

HEALING OF THE LAME MAN

Many signs and wonders was the characteristic of the early church. In chapter three Luke singles out one of these not only because of its public character but also because of its relation to the progress of the church in these early days. Mark well, however, that there is more than one miracle in this chapter, for not only is the lame man healed but many spiritually lame men are healed as a result of believing the words of life (cf. 4:4). But the story turns on the miracle of the healing of the lame man.

I. THE MIRACLE (3:1-10)

A. Its Circumstances (3:1-3)

The chief circumstances surrounding this miracle are two habitual acts which cross each other's paths. The one is the habit of Peter and John in going (imperfect tense) to the temple; the other was the habit of the lame man in being carried to the temple (also imperfect tense). Their paths crossed and God did a miracle.

The Lord's work sometimes brings strange people together like a Peter and a John. But these two opposites were now baptized into the one body of Christ; hence, it is not strange to find them going together to the temple. It may be strange to some to note that they continued to attend the temple services even after the formation of the church. This is the second mention of this (cf. 2:46), and although they did not continue this practice as a means of redemption, they did continue it as a means of testimony. Likewise does the apostle Paul in his ministry. It was their habit to give this very simple yet effective testimony for their Lord. Too many Christians are willing to serve only if they can be surgeons and specialists; too few of us are willing to be general practitioneers.

At the same time a man lame for over 40 years (cr. 4:22) was also being carried to the gate of the temple called Beautiful to beg as was his custom.

*quote
facts
p 46 on temple*

Such practice was common among the Jews then just as it is now among Gentiles in certain places of the world.. But do not look only at his feet. Look ~~at~~ his soul. He well pictures the sinner who from birth is unable to take a step toward God, and tragically, he also pictures the contentment of the sinner in his condition. He was without strength (Rom. 5:6) and without hope (Eph. 2:12). This is a circumstance which calls for a miracle.

B. Its Characteristics (3:4-7)

1. It was unexpected (vs. 4-6a). It is true that the man was expecting something but it was alms, not healing. Too often, one fears, the modern church has reversed this and offered relief in place of regeneration.

2. It was in the name of Jesus Christ (vs. 6b). The name stands for all that the person is. In the case of the man's body it demonstrated Jesus' power to heal; in the case of his soul, His power to save.

3. It was instantaneous (vs 7). The man was healed immediately, not days or weeks later.

4. It was complete (vs. 7). The man was not partially healed but completely so. The verb strengthened is one of Luke's medical terms in the book.

C. Its Consequences (3:8-10)

1. Joy (vs. 8). He leaped for you (cf. Isa. 35:6).

2. Stability (vs. 8). He stood and didn't wobble.

3. Activity (vs. 8). He tested out his new-found strength and walked about freely without any aid or hinderance. If this be a picture of the salvation of a sinner, then would to God that more Christians would test their faith in the Lord. in a similar way.

4. He praised God (vs.8).

5. He became a testimony to others (vs. 9-10). His very walk testified to the miracle, and because the people recognized that a change had been made

they ran together gazing in wonder at that which had happened. And thus from the place called Solomon's Porch Peter preaches a second time to the Jewish people.

II. THE MESSAGE (3:12-26)

A. Introduction (3:11-12)

Again Peter uses a current event to begin his message. Or he takes the healed man as an object lesson and preaches from him. The introduction also contains the address and a rebuke. Peter does not reply as to a mere mob but to the "men of Israel" "assembled at the sanctuary and representing the whole Jewish nation." Alexander p. 107. To understand this is important to the understanding of the nature of his message. He also rebukes them not for their surprise at what had occurred but for their lack of comprehension as to the efficient cause of the miracle.

B. Theme (3:13-18)

As in chapter 2 the theme of Peter's sermon is Jesus whom ye killed is Messiah. Almost as remarkable as the healing of the lame man is this message from Peter's lips, for this is the same man now standing in the very center of things before his fellow-townspeople who only a few months before had denied the one whom he now preached. This is one of the proofs of the coming of the Spirit. Peter develops his theme by designating the Lord in five ways and by stating five facts about Him. He is called the Servant (vs. 13). This would immediately bring to these Jewish minds such passages as Isa. 42:1-9; 49:1-13; 52:13-53:12, and would serve to emphasize Peter's conclusion that the Messiah was not only a ruler but a sufferer (vs. 18). He is called Jesus, and this immediately links Him to the man of Nazareth only too well known to this crowd. He is called the Holy One and Just (vs. 14) which not only contrasts Him with Barabas just mentioned but also makes Him Deity. Finally Peter designates Him

as the Prince of Life (vs. 15). Actually the word means author, leader as well as Prince (cf. Heb. 2:10; 12:2). This prepares the way for the declaration of the resurrection, for obviously it would be impossible to kill the Author of Life itself. They tried; God's answer to the attempt was the resurrection.

The five facts stated about our Lord's life are; the exaltation of Christ (vs. 13); the delivering up of Him (vs. 13); his denial (vs. 13,14); His crucifixion (vs. 15) and His resurrection (vs. 15). Then Peter draws it all together by answering the question that brought the audience together-- faith in the name of this One is the reason for the healing of the lame man. It is the One of whom it was prophesied He should suffer and the One whom they ignorantly put to death, Our Lord confirmed that this was the case by His words "(for they know not what they do;" nevertheless their guilt is not lessened. It is simply that grace triumphed^s over even the greatest crime in the world.

C. Conclusion (3:19-26)

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The conclusion that can be reached in the face of such evidence is that it is imperative to repent. The Jews are called upon to change their minds about Jesus for He is Messiah and change their ways of life by turning to the Lord. This would bring forgiveness of sins and (The word when in verse 19 should be replaced in the translation by the phrase that so) the return of the Lord to establish the kingdom promised to Israel. This has become a difficult passage for some because they pose the hypothetical question, "Would the kingdom have been ushered in if these people had repented?" Peter declares Yes, At the same time there was no doubt from all eternity what would be the disposition by the people of this offer. This chapter is another illustration of the remarkable ways of God. J. N. Darby calls this the rejection of a glorified Christ and the final sealing on the part of the Jews of their own judgment. His well-written words are:

as in the question, Of a non-christ person believe will he be saved?

When Israel repents, the Lord will come, and it will own that He whom they had rejected was the Lord Himself; and it will be full of sorrow and shame, but shall be pardoned and liberated; and all the blessings, of which the prophets have spoken shall be fulfilled. Meanwhile, heaven held Jesus hid from the eyes of men.

But Peter presents this repentance to the Jews, and the present return besides.

But before he could finish his discourse, the rulers of the Jews arrive, take possession of the apostles, and throw them into prison. Jesus glorified is refused as completely as Jesus in humiliation. All is finished for Israel, with respect to its responsibility--the marvellous patience of God, and the grace that had made intercession for the beloved people on the cross. Nothing more could be done; it only remained to carry out the judgment of a people who would not have grace. Such is the history alas! of the natural man!

J. N. Darby Meditations on the Acts of the Apostles. London: G. Morrish. n.d. I. p. 22-23.

Would to God they might have received this Prince of Life, but they did not. But thanks be to God, that He still extends His hand of grace to the world today--to both Jew and Gentile.