

ACTS

THE MOVEMENT BEGINS

Acts 3 | "The Person God Uses"

INTRO: In the 2nd chapter, in verse 43, we read, "Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles," and here in Chapter 3, one of those wonders and signs is recorded for us. This is just one of the many things that were happening in the early church. Also, in verse 46 of chapter 2, we read, "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart," thus we see that these Messianic Jewish believers continued their loyalty to the Temple and going there daily to pray. So, here in Acts 3, Luke tells about a miracle that happened on one of those days.

I believe it is in the heart of every true child of God to be used by God. How I desire that God would use my life in the accomplishing of His eternal purposes! As we look at Chapter 3, we see the people that God used in such a marvelous way and encourage you and me that we too can be used by God.

I. THE MIRACLE OF HEALING. (v. 1-11)

#1: GOD USES ORDINARY PEOPLE (v. 1a)

A. (v. 1a)

1. "Now Peter and John went up together..."

- a. We are prone to look at the Apostles as super humans, but they were just ordinary men.
 - 1) They were unlearned and ignorant men (4:13).
 - 2) Both were fishermen.
 - 3) Peter had denied the Lord.
 - 4) John wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume somebody.
- b. God chooses to use people like YOU.
 - 1) He has a special ministry for you.
 - 2) None of us are unusable.
 - 3) Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 - "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh,

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not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

#2: GOD USES A PERSON OF PRAYER (v. 1b)

B. (v. 1b)

1. "...into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour."

a. "the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour"

1) "the ninth hour" = 3:00pm

a) The Jews had 3 special hours of prayer - 9am, 12noon, & 3pm.

b) At 3:00pm, the evening daily offerings were performed in the Temple (**Ex. 29:39; Lev. 6:20**).

b. If I want God to use my life, I need to be in DAILY CONTACT WITH GOD.

1) Asking Him for direction and wisdom.

2) Seeking His counsel.

3) I should not move or act independently of God's directions.

c. Prayer is VITAL to any work of God.

1) **KEY:** It is an inescapable fact that all the great men of God throughout history have been great men of *prayer!*

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C. (v. 2)

1. **"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;"**

a. "lame from his mother's womb"

1) "lame" - Gr. "limping; crippled"; lit. "deprived of a foot"

2) He was over 40 years old (4:22), and has been *lame* his whole life.

a) **NOTE:** When this guy was only 7 years old, Mary and Joseph carried baby Jesus at 33 days old through the Gate Beautiful on their way for Mary's purification (Luke 2:21-22), and no doubt throughout His life, Jesus passed by this man many times and didn't heal him.

i. **Q** = Why didn't Jesus heal this *lame* man one of the many times He passed by him?... Probably because He had a great plan for this man, but it had to be at the right time!

a. It would be through this lame man's testimony that a multitude would hear the gospel, and thousands of people would get saved (4:4).

b) **Q** = Why does God sometimes wait to do a work that He could do right now?... Probably because He wants to do a greater work!

i. Cf. **Isaiah 55:8-9** - "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

ii. Cf. **Romans 11:33** - "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

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- b. *"was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful"*
- 1) The Jewish historian Josephus describes a gate made of fine Corinthian brass at the Temple, 75 feet high with huge double doors, so beautiful that it "greatly excelled those that were only covered over with silver and gold."¹
 - 2) This was the gate that led from the Court of the Gentiles (or the Outer Court) into the Court of the Women (the Inner Court) and the Temple Treasury.
 - a) People going between the Outer Court and the Inner Court would pass by this man, as he was sitting there asking for alms from those who came in and went out of the Temple.²
- c. *"to ask alms of them that entered into the temple"*
- 1) This was a really great place to post up because people are already going to worship God and know that God wants us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

D. (v. 3)

1. **"Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms."**

- a. *"seeing" - Gr. "perceived; recognized; discern clearly"*
- 1) This man *recognized* Peter and John, so it seems that he knew who they were.
 - a) He probably knew who Peter was from his sermon (2:14) and the 3,000 people that responded to his message (2:41).

¹ Guzik, David. "Study Guide for Acts 3." Enduring Word. Blue Letter Bible. 7 Jul 2006. 2013. 12 Apr 2013. http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7956&commInfo=31&topic=Acts

² Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum. "Commentary Series: The Book of Acts." Apple Books, p. 179.

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- b) He may have known that Peter had financial resources since the Church sold their possessions and laid them at the apostles' feet. (2:44-45; 4:34-35; 5:2)

b. "alms" - Gr. "charity; donations"

- 1) He's asking for *alms*, but will receive legs! 😂

#3: GOD USES A PERSON OF COMPASSION (v. 4-5)

E. (v. 4)

- 1. "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us."
 - a. Peter and John were not too "spiritual" to minister to the needs of people.
 - 1) They were going to the Temple to pray, but they stopped to minister to this man.

#4: GOD USES A PERSON OF DISCERNMENT (v. 6a)

F. (v. 6a)

- 1. "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none;..."
 - a. Q = Did Peter have the money?... Yes! (2:44-45; 4:34-35; 5:2)
 - 1) Peter must have sensed in the Spirit that he was not to give this man money.
 - 2) In other words, Peter is saying, "Silver and gold have I none for YOU!"
 - b. You and I **CANNOT** help everybody.

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- 1) Our heart should be to help everybody, but we *cannot* help everyone that comes across our path. And that's okay!
 - a) **Illust.** - Cf. [John 5:1-9](#) - There were many people that needed healing by the pools of Bethesda, but Jesus only healed this one man!
 - b) **KEY:** We need to be led by the Spirit of who to help and how. Otherwise we'll get frustrated, burned out, and it will be a chore.
- 2) You can only help people financially with the resources that God has given you.
 - a) Thus, we help with what we can and trust that God will send someone else along to help this person too.

c. There are some people that we **SHOULD NOT** help.

- 1) Wait a minute...
 - a) **Q** = Aren't we as Christians supposed to help other people?... Yes.
 - b) **Q** = Aren't we supposed to help those in need?... Absolutely.
- 2) However, there are those that we shouldn't help.
 - a) We should not help them if it is to enable them to continue in a lifestyle of sin and depravity.
 - b) You don't give money to a homeless drunk/drug addict.
 - c) You don't give money to someone who gets their check and immediately goes gambling blowing their money, but can't pay their bills.

[#5: GOD USES A PERSON OF FAITH \(v. 6b-11\)](#)

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G. (v. 7)

1. "And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength."

a. "he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up"

1) The act of lifting the man up was a great act of FAITH!

a) **Q** = Can you imagine yourself doing such a thing?...

b) **Q** = What do you suppose was going through Peter's mind?...

i. I know what would be going through my mind. "I hope this guy gets up! I hope he doesn't collapse! I don't want to be accused of cruelty to the disabled if this guy should collapse!"

c) I'm not advocating that you go around and start lifting people out of wheelchairs. However, I would encourage you to be obedient to those strong promptings of the Holy Spirit and step out in faith.

2) **NOTE:** I believe that Peter was exercising the spiritual gift of faith (1 Cor. 12:9).

a) One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the gift of faith, which is a special gift that God gives to us at certain times in certain situations.

i. It isn't something that we have at all times but there are certain times when God just sort of assures our hearts that he is going to do a work and He gives us special faith, where we boldly step out on that strong impression that comes to us by the Spirit.

b) Peter recognized that this faith was not His, but was given to him by the Lord (v. 16 - "the faith which is by Him").

i. **Illust.** - My pastor told us a story about when an elderly man was wheeled up by his family after the service for prayer, and he

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had this strong impression and said to the man, "In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk," and the guy got up and started walking up the aisle! The family went berserk because they just wanted prayer for a financial situation and he hadn't walked in years!

a. The next week, my pastor went and spoke in Tucson, and a lady was brought up in her wheelchair for prayer, and he just prayed for her and said, "God bless you. May He bring His healing touch." Well, his son came up to him afterwards and said, "Dad, why didn't you just raise her up like the guy last week?" And he said, "You know, I just didn't have the faith this time."

b. *"and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength"*

- 1) The author Luke, as a medical doctor, used medical terms here, but his point was that the healing was *instantaneous!*
- 2) There is a legend that has circulated for years about a discussion between Pope Innocent II and Thomas Aquinas. While counting a large sum of money, the Pope said, "You see, Thomas, the church can no longer say, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" Thomas answered, "That is true, Holy Father, but neither can she still say, 'Arise and walk.'"³

H. (v. 11)

1. ***"And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering."***

³ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum. "Commentary Series: The Book of Acts." Apple Books, p. 181.

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- a. *"the porch that is called Solomon's"*
 - 1) Solomon's Porch was located on the Eastern end of the Court of the Gentiles.
 - 2) It was called Solomon's Porch because it was built on the remains of the ancient foundation of Solomon's Temple.

#6: GOD USES PEOPLE THAT ARE NOT SEEKING GLORY OR FAME FOR THEMSELVES (v. 12)

I. (v. 12)

1. *"... or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?"*

- a. There is a constant danger to the person that God uses — others will seek to exalt them!
 - 1) The people gathered around Peter and John as if they were some holy, special instruments.
 - a) *"Why look ye so earnestly on us...?"* Look at Jesus!
 - 2) The danger for the person being used by God is the temptation to receive the adulation or admiration.
 - a) **Illust.** - Paul the apostle in Lystra. (Cf. [Acts 14:7-21](#))
 - b) **Illust.** - Gideon and his army. ([Judges 7:2](#) - *"And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me."*)
 - c) **NOTE:** The reality is that, at most, I am an instrument used in the hand of God, so He should get the glory.
 - i. **Illust.** - Let's say that after service, you were to come up to my guitar and say, "You

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are such a wonderful guitar! The music that comes from you is so beautiful! You just touch my life in such a glorious way!"

- a. **Q** = Wouldn't that be a little weird?...
 - b. **Q** = Shouldn't the credit go to the person playing the instrument?...
 - ii. **NOTE:** We need to realize that we are just instruments used in the hands of God. He is the One to receive the glory!
- b. If you want to be used by God, then do not ever let anyone try and give you the credit for what God has done!
- 1) Cf. **Leviticus 10:1-3** - "*And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, **I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.** And Aaron held his peace.*"
 - 2) Cf. **Isaiah 48:11** - "...*I will not give my glory unto another.*"
 - 3) **NOTE:** One of the quickest ways to be put on the shelf by God is to receive the glory for yourself.
 - a) Direct them away from you to Jesus Christ!
 - i. Cf. **Matthew 5:16** - Jesus said, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*"

#7: GOD USES PEOPLE THAT BOLDLY PREACH THE GOSPEL (v. 13-21)

J. (v. 15)

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1. **"And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."**

- a. "Prince" - Gr. *archégos* - "author; source; originator; founder; leader; pioneer"
 - 1) Jesus is the "Source" and "Originator" of LIFE!
 - a) Cf. **Hebrews 2:10** - "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the **captain** of their salvation perfect through sufferings."
 - b) Cf. **Hebrews 12:2** - "Looking unto Jesus the **author** and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."
 - 2) Cf. **John 10:10** - Jesus said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
- b. Peter is accusing the Jewish leadership of killing "the Prince of life," but he also tells them that "God has raised Him from the dead"!

K. (v. 19)

1. **"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;"**

- a. "Repent ye" - Gr. *metanoéo* - "change your mind; think differently"
- b. "be converted" - Gr. *epistrephó* - "return; turn back; turn around; turn towards"
 - 1) In this context, it means "to turn from sin to God".

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- a) To *repent* means to do a U-TURN! You've been going away from God, and now you turn toward Him!
- b) To be right with God, you need to repent and turn away from your sin, and turn to God!
 - i. Cf **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10** - The Apostle Paul encouraged the church in Thessalonica by telling them of the reputation they had in Macedonia, and wrote, "*For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and **how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God**; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*"
- c. "*that your sins may be blotted out*"
 - 1) Peter is saying that:
 - a) If they repented as INDIVIDUALS, it would result in individual salvation.
 - b) If they repented as a NATION, it would result in National salvation.
 - 2) "*blotted out*" - Gr. "*wiped out; erased; cancelled; obliterated*"
 - a) Cf. **Colossians 2:13-14** - "*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; **Blotting out** the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*"
 - b) **KEY:** What a joy to have our sins erased!!!

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- i. Cf. **Romans 3:23-36** - *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."*
- ii. Cf. **Hebrews 8:12** - *"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."*
- iii. Cf. **Micah 7:19** - *"He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."*
 - a. Cf. **Revelation 21:1** - *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."*
 - b. **KEY:** If our sins were cast into the depths of the sea, and in the new heaven there is no sea, then our sins are gone forever!!
- d. *"when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord"*
 - 1) *"refreshing" - Gr. anapsuxis - "cooling; revival; reviving with fresh air; relief; rest"*
 - a) From 2 Greek words: ana ("again") & psucho ("breathe"), thus "to breathe again"
 - 2) In the context, this speaks of the Messianic Kingdom for the Nation of Israel, when the Holy Spirit will bring refreshment to God's people.

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- a) Cf. **Isaiah 35:6-10** - *"Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."*
 - b) Cf. **Isaiah 44:2-3** - *"Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:"*
- 3) However, this principle applies to every believer that repents and believes the gospel: you will experience *refreshing and revival from the presence of the Lord.*
- a) There is nothing more *refreshing* than knowing your sins are gone and you feel that closeness of the Lord.
 - b) Cf. **John 7:37-39** - *"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"*

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L. (v. 20)

1. **"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:"**

- a. The 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ is conditional upon Israel's National salvation. Until the Nation of Israel repents, there will be no Second Coming.

M. (v. 21)

1. **"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."**

- a. *"the times of restitution of all things"*

1) *"restitution" - Gr. apokatastasis - "restoration; reestablishment"*

- a) Dr. Luke uses this medical term used of a complete *restoration* to health.

- b) In Jewish apocalyptic literature, it speaks of the age to come, the Messianic Kingdom!

2) Cf. **Matthew 19:28** - Jesus told the Apostles, *"Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the **regeneration** when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

- b. The Ascension of Jesus will last *"until"* the Messianic Kingdom, which will be established at His 2nd Coming!

#8: GOD USES A PERSON OF THE WORD (v. 22-26)

N. (v. 22)

1. "

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[#9: GOD USES A PERSON FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT \(4:8\)](#)