

ACTS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Acts chapter 3 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study we saw the birth of the church and it came forth with a bang.

In one day some three thousand people came to saving faith. We saw this as Peter spoke forth a powerful message and hearts were convicted and lives were changed!

And Acts chapter 2 concluded with these words, “**And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**” Acts 2:42-47.

This was an active church that was a witness of Jesus wherever they went. And as we pick up our study this evening we are going to see Peter and John go to the Temple to pray and it is out of just going out and doing your normal days activities that the Lord brings people across your path.

We will see that with Peter and John as the Lord brings a lame man to them, or I should say, He brings them to this lame man.

With that said, let’s begin reading in Acts chapter 3, beginning in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

**ACTS 3****VERSES 1-3**

Here we see Peter and John going to the Temple, not for the sacrifices being made but for prayer. The reason being is that *THE* sacrifice was already made by Jesus and no further sacrifice was needed to atone for their sins, to atone for our sins!

And the Jews had prayer three times a day; 9 am, 12 noon and 3 pm. It is as Psalm 55:16-17 tells us, **“As for me, I will call upon God, And the LORD shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice.”**

So, Peter and John are there for the 3 pm prayer time and they have an encounter with a man who was lame from birth. And daily his friends, family would take him to the Temple gate to beg for alms, it was how he supported himself.

What is interesting to me is that we don't see Peter and John say, “Hey, let's go out and heal someone!” No, they are just doing their daily activities and God is going to work through them.

You see, you don't have to manipulate things, kick down doors to make things happen, just serve the Lord and see what He will do!

Now we are told specifically which gate they were going through, the gate Beautiful. This gate was located on the eastern side of the Temple Mount area and it separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of the Women.

According to the historian, Josephus, this gate was so huge, 75 feet high, that it took 20 men to close it and it was made of Corinthian brass.

In contrast to the beauty here, we see a lame man, born this way, who, according to Acts 4:22 was over forty years old!

And each day someone would carry him to this gate so he could beg for money. This man wanted to be supported in the condition he was in and he sees Peter and John coming and asks for their help.

Now let's think about this for a minute. If he was over forty years old and daily he was brought to this gate to beg for alms, that means when Jesus was walking through the Temple He must have seen this man multiple times and so did Peter and John. Why didn't Jesus heal Him?

Because God has His timing, He has His plans and purposes and we might not always understand them, but it is what is perfect, and it is what is needed at that time. We must walk by faith and not by sight.

Now why did he keep going to this gate? Because there was a strong tradition in Judaism about giving to the poor, especially beggars, they saw it as an act of righteousness.

And even today you will find beggars at these gates in Jerusalem begging for alms!

#### VERSES 4-7

I like the way that Peter gets this man's full attention; "**Look at us!**" And I am sure this man was excited, he thought that Peter and John were going to give him a large sum of money.

And as this lame man focuses on Peter and John, I am sure with his hands out, Peter says to him, "**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.**" Acts 3:6.

And the lame man said, “Are you kidding me! I have never walked in my life and you want me to stand and walk!” No, he didn’t say that, but I am sure something like that was initially going through his mind!

But as Peter reached out his hand towards this man to lift him up, and this man reached out to him, and it says, “**immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.**”

Here we see the crippled beggar asking for alms and he gets legs!

Too often the church supports people in the condition they are in instead of allowing God to transform them. LaSor said, “It is not the church’s business in the world to simply make the present condition more bearable; the task of the church is to release here on earth the redemptive work of God in Christ.”

That is so true; we are not a social institution but a living organism that brings salvation to people! Yes, we do help with their physical needs, but what has happened is that is all the church is doing at times and they are not bringing the Gospel message to them and that is wrong.

Now I also want you to see that what this man was like is what we are like. We see a picture of salvation. Let me show you what I mean.

Here was a man who was born lame. He could not walk and apart from Christ we are born in this world lame. We are unable to walk, to please God apart from Christ. You see, we received this lameness from Adam, it was passed down to all of his descendants. (Romans 5;12-21)

Not only was this man lame but he was also poor! And that is just like us. As sinners we are bankrupt before God and we can in no way pay back the debt that we owe Him!

Also, this man could not go into the Temple and that is true for all sinners. They are separated from God and they might be as close as possible to the door, but apart from Christ, they can't enter in!

And how was this lame man healed? Was it because he was such a good person? No, that was not the reason. The reason is simple, he was healed completely by the grace of God and that healing was immediate. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

What a beautiful picture that is of where we were and what God has done in our lives as we come to that saving faith and are healed!

Also, keep in mind that Luke was a medical doctor and Morgan picks up on the words that Luke uses in speaking of this man's condition. He wrote, "Perhaps only medical men can fully appreciate the meaning of these words; they are peculiar, technical words of a medical man. The word translated *feet* is only used by Luke, and occurs nowhere else. It indicates his discrimination between different parts of the human heel. The phrase *ankle-bones* is again a medical phrase to be found nowhere else. The word 'leaping up' describes the coming suddenly into socket of something that was out of place, the articulation of a joint. This then is a very careful medical description of what happened in connection with this man."

Now I know that some don't like to go here but we must. You see, in this section we see two spiritual gifts in operation.

We see the gift of faith and the gift of healing. You see, God gave Peter the gift of faith to say to this man who has never walked, "**In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.**" God gave Peter the faith to say those words and then to reach out and lift this man up!

We also see here the gift of healing working side-by-side with the gift of faith as the Lord heals this man not partially but fully, to the point where he is not only going to stand and walk but he is going to leap for joy!

Now some say that these gifts are not for today and I think the reason they feel this way is the abuse of these gifts, how they are used by some and it is all for show. And so much of it is fake!

But that does not negate the gift. Notice what Jesus said in Mark 16:15-18, **“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.’”**

Who is this for? Jesus says it is for **“those who believe”** you and me.

Now let me also say this because some feel that all should be healed and that is not what the Scriptures teach. God is Sovereign, and His will is what we desire. Yes, He does use the gift of healing today, and the Holy Spirit will work as He sees fit.

And, again, I know the abuses that are done in the name of God, but again, don't negate the gift because someone is abusing what God has said.

Let me give you one very sad example of how some take this. Several years ago there was a tragic fire in the home of a pastor in the Chicago-land area and he lost one of his children and one of his sisters children I believe.

At the funeral, some of the people from his church, coming from a health, wealth and prosperity background, felt God was going to raise these children from the dead.

Also at the funeral were many unsaved family and friends.

Now, as the evening went on, a couple of people picked up these two dead children out of the caskets that they were in and commanded them to come back to life dancing them around the room.

They didn't, they were with the Lord, but that is the abuse I am talking about. Turn on your television and watch some of these teachers and you will see what I mean about the abuse, almost like they are controlling God! That is not the gift that is spoken of here in Acts.

But just to show you that God still does heal today, I will give you one example of what I mean.

Pastor Chuck Smith tells the story of how the children of their sick father brought him to Pastor Chuck to pray for him and ask God for a healing.

He couldn't walk and as they approached Pastor Chuck, he felt the Lord telling him to take this man by the hand and lift him out of the wheelchair. God was giving to Pastor Chuck the gift of faith to lift this man out of his wheelchair.

Now please understand that Pastor Chuck, that is not something that he did routinely. But he said that God just gave him the faith to do it and he did.

And this man stood up, he began to walk around the sanctuary and the children were so excited, jumping up and down.

Now, the interesting thing here is that they told Pastor Chuck that their dad had a cold and wanted Pastor Chuck to pray that he would be healed of that.

You see, he hadn't walked for over five years!

Pastor Chuck says he has never done that again, God has never given him the gift of faith to lift someone out of their wheelchair again!

Now let's look at how this man responds to what God has done, healing him!

### VERSES 8-10

This should be the picture that people see as we come to Christ. That we are jumping for joy in what the Lord has done in our lives. And not just when we were saved, but every day is a new day with the Lord as His mercy is new every morning! People should see that as they did in this man.

Not only did they see the change in him, but they saw him praising God. Do people see the love we have for God as we live out our lives? Something to think about because they should!

Now they recognized who this man was, the lame beggar. And yet, now they saw him as a new person! And what did this miracle do in the lives of those who witnessed it?

We are told that, "**they were filled with wonder.**" That is one of the things that miracles do in a person's life who witness it. They begin to wonder who did this, how did this happen and not only does the miracle cause wonder, but it is a sign pointing people to Jesus!

When people look at our changed lives it should cause them to wonder and it should be a sign pointing them to Jesus!

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.**"

### VERSE 11

First of all, and this is important, this miracle, this healing didn't save anyone. Then what was the purpose? We talked about it already, but it causes wonder and it is a sign pointing people to Jesus.



We must understand that this miracle opened a door for Peter to speak forth the Word of God. Paul makes that very important point in Romans 10:17, **“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”**

Notice what is taking place here. People are gathering around this man and Peter and John, and they are looking at them.

And, as we read on notice what Peter does as the attention is being drawn to him.

### VERSE 12

I want you to notice that Peter does not take any credit for healing this man. He disassociates himself from the miracle and corrects them immediately. In other words, “Stop looking at us like we had something to do with this, we didn’t!”

And then Peter will explain who did this miracle and he is going to point them to Jesus. He told them, **“Why do you marvel at this?”**

The reason being is that they saw Jesus heal many, many people in His earthly ministry and thus, why are you surprised to see this man healed, Jesus can heal even from heaven.

The key here is the humility of Peter. Before the death and resurrection of Jesus they were arguing who would be greatest in the Kingdom of God or sit at the right hand or left hand of Jesus.

And now, Peter understands that he is just a servant of God and God alone gets the glory, He gets the honor!

In Isaiah 42:8 we are told, **“I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.”**

God will not share His glory with anyone, He alone is God and worthy of our praise.

Also, in II Chronicles 16:9 we are told, **“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. . .”**

You see, God can use me; He can use you, but where is your heart. It is not about you, it is all about Him. And if you want to be put on the shelf, then take the glory, take the praise, but it will be short-lived!

You see, we are just the instruments that God uses, and we need to remember that.

A good example of this is seen with a surgeon. After the surgery the scalpel is not brought out to be praised, but the surgeon is the one who gets the credit. The scalpel was just the instrument that was used.

God, in a sense, is the surgeon, and we are just the instruments that He chooses to use and thus, it is the Lord that gets the glory!

There is something else that we need to deal with here because we see it being done today!

When you read this verse did you notice that Peter did not say, ***“Men of Israel, if you too want to be healed, then come to my miracle crusade and I will touch you with the power of God because I have the anointing upon me! And if you send your money to The Peter Apostolic Healing Ministry International, for your donation of \$100 you will receive a prayer cloth touched by me and it too has the power to heal you!”***

We might laugh at the silliness of that, but people say those things and people send money to these people.

Once again, Peter does not focus on himself, in fact he has them now take their eyes off of him and place them upon the Lord, the one who did this healing!

And Peter will now give his second sermon, he will give them the Word of God because, like I have said, **“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** Romans 10:17.

#### VERSES 13-15

As Peter shares with the people he speaks of the God of their father’s, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob because Peter is speaking to the Jews and they knew exactly what he was talking about.

Today, as back then, it is important to be very clear about the God you are speaking about because there is such a wide spectrum of ideas people have about God and who He is. The God we serve is real, He is personal, and His name is Jesus!

And we must share with them the Jesus of the Bible instead of the Jesus many make up in the imagination of their own hearts. We need to be clear who this Jesus is and what He came to do and what we must do to receive this gift of God!

Now we see that Peter missed out on the course, ***“How to win friends and influence people!”*** Wow, Peter doesn’t hold back here. He speaks forth the truth about what they did.

You see, they refused to let Jesus go even though Pilate wanted to release Him. And it is even worse than that. Instead of releasing Jesus who was innocent of any crime, the Jews wanted Pilate to release Barabbas, a murderer, and he did!

And yet, today we see people who are afraid to talk about sin. They are afraid to talk about repentance. They are even afraid of talking about the shed blood of Christ. Thus, they give a Jesus who is love, and as true as that is, that is only part of the picture.

You see, Jesus is Almighty God and you can't pick and choose what attributes of God you like and which ones you don't like. Yes, Jesus is a God of love, but He is also a righteous judge and He will judge sin!

If He didn't, then he would not be righteous!

Then how can He forgive us of all our sins? Because He paid the debt for our sin, the debt we owed. Sin was judged on Calvary! Thus, He can forgive us of our sins because there is no longer a record of them, that debt was paid, and He is a righteous judge, that was not in jeopardy!

You see, what Peter is doing is giving them the Gospel message, **“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”** I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Now, what is at the heart of the Gospel message? It is the death and resurrection of Jesus for without the payment for our sins on the cross of Calvary and the resurrection of Jesus, we would still be dead in our trespasses and sins!

The key is they were witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus and if anyone could refute that, produce the dead body of Jesus, all their claims would be false, and this movement would have stopped.

But they couldn't deny it, they couldn't deny the eyewitness testimony, and thus, they are going to have to come to a conclusion in regard to Jesus, that He is the Son of God, the Messiah or they have to suppress the truth and reject Jesus. Those are the only two options!

Now, before we move on, in the verses we have read so far this evening, Luke gives to us four things that are needed if we desire to be used by God. They are pretty simple.

**MEN THAT GOD USES – THEY ARE . . .*****MEN OF PRAYER******MEN OF FAITH******MEN WHO ARE NOT LOOKING FOR ANY GLORY FOR THEMSELVES******MEN OF THE WORD***

In regard to being used by God, one writer put it like this,

God uses ordinary people in extraordinary ways for His glory. God used a lawyer in high school to disciple me to grow in His grace. He's also used many "ordinary" people with no Bible college or seminary education to disciple me. God uses ordinary people in extraordinary ways as a testimony for His grace and glory.

So, the next time you feel you are a failure, that your sin disqualifies you from service or you are better than someone - remember the Gospel. The Gospel that saved you, is sanctifying you and will one day glorify you is the power of God. God uses all sorts of people with all sorts of gifts, talents and abilities as a testimony of His grace that His name would be made famous among the nations. God uses ordinary people in extraordinary ways to advance His Gospel.

If you are hungering for more of God, and desire to be used by Him then use whatever gifts, talents and abilities you have and direct them in the right direction towards God, motivated by a desire for His glory by using your God-given gifts and talents in the local Church and beyond to edify God's people and expand the Kingdom of God.

Then you will join the multitude of ordinary saints before you who became extraordinary because they served a God who is glorified not by self-serving people but people who are humbled by His grace and holy before Him.

As Robert Murray McCheyne once said, “A *holy* minister is an *awful weapon* in the hand of *God*.” In other words, if we are constantly making our own spiritual progress, advancing in Christ-likeness, growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Petr 3:18), we will find to whatever degree God has determined, His blessing will follow in our wake. Entrust whatever ministry and whatever gifts you have to God, and use them in His power energized by His Spirit for His glory. Watch as God grows you in His grace and uses you in extraordinary ways in the lives of His people for His glory.

- <http://blogs.blueletterbible.org/blb/2013/10/09/god-uses-ordinary-people-in-extraordinary-ways/>

God is looking for faithful people who will serve Him because they love Him. May we go forth and serve the King of kings and Lord of lords!

### VERSE 16

Peter is telling them that this man was healed, he was made whole in the name of Jesus. Now we hear that, and many have come to the conclusion that by ending our prayers with, “*In the name of Jesus*” that God has to answer it. It is like some kind of magic formula or magic words.

No, it is done in the authority and power of Jesus as His representatives. We ask for the things that He would ask for and when we don’t have the spiritual gift of faith to do a supernatural task, like lifting a lame man up, God will give to you that faith to do that as Peter did! If He doesn’t then don’t do it!

And once again we see Peter focusing the people on Jesus and not himself. That is important for us to do. We want people to see Jesus, they see enough of us!

One writer put it like this in regard to what we see in the church. He wrote,

Our culture is inundated with a deluge of self-help philosophy that has deceptively taken over many pulpits. “What’s in it for me?” is the heart cry of our culture today. The temptation for preachers is to feel compelled to answer this question and make the message of the Gospel conform to the need. Instead, the preacher should seek to graciously challenge his listeners to flip their entire philosophy on its head and ask a different question that focuses on the person and nature of Christ and his message to all who choose to follow Him. Over time, a consistent diet of self-help preaching produces anemic Christians who are always looking out for themselves and unwilling to make even the smallest sacrifice for Christ.

In a day and age when self-help preaching is running rampant, we need to examine the food we are eating (or feeding others) and ask ourselves whether the message is Christ-centered or people-centered, whether it is one of self-improvement or one of self-denial. God’s people will become spiritually stronger and the Body of Christ will be empowered afresh if we stick to the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. (1 Corinthians 2:2)

- <http://www.christiangrowthnetwork.com/self-help-preaching.html>

I like his point, that we are, ***“to graciously challenge [our] listeners to flip their entire philosophy on its head and ask a different question that focuses on the person and nature of Christ and his message to all who choose to follow Him.”***

Point people back to Jesus, look to Him, the Good Shepherd, and then follow Him! That is who Peter is pointing the people to and so should we!

VERSES 17-18

What I want you to see here is the transition that Peter is making in his sermon. He does not say here in verse 17, ***“I can’t believe how horrible you are. You deserve death, you put the Messiah to death. I can’t even look at you now!”***

Thank God he didn’t say that because his words would be upon us as well. Yes, he brought conviction upon their hearts when he shared with them that they sinned, that they put the Messiah to death and let a criminal go free.

But he does not leave them there. He gives them hope and without hope we have nothing. Yes, they sinned but they did so in ignorance, and even if they didn’t, God’s grace can reach them. That truly is hope for the hopeless, for you and me!

And listen again to Acts 3:18 where Peter tells them, **“But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”**

Peter is telling them that their rejection, their crucifixion of the Messiah did not thwart or foil the plans of God. And the reason is very simple.

The crucifixion, so unthinkable to them as happening to the true Messiah, did not at all alter God’s program, nor did it disqualify Jesus as the Messiah. God had announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets that His Christ should suffer, and those prophecies had now been fulfilled.

You see, the Old Testament foresaw Christ’s death in such passages as Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and Zechariah 12:10.

Even the nation’s rejection of Him had been predicted (Isa. 53:3). God used their evil intentions to fulfill His own purposes (cf. Acts 2:23; Gen. 50:20).



We see this in Isaiah 53:6 which says, **“All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”**

But instead of receiving Him they rejected Him and put Him to death, just as the Scriptures said.

And, of course, there are many other passages of Scripture that speak of this.

What God did was He used their evil, their wickedness for good, to fulfill His perfect plan of redemption.

A great picture of this is given to us in Genesis. Remember the story of Joseph and how his brothers sold him into slavery and Joseph was in Egypt as a slave, as a prisoner and eventually rose to second in command over all of Egypt?

And Joseph said some words that we should remember; we should apply to our lives as we go through difficult times. He said to his brothers as they were in Egypt with Joseph, **“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”** Genesis 50:20.

Ever since sin entered the world and God’s promise of redemption through the seed of the woman in Genesis chapter 3, Satan has been trying to thwart the plans of God.

But as hard as he tries, he fails. And here, with the death and crucifixion of Jesus, Satan may have thought he won but on that third day, when Jesus rose from the grave, he lost once again.

And, ultimately, we see that Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire at the end of the Millennial reign of Christ. Yes, he will be released for a short time after the Millennial reign! But then it is the Lake of Fire for eternity. You see, he will not win, he will never win because the creature cannot defeat his Creator, even though he tries!

What a great lesson for us today. That no matter what evil man may throw at us, there is good that God will bring out of it, there is a purpose, there is a plan, we saw it in the life of Joseph and we see it in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

It is as Paul tells us, “**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**”

That is a promise to us and even though we may not see the good that can come out of a situation we are in; can we believe it by faith? We need to because that is where we will find peace, we will find comfort, we will find rest as we cast all our cares upon Him!

Now let's deal with these two ideas of sins of ignorance and sins that are willful, the ones you know are wrong to do, and you still do them.

Peter is speaking of these Jews and how they sinned in ignorance. Now, just because they sinned in ignorance, some of them, doesn't mean they were innocent.

Yes, sinning with the full knowledge of what you are doing is wrong, is worse, but they both are sins!

In Psalm 19:12-13 David said, “**Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.**”

Both sins of ignorance and willful sins he is praying for God to keep him from, to help him to walk worthy of the calling he has He doesn't want any sin to rule his life.

How is that done? We are told in Psalm 19:14 what we are to do. We are told, “**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.**” Psalm 19:14.

You see, it all begins in our heart and a heart that is sensitive to God and His Spirit will walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh! It is a life of surrender to Him, complete surrender!

But surrender is a hard thing, and I am sure we are all aware of that. Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

The captain of a ship looked into the dark night and saw lights in the distance. Immediately he told his signalman to send a message: "Alter your course 10 degrees south."

Promptly a return message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north."

The captain was angered. His command had been ignored. So he sent a second message: "Alter your course 10 degrees south - I am a captain."

Soon another message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north. I am seaman third class Jones."

Immediately the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear it would evoke: "Alter your course 10 degrees south - I am a battleship."

Then the reply came: "Alter your course 10 degrees north - I am a lighthouse."

- Source Unknown

Funny story, but what do I mean by this story?

We tend to see ourselves as a giant battleship and nothing is going to get in our way, nothing is going to stop us from what we want to do. And thus, when something tries to get in our way we fight back. We are ready to roll them over and we refuse to let go and the problem is, when we are wrestling with God we won't win until we surrender to Him!

You see, He is the **LIGHTHOUSE!**

And now Peter gets to the conclusion, what they are to do, and he does not pull any punches as you will see.

### VERSES 19-21

Peter has given them the truth, they know that sin has separated them from God. They also know that Jesus has come to pay in full the penalty for their sins.

And now, notice what they are to do, **REPENT!** In other words, they were moving away from God but now they need to not only turn back towards Him but keep moving forward, keep walking! As you repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life, your sins will be blotted out, wiped away!

Boice says that “**be converted**” is better translated, “turn to God” – or, even better, “flee to God.”

Boice connects this with the imagery of the cities of refuge in the Old Testament, and thinks Peter told them to flee to Jesus as their place of refuge.

Now, let me share with you a few verses that show what God has done with our sins.

We are told in Psalm 103:12, “**As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.**”

In Isaiah 38:17 we are told, “**Indeed it was for my own peace That I had great bitterness; But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.**”

And in Isaiah 43:25 we are told, “**I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.**”

You might say that God has cast all our sins in the sea of forgetfulness and then He has placed a sign on the shore that says, “*No Fishing!*”

Let me also say this. There are a lot of people who are sorry for their sin, but they are not saved. Paul put it like this in II Corinthians 7:9-10 where he tells us, “**Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.**”

You see, Paul speaks of two types of sorrow. One that leads to repentance, a change in a person’s life and the other is just a sorrow because they got caught. The first leads to life, to Jesus and the other to death, apart from Jesus!

Now, in regard to Acts 3:20-21, my Pastor wrote,

There are those who say “the restoration of all things” spoken of here means that every person will one day be saved - including demons and even Satan.

The problem with that interpretation is that Jesus didn’t teach it. In Matthew 25:41, He spoke clearly of sending some into everlasting fire. The word “everlasting” is the Greek word *aionios*, which is the same word used in John 3:16.

Therefore, whoever says that the fire in Matthew 25 is not really everlasting - that people will only burn for a while until they’re purged (i.e., purgatory), or until the restitution of all things - must also say that the everlasting life God promised in John 3:16 is equally transitory.

“The restoration of all things” refers not to the condition of the soul, but to the people of Israel. Israel shall be restored (see Romans 9–11). She will one day acknowledge Jesus as Lord because the promises and covenants of the Old Testament toward the Jewish people are unconditional. They will be fulfilled.

- Pastor Phil Ballmaier

In other words, repentance would not only bring individual blessings but also the Kingdom Age for the Jews!

Yes, in the Lord we have those wonderful times of refreshing as we spend time with Him and He fills us with His love, but Peter is speaking this to the Jews, to the nation of Israel and before Jesus returns to set up His Kingdom, the Jews will call upon Him as Lord and Savior.

We read of this in Matthew 23:37-39 where Jesus says, **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”**

They will call upon the Lord Jesus Christ at the end of the Tribulation Period and usher in His return and the establishment of His Kingdom on this earth.

Paul speaks of this national repentance of the Jews in Romans 11:25-27, where he says, **“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.’”**

And, as I have said, in a lesser (though glorious) sense, God sends *times of refreshing* to His people today. We should pray for and believe God for seasons of revival and *refreshing*.

#### VERSES 22-26

Yes, the prophets of God spoke forth for God but there was coming a prophet, the Messiah. And they saw this prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy chapter 18 as being a man like Moses and not God.

And yet, notice what Isaiah 9:6 says, **“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”**

It says that the Messiah will be God and not just a man! And here Peter is telling us that this prophet is Jesus!

Now I believe it is that mentality that will cause the Jews to receive the Antichrist as their Messiah for Jesus said in John 5:43, **“I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive.”** The Father sent the Son, Jesus and they rejected Him. Another is coming in his own name, the Antichrist, and they are getting ready to receive him!

And keep in mind that from Moses, to Samuel and onward they spoke of the establishment of the Kingdom, the coming Messiah and the work He was to do.

In fact, as you go through the Old Testament Scriptures they testify of Jesus, our Messiah and there are over 300 prophecies regarding His First Coming that were fulfilled in His life!

Thus, if you reject Jesus then destruction will come, and for the Jews it was both physical as the city of Jerusalem was going to be destroyed in 70 A. D. and it was spiritual!

Now, here in Acts 3:25 we are told, **“You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’”**

Paul picks up on this and makes this very interesting point in Galatians 3:16 as he said, **“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.”**

In other words, in Genesis 22:18 God was speaking of Jesus, the Seed of Abraham and Abraham recognized that fact while his descendants are rejecting it!

And notice that this includes all the families of the earth, we all have been blessed by the coming of Jesus, not only the Jews but even us Gentiles!

And in Acts 3:26 Luke tells us that Jesus first came to the Jews but they, for the most part, rejected Him and His message.

Thus, the message was given to the Gentiles next and they received it.

You see, the Jews were lame, they couldn't walk, and they refused what they needed, Jesus.



Many people do the same today, their walk with God is lame and God is extending to them a gift, a healing to set them free from their sin and it is found in Jesus Christ if they would only receive Him into their lives.

And as we see the fruit of this sermon of Peter's, what the Lord did, we see in Acts 4:4 that about five thousand believed. They usually just counted the men, not the wives or children so this number could be upwards of ten thousand people in the early church!

Let me close with this words from David Guzik. He wrote,

The lame man at the Beautiful Gate wanted something; but God wanted to give him something much greater. The same was generally true of the Jewish people Peter preached to. They expected the Messiah *in a certain way*, but God wanted to give them something much greater. They looked for a political and military Messiah, and not so much one to turn **every one of you from your iniquities**. It shows how important it is for us to expect the right things from God.

- David Guzik

It may not be silver or gold that God has for us, but what He has for us is even better as He tells us, ***“Rise, stand and walk!”***