

History in the Making  
Understanding the Book of Acts  
Lesson Eight

**Introduction:**

After the events of Pentecost Luke tells his readers that “many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.” (Our text is a fuller account of one of these, and one attended by exceptional publicity).

- ✓ The apostles continued to live as observant Jews, attending the set services of worship in the Jerusalem temple.
- ✓ The two principal daily services accompanied the offering of the morning and evening sacrifices.
- ✓ One afternoon as Peter and John went up the steps leading from the outer court to the inner courts for the service with the evening sacrifice (about 3:00 p.m.) they met the cripple who lay begging at The Beautiful Gate.

NOTE: Josephus said this gate was made by Corinthian bronze and “far exceeded in value those gates that were plated with silver and set in gold.”

- ✓ Peter’s eyes fixed on him

*And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." 5 So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 Then Peter said, "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 3:4-6 NKJV*

- ✓ Took him by the right hand-lifted him up and his feet and ankle bones received strength
- ✓ He walked, leaped, praised God into the temple
- ✓ Response of the people

*And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. Acts 3:9-10 NKJV*

## A Return to Acts' Purpose

- ✓ To convince Theophilus, through a logical, concise and historical account, that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah and savior of the world
- ✓ Additionally, that all readers would witness the power of Christ through the Church and come to believe in Christ
- ✓ Communal experiences and religious movements fueled by enthusiasm are often short-lived. Die out quickly
- ✓ Question of Acts-will the faith of Pentecost sustain itself?
- ✓ Will the message of Christ make it to all nations?

## Contemporary Significance

- ✓ Church today has, in many cases, lost its moorings
- ✓ We have strategies, SMART goals, vision and mission statements
- ✓ Yet, we fail too often to make an impact in our world, to turn our world upside down or make history

What are the key moorings/anchors for the church today?

### **I. An acknowledgement of complete dependence upon the power of Christ.**

***Then Peter said, "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 NKJV***

(ILL) Story of Thomas Aquinas visited Pope Innocent II when he was counting a large sum of money. "You see Thomas the church can no longer say, silver and gold have I none." He replied, "True Holy Father but neither can she now say, "Rise and walk."

- A. Dependent more on affluence than anointing
- B. Charisma more than Christ
- C. Must be a hunger, dependence, desperation for God to work among us

PERSONAL: So thankful for blessings, privileges, opportunity, but have we lost our dependence upon Him?

## II. An assurance in the sovereign accomplishment of the divine purpose.

Listen to Peter's sermon

*Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. 12 So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though 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, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. 14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. 16 And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. Acts 3:11-16 NKJV*

NOTE: v. 13, 14a, 15b-Divine Reversal

NOTE ALSO:

*But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Acts 3:18*

- ✓ You delivered up and denied-God glorified
- ✓ You denied, asked for a murderer to be released and killed the Prince of Life-God raised from the dead
  
- A. There was in the first century church an assurance that God would reverse the greatest efforts of mankind to thwart His purpose
- B. Even witnessed in the anti-Jesus movement of the Jewish council (Gamaliel)

*And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it — lest you even be found to fight against God." Acts 5:38-39 NKJV*

- C. It is an assurance that we pay lip service to today but seem to doubt the certainty

1. Individual promise

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:28-29 NKJV*

## 2. Corporate promise

***And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18 NKJV***

D. Today we seek polls, popularity, and opinions instead of trusting His sovereignty

### III. **A confidence in the ongoing supernatural activity of the exalted Christ.**

#### A. Peter's explanation of the miracle

***So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though 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, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. Acts 3:12-13 NKJV***

***And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. Acts 3:16 NKJV***

1. This miracle not by us
2. By the glorified/exalted Christ

(Not us! Don't look at us!)

- a. The cripple had been cured because Jesus had been glorified
- b. From His exalted position Jesus endorsed His followers to act in His name and to do unique works

“He glorified His servant Jesus”

- B. 1<sup>st</sup> century church believed that the exaltation of Christ was crucial to the ongoing supernatural

**NOTE:** Hinged on the words of Jesus

***"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. John 14:12 NKJV***

**IV. A commitment to a message of clarity that offers great mercy but is undergirded with a sense of urgency.**

NOTE: We tend to be one extreme or the other (all mercy/some grace OR all urgent hell-fire)

**A. Grace/Mercy extended**

*"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Acts 3:17-18 NKJV*

**B. But repent to experience His presence**

*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:19-21 NKJV*

**C. Moses and all the prophets pointed to Jesus**

*For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' Acts 3:22-25 NKJV*

*"The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, Deuteronomy 18:15 NKJV*

*I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. 19 And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him. Deuteronomy 18:18-19 NKJV*

**D. Among them-God raised up Jesus as the promised leader like Moses-they missed Him once-now a second chance-don't miss Him again**

**Conclusion:** This narrative is instruction for the church today!

Not just a miracle of days gone by

How do we line up with the New Testament Church?

- ✓ Dependent on His power?
- ✓ Assured of His purpose?
- ✓ Confident in His ongoing activity?
- ✓ Committed to a message of mercy yet urgency?