

# *the book of acts* WEEK FOUR

ACTS 3 · INTRODUCTION

## Preliminary Observations

### Structure

Acts 3 & 4 follows Luke's intentional 4-part pattern:  
(1) A miracle · (2) Peter's sermon · (3) Response · (4) Ramification

### The Lame Man

A medically impossible, congenital (irreversible) condition. Luke notes this specifically as both a physician and a historian.

### The Healing

Instantaneous and complete — the two marks of apostolic healing. This is different in nature from the 'James 5' healing.

### Signs & Wonders

Luke chose this as an example of Acts 2:43. Nine of the sixteen NT occurrences of 'signs and wonders' appear in Acts.

## Context: After the Ascension

- After Jesus' Ascension, the disciples continued to visit the temple regularly.
- The first Christian miracle after Pentecost took place on the way to prayer (Acts 3:1–10).
- The hour was 3 PM — the time of the evening prayer sacrifice.
- The precise location: the Gate Beautiful of the Temple (Acts 3:2, 10).

*"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."*

*Acts 3:2 (NASB)*

## The Beautiful Gate

*Peter & John · Hour of Prayer · A Lame Man*

### The Gate Called Beautiful

The Nicanor Gate — also called the Corinthian Gate, leading from the court of Gentiles into the court of women. Josephus noted it was made of Corinthian bronze and far exceeded the other nine gates plated with silver and gold.

Giving alms was widely practiced and honored in Judaism (Sir. 3:30; Deut. 24:10–22).

### Three Examples to Follow

1. Peter's compassion and love for the lame man (vv. 1–4)
2. Peter & John's secret of power and confidence: the Name of Jesus (vv. 5–7)
3. The healed beggar's robust joy and contagious praise (vv. 8–10)

## Identifying the Beautiful Gate

### THE SHUSHAN GATE

*Traditional View (5th c. onward)*

Located on the east side of the Outer Court, opposite the Mount of Olives. Christian tradition long favored this identification, but it was a poor spot for a beggar — most worshipers entered from the west side of the city.

Unlikely

### THE NICANOR GATE

*Majority Scholarly View*

Separated the Court of Gentiles from the Court of Women. Massive (50 cubits high, 40 cubits wide), bronze doors, described as 'beautiful as gold.' High traffic. Funded by an Alexandrian Jew named Nicanor. Most scholars favor this identification.

Most Probable

### UNKNOWN

*The Honest Answer*

The name 'Beautiful Gate' appears nowhere outside Acts (3:2, 10). Neither Josephus nor the Mishnah (tractate Middot) uses this name. No ancient source settles the question definitively.

Scholarly Caution

## Why This Gate Was Beautiful

### SIZE

50 cubits high × 40 cubits wide — towering above the other gates

### MATERIAL

Bronze (Corinthian bronze), described as 'beautiful as gold' (t. Yoma 2.4)

### UNIQUENESS

Nine of ten temple gates were overlaid in gold and silver. This gate stood apart — its bronze exceeded them in value (Josephus, War 5.201)

### LOCATION

Main eastern entrance to the Court of Gentiles — the largest, busiest court in the Temple complex

### LEGEND

The Mishnah records a miracle associated with this gate (Tosephta Sotah 2:4)

### JOSEPHUS WRITES:

*"Nine [gates] were completely overlaid with gold and silver, as were also their door-posts; but one, that outside the sanctuary, was of Corinthian bronze, and far exceeded in value those plated with silver and set in gold."*

— War 5.201

*Its beauty made it immediately recognizable — a fitting backdrop for a miracle that would draw the attention of the whole city.*

## A Life of Dependence at the Temple Gate

### HIS CONDITION

- Lame from birth — congenital condition
- Carried to the gate daily by others
- Dependent on the generosity of worshipers
- Could not enter the temple beyond the Court of Gentiles (Lev. 21:17–20)
- Had likely been at this spot for 40 years (Acts 4:22)

### THE CONTRAST

The man sat at the most beautiful gate in one of the most magnificent buildings in the world — yet his own life was considered anything but beautiful.

The beauty of the gate framed the brokenness of his condition. He was close to God's house but barred from entering it fully.

"His was not considered a beautiful life. His nasty condition is incongruous with his opulent location."

## Peter's Compassion

### They Fixed Their Gaze

Peter & John used *atenizō* — 'look intently at.' 12 of its 14 NT occurrences are in Luke-Acts. They gave the beggar their full attention, noticeably similar to Jesus' own pattern of life.

### 'Look at Us'

They asked him to look at them — to acknowledge his personhood and evoke his faith. This was not a passive act of pity but an intentional engagement with a person the world had overlooked.

### Application

Likewise, we need to show compassion to the marginalized. The church must truly see people — not walk past them on the way to worship.

## More Than He Bargained For

### WHAT HE ASKED FOR

Silver and gold. He asked for alms — the only thing he knew to ask for, the only thing anyone had ever given him for forty years. It left him as he was: helpless, hopeless, carried by others.

### WHAT HE RECEIVED

"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." (Acts 3:6)

Complete healing. He entered the temple walking, leaping, and praising God (Acts 3:8) — the place he had never been able to enter.

*"Silver and gold, he had been receiving for forty years; but it left him as he was — a helpless, hopeless cripple, carried by others, begging for alms to hold body and soul together. Silver and gold, anybody could give him; but it remained for Peter and John to provide him with something better."*

— Charles W. Koller

*Perhaps the name 'Beautiful' was always pointing to what would one day happen at this gate.*

ACTS 3:5-7

## The Name of Jesus

*Their Utter Inadequacy in Money · Their Amazing Adequacy in Jesus*

### Silver and Gold I Do Not Have

'...but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!' (3:6)

The contrast ties into the theme of 'the poor' as those wholly dependent on God — not wealth, but the Name.

Application: Live with vitality and confidence in Jesus as our most treasured possession.

### 'The Name' — A Unifying Theme

In the ancient world, 'the name' represents the person and their authority. The disciples live in relationship with Jesus and are known by His name.

This theme runs through Acts 3–5:  
Acts 3:6, 16 · 4:10, 18, 30 · 5:40

*Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
then shall the lame man leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.*

**Isaiah 35:5–6**

ACTS 3:8–10

## The Healed Beggar's Praise

Walking · Leaping · Praising God

This was true worship — in spirit and truth — which God desires. Our salvation is also a miracle and a reason for the same kind of worship.

His Joy Was Robust, His Praise Was Contagious

The people were filled with wonder and amazement. Application: Rejoice and praise in God-centered worship daily — with full and deliberate expression of gratitude.

George H. Morrison (1900)

'Do not object to preliminary leaping... Emotion will be translated by the years into the strength of action and of character.'

Acts 3:8–10

*As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;  
as poor, yet making many rich;  
as having nothing, yet possessing everything.*

**2 Corinthians 6:10**

One thing let everyone of us be sure of Jesus will do more for us than we expect, and none knew that better than the lame man here when he begged for a little coin and got a cure. Then, lastly, it is quite natural to leap at first. The man went walking and leaping praising God. It takes a little time to find one's feet after a great experience like that. Give the man ten or twenty years of city life, and he will walk as sedately as any other citizen. *First* they shall mount up with wings as eagles, says the prophet; *then* they shall run (as children always do); and *then*, when time and experience have wrought their sobering work, they shall walk and (thank God) shall not faint. Do not object to preliminary leaping. Do not be hard on a little wild enthusiasm in the man who has really been healed by Christ. Time will convert that spiritual electricity into a driving and illuminating power. Emotion will be translated by the years into the strength of action and of character

- George H. Morrison (1900)

# Peter's Sermon at Solomon's Colonnade

## 1 - Who Jesus Is (vv. 12-16)

God glorified His servant Jesus — whom you killed, whom God raised from the dead. The miracle was done by faith in His name. Jesus is the Author of Life.

## 2 - What the People Must Do (vv. 17-23)

Repent and follow Jesus, the Prophet-like-Moses (Deut. 18:15). Repentance brings 'times of refreshing' and 'restoration of all things.' People must listen to Him or be cut off.

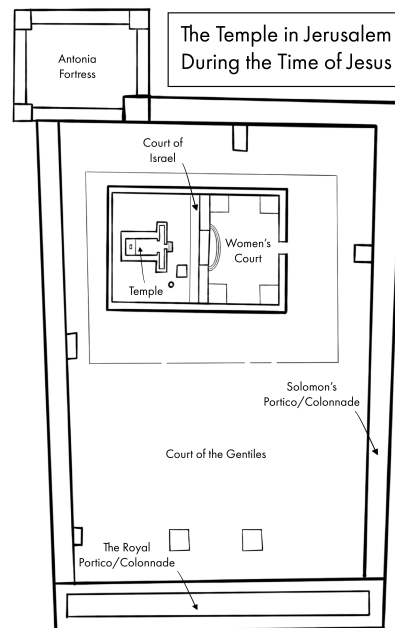
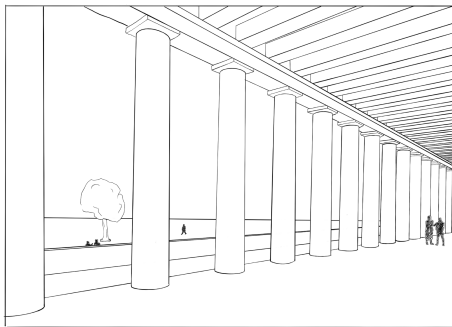
## 3 - What God Is Doing (vv. 24-26)

Through Jesus, God is fulfilling His promise to Abraham — to bless all the nations. You are heirs of the prophets. God raised His servant and sent Him first to you.

## Solomon's Colonnade (Portico)

The Temple in Jerusalem during Jesus' time was surrounded by colonnades. A colonnade is a row of columns that supports a roof. The colonnade on the eastern side of the Temple complex was known as Solomon's colonnade, porch, or portico. It likely bore Solomon's name because it was built against the same eastern wall Solomon constructed as part of the original Temple project. To the west of the colonnade was the Court of the Gentiles and the Temple proper. To the east was the city wall and the Kidron Valley.

This location is mentioned several times in the New Testament. During the Feast of Dedication, Jesus was approached by the Jews while walking in the colonnade (John 10:23). Peter and John preached to a crowd that gathered under the portico after they healed a lame man (Acts 3:11). We are also told it became a gathering place for the early believers (Acts 5:12).



## Titles of Christ in Peter's Sermon

### Servant (pais)

Rare in NT; echoes Isaiah's Suffering Servant.  
Isa. 42:1; 52:13; 53:4–6

### Holy and Righteous One

Drawn from Isaiah 49:7; 55:5 and 53:11 —  
composite title from the Servant Songs.

### Author of Life

The one who gives life — whom they killed,  
and whom God raised from the dead (v. 15).

### Prophet like Moses

Fulfills Deut. 18:15. People must listen to Him  
or be cut off. Jesus is the eschatological  
Prophet.

## The Arrest & The Sanhedrin

*The Sadducees Intervene · Peter and John in Jail*

### The Arrest (vv. 1–4)

The priests, captain of the temple guard, and the  
Sadducees arrested them — greatly disturbed by  
the resurrection preaching.

The Sadducees: aristocratic lay elders who  
rejected resurrection and angels (Luke 20:27–40;  
Acts 23:6–8). They were the rationalists of  
Judaism.

Despite the arrest: 5,000 men believed.

'The gospel moves, but never without pain.'

### The Sanhedrin (vv. 5–6)

Rulers, elders, and scribes — Jerusalem's major  
Jewish governing body under Roman supervision.

Key figures:

- Annas — high priest AD 6–15, still wielding great influence
- Caiaphas — Annas's son-in-law; had plotted Jesus's arrest
- John, Alexander, and other members of the high priestly family

They thought they were rid of Jesus — now His  
disciples are the problem.

*Jesus is 'the stone you builders rejected,  
which has become the cornerstone.'*

*Salvation is found in no one else,  
for there is no other name under heaven  
given to mankind by which we must be saved.*

**Acts 4:11–12 | Psalm 118:22**

ACTS 4:13–16

## Boldness Before the Council

*Uneducated Men · The Spirit Inspires · The Healed Man Silences*

### Boldness of Uneducated Men (v. 13)

The council saw the boldness of Peter & John — uneducated, common men — and recognized they had been with Jesus.

'Filled with the Holy Spirit' (4:8): Luke uses this for specific instances of Spirit-inspired proclamation.

Theme: Boldness of those empowered by the Spirit (cf. Acts 14:1–3; John 7:15; Luke 4:32).

### The Healed Man Silences Opposition (v. 14)

The man standing beside them — they had nothing to say in opposition. The promise of Jesus fulfilled (Luke 21:15).

The Sanhedrin's dilemma (vv. 15–16): 'What shall we do with these men? The sign is evident to all Jerusalem — we cannot deny it.'

Healing was no threat — but gospel preaching was! (cf. Acts 5:28)

# We Must Obey God Rather Than Men

*The Command · The Response · Released*

## The Command to Be Silent (vv. 17-18)

'Speak no more to anyone in this name.'

They effectively commanded the apostles to disobey Jesus's own commission (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

Reply (vv. 19-20): 'Whether it's right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you decide. We cannot stop speaking.'

Application: Civil obedience stops when it demands direct disobedience to God (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-16).

Acts 4:17-31 | Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-16; Luke 19:47-48

## Released (vv. 21-22)

No way to punish them — the people were praising God. The healed man was over 40 years old.

Pattern in Luke-Acts: the people receive truth while the leaders oppose it (Luke 19:47-48; 20:1-8).

The church responds not with fear but by calling out to the Sovereign Lord (*despotēs*) — a striking term used only here in Acts, designating one who possesses all power and authority (4:24).

# Barnabas vs. Ananias & Sapphira

*Positive Example · Negative Example · Luke's Intentional Contrast*

## Barnabas — The Positive Example (4:36-37)

A Levite of Cyprus, named 'Son of Encouragement' by the apostles. He sold land and laid all the money at the apostles' feet.

Barnabas sought to praise God.

'The two illustrations were intended to be brought in contrast, as the conjunction "but" introduces the sentence.' — H. Leo Boles

Acts 4:36-5:2 | H. Leo Boles · Don De Welt

## Ananias & Sapphira — The Negative Example (5:1-2)

Sold a possession, kept back part, and gave the impression of giving all. They sought the praises of men.

Luke uses both as illustrations of the proper and improper attitude toward possessions (4:32-5:11).

This is the first case of church trouble, first record of sin among God's people, first case of hypocrisy.

'...the first marks of the evil one within the fold.' — Don De Welt

# THIS IS A FIRST

”...but this chapter opens with the account of the first marks of the evil one within the fold.”

- *Don De Welt*

- First case of church trouble
- First record of sin among God’s people
- First case of hypocrisy

ACTS 5

## Ananias & Sapphira: Six Lessons

### I. Were Hypocrites · II. Were Sinners

Hypocrites (NT:5273): a stage-actor wearing a mask. W. E. Vine: 'a dissembler.' A. T. Robertson: 'to feign, to pretend, to wear a masque, to play a part.' They tried to appear more benevolent than they were, caring only how they looked to men — not God (Heb. 4:13). 'People run fearful risks when they profess more than their spiritual strength can carry.' — W. G. Moorehead

### III. Were Accomplices · IV. Were Men Pleasers

Sapphira acted in collusion with Ananias — aware, silent, persisting in cover-up, equally guilty (vv. 2–10). We can be accomplices through fellowship with error (2 John 9–11), consenting silence (Ps. 50), or failing to train children (Prov. 29:15). Greed coupled with desire for men's approval drove them — telling people what they want to hear, compromising with friends, putting family happiness above God (Gal. 1:10).

### V. Were Hold Outs · VI. Were Disciplined

'We too may be pretending with a few outward deeds to be giving the Lord the best we have, when in reality we are holding back.' — R. Harkrider. Modern holdouts: worship, giving, talent, time, courage. The discipline was direct — church purified, hypocrisy cleansed, great fear resulted (vv. 5, 11; cf. 1 Cor. 5:6–7).

# Signs, Wonders & Second Arrest

*The Church Grows · Persecution Escalates*

## Signs and Wonders (vv. 12–16)

Many signs and wonders at Solomon's Colonnade. An apparent paradox: unbelievers (loipos) dared not join, yet more and more believed — held in high regard by the people.

Peter's shadow falling on the sick; crowds from surrounding towns; all were healed.

The new prophetic community, like prophets of old, performs signs AND shows compassion for the poor — both mark God's people (Exod. 7:3; Deut. 15:4–5).

Acts 5:12–32 | Exod. 7:3; Deut. 15:4–5

## Second Arrest & Trial (vv. 17–32)

Arrested, miraculously released by an angel, found teaching in the temple courts.

Sanhedrin: 'We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name... you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.' (5:28)

Bold reply: 'We must obey God rather than human beings!' (5:29)

Bold, Spirit-inspired witness → rapid church growth AND escalating persecution — Luke's consistent pattern throughout Acts.

# Gamaliel's Counsel & The Apostles' Joy

*Wisdom from an Unlikely Source · Joy in Suffering*

## Gamaliel's Counsel (vv. 33–39)

Gamaliel urges caution, citing Theudas and Judas the Galilean as examples of failed human movements.

His principle: 'If their activity is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is from God, you will only find yourselves fighting against God.' (5:38–39)

The apostles are flogged, warned not to speak in Jesus's name, and released.

Acts 5:33–42

## The Apostles Rejoice (vv. 41–42)

They rejoice that they were counted worthy of suffering for Jesus (5:41).

They continue daily — in the temple and house to house — proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah (5:42).

Suffering does not silence the prophetic community — it emboldens it. Growth in the midst of opposition is Luke's consistent narrative pattern.

*In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.*

*'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.'*

**Acts 6:1–2**

ACTS 6:1–5

## The Complications of Multiplication

*A Growing Church Faces Its First Internal Crisis*

### The Root of the Conflict (v. 1)

Hebrews vs. Hellenists: a pre-existing cultural suspicion.

- Hebrews: saw Hellenists as compromisers with Greek culture
- Hellenists: saw Hebrews as holier-than-thou traditionalists

Satan tried to exploit that suspicion.

The word 'grumbling' (gongyzō) deliberately echoes Israel's grumbling in the wilderness (Num. 11) — connecting this dispute to the Exodus narrative.

### The Solution: Choose Seven Men (vv. 3–5)

Full of the Holy Spirit AND wisdom — spiritually AND practically minded. A hard combination to find.

All seven had Greek names — likely Hellenists themselves. Great sensitivity: the offended group was served by members of their own community.

Note: The modern picture of deacons as men who 'do not preach but serve behind the scenes' is faulty — Stephen and Philip emerge as gifted evangelists (Acts 6:8–8:40).

# The Seven & the Church's Organization

*A Symbolic Expansion of Leadership · Two Offices Working Together*

## The Seven as the New Seventy

The selection of the Seven is a symbolic counterpart to Jesus sending the Seventy (Luke 10:1-16).

Stephen and Philip parallel Eldad and Medad (Num. 11:29) — inspired by the Spirit to prophesy and bear bold witness.

The movement of leadership in Acts:

The One (Jesus) → The Twelve → The Seventy → 'All the Lord's people'

The laying on of hands (6:6): a Jewish commissioning rite (Num. 8:10; 27:18) — formally commissioning the Seven for the church's mission.

## Two Offices Working Together

The Pastor/Elder: shepherding, envisioning, equipping, praying over the church.

The Deacon (diakonos = servant, minister): serving the church by physical and/or spiritual means. Diakoneo = 'to be an attendant,' 'to wait upon,' 'to minister.' (Romans 12:6-7)

Qualifications: 1 Timothy 3:8-13 — grave, not doubletongued, blameless, husband of one wife, ruling house well.

When everyone fills their God-given role, the church grows.

Acts 6:5-7 | Num. 8:10; 11:29; 27:18 | Luke 10:1-16 | 1 Tim. 3:8-13 | Rom. 12:6-7

## 1 Timothy 3:8-11

Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. 11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

## 1 Timothy 3:12-13

Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

ACTS 6:7

*So the word of God spread.  
The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly,  
and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*

obedient to the faith (*hypakouo*) — from 'listen' (*akouo*) — echoing Peter's call in 3:22

**When the church is organized and faithful to its calling the Word spreads.**