



Acts 3 | Session 10 | Confrontation in the Temple

Acts 3:17-23 | Peter and John Preach the Risen Christ

Verse 17—

Peter and John healed a man who sat at the temple gate and was *lame from his mother's womb*. Now, fully healed, *walking, and leaping, and praising God*, Peter, John, and the lame man are inside the temple grounds. A crowd has gathered and, in verse 17 Peter is in the middle of addressing them (His third speech in Acts, see 1:15; 2:14; 3:12). The man's *faith* did not give him salvation by *grace through faith*, but it gave him *perfect soundness*. The man had *faith* in the kingdom miracle, he did not *accept Jesus as his Lord and Savior* as we say today. We do not want to read into (eisegesis) the Scripture what is not there.

I wot (know), translated as *seeing* (vs. 3) and *know* (vs. 16), **that through ignorance ye did it**, that is, put Jesus to death. Their **ignorance** was that they simply did not understand the crucifixion, or the resurrection. In **ignorance** they did not recognize their Messiah, which is why Jesus prayed on the cross, *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do* (Luke 23:34). The Jews did not believe in Jesus as Messiah when he walked on the earth; now the kingdom miracle just performed by Peter and John, and Peter's speech to them, is providing another opportunity for the nation of Israel to believe.

Verse 18—

God before shewed (showed) **by the mouth of the prophets...he hath so fulfilled**. The death of Christ was prophesied. How did God fulfill his prophecy of the suffering Messiah? He did it through the *ignorance* of the men of Israel.

Verses 19, 20, 21—

Why, if they were ignorant does Peter command them to **Repent ye therefore, and be converted**? Repentance means a *change of mind*. In our day we have revised the meaning to *change your behavior*. The idea Peter is conveying is, *it's time to stop being ignorant and realize what you have done*. The word **converted** does not mean "become Christians" as in the way we think of it. It is literally to *turn back*. If the nation as a whole would do this, their collective sins of killing their Messiah would be **blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord**. Notice again it does not say *repent and be converted and you will be saved by grace through faith*. We should remind ourselves this is not about *individual salvation*, that will come later, this is about the national salvation of Israel (God's elect, his chosen people, his saints)—when God **shall send Jesus Christ** who will set up his kingdom—the kingdom will be *the times of refreshing* for Israel. The **times of restitution of all things** (vs. 21) will begin with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, proceeding (as first prophesied in Genesis 3:15) until *death is swallowed up in victory* (See 1 Corinthians 15:54).

Verses 22, 23—

Another indicator of the early part of Acts being solely directed toward the nation of Israel and the Jews is the many references to Moses. He is referred to 19 times in the book. Thirteen references are found in the first 13 chapters. An interesting side note in verse 22 is that it confirms Moses as the author of Deuteronomy (Deut. 18:15,18-19). Because of the book of Acts we discover the Deuteronomy passage is referring to Jesus Christ who *will speak...all that I shall command him*. Jesus, in the gospel of John, confirms he was speaking the very words of God the father (John 8:28). **Every soul which will not hear...shall be destroyed**; a reference to Israel as a nation rejecting the Messiah (the dispensation of grace has not come yet. See also Mark 16:16).



Verses 24, 25, 26—

Peter continues to hammer home that fact that the work of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, was prophesied over and over in the Hebrew Scriptures in **all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after...foretold these days**. What they did not *foretell* was individual salvation *by grace through faith* and that the *Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel* (See Ephesians 3:1-6). **Ye are children of the prophets**, this is directed to the Jews and only the Jews—they are the children of the prophets...not us. At this point, the Gentiles still have no hope! (See Ephesians 2:11-13). The promise or **covenant which God made** is found in Genesis 12:3, “*all the kindreds of the earth will be blessed.*”

Unto you first... The Jews were given the opportunity to believe that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah). Jesus was *sent only unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel* (Matthew 15:24). When they rejected him, as he hung on the cross, he forgave them (Luke 23:34), and now they are presented with a second chance.

Chapter 4 | The Hatred and Persecution of the Apostles Begins (John 15:18)

Verses 1-4—

As Peter is calling Israel to turn from iniquities his speech (and John’s?) ends with an interruption by the unbelieving leaders of Israel. **The priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees**. We can wonder how many would have turned to Jesus as their Messiah had the leaders believed. But, as in most cases of leadership, many are threatened by the loss of power. They are consumed with themselves (money and power, and often times sex, see John 8:7) is what drives corruption.

Captain is the Greek word *strategos*. There is some historical indication that the **captain of the temple** was ruthless with his own temple guards, some historical accounts claim the **captain of the guard** occasionally set aflame the clothes of a guard found sleeping on his watch. This is all to say, the confrontation about to take place is not a friendly one.

Sadducees were a religious party and part of the ruling assembly (remember the Pharisees) who denied the resurrection (Luke 20:27)? It is obvious they come on the scene here because Peter is speaking about **God, having raised up his son Jesus** (3:26). They were part of the aristocrats, or the upper class, which makes the encounter even more tense, since Peter and John were, in the eyes of these rulers, lower class (and certainly they would have looked on the man healed with disdain). We will see the Sadducees again in Acts. Since they denied the resurrection, their denial of a future hope, according to many Jews, led to wickedness (See Wisdom 2:1-24). In other words, “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” Often aristocratic leadership leads to repression of the people. Verse 2, the **Sadducees being grieved that they** (the apostles) **taught the people...through Jesus the resurrection of the dead**.

Priests refer to the various priests in the temple.

Laid hands on them, and put them in hold. A few hours have most likely passed since the healing in chapter 3. It was **eventide**, which would mean no authoritative body was available for any kind of a trial (although in Jesus’s case they held an emergency hearing).

But, despite the persecution, the assembly (ekklesia) of Jews still experiences growth. Three thousand Jews already believed in Jesus as Messiah, now five thousand more believe—indicating this was an enormous crowd who had congregated in *Solomon’s Porch* on the temple grounds.

Nevertheless, they are detained overnight and we will have to find out what happens to them next week, as the political elite confront the uneducated Galileans.

