

22. The Book of Acts—3:15-19

(10/7/26)

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

The chapter is divided into 2 main parts:

1. God using Peter to heal a man who had been lame from his mother's womb and was now over 40 years of age;
2. Peter's sermon that God used to save five-thousand men plus women and young people.

Acts 3:11–12 (NKJV)

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?"

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.

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.

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—v.11-12

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 himself a very powerful '*attention grabber*' and introduction for Peter's message.

II. The Theme—v.13-18

Acts 3:13–15 (NKJV)

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.

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

A. Servant—v.13

B. Jesus (Savior God)—v.13

C. The Holy One—v.14

“**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.

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)

¹⁴ “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning [*archegos*- ‘source’] of the creation of God...

John 1:1–3 (NKJV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

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.

Acts 3:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ [you]...**killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are [eye] 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.

You must understand that the reason those early Christians were willing to die for their faith was because—they had seen the risen Christ or had known someone who had seen Him (over 500 disciples saw the risen Christ at one time up in the Galilee) !

And the fact that they were willing to die for what they believed (and the way they died—singing praises to God!)—was used by God to bring many unbelievers to Christ in the first century!

Acts 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong [healed him], whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Notice, that Peter not only attributes this man's healing to faith, but quickly adds—**“Yes, the faith which comes through Him (Jesus) has healed this man in the presence of you all.”**

You see, if Peter had just said this man had been healed through **“faith”**—he knew that those present would be prone to exalt Peter as a man of great faith.

Which could have caused the crowd to say of Peter, *“Aren't you wonderful? What a great man of faith. I wish I had the faith that you have!”*

And Peter didn't want them exalting him for *his* faith—so he quickly adds, **“It's the faith that comes through Jesus that has healed this man in the presence of you all!”**

This was a gift of faith given to Peter by the Holy Spirit for that moment which God then used to heal this crippled man.

Again, Peter is being very careful here to make sure he doesn't get any glory for what God has done through him.

Acts 3:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ “Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers.

Verse 17 marks a transition in Peter's sermon—he first convicted them of rejecting and executing their Messiah.

But Peter didn't leave the people without hope—in fact, he almost seemed to defend them by pointing out that they had acted in ignorance (Acts 3:17) while at the same time they had fulfilled the Word of God (Acts 3:18).

In the Old Testament Law, there is a difference between *deliberate* (willful) sins and sins of ignorance.

The person who sinned presumptuously was a rebel against God and was guilty of great sin—he or she was to be “*cut off*” from their people (Num. 15:30–31), which could mean excommunication or more probably, execution.

But there was forgiveness for those who sinned *ignorantly* (see Lev. 4–5; Num. 15:22–31).

Once again, the theme of Peter’s sermon is Jesus Christ and contains of 6 different names or titles for Him.

A. Servant—v.13

B. Jesus (Savior God)—v.13

C. The Holy One—v.14

D. The Just—v.14

E. The Prince of Life—v.15

F. The Christ—v.18

Acts 3:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

Peter reassures his hearers that their rejection and execution of the Messiah had not thwarted God’s plan.

He tells them that their rejection of the Messiah and even pressuring Pilate to have Him crucified, while extremely wicked and vile—did not at all thwart the plan of God or disqualify Israel from the covenant God made with them under Abraham (which was an unconditional covenant—Gen. 15)!

Peter points them back to their own Scriptures and how that God had announced beforehand by the mouth of many of the prophets that His Christ would suffer, be rejected, and killed—and those prophecies had now been fulfilled.

The Old Testament prophets foresaw Christ's death in such passages as Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and Zechariah 12:10.

In Daniel 9:26, we are told that when Messiah comes the first time He would eventually be “*cut off*.”

The Hebrew word means ‘*executed for a capital offense*’—“**but not for Himself**” Gabriel said.

In other words, He would be executed for a capital crime, but He would be innocent of the charges—He would be executed but not for His guilt (He was absolutely innocent) but for our guilt:

Isaiah 53:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵ But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Even the nation's rejection of Messiah had been predicted (Isa. 53:3).

Isaiah 53:3 (NKJV)

³ He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

God used their evil intentions to fulfill His own purposes—as Peter stated in his first sermon:

Acts 2:23 (NKJV)

²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

The question is—can God use (allow) evil to bring about ultimate good? Absolutely!

Someone has said,

“The only way to get to the Promised Land was through the wilderness. The only way to form diamonds is to put pressure on coal. The only way to produce second order good is to allow first order evil.

If you never allow evil you’ll never be able to defeat it. If you don’t allow sin you’ll never have the higher good of forgiveness. If you don’t allow tribulation you’ll never produce patience. God permits evil, but He does not promote evil.”

God allows pain to bring about the greater good.

Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.

The greatest example of this was the crucifixion of Jesus and how the *worst* thing that has happened in the history of the world (man killing his own Savior God) became the *greatest* thing that ever happened in the history of the world (the resurrection of Jesus, the conquering of death and the offer of eternal life to all who would believe!)

I. The Introduction

II. The Theme

III. The Conclusion—v.19-26

The conclusion of a sermon is simply tying all your points together and applying them to your audience.

Having announced the crime, presented the evidence, and explained the nature of their sin—Peter then offered them—a pardon! (Acts 3:19–26)

Someone has said,

“What a strange thing for the prosecuting attorney to become the defense attorney—and then the pardoning judge!”

Peter's burden was to encourage his people to trust Christ and experience His gracious salvation.

Acts 3:19 (NKJV)

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,

“Repent and be converted”

The message of **repentance** was not new to the Jews, for John the Baptist had preached it (Matt. 3:2) and so had Jesus (Matt. 4:17) and Peter on Pentecost called the Jews to repent. (Acts 2:38)

The Greek word *metanoia* literally means “*to have a change of mind*”—a change of mind that leads to a change of direction.

No one can be saved who isn't willing and wanting to have the course of their life changed from rebellion against God to obedience toward God. (Elaborate)

Jesus said, “*I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish... I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.*” (Luke 13:3, 5)

So, first Peter tells them they must **repent**, and that it would then lead to their **conversion**—**“Repent therefore and be converted” (v.19)**

Repentance precedes **conversion**—**repentance** means to ‘*turn from sin*’ and exercise saving faith in Jesus Christ and **conversion** means *salvation*.

The person who sincerely repents will have little problem putting his or her faith in the Savior—in fact, in one sense they're ‘*flipsides*’ of the same coin! (Explain)

The biblical message is “*Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Acts 20:21), and the two go together.

Unless we are *willing* to turn from our sins, we cannot put saving faith in Jesus Christ.

It is unfortunate that some preachers have so ignored the doctrine of repentance that their “*converts*” lack a true sense of conviction of sin.

Balanced evangelism presents to the sinner both *repentance* and *faith*.

“...that your sins may be blotted out,”—which means “*totally erased, as if it was never there.*”

“...times of refreshing... from the presence of the Lord”—is a reference to Christ’s Kingdom on earth.

It must be remembered that this message is addressed to the **“Men of Israel” (v. 12).**

And Peter is talking about Israel’s national repentance which must precede national restoration and blessing—i.e., the establishment of the Kingdom.

What does Israel need to repent for? What does Israel have to change their mind about?

They have to change their mind about Matthew 12:24—

Matthew 12:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Now when the Pharisees heard *it* they said, “This *fellow* does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.” [Give the context]

Dr. Andy Woods explains—

“They could not explain the miracle away because it was right in front of their face. So they just said, well, you obviously did that through Satan’s power. So, the moment they did that,

everything changes for Israel. The offer of the kingdom, which they could have had, is now taken off the table. And they're moving off into the divine discipline of A.D. 70 when the Romans would come and destroy the city and the sanctuary (Temple) about 40 years later.

*So, when Peter says here in Acts 3:19, after describing Israel's guilt in verses 13 through 18, then he says, **"therefore"** meaning here's how the nation can make itself right in the distant future. What do you have to do? You have to repent (change your mind) and return. Repent of what? Repent of that statement right here in Matthew 12:24. And it's not until the nation changes its mind about that national sin of rejecting their Messiah by attributing His supernatural works (which confirmed His Messiahship) to Satan and cry out for Him to come save them from the Antichrist's armies that Jesus will return, save them and set up the Kingdom."*

Arnold Fruchtenbaum says concerning Peter's sermon in Acts 3 that—

"It is not a re-offer of the Messianic kingdom. The Jewish people had rejected the kingdom in Matthew 12, and from then on, they were under the judgment of the unpardonable sin (the judgment of A.D. 70). That judgment was irrevocable—what Israel did (in Matt. 12:24) could not be reversed nationally speaking (individual Jews can still be saved but the nation was going to be set aside in the judgment). They had committed the unpardonable sin and there was no possibility for change. The prerequisite for the Second Coming and the establishing of Israel's future earthly Kingdom would depend upon Israel's national repentance and salvation."

And while I agree with that interpretation of the 'unpardonable sin' primarily applying to Israel and their rejection of her Messiah—I'm not willing to say that it doesn't apply to unbelievers who refuse to accept Jesus as their Savior at all either. (Explain)