

ACTS

Chapter 3

The Lame Beggar Healed

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. 3 Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. 4 And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." 5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. 8 And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

3:1 *Peter and John.* Among the foremost apostles (Gal 2:9). Along with John's brother, James, they had been especially close to Jesus (Mk 9:2; 13:3; 14:33; Lk 22:8). Arrested together (4:3), they were also together in Samaria (8:14). (CSB)

hour of prayer. The three stated times of prayer for later Judaism were midmorning (the third hour, 9:00 A.M.), the time of the evening sacrifice (the ninth hour, 3:00 P.M.) and sunset. (CSB)

Devout Jews had developed patterns of prayer at specific times. Features of early Christian prayers recorded in *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (aka the *Didache*, c first century; cf 2:42) resemble features of Jewish prayers associated with the temple services (cf Ex 29:38–42). (TLSB)

Three in the afternoon – the ninth hour as the Jews reckoned it – was one of three hours of prayer. The others were 9:00 A.M. and sunset. There was a daily sacrifice at 3:00 P.M. called "the evening sacrifice." It was an hour of "peak activity" at the temple. (PBC)

How perfectly the Lord set the scene for the widest possible exposure for the message of His love, forgiveness, peace, joy and hope in Christ Jesus. That was the sole purpose of this event. (LL)

3:2 *lame man* – The lame man is marked by Torah as "blemished," a condition that excludes an animal from being used for sacrifice, and a human being from becoming a priest. But when he is commanded by Peter to rise and walk, the man is able to leap through the temple precincts, by "praising God." The healing worked by the apostles makes the temple truly "a house of prayer" (Luke 19:46) even for one considered an outcast but now made "whole." (Scara)

This man was destitute but the beneficiary of community care. (TLSB)

gate to temple...alled Beautiful. The favorite entrance to the temple court, it was probably the bronze-sheathed gate that is elsewhere called the Nicanor Gate. Apparently it led from the court of the Gentiles to the court of women, on the east wall of the temple proper. (CSB)

Location unknown; traditionally identified with the Shushan Gate, and by some moderns with the Nicanor Gate. (TLSB)

The gate was probably on the east side of the temple, leading from the court of the Gentiles to the court of women. That is how the first-century Jewish historian Josephus described it. It must have been a busy place if it was a good place for the beggar to sit. (PBC)

ask alms - A positive aspect of Judaism was its emphasis on doing good to a neighbor in need (affirmed by our Lord, Mt. 6:1-4). (TLSB)

3:3-5 The beggar receives personal attention from the apostles but not the gift he expects. (TLSB)

3:6 *In the name of Jesus Christ.* Not by power of their own, but by the authority of the Messiah. (CSB)

The name of Jesus is exalted, supremely holy, and worthy of praise (cf. 5:40-41). It is the deposit of salvation which it powerfully enacts (2:38). Hebrew *shem*. Its meaning can include “reputation,” “fame,” and “memory.” Cf. John 16:23. Ambrose: “He gave not money, but he gave health. How much better it is to have health without money, than money without health!” (NPNF2 10:63). (TLSB)

Means by the power and authority of. (PBC)

3:7 *raised him up.* But he had faith to be healed (v. 16). (CSB)

3:8-10 Praising God, the cured man sets the best example for all who receive the healing gifts of Word and Sacrament. (TLSB)

3:8 *entered the temple.* From the outer court (for Gentiles also) into the court of women, containing the treasury (Mk 12:41-44), and then into the court of Israel. From the outer court, nine gates led into the inner courts. (CSB)

3:10 *wonder and amazement* – They knew what his condition had been, and they were awestruck and dumbfounded at the sight. (PBC)

3:1-10 In this highest form of almsgiving, Peter and John dispense God’s own gift: mercy. Present through the Spirit in His holy name, the exalted Jesus makes the crippled man stand, that he may leap for joy. Shudder when you hear people use Jesus’ holy name as a curse rather than as a cure. Call on Him in all your needs, and use His name reverently and gladly to bestow the Father’s gifts on others. • Fill us, Holy Spirit, that our hearts and lips may honor Jesus’ holy name. Amen. (TLSB)

Peter Speaks in Solomon's Portico

11 While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. 12 And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: “Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or

piety we have made him walk? 13 The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. 14 But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. 16 And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all. 17 “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, 20 that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, 21 whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. 22 Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’ 24 And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. 25 You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ 26 God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.”

3:11 *clung to* – The beggar would not leave the side of his benefactors. After the time of prayer, perhaps cutting short their own devotions, the people gathered around the three men. (PBC)

Remarkably, the lame man is physically present even at the hearing before the Sanhedrin after the apostles’ arrest (4:14). He is a persistent reminder of the power of Jesus’ name. (Tannehill)

ran together to them - Literally “ran together toward them.” (Sacra)

The hundreds of worshipers surrounded the three men. (LL)

Solomon’s Colonnade. A porch along the inner side of the wall enclosing the outer court, with rows of 27-foot-high stone columns and a roof of cedar. (CSB)

On the east side of the court of Gentiles. (TLSB)

3:12 *men of Israel* – This was to remind them of their responsibility as people who had been especially blessed in receiving God’s written word and God’s revealed religion. It was to challenge them to react responsibly to the miracle they had witnessed and the message he would preach. (PBC)

Peter addresses the “men of Israel” (v 12). They were the first-century sons of the covenant God made with their ancestors, and they were also the sons of the prophets. (The NIV translates *uioi*, “sons,” as “heirs.”) Samuel is singled out because he was instrumental in the rise of the Davidic monarchy which culminated in Christ. He anointed David asking (1 Sam 16:13). All the prophets who followed, not just those who uttered the well-known “Messianic prophecies,” spoke of Christ (cf. also Luke 24:25–27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

why do you wonder – Peter first makes certain all understand that neither he nor John made this man to walk by their own power and immediately directs attention elsewhere. And he leaves no doubt as to the elsewhere directing his hearers and us to the source of this healing power. (LL)

3:13 *the God of our fathers* – Peter was identifying with his hearers and insisting that he and John were true Israelites. He would not wash his hands of his people but would try to win them to faith in Christ. (PBC)

his servant Jesus. A reminder of the suffering servant prophesied in Isa 52:13–53:12 (see Mt 12:18; Ac 4:27, 30). (CSB)

Greek *paidon*, “child.” Not “slave” (cf. 2:18) or “minister,” as is used sometimes of apostles. Derived from LXX version of Is. 52:13, where it expresses both submission to the Lord and intimacy with Him. (TLSB)

Peter’s choice of the word *pais* is significant. It designates Jesus as God’s servant, thus connecting him with the servant of Is 52:13–53:12 (see Jeremias, *pais*, *TDNT* 5.654). This healing is a fulfillment of Is 53:5, where God’s servant bears our infirmities and illnesses (see Mt 8:17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

delivered – Strong emphasis on their complicity in Jesus’ death. Perhaps some faces were familiar from Pilate’s courtyard and from Calvary. (TLSB)

denied. Voted against Jesus, spurned him, denied him and refused to acknowledge him as the true Messiah. (CSB)

Pilate ... had decided to release him. See Jn 19:12. (CSB)

3:14 *Holy and Righteous One*. Blameless in relation to God and man. (CSB)

Pointed contrast between Jesus’ innocence and the guilt of the criminal Barabas. Yet Jesus placed Himself under the curse of all sin. (TLSB)

3:15 *author of life* - The word *archēgos* can mean “originator,” “author,” or “founder.” Its use here by Peter underscores the irony that the originator of human life had his life snuffed out through human hands. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

As “founder” (Heb. 2:10; 12:2), Jesus serves as “the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom. 8:29). Luther: “(The OT saints) believed that He would come in the future; but we believe that He has appeared, and that He has gone away to the Father to prepare dwelling places for us (John 14:2), and that He is sitting at the right hand of the Father and is interceding for us” (AE 1:348). (TLSB)

You killed ... God raised ... We are witnesses. A recurring theme in the speeches of Acts (see 2:23–24; 4:10; 5:30–32; 10:39–41; 13:28–29; cf. 1Co 15:1–4). (CSB)

The hammer blows of the Law pounding and crushing, exposing sin and sinfulness for what they really are, followed almost in the same breath with the most unbelievable and joyous words human ears can ever hear – the Gospel. (LL)

3:16 *faith in the name* - Jesus' holy name works not by magic but through trust, or faith. (TLSB)

faith that is through Jesus - Faith in Jesus completes the people's existing faith in the God of Israel and His promised Messiah. (TLSB)

3:17-18 Although the Jewish people and their leaders killed Jesus in ignorance, Peter doesn't excuse this ignorance. Instead, his words prepare them for the repentance that leads to forgiveness for such sins of ignorance. And far from being merely a tragic consequence of ignorance, Christ's suffering and death were a part of God's plan as foretold by the prophets. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

3:17 *acted in ignorance* – Peter did not mean to say that ignorance is innocence. They could not be excused for disowning God's servant and killing the author of life. But Peter was leading into the thought that God in his grace had used their evil act for his good purpose and that the gracious Lord was ready to forgive their sins. His words were in the spirit of Jesus who prayed from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). God did not order them to act as they did or will that they do it. He did not cause their ignorance. But through their ignorant actions he accomplished what had to occur because his word had prophesied it. (PBC)

Because Christ rarely showed His divine majesty on earth, the people did not fully understand who He was. (TLSB)

3:18 *foretold by the mouth of all the prophets*. Echoes what Jesus had said (Lk 24:26–27). The suffering was prophesied (compare Isa 53:7–8 with Ac 8:32–33; Ps 2:1–2 with Ac 4:25–26; Ps 22:1 with Mt 27:46; see also 1Pe 1:11). (CSB)

Popular Jewish belief did not think of Messiah as suffering. It still does not. I once heard a hero of the modern state of Israel say, "A Messiah who suffers and dies cannot be Israel's Messiah. (PBC)

3:19-21 Turning to God in repentance will bring *kairoi anapsuxeōs*. The NIV translates this phrase as "times of refreshing." The verbal form of the second word denotes a spiritual strengthening and invigoration that gives comfort (only in 1 Tim 1:16 and as a variant reading at Rom 1:32). The connotation of the word, also suggested by its etymology, is new life. Most commentators see these words as referring to the final era of salvation, the period of new life and baptismal rebirth in Jesus Christ. F. F. Bruce suggests that the sense of this refreshment is a respite from the judgment that Jesus had pronounced on Jerusalem.² Also, note the translation differences: "whom heaven must receive" (NKJV; KJV) versus "He must remain in heaven" (NRSV; NIV). Lenski observes that some mistakenly have taken this verse to mean that Christ's human body and nature are confined to heaven in such a way as "to make it impossible for him to be present anywhere else." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

3:19 *Repent*.† Repentance is a change of mind and will arising from sorrow for sin (see note on 2:38). (CSB)

your sins ... blotted out.† Your sins will be forgiven as a result of faith (here called "turning to God"), a gift of God by the working of the Holy Spirit through word and sacrament. (CSB)

Peter uses the concept of erasing to describe the totality and beauty of God's forgiveness of our sins in Christ. Those of us still troubled with guilt over past sins are making ourselves miserable over something God simply cannot understand. As impossible as it is for us to make erased words on a blackboard reappear, so impossible is it for our God to remember sins that have been erased with the blood of Jesus. (LL)

3:20 *times of refreshing* – Like “breathing space,” times free from end-times distress. (TLSB)

The expression as such occurs only here, and its specific meaning is not clear. In the literal sense, the terms *anapsycho/anapsyxis* refer to the sort of respite or refreshment that comes from a good drink of water (e.g., Judg15:19; 2 Sam 16:14; Macc. 4:46). The verb is used for the Sabbath rest of slaves and animals in Exodus 23:12, for the soothing of Saul's spirit by David's music in 1 Sam 16:23, for the cessation of suffering in Ps. 38:14, for the revival of the people in 2 Macc. 13:11. The noun occurs only once, but most intriguingly: in Exodus 8:15 it refers to the respite in punishment from the plagues that comes when Pharaoh obeys Moses! (Sacra)

This is when sins are wiped out and there is peace with God. God sends the Christ when the gospel is preached and when people believe in Him. The times of refreshing and the sending of Christ do not refer to a thousand-year reign of the Messiah, as some people believe. Rather, the times of refreshing are simply the day of salvation, the day when a sinner is brought to faith in the Savior. (PBC)

3:21 *must receive*.† An alternate translation is: “It is necessary for heaven to receive him,” which does not preclude his presence at the gatherings of believers and at the Lord's Supper. (CSB)

Christ ascended to the Father, yet His present reign still links Him with His Church. (TLSB)

The original language does not say, “He must remain in heaven.” That would suggest that Jesus is confined to a particular place. The Greek says, “Heaven must receive him.” In God's plan heaven must accept him as its Lord for he is the maker of heaven and earth. Jesus' ascension means that he now uses his eternal divine power in the interest of his church, although he is no longer visible. (PBC)

restoring all the things - He will undo all the damage done to humankind in the fall. Cf. Is. 65:17-25. (TLSB)

3:22–26 *raise up ... raised up*. Christ is the fulfillment of prophecies made relative to Moses, David and Abraham. He was to be a prophet like Moses (vv. 22–23), he was foretold in Samuel's declarations concerning David (v. 24; see note there), and he was to bring blessing to all people as promised to Abraham (vv. 25–26). (CSB)

Moses and Jesus are both prophets and deliverers. (TLSB)

3:22-23 In case there would be a question in the listener's mind, Peter cites Deut 18:15 ff., where Moses, the first and greatest of Israel's prophets, foretells of Christ. Moses emphasizes repentance and hearing in order to avoid judgment, the very message Christ himself preached (e.g., Mt 4:17; Mk 1:14–15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

3:23 *destroyed* – We are not told, however, when this treat will take effect for those who refuse to repent or accept God's servant. As long as God continues to send the servant to bless the people

through the mission, there is hope that the refusal will change to obedient hearing. Jesus' witness will still be struggling to make a deaf people hear at the end of Acts. (Tannehill)

A sobering threat (cf. Rev. 2:9). Cf. Dt. 18:19. (TLSB)

This needs to be taken seriously in light of Hebrews 10:26-31. We also need to look at passages that speak to his will concerning those who do not yet believe like: Ezekiel 18:23; 1 Timothy 2:4; and 2 Peter 3:9. We also have the model of Jesus who continued to reach out to even his tormentors from the cross. His messages to the Jewish leaders and Judas became ever-more direct near the end of Jesus' life on earth.

3:24 *prophets have spoken from Samuel*. Samuel anointed David to be king and spoke of the establishment of his kingdom (1Sa 16:13; cf. 13:14; 15:28; 28:17). Nathan's prophecy (2Sa 7:12-16) was ultimately Messianic (see Ac 13:22-23, 34; Heb 1:5). (CSB)

They announced God's coming reign, which arrived in Jesus. (TLSB)

Samuel, who anointed King David and spoke of his kingdom (1 Sam 13:14), and all the subsequent prophets foretold of the work of David's greater son, Jesus. Believing those prophets leads one to Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

3:25-26 The Jewish people were heirs (not merely descendants) of the prophets and the promises God made through them. Bruce summarizes:

He [Jesus] came to them, as Abraham's promised seed, to bestow God's best blessing upon them, turning them from their wickedness. They had not paid heed to him at first when God sent him; let them pay heed now, when God in his pardoning grace gave them a fresh opportunity; else they would forfeit the covenanted blessing.

A study of the word *dithēkē* (TDNT 2.106-134; Colin Brown 1.365-372) will provide a helpful background for the significance of "covenant" in the Scriptures. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

3:25 *sons of the prophets* - These hearers should welcome Jesus as a fulfillment of God's promise. (TLSB)

offspring. The word is singular, ultimately signifying Christ (see Gal 3:16). (CSB)

In v 25, Peter emphasizes two elements of promise: the (old) covenant and the (individual) offspring who carried the promise of the covenant. The old covenant between God and his people was renewed and amplified throughout the history of Israel. It began with Abraham, as the ending of the verse states, but once begun, God's pledge continued unbroken, because God is always faithful to his promises despite the infidelity of his people. God does not let our sin nullify his grace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

Peter sees in Jesus the living link between the Old and New Testaments. Peter interprets the noun *zera*, "seed, offspring," as a reference to the individual Jesus, just as Paul does in Gal 3:16. Jesus is the source of the blessing promised five times in Genesis (12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Acts 3:25 quotes Gen 22:18). The NT writers do not deny the collective dimension; blessing did come to Israel through many of Abraham's descendants, and God continues to bless today through

Christians who are children of Abraham by faith. Yet this collective understanding presupposes that Jesus Christ is the only true source of blessing for all the faithful in both the OT and NT, and it is the blessing of Christ which believers proclaim to all nations of the earth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

There has been much debate about the meaning of the verbs for blessing in the Genesis promises. Some versions translate them as reflexive (all peoples will “bless themselves” or “wish for blessing”) or as reciprocal (“bless each other”). However, the verb used in v 25 of our text and in the LXX of Genesis, *eneulogēthēsontai*, is first future passive, and in Hellenistic Greek this form has a passive or middle meaning, and these are also the most likely meanings of the Hebrew verbs in Genesis. Therefore, it is best to translate the promise as “all peoples on earth will acquire blessing” (middle) or “be blessed” (passive). This emphasizes the grace of God, divine monergism, and the role of Jesus in conveying the eternal blessing of salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

Although our text, Acts 3:25, contains no explicit reference to Jesus, his cross, or his resurrection, these are described earlier in Peter’s speech. It is essential to convey to our hearers the connection: by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God has carried out his eternal plan for the salvation of all peoples on earth. The resurrection is the proof that God has accomplished his plan. Jesus is God’s final word (Hebrews 1) who clarifies and reinforces all that God has said and done previously in the old covenant. The risen Jesus is able to save, willing to heal, and ready to help. These same attributes describe the God whose history of blessing begins with Abraham in Genesis 12. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

God’s blessing is given to us by virtue of the saving work of Jesus Christ. The gift was earned for us two thousand years ago, when Jesus died and rose again. We are given the inheritance: eternal life as children of God. It only remains for us to receive the inheritance, to recognize our heritage, to accept the gift here offered. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

We have uncovered our roots. They grow from the tree of the cross, through the ground of an open tomb where Jesus’ body once lay, through Old Testament Israel all the way back to Abraham. Since we are God’s family, we receive the blessing which has been earned by Jesus and guaranteed by his resurrection. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is our God and Father. We are heirs of the kingdom, sons and daughters of the covenant. The old covenant has been superseded and absorbed into the new covenant, sealed with the blood of Jesus. From our New Testament perspective we can see how all the prophets testified to Jesus in days gone by. The history of God’s people has been written up to now and our names are written in the covenant as heirs. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 2)

3:11–26 Peter shows the crowd at the temple that all the prophets have pointed to Jesus as the Christ. The risen Lord brings to light our hidden guilt and lifts the burden that crushes every sinner. Though His Word points out your shame, His grace will wipe away your sin. • Lord Jesus, come boldly to both Jew and Gentile, to accuse and to forgive, to wound and to heal. Amen. (TLSB)