

## 21. The Book of Acts—3:11-15

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(9/30/26)

In our study in the Book of Acts, we are currently in chapter 3.

The chapter is divided into 2 main parts: God using Peter to heal a man who was lame all of his life (born crippled); Peter's sermon that God used to save five-thousand men plus women and young people.

### **Acts 3:1–10 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour*.  
<sup>2</sup> 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;  
<sup>3</sup> who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. <sup>4</sup> And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." <sup>5</sup> So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup> 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." <sup>7</sup> And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. <sup>8</sup> So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. <sup>9</sup> And all the people saw him walking and praising God. <sup>10</sup> 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.

As we have said, there are several lessons that come out of this incident about the men that God uses:

1. They're men of prayer.
2. They're men of faith.
3. They're men who are not looking for any glory for themselves.

**Acts 3:11–12 (NKJV)**

**<sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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?"**

One of the pitfalls of ministry is that whenever God is working in a special way through a person, people are prone to put them on a pedestal and begin to exalt the instrument, more than they do the God Who used the instrument. (Comment)

Now listen, we can't stop people from putting us on a pedestal as we serve the Lord—the real danger is when we *accept* the praise and begin to think we *deserve* it!

Be careful, that you don't get lifted up with pride when God uses you and begin to take credit for the work God is doing through you—remember pride goes before a fall! (Comment)

So, Peter wisely and immediately took the spotlight off himself and pointed it at Jesus when the crowd of people there in the Temple tried to exalt Peter for the miracle God had done.

And how Peter did it was to preach the Word!

Which brings up the fourth thing concerning the men that God uses—

**1. They're men of prayer.**

**2. They're men of faith.**

**3. They're men who are not looking for any glory for themselves.**

**4. They are men of the Word**

To take the focus off of himself and John, and put it on Jesus, Peter began to preach a sermon that was nothing more than a combination of various O.T. Scriptures relating to the Messiah.

In fact, in verses 11-26 Peter delivers his second sermon containing 3 parts:

- I. The Introduction**
- II. The Theme**
- III. The Conclusion**

## **I. The Introduction—v.11-12**

### **Acts 3:11–12 (NKJV)**

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Many good introductions contain a story or an illustration or something that grabs people's attention.

In this case, the lame man who had been healed by Peter and was standing there holding on to Peter and John became a very powerful '*attention grabber*' and introduction for Peter's message.

There is nothing more powerful to grab a person's attention and prepare their heart to hear about Jesus than the miracle of those who were *lame* in life through drugs, alcohol, pornography etc. and were healed and are now standing in life by the power of God—in the name of Jesus!

A transformed life is the best introduction to the gospel there is!

## **II. The Theme—v.13-18**

### **Acts 3:13–15 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a

**murderer to be granted to you,<sup>15</sup> and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.**

The theme of Peter's sermon is Jesus Christ and contains of 6 different titles for Him.

### **A. Servant—v.13**

The word **Servant** in the Greek means, "*an ambassador*" and refers to a person sent to one country to represent the king of another country.

This title ties Jesus to Isa. 42:1; 52:13; and chap. 53 which are all Messianic Scriptures.

Jesus was a suffering Servant

### **B. Jesus—v.13**

**"Jesus"** isn't a title it's His name—a name that means, "*Jehovah is salvation.*"

People today want to separate Jesus from His own name—"*God the Savior.*"

There are many concepts that people hold to today as to who Jesus really is and what was His purpose and passion in life when He walked on the earth.

#### **1. Jesus, the social reformer**

This was the concept held by those in the *Jesus Seminar*.

The *Jesus Seminar* was founded in 1985 and disbanded in 2006.

It was made up of 40-50 liberal scholars that met twice a year to sit in judgment on Jesus' words, voting on what they believe He did and did not actually say.

They determined that He only said about 18% of the words attributed to Him in the Gospels.

One of the members of the Jesus Seminar was John Dominic Crossan, who wrote the book, *"Who is Jesus?"*

Crossan rejected the biblical Jesus in favor of one that he saw as a social, political activist—a Jesus that went around speaking out against racism, sexism, social injustice and the systemic abuse of power in the Roman Empire.

This Jesus preached *social reform*, not repentance from sin.

## **2. Jesus, the investment banker**

Next on the list we have a Jesus that is presented by many of the televangelists—one that we'll call *Jesus, the investment banker*.

This is a Jesus that has come to make us all rich—even though He Himself had nowhere to lay His head and when He was crucified all He owned were the clothes on His back.

Yet these people contend that it's His desire that Christians all drive BMW's, wear designer clothes, live in palatial mansions, and take extravagant vacations.

All we have to do is invest our money with "*Jesus*" (which means giving it to the T.V. evangelist's ministry) and we will receive a tremendous return on our investment—a hundred-fold or more.

This Jesus isn't the Jesus who said, "*Don't lay up for yourselves treasures on the earth...*" and "*Deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Me.*"

No, this Jesus basically encourages greed and materialism—a Jesus that didn't come to save us from *perdition* but from poverty.

### 3. Jesus, the environmentalist

Third on the list is *Jesus, the environmentalist*.

Several years ago, the Wall Street Journal ran an article entitled, "*Religious Leaders Target SUVs.*"

*"Top executives of the world's two biggest auto makers plan to meet this week with religious leaders who are trying to make the fuel economy of U.S. vehicles a religious as well as environmental issue. Among those leaders is a Christian group plans to roll out a TV ad campaign arguing that gas-guzzlers are contrary to the moral teachings in the Bible about protecting people and the planet earth. The tagline for the ads is "What Would Jesus Drive." (A play on the popular Christian motto: "What Would Jesus Do" or WWJD)*

I think as Christians we should take care of God's creation—it's just that some people have turned the creation into a god and Jesus into an environmentalist.

But this trivializes who Jesus really is and what He is most passionate about—as He Himself said, "*I have come to seek and to save (not the planet but) those that are lost.*"

### 4. Jesus, the psychologist

The fourth misconception of Jesus on our list is one we'll call *Jesus, the psychologist*.

Today the Church has become glorified group therapy, and Jesus has been turned into a psychologist whose sole purpose for existing is to make people happy.

But contrary to what many believe today, the goal of Christianity is to bring glory to God—not a better quality of life for ourselves.

To accomplish this God is at work in our lives, not to make us happy, but to make us holy.

Because of this He often allows trials and tribulations to come our way to grow and mature us—because God is far more concerned about our *eternal* rewards than He is about our *temporal* comforts.

**So, who's right?** Will the real Jesus please stand up?!

Some would say it isn't important who He really is as long as we esteem Jesus in our hearts no matter who we perceive Him to be.

Apparently, Jesus didn't feel that way—He wasn't one to allow ambivalence in His disciples when it came to them understanding who He is—

**Matthew 16:13-16 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" <sup>14</sup> So they said, "Some *say* John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

[Comment]

**A. Servant—v.13**

**B. Jesus—v.13**

**C. The Holy One—v.14**

**Holy** (Hagios) means to be separated to God. Jesus is not only holy by nature but He was also separated to God to do His will.

**“Holy One”** is also a Messianic title—in Psalm 16:10 (a Messianic passage quoted by Peter in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost) reads, *“For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption (resurrection).”*

## D. The Just—v.14

The **Just** is a legal term that means ‘*righteous and innocent*’ of any crime.

Faced with the choice between Jesus, their innocent Messiah, and the guilty murderer Barabbas, they chose the latter—even though Peter reminds them that Pilate was determined to let Him go.

“Barabbas” means “*son of father*,” an interesting earthly contrast to Jesus, who was the “*Son of the Father*” in heaven.

Even pagans, such as Pilate’s wife (Matt. 27:19) and a Roman centurion (Luke 23:47), recognized what Israel could not—that Jesus was innocent and righteous and that He was a just Man.

## E. The Prince of Life—v.15

**Prince** translates *archēgos* and can be translated ‘ruler’ (Michael the Arch (‘ruling’) Angel)—but also could mean the ‘*source*’ or ‘*beginning cause*’ of something—

### Revelation 3:14 (NKJV)

“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning [source] of the creation of God...[John 1:3]

- Hebrews 2:10 uses it in the phrase “*author of salvation*.”
- In Hebrews 12:2 it describes Jesus as the “*author of faith*.”
- Here Peter uses it to describe Jesus as the *originator* or source of life—which is a claim of divinity for Jesus.
- In the prologue to his gospel (the introduction), John writes, “*In Him was life*...” (John 1:4).

- In his first epistle, he adds, “*God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son*” (1 John 5:11).
- Speaking of Jesus later in that chapter John wrote “*This is the true God and eternal life*” (1 John 5:20).
- Jesus also claimed to be the source of life in John 5:26 when He said, “*Just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself.*”
- He declared to Martha, “*I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies.*” (John 11:25)
- In John 14:6 He made the exclusive claim when He said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*”

Peter doesn’t end his message with the death of the “**Prince of life**” (because that’s not where the story ends!)—he adds the all-important climax of the story—the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Jesus, the Prince of life, was the one whom God raised from the dead—a fact to which Peter and the apostles were witnesses.

Peter’s claim is powerful evidence for the resurrection—in that if Jesus had not risen from the dead, that claim would have been easy to disprove.

*“Had the Jewish leaders been able to produce Jesus’ dead body, the church would have been stillborn—but they could not and did not, the apostles’ testimony was undeniable.”*

**Acts 3:15 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> [you]...killed the **Prince of life**, whom God raised from the dead, of which **we are witnesses.**

When Jesus commanded His disciples to go into the world preaching the gospel—His resurrection from the dead was to be the central truth of their good news!

He knew that they would be greatly persecuted, and many would face violent deaths—and they needed a message to give unbelievers based on their eyewitness testimony of seeing the risen Christ Jesus—hearsay wouldn’t do.

Our whole system of jurisprudence is built on eyewitness testimony—even as God established in *His* law:

*“You must not convict anyone of a crime on the testimony of only one [eye] witness. The facts of the case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” (Deut.19:15)*

And yet, the resurrection of Jesus Christ had hundreds of eyewitnesses who testified they had seen the risen Christ—even as Paul declared:

**1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. [*Most of them the first night of the resurrection in the upper room, and then Thomas a week later.*] <sup>8</sup> Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time [*Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus in Acts 9*].

Again, our whole system of jurisprudence is built on eyewitness testimony which is accepted in any court of law as proof of guilt or innocence—which Luke alludes to in Acts 1:3, when he said:

**Acts 1:3 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs...

Luke is saying that the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus were a powerful testimony to the validity of His bodily resurrection.

The Greek word translated “**proofs**” occurs only here in the New Testament and speaks of *empirical* evidence—in other words, the Resurrection was proven by touch, sight, and feel (Luke 24:39-40; 1 John 1:1).

It reminds me of the story of Dr. Simon Greenleaf—

Dr. Simon Greenleaf, the famous 19<sup>th</sup> century professor of law at Harvard University, was a very verbal skeptic of Christianity. He had written a set of books called *“The Laws of Legal Evidence”* and was challenged by his students to apply those laws to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He accepted the challenge, and in the process he became a Christian. His conclusion was *“The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the best established events of history, according to the laws of legal evidence administered in the courts of justice.”*

He went on to say, *“All that Christianity asks of men...is that they would treat its evidences as they treat the evidence of other things...”* (as in a human court of law)

As I just said, eyewitness testimony is what our whole system of jurisprudence is built upon.

If two or three people witness you committing a crime and testify to it in court—you’re probably going to be convicted—how about 500 witnesses!?

That’s how many saw the risen Christ at one time after His resurrection up in the Galilee!

And not only that they went around testifying to everyone that Jesus was alive inviting *their* executions at the hands of the Roman Government!

Skeptics and flat-out atheists claim—*“They lied!”*

Listen, nobody is willing to die for a lie!

If the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus and gone around telling everyone He had risen—when Rome started killing them for their testimony surely one of them would have *‘cracked and spilled the beans’* to save his skin.

Satan made the observation in the book of Job, *“Skin for skin all a man has will he give for his life”*. (Elaborate)