

ACTSFACTS

C@G Supplementary Study Notes for ACTS

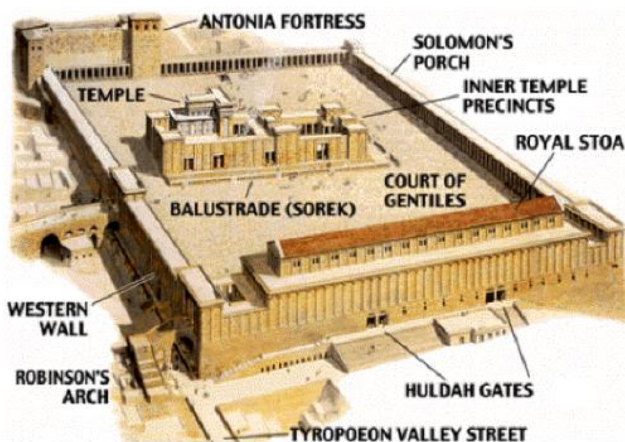
Message #8

“STIRRING THE POT, AGAIN”

Acts 3:11-26



In the previous section (3:1-10) we saw how the Holy Spirit worked through Peter and John to heal the lame man at the gate of the temple. The rest of this chapter shows how this miracle created an opportunity for the preaching of the gospel.



The setting was Solomon's colonnade, also known as Solomon's Portico (3:11). This grand porch had giant columns that surrounded the temple; it overlooked the city and served as a place for people to gather and converse in.

Interestingly, this was the same place where Jesus was nearly stoned for preaching the gospel to the Jews in John 10:22-39. Undeterred by that memory and emboldened by the Holy Spirit, the apostles take advantage of an incredible opportunity to begin another evangelistic sermon.

In your opinion and experience, what causes non-Christians to be open to hear about Jesus?

The most remarkable feature of Peter's second sermon, as of his first, is its Christ-centredness. He and John were intent on avoiding taking any credit for his life-long cripple's healing. In spite of the crowd's amazement and enthusiasm, they wanted to deflect all attention away from themselves, and even the healed man, to Jesus Christ.

The two questions Peter starts off with ("Why does this surprise you?" "Why stare at us as though we'd done it?") were meant to remove the human hand out of the discussion and focus on the divine hand and heart. This healing (and the bigger picture Peter was going to address) was not a man-thing, but most definitely, a God-thing.

In this message, Peter emphasizes three theological facts:

- The glory of the Christ (Messiah)
- The sinfulness of man
- The right response to the gospel

THE GLORY OF THE CHRIST.

In this passage, Peter uses Old Testament language to teach us something about the character and identity of Christ. He declares that it was the God of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) who "glorified" Jesus as the true source of the miracle.

To the Jews, the invocation of these names recalls God's promises to Abraham in Genesis 12, 15 & 17 that He would make Abraham a father to a multitude of nations (Genesis 17:6)...and the rest of the New Testament makes clear that this promise is fulfilled, ultimately, in Jesus and the church. Jesus is the true offspring of Abraham (Galatians 3:16) and those united to Him by faith are Abraham's children (Gal.3:29).

THE SINFULNESS OF MAN.

Peter also refers to Jesus as God's "servant" (3:13). This language is a reminder of the famous prophecy of Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12. In His earthly ministry, Christ came as the suffering servant. This servant, Peter said,

was disowned and delivered over by the audience that was now listening to him. The Jews disowned, cut Him off from the people, and delivered Him to Pilate in utter humiliation. So, by using the word “servant” here, Peter was very consciously claiming that Jesus fulfilled the Isaiah passages. The point of these OT references was to confront the crowd with the true identity of Jesus. Jesus is no mere prophet, He is the source of Israel’s hope and the fulfilment of OT prophecy. The one whom they crucified is, in fact, the Messiah.

If you were one of the Jewish listeners, how do you think you would react to this claim?

Then, in Acts 3:14-15, Peter goes on to refer to Jesus as the “Holy and Righteous One”. This designation was clearly meant to invoke Jesus’ divinity. To refer to a mere man in this way would have been heresy for first-century Jews. While Peter extols the glories of Christ he is, at the same time, exposing the sinfulness of the crowd. He reminds the crowd that they chose to kill the “author of life” in exchange for a murderer (someone who took life).

And then Peter brings out the “clincher”...**The Resurrection**. He says that Jesus is not dead...that God raised Him from the dead...and that the apostles are witnesses to this fact.

Of course, coming so soon after the crucifixion and burial of Jesus, this was an audacious claim as it could have easily been disproved. BUT IT WASN’T...AND COULD NOT BE!

Why do you think it was so important for Peter, and us, to speak of the Resurrection of Jesus?

THE RIGHT RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL.

Finally, Peter teaches the crowd how they should respond to all of this. In 3:16, the doctrine of justification and salvation by faith alone is clearly articulated. The man was not healed by any power of the apostles, or by anything the lame man had done. Instead, the healing came by faith alone in the name of Jesus Christ.

The Name of Jesus:

All spiritual blessings come through the name of Jesus Christ, including:

- Adoption as God’s children (John 1:12)
- Salvation (Acts 4:12)
- Forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:43)
- Answered prayer (John 14:13-14)
- The Gift of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26)
- At the name of Jesus every knee will bow (Phil.2:10)
- Believers are to do everything in His name (Col.3:17) so that His name will be glorified (2 Thess.1:12)

So Peter called the Jews to **repent**.

REPENTANCE (Acts 3:17-26)

Repentance is a key theme of Scripture (both Old and New Testaments). The word is used in the NT 56 times (34 times as a verb *metanoeo*, and 22 times as a noun *metanoia*). The word “repentance” means: **“to change one’s mind or purpose, particularly in relation God and His purpose for life.”**

Repentance involves:

- A radical change of mind about God (rebellion vs reunion)
- A radical change of mind about “self” (owned by God – not by self)
- A radical change of mind about sin (to abhor it – not adore it)
- A radical change of mind about others (to see them as God’s loved ones)
- A radical change of mind about life (to be lived for the glory and purposes of God)

Verse 19 is a key verse in this passage....and is essential in our response to the gospel.

What three reasons does Peter give his listeners (and us) to accept the invitation to repent?

Why is it tempting to ignore the truth that there are only two possible responses to the gospel?
