

ACTS

Chapter 3

Peter Heals the Crippled Beggar

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon.² Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.³ When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!”⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.⁶ Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong.⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.⁹ When all the people saw him walking and praising God,¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

3:1 *Peter and John.* Among the foremost apostles (Gal 2:9). Along with John’s brother, James, they had been especially close to Jesus (Mk 9:2; 13:3; 14:33; Lk 22:8). Arrested together (4:3), they were also together in Samaria (8:14).

time of prayer. The three stated times of prayer for later Judaism were midmorning (the third hour, 9:00 A.M.), the time of the evening sacrifice (the ninth hour, 3:00 P.M.) and sunset. – Three in the afternoon – the ninth hour as the Jews reckoned it – was one of three hours of prayer. The others were 9:00 A.M. and sunset. There was a daily sacrifice at 3:00 P.M. called “the evening sacrifice.” It was an hour of “peak activity” at the temple. (PBC) – How perfectly the Lord set the scene for the widest possible exposure for the message of His love, forgiveness, peace, joy and hope in Christ Jesus. That was the sole purpose of this event. (LL)

3:2 **CRIPPLED** – The lame man is marked by Torah as “blemished,” a condition that excludes an animal from being use for sacrifice, and a human being from becoming a priest. But when he is commanded by Peter to rise and walk, the man is able to leap through the temple precincts, by “praising God.” The healing worked by the apostles makes the temple truly “a house of prayer” (Luke 19:46) even for one considered an outcast but now made “whole.” (Scara)

gate called Beautiful. The favorite entrance to the temple court, it was probably the bronze-sheathed gate that is elsewhere called the Nicanor Gate. Apparently it led from the court of the Gentiles to the court of women, on the east wall of the temple proper. – The gate was probably on the east side of the temple, leading from the court of the

Gentiles to the court of women. That is how the first-century Jewish historian Josephus described it. It must have been a busy place if it was a good place for the beggar to sit. (PBC)

3:6 *In the name of Jesus Christ.* Not by power of their own, but by the authority of the Messiah. – Means by the power and authority of. (PBC)

3:7 *he helped him up.* But he had faith to be healed (v. 16).

3:8 *into the temple courts.* From the outer court (for Gentiles also) into the court of women, containing the treasury (Mk 12:41–44), and then into the court of Israel (see map No. 8 at the end of the Study Bible). From the outer court, nine gates led into the inner courts.

3:10 WONDER AND AMAZEMENT – They knew what his condition had been, and they were awestruck and dumbfounded at the sight. (PBC)

Peter Speaks to the Onlookers

¹¹ While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon’s Colonnade. ¹² When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see. ¹⁷ “Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ¹⁸ But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ^a would suffer. ¹⁹ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ²⁰ and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. ²¹ He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. ²² For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. ²³ Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.’^b ²⁴ “Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. ²⁵ And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.’^c ²⁶ When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.”

3:11 HELD ON – The beggar would not leave the side of his benefactors. After the time of prayer, perhaps cutting short their own devotions, the people gathered around the three men. (PBC) – Remarkably, the lame man is physically present even at the hearing before the Sanhedrin after the apostles’ arrest (4:14). He is a persistent reminder of the power of Jesus’ name. (Tannehill)

RUNNING TO THEM - Literally “ran together toward them.” (Sacra) - The hundreds of worshipers surrounded the three men. (LL)

Solomon’s Colonnade. A porch along the inner side of the wall enclosing the outer court, with rows of 27-foot-high stone columns and a roof of cedar (see note on Jn 10:23).

3:12–26 See note on 2:14–40.

3:12 MEN OF ISRAEL – This was to remind them of their responsibility as people who had been especially blessed in receiving God’s written word and God’s revealed religion. It was to challenge them to react responsibly to the miracle they had witnessed and the message he would preach. (PBC)

WHY DOES THIS SURPRISE – Peter first makes certain all understand that neither he nor John made this man to walk by their own power and immediately directs attention elsewhere. And he leaves no doubt as to the elsewhere – directing his hearers and us to the source of this healing power. (LL)

3:13 THE GOD OF OUR FATHERS – Peter was identifying with his hearers and insisting that he and John were true Israelites. He would not wash his hands of his people but would try to win them to faith in Christ. (PBC)

his servant Jesus. A reminder of the suffering servant prophesied in Isa 52:13–53:12 (see Mt 12:18; Ac 4:27, 30).

disowned him. Voted against Jesus, spurned him, denied him and refused to acknowledge him as the true Messiah.

Pilate ... had decided to let him go. See Jn 19:12.

3:14 Holy and Righteous One. Blameless in relation to God and man.

3:15 You killed ... God raised ... We are witnesses. A recurring theme in the speeches of Acts (see 2:23–24; 4:10; 5:30–32; 10:39–41; 13:28–29; cf. 1Co 15:1–4). – The hammer blows of the Law pounding and crushing, exposing sin and sinfulness for what they really are, followed almost in the same breath with the most unbelievable and joyous words human ears can ever hear – the Gospel. (LL)

3:17 ACTED IN IGNORANCE – Peter did not mean to say that ignorance is innocence. They could not be excused for disowning God’s servant and killing the author of life. But Peter was leading into the thought that God in his grace had used their evil act for his good purpose and that the gracious Lord was ready to forgive their sins. His words were in the spirit of Jesus who prayed from the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). God did not order them to act as they did or

will that they do it. He did not cause their ignorance. But through their ignorant actions he accomplished what had to occur because his word had prophesied it. (PBC)

3:18 *foretold through all the prophets.* Echoes what Jesus had said (Lk 24:26–27). The suffering was prophesied (compare Isa 53:7–8 with Ac 8:32–33; Ps 2:1–2 with Ac 4:25–26; Ps 22:1 with Mt 27:46; see also 1Pe 1:11). – Popular Jewish belief did not think of Messiah as suffering. It still does not. I once heard a hero of the modern state of Israel say, “A Messiah who suffers and dies cannot be Israel’s Messiah. (PBC)

3:19 *Repent.* † Repentance is a change of mind and will arising from sorrow for sin (see note on 2:38).

your sins ... wiped out. † Your sins will be forgiven as a result of faith (here called “turning to God”), a gift of God by the working of the Holy Spirit through word and sacrament. – Peter uses the concept of erasing to describe the totality and beauty of God’s forgiveness of our sins in Christ. Those of us still troubled with guilt over past sins are making ourselves miserable over something God simply cannot understand. As impossible as it is for us to make erased words on a blackboard reappear, so impossible is it for our God to remember sins that have been erased with the blood of Jesus. (LL)

3:21 *must remain.* † An alternate translation is: “It is necessary for heaven to receive him,” which does not preclude his presence at the gatherings of believers and at the Lord’s Supper. – The original language does not say, “He must remain in heaven.” That would suggest that Jesus is confined to a particular place. The Greek says, “Heaven must receive him.” In God’s plan heaven must accept him as its Lord for he is the maker of heaven and earth. Jesus’ ascension means that he now used his eternal divine power in the interest of his church, although he is no longer visible. (PBC)

3:22–26 *raise up ... raised up.* Christ is the fulfillment of prophecies made relative to Moses, David and Abraham. He was to be a prophet like Moses (vv. 22–23), he was foretold in Samuel’s declarations concerning David (v. 24; see note there), and he was to bring blessing to all people as promised to Abraham (vv. 25–26).

3:23 **CUT OFF** – We are not told, however, when this treat will take effect for those who refuse to repent or accept God’s servant. As long as God continues to send the servant to bless the people through the mission, there is hope that the refusal will change to obedient hearing. Jesus’ witness will still be struggling to make a deaf people hear at the end of Acts. (Tannehill) – This needs to be taken seriously in light of Hebrews 10:26–31. We also need to look at passages that speak to his will concerning those who do not yet believe like: Ezekiel 18:23; 1 Timothy 2:4; and 2 Peter 3:9. We also have the model of Jesus who continued to reach out to even his tormentors from the cross. His messages to the Jewish leaders and Judas became ever-more direct near the end of Jesus’ life on earth.

3:24 *prophets from Samuel on*. Samuel anointed David to be king and spoke of the establishment of his kingdom (1Sa 16:13; cf. 13:14; 15:28; 28:17). Nathan's prophecy (2Sa 7:12–16) was ultimately Messianic (see Ac 13:22–23, 34; Heb 1:5).

3:25 *offspring*. The word is singular, ultimately signifying Christ (see Gal 3:16).