes to salvation, Jesus is not an option but a necessity. His career is rooted in promises of old. Salvation comes uniquely through him" (Bock, 182).