The Early Church of Jesus Christ

A Bible teaching commentary on the Acts of the Apostles in easy-to-read English

Written by Fred Morris

Peter heals the lame beggar in the name of Jesus

Acts Unit 2 of 12

Chapter 3:1-4:37

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ACTS CHAPTER 3.

Peter and John go to the Temple

The people who believed in Jesus had no church buildings, so they met in houses or in the Temple courts to worship God (2:46).

One day Peter and John went to the Temple. A lame man sat at the Temple gate asking for money (3:1 to 2). Because he was lame and a beggar, he was not allowed to go into the Temple.

Peter told him, "I do not have silver or gold [money]. But I will give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ, get up and walk!" (3:6).

Peter took him by his right hand and helped him to stand up. At once His feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. He went with Peter and John into the Temple. He walked and jumped and praised God (3:7 to 8). He was healed! He was now allowed to go into the Temple. He could stop begging.

Everyone heard about him and soon people came running to see what had happened. They knew the man very well and they were amazed that he was walking. God welcomes disabled people into His Kingdom.

Peter asked, "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? ... The God of our fathers has done this ... This man was made strong by faith in the name of Jesus. Faith in

Jesus has healed him completely" (3:12-16). Jesus has the power to do this because He is the Son of God.

Peter continued, "God gave a promise through all the prophets ... So turn away from your sins. Turn to God then your sins will be wiped away ... Jesus is appointed as the Christ for you ... [God] promised this long ago through the holy prophets" (3:18 to 21). All their prophets had told how the Christ (Messiah) would first suffer and die before God raised Him from death (Acts 3:18,24).

Peter preaching to the Jews in Jerusalem

Peter then quoted the prophecy of Moses in the Old Testament. "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me. He will be one of your own people. You must listen to everything He tells you" (3:22; Deuteronomy 18:15,18,19; Matthew 17:5).

Under the Law given to Moses, sinful people should die, since 'the wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23). But Jesus

came and died in our place. He promised life, new life, not death! Jesus could only save people from sin by dying in their place.

Jesus died to save the World

Peter used this healing to tell people the Good News of Jesus Christ, and encouraged them to repent. "Turn away from your sins. Turn to God. Then your sins will be wiped away" (Acts 3:19). "God raised up Jesus…to bless you. He wanted to turn each of you from your evil ways" (3:26).

Nearly 2000 years before this happened, God made a promise to Abraham: "I will make you into a great nation [Israel and the worldwide Church] … and all nations on Earth will be blessed because of you" (Genesis 12:2to 3). Now Peter saw this promise coming true. People from all over the world were in Jerusalem to worship God. They heard the Good News of Jesus Christ, His Son. People from all over the world were saved and blessed. And this has happened every day since the first day of His Holy Spirit coming to us. God's grace and saving power do this. If we preach the Good News of Jesus Christ, the power of God's word can change people's lives. God is merciful. He will forgive the sins of people through the sacrifice of Jesus if they repent and believe.

The message is for us too. Jesus died to save us. We too can tell others the Good News of Jesus Christ and see the power of God change lives! We too can be witnesses

for Jesus wherever we live 'from one end of the Earth to the other' (1:8).

ACTS CHAPTER 4.

The Religious Leaders try to stop the Good News

Peter and John taught the crowds at the Temple. They told the people that Jesus rose up from death. This made the Jewish leaders angry. One group of priests, who did not believe in life after death, came with the Temple guard and arrested Peter and John. They did not want trouble from the Romans soldiers.

They put the apostles in jail. At this time there were about 5000 men who believed (4:4) and many women as well. This happened because one person was healed. His testimony enabled Peter to preach to the crowds. As a result, many believed the Good News about Jesus.

Next day they brought Peter and John to the Jewish high court. Two high priests were there (4:6). It was these high priests who sent Jesus to the Roman governor to be crucified (John 18:24,28). They asked two important questions about the healing of the lame man. "By what power did you do this?" they asked. "And through whose name?" (Acts 4:7).

These questions helped Peter to tell them about Jesus. He boldly answered, "You nailed Jesus Christ to the cross.

But God raised Him from death. It is through the name of Jesus that this man stands healed in front of you" (4:10).

Peter then gave the same message that he preached before. He was bold because of the power of the Holy Spirit in him (4:8). He told them that God made Jesus to be the 'most important stone' or 'cornerstone' (Psalm 118:22,23). An Old Testament prophet had foretold that Christ the 'cornerstone' would come from the tribe of Judah and from the family line of King David (Zechariah 10:4; Luke 1:32). They refused to believe their Messiah, Jesus the Christ, and they killed Him. And now they refused to believe what Peter told them.

Peter warned the court, 'You can not be saved by believing in anyone else. God has given us no other name under Heaven that will save us" (Acts 4:12).

The Jewish leaders saw how bold Peter and John were. "What can we do with these men?" they asked (4:16).

They could not find any unlawful answers to their questions. So they told Peter and John not to teach or speak in the name of Jesus again (4:18).

Peter and John said, "What is right? Should we obey you or God?" ... We have to speak about the things we have seen and heard" (4:19 to 20).

'The leaders warned them again. Then they let them go ... They knew that all the people were praising God for what had happened' (4:21).

The Church at Prayer and at Work

Peter and John were allowed to join the believers. They prayed and praised God together.

Hundreds of years before this, King David wrote of Christ's coming. He said rulers and nations would be angry because of Jesus (4:25 to 26; Psalms 2:1 to 2). God always knows what will happen. He showed King David what to write. We need not be afraid! God knows all things. He is in control.

When the believers prayed, they were happy, not sad; at peace, not worried; bold not afraid:

- They praised God in their prayers (4:24).
- They read the Old Testament (4:25 to 26).
- They remembered how God anointed Jesus to be persecuted and punished (4:27).
- They rejoiced that God was working out His plans (4:28).
- They asked God to make them very bold (4:29).
- They asked for more miracles in the name of Jesus (4:30).

The believers were not afraid of persecution. 'After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They were bold when they spoke God's word' (4:31).

All this time, the Jewish Christians were meeting in homes. They were all caring for each other and sharing what they had. They all agreed together. The Holy Spirit

began to make them kinder and more loving (4:32). Some sold their land and brought the money to the apostles (4:36 to 37). This was so that they could help those believers who were poor or unable to work (4:35). Jesus said, "You have received freely, so give freely" (Matthew 10:8).

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