

A Practical Study of ACTS:

Take It To Them!

“Putting the GO Back in the Gospel”

Study Number Three – Acts 3:1-4:37

J.I. Packer says some things that fit well in the study that we’re doing in the book of Acts:

(Keep In Step With the Spirit by J. I. Packer)

I remember walking to a church one winter evening to preach on the words “He shall glorify me,” seeing the building floodlit as I turned a corner and realizing that this was exactly the illustration my message needed.

When floodlighting is well done, the floodlights are so placed that you do not see them. You are not, in fact, supposed to see where the light is coming from. What you are meant to see is just the building on which the floodlights are trained. The intended effect is to make it visible when otherwise it would not be seen for the darkness, and to maximize its dignity by throwing all its details into relief so that you see it properly.

This perfectly illustrates the Spirit’s new covenant role. He is, so to speak, the hidden floodlight shining on the Savior. Or think of it this way, it is as if the Spirit stands behind us, throwing light over our shoulder on Jesus, who stands facing

us. The Spirit's message to us is never Look at me, Listen to me, Come to me, Get to know me; but always Look at Him and see His glory, Listen to Him and hear His Word. Go to Him and have life. Get to know Him and taste His gift of joy and peace. The Spirit, we might say, is the matchmaker, the celestial marriage broker, whose role it is to bring us and Christ together and insure that we stay together.
(source unknown)

The incredible thing that is happening today among us is that the book of Acts has become the proof text manual for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and that's a tragedy.

In this study alone, we're going to see Christ mentioned at least 40 times—either by means of pronoun or by direct reference to Jesus or to one of His names.

The whole message of the book of Acts is focused on the Person of Christ. But because we have this great controversy going on in the body of Christ—between the charismatics and the non-charismatics—we've made the book of Acts the great book of the Holy Spirit. And it isn't that and it wasn't intended to be that.

And so as we focus on our study, we need to emphasize the book of Acts, we have to know the Person of the Lord Jesus because He is the center point of all of it.

In chapter 1 we had the **PRELIMINARY PREPARATIONS FOR PENTECOST**. It was the countdown to the big day.

And in Acts 2 we had the event of Pentecost recorded itself and the phenomenon that took place as the Spirit of God came to permanently indwell.

Now in this study the ministry that follows immediately is what is recorded in chapters 3 and 4.

In chapter 3 we have a HEALING and in chapter 4 we have the first PERSECUTION of these early believers.

So let's pick up Acts 3:1.

v. 1 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.), the hour of prayer.

“Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the ninth hour (about 3:00 p.m.), the hour of prayer.”

The scene of the study opens with Peter and John on their way to their regular routine. In those days they went to the temple at three in the afternoon for prayer. And the priest offered on the altar of incense his incense right in front of the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

The temple is still much involved in their lives. In the transition of church—we're moving from RITUAL to RELATIONSHIP—but we're not there yet. These men still are cumbered about by using the temple. They go up there for Bible study and for prayer and all of that. But the temple is no

longer the meeting place of God with man.

In fact when we get to the book of Hebrews, the Christians are challenged to leave the temple behind. God is not dwelling in a temple now with hands. He dwells in the hearts of individuals. And every individual becomes a temple of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit as a result of a relationship to Christ.

But we're not there yet! And so at 3:00 in the afternoon, we have Peter and John heading up to the temple for the afternoon time of prayer.

v. 2 And a certain man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they were accustomed to place daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, for the purpose of asking alms from those who were entering the temple.

“And a certain man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they were accustomed to place daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, for the purpose of asking alms from those who were entering the temple.”

Now this fellow is being carried along by his buddies. He doesn't want to waste any time. He just wants to be there during rush hour. And rush hour is at 3:00 when everybody's heading up to the temple. And he needs to be there and he

wants to be right at the gate.

When people were coming to worship, they were usually very generous. And so these fellas would always get their big take right at the gate as people were on their way up to worship the Lord. And these buddies are getting him there.

Now he has never walked in his life. He was born this way.

Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, fell when he was five and never walked again. At least he had the first five years of his life to experience some of that.

The poor old man at the pool of Bethesda in Jesus' time in John 5 had been laying there for 38 years and there was nobody to come along and put him in the water until the Lord said, "Rise, take up your pallet and start to walk."

So several of his buddies bring him along. He's never walked in his life. He's a permanent fixture at the gate. They just plan on him being there at 3:00 in the afternoon to do his deal.

v. 3 And when he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms.

"And when he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms."

It's kind of like, at a ballgame and someone says, "Programs! Programs!" We can't see the players without a program and

all that stuff. It's kind of like he's hawking his wares. He's getting the attention of everybody who's coming because he wants to gain some financial benefit from these fellas that are coming.

v. 4 And Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze upon him and said: “Look at us!”

“And Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze upon him and he said: ‘Look at us!’”

And of course he thinks immediately, “Well I got their attention. Now they're going to give me what I need. They're going to give me some money here.”

v. 5 And he began fixing his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.

“And he began fixing his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.”

v. 6 Then Peter said: “I am not having silver and gold, but what I am having, this I am giving to you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene start walking and keep on walking!”

“Then Peter said: ‘I am not having silver and gold, but what I am having, this I am giving to you.’”

Now notice what he says:

“In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene start walking and keep on walking!”

Now this is something he’s never done before. He has never been vertical. He’s been born horizontal and he’s been horizontal all of his life. And he’s being asked to do something that he’s never done before. And in the present tense in the Greek, he’s supposed to keep on doing it. Impossible—never done that.

There are some things that money just can’t buy and Peter and John are saying, “I am having what you need, not what you want right now.”

In one of the historical accounts of Pope Innocent IV he was having a conversation with Thomas Aquinas. Thomas Aquinas came in, he was counting a large sum of money and the Pope turned to him and he said, “You know Thomas, the church can no longer say silver and gold have I none.” And Thomas said, “Yah. And the church neither says ‘rise up and walk.’” And that gives you an indication sometimes of the shallowness in our own lives of our commitment and how far we’ve drifted. (source unknown)

But there’s also another tremendous problem. The problem is there are a lot of people today that are totally confused about this whole business of healing and rising up and walking.

Is this for believers today? Is this for the church? Do we have

people today that are so gifted that they can go around and in the name of Jesus tell people to do this?

Well that whole healing movement that seems to be clustering around the church, the body of Christ, finds its foundation in Mark 16 where we read these words:

Mark 16:15-18

“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved. But he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.’”

Ray Stedman probably made the best statement with regard to this whole problem:

... Mark’s highly condensed account that Jesus first said to all of his disciples, “Go and preach the gospel to every creature.” And then He added, “He who believes the gospel and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Then Jesus changed back to the plural, “And these signs will accompany those who believe.” [In other words, these disciples who are in fact believers.] By this He meant those disciples to whom he was talking, those whom He had just rebuked for their unbelief. Jesus had just finished

scolding them because they would not believe that He was risen from the dead. So He added, “And these signs will accompany those among you who believe.”

(source unknown)

And so those signs were signs of authentication, that transition time. That what is being done is being done in the name of Jesus Christ. So these signs were not meant to follow or to be a part of it.

Now J. I. Packer of course, he’s a little more direct. When he gets into it he says:

(Keep In Step With the Spirit by J. I. Packer)

...the text quoted will not bear the weight put upon them, and the New Testament references to unhealed sickness among Christian leaders make it plain that good health at all times is not God’s will for all believers. Also, the charismatic supposition loses sight of the good that can come in the form of wisdom, patience, and acceptance of reality without bitterness when Christians are exposed to the discipline of pain and of remaining unhealed.

Moreover, the charismatic supposition creates appalling possibilities of distress when on the basis of it a person seeks healing, fails to find it, and then perhaps is told that the reason lies not in God’s unwillingness or inability to heal, but in his own lack of faith. Without doubting that God can and sometimes does heal supernaturally today, and that healings of various kinds do in fact cluster around some people’s

ministries, I judge this expression of the healing streak in charismatic thought to be a major mistake and one that works against Christian maturity in a quite radical way.

The same must be said of the crass insistence by some charismatics (and others too) that if you honor God, He will prosper your business and you will make money and enjoy comfort. In practice, it often does not work so. A long line of bankrupt believers proclaims this.

And while some may have brought trouble on themselves by supposing that because they were Christians they were somehow exempt from the rigors of proper business management and coping with economic change, that is not the case with them all. In Scripture Christians are given no general promises of wealth, only of testing and tribulation. Directions are certainly given for handling wealth, if in God's providence it comes your way. But it is evident that universal wealth is not expected.

(source unknown)

The focus is not on the sign. The focus is on the Person of the Lord Jesus. And in this authentication here that's taking place in the message, Peter says, "get up and start walking and keep on walking."

v. 7 And having firmly grasped his right hand, he raised him up. And instantly his feet and his ankles were strengthened.

"And having firmly grasped his right hand, he raised him up. And instantly his feet and his ankles were strengthened."

And the guy starts walking. Now why is that miracle right there in the book of Acts? That miracle is a picture of all of humanity under the new dispensation of grace. We are all lame. We're all crippled. We all lay at the gate of the temple or at the church and we wonder how it is that we're going to be made right. We want money but money's not it. It's a healing that has to take place.

Romans 5:8

God commendeth His love toward us and yet while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

So this is a picture of salvation. This man is healed. He is a picture of what is going to come in this next generation.

v. 8 And leaping up, he stood and went to walking about; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

“And leaping up, he stood and went to walking about; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.”

The guy's never done this before. That's like trying to teach a brand new little baby to walk. It's a process. This guy gets up and he shuffles one foot in front of the other—he's vertical. Pretty soon he realizes there's new freedom and there's new action here.

And he starts getting involved in this. In fact he starts in a little aerobic dance here toward the end. He starts leaping and jumping around and saying, “Wow! This is the most fantastic thing that’s ever happened!” And he’s praising God because he knows who’s responsible for it.

v. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

“And all the people saw him walking and praising God.”

There’s no question about it. This guy has been a permanent fixture for a lot of years, laying out there by the gate. And it’s the same guy.

v. 10 And they were recognizing him as being the one who used to sit at the beautiful gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

“And they were recognizing him as being the one who used to sit at the beautiful gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”

What happened in our last study when the Spirit of God came? Remember? All those words were described? They were filled with wonder, filled with amazement. They were astonished at what was happening.

Again the same thing happens here. They're amazed. They're "filled with wonder."

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. Old things are passed away. Behold all things are become new.

How amazed are people at what they see in our life? How amazed are they at how we responded and reacted to situations and circumstances today? Has our life been a dramatic demonstration of the fact that Jesus Christ lives today? Has He been seen in us? And freely spoken of by us?

v. 11 And while he was holding firmly to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the covered colonnade, the one called Solomon's, utterly flabbergasted.

"And while he was holding firmly to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the covered colonnade, the one called Solomon's, they were utterly flabbergasted."

There's a new one! That's the only way we could translate that word from the Greek. It's totally mind boggling that this guy, after all these years laying out here by the gate, is now in there at the time of prayer.

v. 12 And Peter, having seen this, he replied to the people, “Men, Israelites, why are you marvelling at this, or why are you fixing your attention upon us, as if by our own power or piety we have made him to be walking about?”

“And Peter, having seen this, he replied to the people,”

Now here comes Peter’s second message. We’re going to get two messages from Peter here. And this one’s great but the next one is even better. Here he comes again. Remember this is the guy that just a couple of months ago denied that he even knew Christ. He was so shy and so fearful and so afraid. But when the conflict comes in the opportunity now, Peter’s a different person.

“And Peter, having seen this, he replied to the people, ‘Men, Israelites, why are you marveling at this, or why are you fixing your attention upon us, as if by our own power or piety we have made him to be walking about?’”

v. 13 The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His servant, Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.

“The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified”—WHO?—“His servant, Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up and disowned in the presence of Pilate,

when he had decided to release Him.”

“Why just a couple of months ago y’all were responsible for delivering Him up! You’re responsible for disowning Him when Pilate was getting ready to release Him! This is the one who’s responsible for what took place.”

Why does he use that strange term there? He says this happened in the name “of our fathers, glorified His servant, Jesus”? Why does he use the term “servant”? Ever thought of that?

Isaiah 52 and 53 is the passage of the suffering servant in the Old Testament. It’s a passage that every Jew doesn’t care to read. In fact the rabbis just don’t read it. Why? Because that passage says 700 years before Christ came that the Messiah was going to suffer.

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we’ve turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

The substitutionary atonement of the death of the Messiah, God’s servant, is prophesied 700 years before but the Jews

have to reject that! Because they rejected the Christ! He isn't going to suffer. He's going to come as their Messiah, their King, their great Deliverer.

And so again the focus of the passage is on the Lord Jesus.

Leonardo da Vinci, after he painted the Last Supper, invited a friend to come in and look at it. And the friend's first words were: "That silver goblet is magnificent!" Whereupon Leonardo quickly grabbed the paint and blotted out the silver goblet. And the guy said, "Why did you do that?" He said, "Because my original intention was that all the focus would be on the Lord Jesus and on Him alone."
(source unknown)

And that's why that is such a masterful painting and why immediately now our eyes go to the Person of the Lord Jesus. And if we'll keep our eyes on Christ in the early church in the book of Acts, we're not going to get very far off field.

Now look at verse 14. Peter's incredible in some of the words he uses!

v. 14 But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

"But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One,"—and they both knew that was the Messiah—"and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,"

When did that happen? Remember when Pilate brought Barabbas out and he also brought Christ out that morning of the crucifixion? He said, “Which one do you want me to free since this is Passover time?” And they said, “Give us Barabbas the murderer! We’ll take him!” “What’ll I do with Jesus?” And the chorus just resounded with a thundering cavalcade of noise and they said, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” (ref. John 18:39, 40)

That was just a couple of months ago. Now look at verse 15.

v. 15 and killed the originator of life, whom God raised from the dead,—a fact to which we ourselves are witnesses.

“and you killed the originator of life,”

“You put to death the Author of Life!”

“whom God raised from the dead,—a fact to which we ourselves are witnesses.”

All things were created by Him and for Him, through Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made.

John 1:4 says: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

“You’ve killed the originator of life and that’s a fact that we ourselves are witnesses.”

v. 16 And on the basis of faith in His name, it is His name which has strengthened this man whom you are seeing and knowing, and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

“And on the basis of faith in His name,”

There’s the single condition of salvation. See we’re getting to that point now.

“it is His name which has strengthened this man whom you are seeing and knowing, and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.”

Now when we come to the word “faith,” what do we mean?

Ron Dunn in his book *The Faith Crisis* probably best described it. He says:

(The Faith Crisis by Ronald Dunn)

Many well-meaning Christians confuse the key of faith with counterfeit keys, keys that bear a remarkable similarity to faith but are actually look-alike replicas. Often what they judge to be faith is in fact presumption or wishful thinking or selfish desire or some form of positive thinking. And when these bogus keys fail to open the doors of God’s promises, some

conclude that they are not of the chosen few and abandon any hope of living the life of faith.

That was the greatest discovery of my life. Faith is the master key of the Christian life. From start to finish salvation is a by-grace-through-faith operation. Everything we get in the Christian life we get by grace through faith. Grace makes it available and faith accepts it. Grace is God's hand giving; faith is man's hand receiving. Faith possesses what grace provides. Grace is God's part; faith is man's part. It is our positive response to God's gracious offer. Everything God demands of man can be summed up in one word: faith.

Faith is the grasping of almighty power, the hand of man laid on the arm of God, the grand and blessed hour in which things impossible to me become possible, O Lord, through Thee." —Anna E. Hamilton
(source unknown)

It is taking. It is the means of taking what God has provided in grace.

v. 17 And now, brethren, I am knowing for sure that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.

"And now, brothers, I am knowing for sure that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also."

At least he's showing some love and kindness to them. He's not being stern and vengeful at this point.

v. 18 But the things which God announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled.

“But the things which God announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”

That’s Isaiah 52 again.

v. 19 Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

“Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;”

“Repent! Turn around! Come back so your sins can be wiped away. And then the time of refreshing will come.”

The Lord will open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing. And we can start singing:

There shall be showers of blessing,
This is the promise of love.
There shall be seasons refreshing,
Sent from the Savior above.
(source unknown)

v. 20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you.

“and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you.”

Of course he’s referring to Christ coming as the Messiah to set up the Kingdom. As soon as the nation repents and comes back to God, it is time for the Kingdom.

v. 21 Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, about which God spoke through the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

“Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration”—or the Kingdom—“of all things, about which God spoke through the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.”

That obviously with the word “restoration” means the Kingdom has been set aside for a time. God has a new program. It’s an individual relationship now, but the Kingdom is going to come.

v. 22 Moses indeed said, ‘A prophet from among your brethren the Lord your God shall raise up for you who is like me; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you.

“Moses indeed said, ‘A prophet from among your brethren the Lord your God shall raise up for you who is like me; to Him

you shall give heed in everything He says to you.”

v. 23 And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’

“And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.”

What’s the process?

REPENT,

RETURN,

REFRESHMENT, and

RESTORATION.

God wants to do that in the heart and life of every believer today. And He also wants to do it in the heart of those who know not the Christ to bring to that place.

v. 24 And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days.

“And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days.”

v. 25 It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God covenanted with your fathers, saying to Abraham: ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’

“It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God covenanted with your fathers, saying to Abraham: “And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

He takes him right back to the Abrahamic covenant and says:

v. 26 For you first, God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.”

“For you first,”—God did this for you first—”“God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.”

There are so many people that have the idea that God is out to bug and blast them but never to bless them. God’s whole purpose in mind is to bring blessing into our lives if we just realize with our old Adamic, sinful natures that He just waits for us to turn it over to Him and allow Him to work.

And that’s what he’s saying to these fellows. “You know you’re fighting the gift of salvation, the originator of life. The prophets spoke of it. He has suffered and died for you and still you are resisting Him.”

As he finishes his message, we can just feel the intensity of hatred among the Jews that are here as they listen to this message. They've been accused of killing the "originator of life."

Someone said this is the second story of the three Hebrew children. Remember the story in the Old Testament of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being thrown into the fiery furnace and the Lord was with them through it? Well here we have Peter, John and a lame man healed. And the Lord has to stand with them in the midst of all of this because now they're going to be apprehended and put in jail. Here comes the first persecution.

4:v.1 And while they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple police, and the Sadducees, burst suddenly upon them,

"And while they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple police, and the Sadducees, burst suddenly upon them,"

v. 2 being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and announcing in the case of Jesus the resurrection from among the dead.

"being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and announcing in the case of Jesus the resurrection from among the dead."

What were they famous for? Teaching Jesus and “the resurrection from among the dead.”

v. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.

“And they laid hands on them, and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.”

Would it have been great to have heard the conversation in jail that night about what was taking place as they thought, “Well, it’s going to cost us a little bit. Evidently these people aren’t just going to be really excited about what we’re doing.”

It would have been interesting to hear Peter and John dialogue over this whole thing.

v. 4 But many of those who heard the Word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

“But many of those who heard the Word believed;”—It can’t be stopped—“and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”

Doesn’t that sound like a great Baptist statement there? We have two thousand here, we have three thousand over here. We have five thousand! We had three thousand last week. We’ve had two thousand more as a result of the sermon, so we

have five thousand now.

Put the leaders in the prison and look what happens. There were a whole bunch of people who believe this message from Peter. And we have two thousand more. Now we have five thousand of them that are in this new body—the body of Christ.

v. 5 And it came about on the next day, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem;

“And it came about on the next day, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem;”

Now we have all of the big boys that have come together!

v. 6 also Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.

“also Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.”

We have the whole group here. This is the religious establishment of the day.

v. 7 And having stood them in their midst, they were inquiring: “By what power, or in what name, have you done this?”

“And having stood them in their midst,”—how would we like to be in that group?—“they were inquiring:”—QUESTION—
“By what power, or in what name, have you done this?”

What’s the motivation behind this? What’s the “power”?
What’s the “name” involved?

v. 8 Then Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers of the people and elders,

“Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: ‘Rulers of the people and elders,’”

This is a 92-word sermon in which Peter, being on trial by the Sanhedrin, puts the Sanhedrin on trial. It’s going to be great! In a few words he turns it around and makes a powerful, powerful presentation.

v. 9 if we are being examined today regarding a good deed done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well,

“if we are being examined today regarding a good deed done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well,”

v. 10 let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised

from the dead—by means of this One this man stands here before you in good health.

“let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by means of this One this man stands before you in good health.”

v. 11 This One is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

“This One is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, which had become the cornerstone.”

Talk about an illustration that communicates to these guys.

Back when they were building Solomon’s temple, it took them about seven years. And they quarried all the stones underneath the temple site. Where is that? That’s the Dome of the Rock presently in the land of Israel where we can go down into archeological excavation and see these gigantic quarries where they quarried the stones.

And they quarry the stones down there and they’d take them out and send them up and they’d build a building. Most of the stones were alike.

One day a big stone came that was different—different shape and size. And the builders saw a stone and they just thought to themselves this doesn’t fit. And so four or five of the

workmen rolled this stone over to the cliff of the Kidron Valley and shoved it off thinking that the guys downstairs made a mistake.

And it came time finally for the putting in place of the cornerstone that held everything else together and they sent word to the men downstairs and said we need the cornerstone. And they said, “Well, I’m sorry. We had an order for that a long, long time ago and we sent that thing up there. You ought to have it on location at least for three or four years now.” And they said it’s nowhere around here.

Finally one old workman remembered that other stone that they’d rolled down the valley. He said, “You know, we rolled one down the hill one day. Reckon we ought to go down and check it out.” And they went down and scraped away all the brush and the debris.

v. 12 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is not even another name under heaven which has been given among men, by means of which we can be saved.”

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is not even another name under heaven which has been given among men, by means of which we can be saved.”

Salvation now resides in a person, not in the works of the Law.

We are born lost, dead and separated from God, and it is only by means of this One and His name that we can be saved.

v. 13 Now viewing the confidence of Peter and John, and having understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and they were recognizing them as those who were with Jesus.

“Now viewing the confidence of Peter and John, and having understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and they were recognizing them as those who were with Jesus.”

They see their confidence and they also understand that they are uneducated and untrained men. Because of this, they were marveling, and they were also recognizing them as those who were with Jesus when He was here upon the earth.

v. 14 And seeing the man who was standing with them, the one who had been healed, they were not having one thing to say against it.

“And seeing the man who was standing with them, the one who had been healed, they were not having one thing to say against it.”

They couldn't fault it in any way.

v. 15 But when they had ordered them to go off outside of the council, they were conferring with one another saying:

“But when they had ordered them to go off outside of the council, they were conferring with one another saying:”

After dismissing Peter and John from the council, they begin a secret session.

v. 16 “What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy sign has taken place through them is known to all those who are residing in Jerusalem, and we are not able to deny it.

“What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy sign has taken place through them is known to all those who are residing in Jerusalem, and we are not able to deny it.”

The big question is “What are we going to do with these men?” The reason is there is a fact: “that a noteworthy sign has taken place through them.”

The big problem is that it “is known to all of those who are residing in Jerusalem,” and we don’t have any defense. We cannot deny the fact that it has happened.

v. 17 But in order that it may not be caused to spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any man in this name.”

“But in order that it may not be caused to spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to any man in this name.”

Here in this initial statement of verse 17 they won't even mention the name Jesus Christ.

v. 18 And having called them, they commanded them not to be speaking at all or to be teaching upon the basis of the name of Jesus.

“And having called them, they commanded them not to be speaking at all or to be teaching upon the basis of the name of Jesus.”

They are here trying to do away with the heart of their teaching, and that is Jesus Christ.

v. 19 But Peter and John, answering, said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to be yielding obedience to you rather than to God, you be the judge;

“But Peter and John, answering, said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to be yielding obedience to you rather than to God, you be the judge;’”

The word “but” forms the contrast with the previous. And in their response they are basically saying, “What you are asking us to do violates the last command of our Lord that we would be His witnesses.”

v. 20 for we are not able to stop speaking the things which we saw and heard.”

“for we are not able to stop speaking the things which we saw and heard.”

“The reason we cannot comply with your wishes is because we cannot stop speaking the things which we saw with our eyes and we heard with our ears.”

Jeremiah 20:9

But if I say I will not remember Him or speak anymore in His name, then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones and I am weary of holding it in, and I cannot endure it.

v. 21 And when they had threatened them further, they released them, (finding no basis on which they might punish them) because of the people, because they all were glorifying God for what had happened;

“And when they had threatened them further, they released

them, (finding no basis on which they might punish them) because of the people, because they all were glorifying God for what had happened;”

The only option opened to them was to threaten them further and to release them. And as they did, it was because of the people who were so much in favor of what they had done and because everyone was “glorifying God for what had happened.”

v. 22 for the man was more than forty years old upon whom this sign of healing had been performed.

“for the man was more than forty years old upon whom this sign of healing had been performed.”

He had lived for over 40 years in this condition. He had been at the gate for many, many of these years and so was a spectacle to all the people. He was a permanent fixture, and few there were who did not know him.

v. 23 And having been released, they went to their own associates, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

“And having been released, they went to their own associates, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.”

This account that we have just witnessed is really the second story of the three Hebrew children.

Daniel 3:23-25

But these three men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire, still tied up. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste. He responded and said to his high officials, “Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “Certainly, O King.” He answered and said, “Look, I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.”

v. 24 And when they heard this, they lifted their voice to God with one accord and said: “O Lord, it is you who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all the things in them,

“And when they heard this, they lifted their voice to God with one accord and said: ‘O Lord, it is you who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all the things in them,”

v. 25 who by the mouth of our father David your servant, through the Holy Spirit, said, ‘Why did the Gentiles behave arrogantly, and the people devise futile things?

“who by the mouth of our father David your servant, through the Holy Spirit, said, “Why did the Gentiles behave

arrogantly, and the people devise futile things?”

v. 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ.’

“The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ.”“

v. 27 For truly in this city there joined together against your holy Servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

“For truly in this city there joined together against your holy Servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,”

Here in their prayer they raise the question raised by David and then speak of what has happened to Jesus Christ in His coming to earth and the giving of His life.

v. 28 to do whatever your hand and your purpose determined beforehand should occur.

“to do whatever your hand and your purpose determined beforehand should occur.”

v. 29 And as for the present circumstances, Lord, look upon their threatenings, and grant to your

bondslaves to be speaking your word with all confidence,

“And as for the present circumstances, Lord, look upon their threatenings, and grant to your bondslaves to be speaking your word with all confidence,”

They are not willing to entertain the thought of being still. They want to continue in “the present circumstances” where “threatenings” are similar to what they have just described, and they are asking that they might “be speaking the word with all confidence.”

v. 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

“while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

What an incredible prayer! It starts with the magnificent manifestation of power displayed in creation, followed by speaking to the Lord about the conflict and confrontation they are presently experiencing, and then praying for confidence that they might be bold enough to speak.

Finally they asked the Lord for confirmation that He might stretch out His hand to heal, with “signs and wonders” so that these His followers might be vindicated.

v. 31 And having prayed, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and went to speaking the word of God with boldness.

“And having prayed, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and went to speaking the word of God with boldness.”

There’s a story in the *Daily Bread* that illustrates the point of being able to speak with confidence once the Spirit of God is within.

Though uneducated and rough in his mannerisms, Peter Cartwright possessed a keen insight into human nature and an overpowering devotion to God. One day he was conducting a service in a church when President Andrew Jackson unexpectedly showed up. The deacons hurriedly called the preacher from the pulpit and informed him of the distinguished visitor. They asked Cartwright to be careful what he said. As he stood up to give his message, he began, ‘I understand that Andrew Jackson is with us, and I have been requested to be guarded in my remarks. Andrew Jackson will go to hell as quickly as any other man if he does not repent.’

The audience was totally shocked, wondering how the president would react. At the close of the meeting, the chief executive stepped forward to speak to Cartwright. “Sir,” he said, “if I had a regiment of men like you, I could whip the world.”

(Our Daily Bread, date unknown)

We get so intimidated and so scared but the message has to go out. People have to be confronted and sometimes we have to do it with great courage.

Now watch the end of this. This is a beautiful thing.

v. 32 And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not even one was saying that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them.

“And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; and not even one was saying that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them.”

There’s no tight-wads in this bunch at all.

v. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon all of them.

“And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon all of them.”

v. 34 For there was no one among them who was in need, for as many as were possessors of lands or

houses, selling them, kept on bringing the prices of the things that were being sold,

“For there was no one among them who was in need, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, selling them, kept on bringing the prices of the things that were being sold,”

v. 35 and kept on placing them at the feet of the apostles; and distribution was continually being made to each one, according as he was having a need.

“and kept on placing them at the feet of the apostles; and distribution was continually being made to each one, according as he was having a need.”

v. 36 And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which latter name by interpretation means Son of Encouragement, a Levite, of the land of Cyprus,

“And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which latter name by interpretation means Son of Encouragement, a Levite, of the land of Cyprus,”

v. 37 possessing a field, sold it and brought the money and placed it at the feet of the apostles.

“possessing a field, sold it and brought the money and placed it at the feet of the apostles.”

He's a man noted for his encouragement. He could affirm. He could exhort. He could comfort. He could counsel.

But notice one thing. They're all of one mind. This hurts so bad when we see believers divided.

We have to turn to the secular world to find the loyalty, the devotion, the love, the commitment, the sharing, the concern, the deep willingness to be involved in the lives of one another constructively to the benefit of everyone.

The early church was like that. They didn't have to do this. This is not communism. They're not told to do this! They can do it because they wanted to, because they loved each other and they wanted to help one another.

There are a number of lessons that come out of this study.

Lesson #1: Sometimes we must give to people what they need, rather than what they want.

This guy wanted money and what he needed was to be made well. Sometimes we must give to people what they need rather than what they want.

Lesson #2: The single condition for salvation is faith.

Lesson #3: The focus of the whole passage is upon Jesus Christ and one's relationship to Him.

Lesson #4: Salvation now resides in a person, not in the works of the Law.

Lesson #5: There is salvation in no one else but Jesus Christ.

Lesson #6: There is no excuse for ignorance with regard to the things of God.

Lesson #7: Confidence is a manifestation of the Spirit-filled life.

Lesson #8: The concern of these early believers is for the needs of one another.

Lesson #9: You never hear a testimony in the book of Acts about getting the Holy Spirit.

That is a powerful argument of silence that we have somewhat afield, placing so much emphasis and so much focus on the Holy Spirit when the Holy Spirit was given to glorify, to magnify and to honor the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is our salvation. He is all and in all. He's all that a man needs and He's in all that a man does. If we know Him not, we're not ready to meet Him.

“He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.” (ref. 1 John 5:12)

Father, thank You for these two chapters we've looked at in the book of Acts. Thank You that the study opened with a man lame, laying at the gates of the temple asking for money. Lord, we realize that we do the same. We try to buy our way into Your good graces. We try to do all sorts of things and healing will only come into our lives when we learn to walk by means of the Spirit when we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior. We pray that Your Holy Spirit would really convict hearts that are trying to fog or confuse the issue and will by faith reach out and appropriate this gift of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank You that when we stand before You it will not be our human works, it will not be the deeds that we have done in the flesh. It'll simply be the blood of Christ, the perfect Lamb of God who paid the price for our broken law that makes eternity possible. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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A Practical Study of ACTS:

Take It To Them!

“Putting the GO Back in the Gospel”

STUDY NUMBER THREE – ACTS 3:1-4:37

NOTES

v. 1 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the ninth hour (3:00 p.m.), the hour of prayer.

v. 2 And a certain man who had been lame from his mother’s womb was being carried along, whom they were accustomed to place daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, for the purpose of asking alms from those who were entering the temple.

v. 3 And when he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms.

v. 4 And Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze upon him and said: “Look at us!”

v. 5 And he began fixing his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.

v. 6 Then Peter said: “I am not having silver and gold, but what I am having, this I am giving to you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene start walking and keep on walking!”

v. 7 And having firmly grasped his right hand, he raised him up. And instantly his feet and his ankles were strengthened.

v. 8 And leaping up, he stood and went to walking about; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

v. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

v. 10 And they were recognizing him as being the one who used to sit at the beautiful gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

v. 11 And while he was holding firmly to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the covered colonnade, the one called Solomon’s, utterly flabbergasted.

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v. 12 And Peter, having seen this, he replied to the people, “Men, Israelites, why are you marvelling at this, or why are you fixing your attention upon us, as if by our own power or piety we have made him to be walking about?”

v. 13 The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His servant, Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.

v. 14 But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

v. 15 and killed the originator of life, whom God raised from the dead,—a fact to which we ourselves are witnesses.

v. 16 And on the basis of faith in His name, it is His name which has strengthened this man whom you are seeing and knowing, and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

v. 17 And now, brethren, I am knowing for sure that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also.

v. 18 But the things which God announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled.

v. 19 Repent therefore and return, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

v. 20 and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you.

v. 21 Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, about which God spoke through the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.

v. 22 Moses indeed said, ‘A prophet from among your brethren the Lord your God shall raise up for you who is like me; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you.

v. 23 And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’

v. 24 And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days.

v. 25 It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God covenanted with your fathers, saying to Abraham: ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’

v. 26 For you first, God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.”

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4:v.1 And while they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple police, and the Sadducees, burst suddenly upon them,
v. 2 being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and announcing in the case of Jesus the resurrection from among the dead.
v. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in jail until the next day, for it was already evening.
v. 4 But many of those who heard the Word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.
v. 5 And it came about on the next day, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem;
v. 6 also Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent.
v. 7 And having stood them in their midst, they were inquiring: “By what power, or in what name, have you done this?”
v. 8 Then Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers of the people and elders,
v. 9 if we are being examined today regarding a good deed done to a sick man, as to how this man has been made well,
v. 10 let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by means of this One this man stands here before you in good health.
v. 11 This One is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.
v. 12 And there is salvation in no one else; for there is not even another name under heaven which has been given among men, by means of which we can be saved.”
v. 13 Now viewing the confidence of Peter and John, and having understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and they were recognizing them as those who were with Jesus.
v. 14 And seeing the man who was standing with them, the one who had been healed, they were not having one thing to say against it.
v. 15 But when they had ordered them to go off outside of the council, they were conferring with one another saying:
v. 16 “What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy sign has taken place through them is known to all those who are residing in Jerusalem, and we are not able to deny it.

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v. 18 And having called them, they commanded them not to be speaking at all or to be teaching upon the basis of the name of Jesus.

v. 19 But Peter and John, answering, said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to be yielding obedience to you rather than to God, you be the judge;

v. 20 for we are not able to stop speaking the things which we saw and heard.”

v. 21 And when they had threatened them further, they released them, (finding no basis on which they might punish them) because of the people, because they all were glorifying God for what had happened;

v. 22 for the man was more than forty years old upon whom this sign of healing had been performed.

v. 23 And having been released, they went to their own associates, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

v. 24 And when they heard this, they lifted their voice to God with one accord and said: “O Lord, it is you who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all the things in them,

v. 25 who by the mouth of our father David your servant, through the Holy Spirit, said, ‘Why did the Gentiles behave arrogantly, and the people devise futile things?’

v. 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ.’

v. 27 For truly in this city there joined together against your holy Servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

v. 28 to do whatever your hand and your purpose determined beforehand should occur.

v. 29 And as for the present circumstances, Lord, look upon their threatenings, and grant to your bondslaves to be speaking your word with all confidence,

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v. 31 And having prayed, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and went to speaking the word of God with boldness.

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v. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon all of them.

v. 34 For there was no one among them who was in need, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, selling them, kept on bringing the prices of the things that were being sold,

v. 35 and kept on placing them at the feet of the apostles; and distribution was continually being made to each one, according as he was having a need.

v. 36 And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which latter name by interpretation means Son of Encouragement, a Levite, of the land of Cyprus,

v. 37 possessing a field, sold it and brought the money and placed it at the feet of the apostles.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Acts 3:1-4:37 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What kind of gift does Peter give to the lame man, according to verse 6?

3. Why did God allow the man to be healed, according to verse 13?

4. What does he recommend they do, according to verse 19?

5. What was it about their teaching that upset the priests and the Levites, according to chapter 4:1, 2?

6. To whom does Peter give all the glory for the healing that has taken place, according to verse 10?

7. How do Peter and John respond to the council, according to verse 19?

8. What are the results of their prayers, according to verse 31?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Sometimes we must give to people what they need, rather than what they want.

LESSON #2: The single condition for salvation is faith.

LESSON #3: The focus of the whole passage is upon Jesus Christ and one's relationship to Him.

LESSON #4: Salvation now resides in a person, not in the works of the Law.

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