

Learn to Read Acts Effectively

Distance Learning Programme

Session 2

Session 2

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Session 2 - Peter's message in the temple in Jerusalem Acts 3

Introduction

In this chapter we see Peter showing that he was acting with God's authority by healing a man whom everyone knew to be unable to walk. Having attracted attention, he then gave a summary of God's plan, which was very relevant to his hearers, and is to us as well.

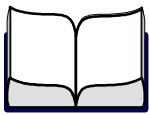
Before looking at the notes, you may wish to read Acts 3.

Summary

The Church in Jerusalem

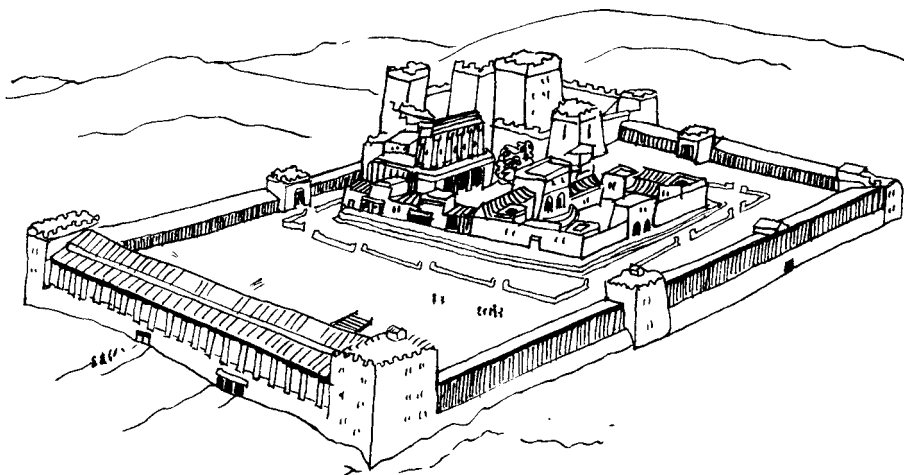
A lame man healed	3 v 1 to 11
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Acts 3 v 1 to 11 - A lame man healed



Read Acts 3 v 1 to 11

Peter and John went up to the temple at the "ninth hour", which is 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Verse 2 tells us that a lame man was laid "daily" at the gate of the temple. He was there every day and would be known by all.



A reconstruction of the temple

Acts 3 v 6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

Look at the cross-references from this verse and you will see some interesting connections with other sections of scripture:

X-Refs-
Acts 3 v 6

Matthew 7 v 21 to 23; 10 v 9; Acts 3 v 16; 4 v 7.

- Many will claim to work miracles "in Jesus' name" for wrong motives and reasons. We must look and see if the wonders are done by people who "do God's will"
- This also warns us that wonders and signs are not proof on their own that people are approved by God
- Peter had obeyed the command Jesus gave the disciples when they were first sent out by him, and had no money
- This would mean that they had to trust in God to provide people to support them
- "In the name of" indicates "using the power and authority of". Peter healed the man to show the power and authority of Jesus

We have seen that "the name" implies much more than we normally understand by the word. The echoes lead us to other passages that help us to see more of what is involved in "the name":

Echoes -
In his
name

John 1 v 12; 2 v 23; 17 v 12 and 26; Acts 4 v 7 and 12; 10 v 43.

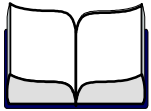
- We can become children of God through belief "in His name"
- Jesus' miracles caused people to believe "in His name"
- Jesus kept his disciples "in God's name" while he was with them
- Jesus' teaching was "declaring God's name"
- Miracles were done by the power or "name" of Jesus
- We can have salvation through the "name" of Jesus only
- We can have our sins forgiven through the "name" of Jesus

We see that the "name" of God and Jesus involves all that they stand for. We occasionally say that a person has a good or bad name, meaning that they are known for doing good or bad things. God has the best "name" of all, which includes His purpose or plan for us and the power to complete the plan.

The lame man was healed to show all that Jesus stood for: his willingness to help, not only with illness, but with the worst disease all of us have - death.

Verses 7 to 11 tell us how Peter healed this man. There was no possible doubt - the man whom everyone knew to be lame was now leaping about and praising God for his miraculous cure.

Acts 3 v 12 to 26 - Peter's message in the temple

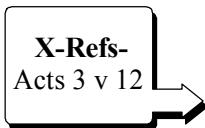


Read Acts 3 v 12 to 26

In this section we see the lessons that Peter brought out from the healing of the lame man.

Acts 3 v 12 So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

The cross-references refer to similar events and show us what we can learn from them:

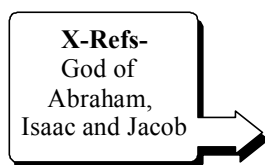


Daniel 2 v 27 and 28; Acts 10 v 25 and 26; 14 v 11 to 15.

- Miraculous powers come from God
- There is nothing "special" about the people receiving these powers - they are merely using God's power
- The purpose of the miracles was to draw attention to the message of the apostles and not to the apostles themselves.

Acts 3 v 13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers ..."

Peter referred to the God he worshipped as the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob". Look at the cross references and you will see something of the significance of this phrase:



Exodus 3 v 6; Psalm 105 v 6 to 10; Matthew 22 v 32;
Acts 5 v 30; Hebrews 11 v 8 to 21.

- God Himself used this title to Moses
- Psalm 105 refers to the covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- Jesus used the same title in Matthew 22
- Peter told his hearers that it was the “God of our fathers” who sent Jesus
- Hebrews 11 tells us that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob put their faith and trust in the promises God made to them

We shall see what these promises involve later in this session.

Acts 3 v 13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus"

Peter is telling his hearers that God has glorified Jesus as part of His plan. We can see what God has planned for His glorified Son by looking at the references from “glorified His Servant Jesus”:

X-Refs-
Glorified
His Servant
Jesus

John 5 v 22 and 23; 17 v 1 to 5; Philippians 2 v 9 to 11.

- God has given all responsibility for judgement to Jesus
- If we believe in all that God and Jesus can do for us, we can have endless life
- God has exalted Jesus so that eventually all people will glorify God when His purpose is complete

Acts 3 v 13 "... whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go."

Peter showed the stark contrast between God’s view of Jesus and that of the Jews. God highly exalted Jesus, they despised him and condemned him to the death of a common criminal.

*Acts 3 v 14 "But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,
15 "and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses."*

These two verses contain the real message for Peter’s hearers:

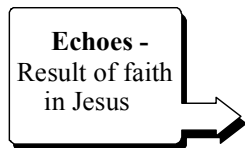
- They had no time for the righteous Son of God and wanted him killed
- But this was the same righteous Son of God who had come to give them life
- God raised Jesus from the dead
- The apostles were witnesses of all these things

Acts 3 v 16 "And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

Peter challenged his audience:

- The man had faith in Jesus and so was healed
- If they had faith in the same Jesus, who was the "Prince of life", they could be more than healed, they could be involved in the fulfilment of the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Look at the echoes and you will see that any one of us can be involved in God's plan if we have faith in God's purpose through Jesus:

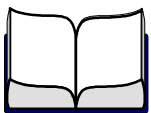


Romans 5 v 1; Galatians 3 v 26 to 29.

- Through faith in Jesus' work we can be justified (counted as being right with God) and have peace with God
- We can be sons and daughters of God through faith in Jesus
- If we are baptised, we belong to Christ and are included in the promises to Abraham just like the natural Jews could have been in Paul's day



We have now seen that it is through faith that we can be at peace with God. We can then be involved in the promises He made to Abraham, which we will look at later.



Read Acts 3 v 17 to 24

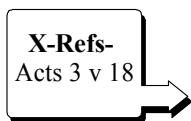
In this section, Peter is emphasising that all the recent events involving the death and resurrection of Jesus were fulfilments of predictions made in the Old Testament.

Acts 3 v 17 "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.

18 "But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled."

Peter encouraged his hearers and told them that, although they were guilty of crucifying the Son of God, all that had happened was part of God's plan with "the Christ" predicted by the prophets in the Old Testament.

Look at the cross-references from verse 18 and you will see some of the predictions about "the Christ" that were fulfilled by the sufferings of Jesus:



Psalm 22 v 1, 7 and 8, 14 to 18; 69 v 21; Isaiah 50 v 6; 53 v 4 to 9.

The table below shows where all of these God-given Old Testament predictions about "the Christ" were fulfilled in the sufferings of Jesus:

Old Testament prediction

Fulfilment

Psalm 22 v 1

Matthew 27 v 46; Mark 15 v 34

Psalm 22 v 7 and 8

Matthew 27 v 39 to 43; Mark 15 v 29 to 32

Psalm 22 v 15

John 19 v 28

Psalm 22 v 16

John 20 v 25 to 27

Psalm 22 v 17

Luke 23 v 35

Psalm 22 v 18

John 19 v 23 and 24

Psalm 69 v 21

Matthew 27 v 34 and 48

Isaiah 50 v 6

Mark 15 v 19

Isaiah 53 v 5

1 Peter 2 v 24

Isaiah 53 v 6

1 Peter 2 v 25

Isaiah 53 v 7

Mark 14 v 60 and 61

Isaiah 53 v 9

Matthew 27 v 57 and 60; 1 Peter 2 v 21 to 23

Acts 3 v 19 "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord"

Having shown that Jesus was "the Christ", Peter encouraged his hearers to "repent and be converted" so that they might be involved in God's plan for "refreshing" our world and have their sins removed. The echoes tell us a little more about how we can have our sins forgiven:

Look at the echoes and write down what you learn about how we can have our sins forgiven.
Compare your conclusions with the notes on page 12.

Echoes -
How our sins
can be forgiven

Acts 2 v 38; 1 Corinthians 15 v 3; Revelation 1 v 5.

The echoes clearly tell us that it is through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ that we can have our sins forgiven.

The cross-references from “times of refreshing” lead us to several Old Testament passages that tell us of God’s plan for the future:

Look at the cross-references and write down what you learn about God’s plan for the future refreshing of our world.
Compare your conclusions with the notes on page 13.

X-Refs-
Times of
refreshing

Isaiah 2 v 1 to 4; 61 v 3, 9 to 11.

We can see that God has planned a time when all the present personal and national problems will be a thing of the past. For a fuller picture of what God has planned for our world, have a look in the *Cross-references* booklet at some more of the many cross-references from Acts 3 v 19 referenced from the word “when”.

Acts 3 v 20 "and that He may send Jesus Christ ..."

Peter tells his audience that the “times of refreshing” for our world will come when the Lord Jesus Christ returns. The cross-references tell us a little more about this event:

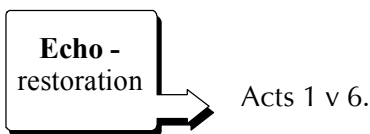
X-Refs-
Acts 3 v 20

Matthew 16 v 27; 24 v 30, 31 and 36; Mark 13 v 32; Revelation 1 v 7.

- Jesus will return to the earth and reward his followers
- The angels will gather those followers to Jesus when he returns
- No one knows the exact date of the return of Jesus
- Everyone will be aware when Jesus returns

Acts 3 v 21 "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

This verse tells us that Jesus will remain in heaven until "the times of restoration of all things", which are predicted by the Old Testament prophets. An echo from "restoration" tells us what Peter was referring to:



We see that Peter was referring to the restoration of the kingdom of Israel foretold in the Old Testament. He told his hearers that this would happen when Jesus comes back.

Acts 3 v 22 "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.

23 'And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' "

Look at the cross-reference and you will see the verses that Peter is here applying to Jesus:



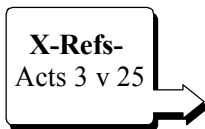
This passage from Deuteronomy tells us that God sent Jesus and expected the Jews to listen to him when he came. Peter is telling his listeners that they will listen when Jesus comes again.

In verse 24, Peter again reminded his audience that the Old Testament prophets foretold the work of Jesus. We looked at some of these prophecies on page 6.

Acts 3 v 25 "You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' "

Peter told his hearers that they were the sons of the men who made all of these predictions that we have been looking at. He implied that they should have listened to what the prophets said.

Look at the cross-references and write down what you learn about who the covenant was given to and what it has to do with the gospel.
Compare your conclusions with the notes on page 13.



Genesis 22 v 18; 26 v 4 ; 28 v 14; Galatians 3 v 8 and 16.

The cross-references show that God promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob a special descendant, just as we have seen He did to David (Session 1, page 16).

We can now expand our last summary (Session 1, page 19) of what we have learned about God's plan:



- God promised Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David a special descendant who would bring blessings on all nations
- This descendant would reign over an endless kingdom
- The special descendant was the Lord Jesus Christ
- Jesus died so that we can have our sins forgiven
- We can then be justified (counted as being right with God) and be included in His promises
- His promises include the endless kingdom to be set up at the return of Jesus
- We can be involved if we put our faith and confidence in God and His plan with Jesus Christ
- If we repent and are baptised, we will be raised from the dead at the return of Jesus
- We can then be included in this kingdom, when the present problems will all be things of the past

Acts 3 v 26 "To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

This was Peter's last comment before his arrest (see the start of chapter 4). He told his hearers that they could all benefit from the work of Jesus by having their sins forgiven. The cross-references form a useful summary of what we have already seen regarding God's covenant with Israel:

X-Refs-
to you first

Matthew 10 v 5 and 6; Luke 24 v 47; Acts 1 v 8; 18 v 4 to 6; 26 v 20.

- God's plan was to be preached to the Jews first
- This plan involving forgiveness of sins was to be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem
- The apostles were to be assisted in this work of witness by having special Holy Spirit powers
- The apostle Paul preached to the Gentiles after opposition from the Jews

X-Refs-
sent Jesus to
bless you

Galatians 3 v 9 and 14; 1 Peter 1 v 3.

- If we have faith in God and His promises made to Abraham, we can be included in the promises and so be in God's plan for the future
- Our hope for the future is bound up in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead

X-Refs-
in turning you
from your
iniquities

Jeremiah 32 v 38 to 41; Matthew 1 v 21; Titus 2 v 11 to 14; Jude 24.

- Jeremiah predicted that Israel would turn to God and He would bless them
- Joseph was told that Mary's son Jesus would be the one who would "save His people from their sins"
- God's grace (or undeserved favour) is now extended to all men
- We must live our life now trying to copy Jesus' perfect character and looking forward to the time of his return to the earth
- God's plan is able to remove the effect of our sin and enable us to be made faultless when Jesus comes back

We have now considered the content of the first two speeches that Peter gave at the start of the first-century church. We have seen most aspects of the message which the Bible presents to us as the teaching of the first-century church. We have summarised these teachings in a table on page 14.

The death and resurrection of Jesus is the part of God's plan that enables us to be involved in God's promises. We looked on page 8 of Session 1, at the evidence for our confidence in the resurrection of Jesus. We also look at more of the evidence to base our faith on in the *God-given evidence* booklet. Based on this evidence, we are challenged:



- God has raised Jesus from the dead and made the promise that he is to be king of a world-wide endless kingdom which will refresh our world
- We can be involved in this if we believe and trust God's plan through Jesus
- *Are we prepared to put our faith and confidence in God and His plan with Jesus Christ?*

If you would like to do an in-depth study, have a look at all the cross-references from these chapters in the separate *Cross-references* booklet.

In the next session, we shall see how the first-century church developed, and the problems that arose as the preaching continued. From this we can learn much that will be relevant to us today.

Summary of Session 2

- Peter healed the lame man to show that the message was from God
- Scripture warns us that impostors will try to imitate such miracles
- We can summarise God's plan:
 - * God promised Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David a special descendant who would be the centre of God's purpose
 - * The special descendant was the Lord Jesus Christ
 - * Christ died so that our sins may be forgiven
 - * God raised Jesus from the dead and promised that he will be king of an endless kingdom to refresh our world, to be set up when Jesus returns
 - * Those who are baptised and are faithful will be raised from the dead at the return of Jesus and will be involved in the blessings of the kingdom



We are challenged:

- We can be involved in this marvellous plan *if we put our trust and confidence in God and His plan with Jesus Christ, and take necessary action*

Questions

1. Why did Peter heal the lame man?
2. What, according to Peter, was the reason why God sent Jesus?
3. What will Jesus do when he comes back to the earth?
4. How can we be included in God's plan?

Self-study notes

(Look at the cross-references from the relevant verses to gain more information)

How our sins can be forgiven (page 7)

- Sins are forgiven when we repent and are baptised (Acts 2 v 38)
- Christ died so that our sins may be forgiven (1 Corinthians 15 v 3)
- The blood of Jesus has freed us from our sins (Revelation 1 v 5)

God's planned "times of refreshing" (page 7)

God has promised that:

- All nations will worship at God's house (Isaiah 2 v 3)
- God's commands will go out from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2 v 3)
- Nations will be judged (Isaiah 2 v 4)
- War will be a thing of the past (Isaiah 2 v 4)
- Weapons of war will be turned into agricultural equipment (Isaiah 2 v 4)
- Joy and praise to God will replace sorrow and problems (Isaiah 61 v 3)
- God's people will be known and respected by other nations (Isaiah 61 v 9)
- God will be praised by all nations (Isaiah 61 v 11)

Lessons from references in Acts 3 v 25 (page 9)

- God made the same promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that all nations would be blessed in a special descendant of theirs (Genesis 22 v 18; 26 v 4 and 28 v 14)
- This promise about a special descendant blessing all nations, is a summary of the gospel message (Galatians 3 v 8)
- As we have seen earlier, this special descendant is the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 3 v 16)

Summary of the message given by Peter in Acts 2 and 3

Message (Session and page)	Acts 2 & 3	Cross-references/Echoes
Jesus was a man having our nature (1, 13)	2 v 22 and 30	Matthew 1 v 1; Romans 1 v 3; 8 v 3; 2 Timothy 2 v 8; Hebrews 2 v 14 and 17
The miracles Jesus did were evidence that he was sent by God (1, 14)	2 v 22	Luke 7 v 20 to 23; John 3 v 2; 6 v 14; 9 v 32 and 33; Acts 10 v 37 to 39
It was part of God's plan that Jesus should die as a sacrifice for our sins (2, 6)	2 v 23; 3 v 14, 15 and 18	Psalm 22 v 1, 7 and 8, 14 to 18; 69 v 21; Isaiah 50 v 6; 53 v 4 to 9
God raised him to life again (1, 14 & 16; 2, 4)	2 v 24, 31 and 32; 3 v 15	
The Holy Spirit was given as a witness (1, 16 & 19)	2 v 33 and 38	Luke 24 v 47 to 49; John 14 v 26; 15 v 26
God promised David a special descendant (1, 16)	2 v 30	2 Samuel 7 v 11 to 16; 1 Chronicles 17 v 10 to 15
God promised Abraham a special descendant who would bring blessings on all nations (2, 9)	3 v 25	Genesis 22 v 18
The special descendant was Jesus Christ (1, 17; 2, 9)	2 v 30 and 36; 3 v 26	Galatians 3 v 8 and 16
We can now have our sins forgiven through Jesus (2, 7 & 10)	2 v 38; 3 v 19 and 26	Matthew 1 v 21; 1 Corinthians 15 v 3; Titus 2 v 11 to 14; Jude 24; Revelation 1 v 5
To be part of God's plan we must repent (1, 17; 2, 6)	2 v 38; 3 v 19	Matthew 3 v 2; 4 v 17; Luke 24 v 47; Acts 17 v 30; 20 v 21
We must then be baptised (1, 18)	2 v 38	Acts 8 v 12, 36 to 38; 16 v 15, 31 to 34; 22 v 16; Romans 6 v 4 to 6; 1 Peter 3 v 21
God has glorified Jesus and we must have faith in the name of Jesus the Prince of life (2, 4 & 5)	3 v 13 to 16	John 5 v 22 and 23; 17 v 1 to 5; Romans 5 v 1; Galatians 3 v 26 to 29; Philippians 2 v 9 to 11
All the present problems will be solved when God has "refreshed" the earth (2, 6 & 7)	3 v 19	Isaiah 2 v 1 to 4; 61 v 3, 9 to 11
Jesus will return to the earth and establish his endless kingdom (2, 7)	3 v 20 and 21	Matthew 16 v 27; 24 v 30, 31 and 36; Revelation 1 v 7

Notes

Notes

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