

We have been in the opening chapters of Acts. The Holy Spirit had come upon the 120 in the Upper Room. Peter's first sermon had led 3000 men plus women to place their faith in Jesus. They were devout Jews, mostly from other countries, and they stayed after the feast of Pentecost to learn about Jesus, a teaching called the Apostle's Doctrine. They shared their material goods and homes to make this possible. They were devoted to learning the Apostles' Doctrine, to prayer, and to fellowship (Acts 2:42). In the passage just preceding this one, Peter and John had seen a beggar crippled from birth and Peter was led to command the man, in the name of Jesus, to rise and walk. The miracle not only gave the man muscular mass and strength, but balance, and coordination so that he could leap and praise God!

¹¹ While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. Acts 3:11 The man who was healed would not let go of Peter and John. This portico was sometimes referred to as Solomon's colonnade, and was just inside and to the left of the gate where the beggar had been placed each day. Now he can walk into the temple courtyard with everyone else. It was at this same colonnade where Jesus had often taught (John 10:23). God used this miracle to open the minds and hearts of many more Jews to the Gospel.

¹² And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?" Acts 2:12 First, Peter made sure that the crowd understand the glory does not belong to him. Peter had denied with a curse that he even knew the Lord at the very moment when Jesus was being tried for blasphemy (Matthew 26:74). Now, fresh from his restoration (John 21:19), he is certain that any power or piety from himself is only Jesus in him. **Humility is the acceptance of reality.** We are sinners saved by grace, and without Jesus we can do nothing (John 15:5)! Peter declared the glory belongs to Jesus.

This is an essential point for anyone who would be an instrument of God. If we don't understand and accept the abundant grace of God upon our own lives, how can we invite others to share in that grace? God works through broken and contrite hearts (Psalm 51:17). To receive glory for ourselves for the message or works of faith is to deceive people and distort the truth. Don't think you have been too bad for God to work through you. Recognition of how bad we are is the starting point for being an instrument of God. Consider the Apostle Paul. When Jesus came to him on the road to Damascus, Paul was on his way to arrest and imprison Christians. Later in his ministry, Paul will say he is the worst of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). God used his brokenness to plant churches all over Asia Minor and give us a large part of our New Testament. The vast majority of the Bible's heroes were humbled and broken before their ministries were truly fruitful.

¹³ The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, Acts 3:13-14 Peter built a connection with his

Commented [PW1]: Acts 2:42 (ESV)

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Commented [PW2]: Matthew 26:74 (ESV)

⁷⁴ Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." And immediately the rooster crowed.

Commented [PW3]: John 21:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me."

Commented [PW4]: Psalm 51:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Commented [PW5]: 1 Timothy 1:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

fellow Jews by declaring it was the God whom they believed and worshiped who sent the Messiah and glorified Him. This was no new religion or break from the old ways, rather it was the fulfillment of the Scriptures (Matthew 5:17). Using the term "servant" pointed the listeners to the Servant Songs in Isaiah which predicted the life of the Messiah, Jesus. **Servant and Righteous One are both messianic titles found in Isaiah 53:11.**

Peter declared that Pilate was determined to release Jesus (John 19:12), but the Jews insisted He be crucified and release Barabbas instead. In a recent movie it looked as though the crowd was shut out and only those handpicked by the leaders let in where the decision was made. That is not so according to this account.

Jesus did not fit their expectations of a new King David like Messiah. He refused violence to fulfill His mission (John 18:11). He did not share their hatred of Romans. He told them to pay their taxes (Matthew 22:21). But one of the clinchers was that he told them the kingdom of God did not come with observation, but rather was within us (Luke 17:20-21). That is not what they expected or desired.

How many turn from accepting Jesus because He does not fit their expectations? Fallen man wants a genie in a bottle that we can command to fulfill our wishes, not a Lord who tells us what is best for us and convicts us when we are ungodly. I've heard the stories of so many people who turned from Christ after a tragedy in their life. God did not change circumstances for them and cure a loved one, or give them a job, or cause a friend to admit they were wrong, or any number of things they thought was what should have happened. Because God didn't intervene, they decided they won't believe. **We shouldn't believe in the genie in the bottle god. That is not who God is.** Better to turn from a false idea of God so that when they are confronted by the real God who is Lord of all, they can accept His Lordship over their lives without false expectations.

¹⁵ and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. Acts 3:15 They chose a murderer instead of the Author of life! How depraved can mankind be? They didn't drive the nails into Jesus' hands and feet, but their choices did. Our choices did, for He died for every choice we make to turn from God and go our own way, so that we might be forgiven and have life in Him.

Peter is fulfilling the mission of Acts 1:8, to be a witness of the resurrection. He says it in the plural, "we are witnesses", as he is with the other apostles, and two or more witnesses were required to establish evidence. The main point in Peter's message is that Jesus is the Messiah whom they killed, but God raised Him up from death. That is what Jesus wanted proclaimed to the world. Death is the consequence of rebellion against God. Eternal life is the result of accepting Jesus' sacrifice for our sins (Romans 5:9). Death could not hold Him, nor will it hold those who place their faith in Him (1 Corinthians 6:14).

The title Author of life has recently been revealed to mean much more. We now understand that DNA is a language. It communicates instructions. The Author of Life created this language and created all living things through the communication of that language to cells that read, understand, and obey it.

Commented [PW6]: Matthew 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Commented [PW7]: Isaiah 53:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Commented [PW8]: John 19:12 (ESV)

¹² From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar."

Commented [PW9]: John 18:11 (ESV)

¹¹ So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

Commented [PW10]: Matthew 22:21 (ESV)

²¹ They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Commented [PW11]: Luke 17:20-21 (ESV)

²⁰ Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed,

²¹ nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."

Commented [PW12]: Acts 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Commented [PW13]: Romans 5:9 (ESV)

⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Commented [PW14]: 1 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

¹⁶ *And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.* Acts 3:16 Jews understood the name to represent the person's character and calling. Jesus name means salvation. It isn't in saying "Jesus" with the right pronunciation as in a magic spell. It is believing who He is and what He can do. Peter was saying it is through the faith in who Jesus is that gave the man "perfect health." The Jews did not separate the physical and the spiritual (Romans 1:20). The physical represented what was happening in the spiritual. A military defeat was seen as a spiritual problem (Joshua 7:11-12). An illness was thought to be sourced in sin (John 9:2). The healing of this man who was lame from birth showed that our sinful condition from birth could be healed, made whole, spiritually healthy, through faith in Jesus. We can have perfect *spiritual* soundness! (1 Peter 2:24)

¹⁷ *"And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers.* Acts 3:17 Peter declares that the people and the rulers didn't realize what they were doing. Jesus said as much on the cross (Luke 23:34). Nicodemus seemed to declare the opposite in John three when he said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." John 3:2 Perhaps the leaders thought He was from God at first and changed their minds. Or it could be that "we" refers to Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea only (John 19:38-39). According to Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the leaders and the people truly did not understand that they were killing their Messiah and the Savior of the world.

Paul acted in ignorance when he pursued Christians (1 Timothy 1:13). I think many people act in ignorance when they choose to reject the truth. It can be cultural influence or a bad experience, and God certainly understands that. But there comes a point in every life when the Holy Spirit confronts us as He was now doing with this crowd (John 1:9). The miracle was making them stop and consider the meaning of the man's healing. They are confronted with the evidence that Jesus is Messiah. Everyone comes to this decision point at some time in their life when there is a clear choice to make.

¹⁸ *But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.* Acts 3:18 Peter learned this from Jesus after the resurrection (Luke 24:26-27). The appearances of Jesus after the resurrection were often to explain the Scriptures He had fulfilled. They needed to see the continuity with their forefathers in the faith. They needed to understand why Jesus' death was necessary. This is an issue with most mainline and liberal churches. So many of them have rejected the idea of atonement as barbaric. They forget Jesus' words, "Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for His friends." (John 15:13) They don't want to believe they are so evil that only death can atone for their sins. It is the age old stumbling block that believes that man can be good enough for God on their own. Eve thought she could disobey God and yet be like God (Genesis 3:4-5). This is the difference between false religions and the gospel, works and grace, pride and humility.

¹⁹ *Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out,* ²⁰ *that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ*

Commented [PW15]: Romans 1:20 (ESV)

²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Commented [PW16]: Joshua 7:11-12 (ESV)

¹¹ Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings.

¹² Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies. They turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become devoted for destruction. I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you.

Commented [PW17]: John 9:2 (ESV)

² And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Commented [PW18]: 1 Peter 2:24 (ESV)

²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Commented [PW19]: Luke 23:34 (ESV)

³⁴ And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Commented [PW20]: John 19:38-39 (ESV)

³⁸ After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body.

³⁹ Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight.

Commented [PW21]: 1 Timothy 1:13 (ESV)

¹³ though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief,

Commented [PW22]: John 1:9 (ESV)

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

Commented [PW23]: Luke 24:26-27 (ESV)

²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Commented [PW24]: Genesis 3:4-5 (ESV)

⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

appointed for you, Jesus, Acts 3:19-20 Peter was saying, "Reconsider and be converted" or "Have a change of mind and turn around, that the record of your sins might be wiped away" (*exaleipho* - the erasure of a written record). The ink had no acid in those days so a wet sponge could wipe it off papyrus. This issue is to recognize we are so fallen we don't even know how sin sick we are. The best illustration of this in Scripture is in Isaiah. In Isaiah chapter 5, Isaiah was rebuking the people for all their evil deeds. In Isaiah chapter 6 Isaiah saw the Lord and realized his mouth was as vile as those he had been rebuking. He was undone. This is another illustration of the brokenness necessary to be an instrument of God. He had to see how depraved he was before he could be cleansed and humbly serve.

²¹ *whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.* Acts 2:21 This verse gives us the doctrine of the Second Coming and lifting of the curse that came from the fall of man (Romans 8:21). Every soul whom God has destined to come into the kingdom must do so before His return. That is one reason we witness. The bride must be complete. Only then will the prophecies which the Jews were hoping to see fulfilled by the Messiah reigning on the earth over the whole world come to pass (Isaiah 11:9-10). Only then will the curse that came from sin be lifted from the planet (Genesis 3:17-19). Then we will have access once again to the tree of life and walk with God in a world where death and decay is no more.

²² *Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.* Acts 3:22 How important it is to listen to Jesus' teaching in the Gospels and the Holy Spirit's direction to our hearts! Peter was declaring that Jesus was the One Moses spoke of in Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19. "You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you." Every time you open the Word He speaks to you. Every time you are still, He can speak to you (John 10:3-4). Are you listening? Are you obeying what you hear? The first thing He speaks to our heart is to repent and receive His forgiveness and let Him be the Lord of our lives. But He has so much more to speak to us!

²³ *And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.* Acts 3:23 The warning has been from the beginning. God is just. He has provided a way for us to be restored and forgiven, but if we reject it, we will have to pay for our sins ourselves. What is justice for a soul that rejects the love of God? What is justice for the soul who tells their Creator they have no need of Him? Who can we ask to be certain? How about asking Jesus? He said, ¹⁸ *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.* ¹⁹ *And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.* ²⁰ *For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.* John 3:18-20

The world's response is often to say that this is narrow minded and bigoted. If you ask them if Jesus was narrow minded, they will usually say, "No!" But then if you show them

Commented [PW25]: Romans 8:21 (ESV)

²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Commented [PW26]: Isaiah 11:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

Commented [PW27]: Genesis 3:17-19 (ESV)

¹⁷ And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Commented [PW28]: Deuteronomy 18:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—

Commented [PW29]: Deuteronomy 18:18-19 (ESV)

¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

¹⁹ And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

Commented [PW30]: John 10:3-4 (ESV)

³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

this passage or others like it (Mark 16:16), they will come up with some other excuse. Man has a lot of experience at making excuses not to believe.

²⁴ And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. Acts 3:24 Peter repeats the point he made in verse 18. Samuel was the first in the age of the prophets (Acts 13:20), but I don't know of any prophecy of Samuel about Jesus unless perhaps the kingdom being torn from Saul and given to someone better, meaning David who foreshadowed Jesus (1 Samuel 15:28). Jesus must have explained how each prophet in some way was pointing to Him and this time when the Gospel would go into all the world. There is a book in Arabic with the title from this passage, *All That the Prophets Have Spoken*. It is based on this passage and goes into the prophets' predictions fulfilled in the life of Jesus, showing that He is Savior and Lord. Muslims accept many of the Biblical prophets as genuine, so this is a point where we can connect with them and point them to Jesus as Lord. Of course here in our passage, the Holy Spirit was inviting the Jews to examine their own Scriptures.

²⁵ You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' Acts 3:25 After conviction, encouragement was given. They can enter the promised blessing (Genesis 22:18). The blessing to all the families of the earth is the salvation that Jesus, the descendant of Abraham, paid for on the cross. It is forgiveness of sins and a restored relationship with God for all who will come to God by faith.

²⁶ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness." Acts 3:26 If Peter was listening to the words of the Holy Spirit coming through him, he would recognize that this was just the beginning of the message of salvation going into the whole world. It took that revelation on the roof top of Simon the tanner for Peter to take the next step and take the Gospel to the Gentiles (See Acts 10).

Please note that last line. The blessing is forgiveness, but forgiveness follows repentance and **repentance and a transformed life are inseparable**. Some people claim to have forgiveness but go on with their sinful lives without changing. We aren't perfect the moment we are saved, but our lives are aimed in a new direction. We turn from wickedness toward righteousness. There may be a lot of habits to break and certainly our thinking must be renewed by the Word of God and His Spirit.

- Questions:
- 1 What led up to this moment?
 - 2 What is the first thing Peter declares?
 - 3 Why is that important?
 - 4 What's wrong with a god who grants our wishes?
 - 5 What was the message behind the lame man's "perfect health"?
 - 6 What did all the prophets foretell?
 - 7 What happens when we repent and turn to Jesus?
 - 8 Which two verse from the Law did Peter quote?
 - 9 Why did he refer to those two verses? Implications?
 - 10 What happens to our life when we receive Jesus?

Commented [PW31]: Mark 16:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Commented [PW32]: Acts 13:20 (ESV)

²⁰ All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.

Commented [PW33]: 1 Samuel 15:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.

Pointing to David who foreshadowed Jesus, the Son of David.

Commented [PW34]: Genesis 22:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."