

The Great Stories of the Early Church
10 - The Healing of the Lame Man, 03
Acts 3:11-26

Acts 3:11-4:1

- 11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.
- 12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?
- 13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.
- 14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;
- 15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.
- 16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.
- 17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.
- 18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.
- 19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;
- 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:
- 21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.
- 22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.
- 23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.
- 24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.
- 25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.
- 26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities. KJV

Introduction:

The back story here, of course, is that which we have covered in the previous messages from

Acts 3. In the days after Pentecost, when the church was growing daily in Jerusalem, Peter and John were apparently keeping appointments at the temple for the hours of prayer. Here, on this day, at the afternoon prayer hour, about 3 P.M. they had encountered a man who was over 40 years old and had been lame from birth. His legs had simply never worked, and he was carried daily to the temple to sit and beg for gifts from people so that he could live.

Peter and John had their attention fastened on the man by the Holy Spirit Who communicated to them that He would be pleased to heal him on this day. You recall Peter's famous words.

Acts 3:6 "... Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." KJV

And, the man had immediately received both strength in his legs as well as the skills necessary for walking. He sprang to his feet and began leaping about praising God very loudly for the miracle that had befallen him.

A crowd had quickly gathered and Peter discerned something in their manner that told him they were crediting him with the miracle. He was aghast that they would do this and began to proclaim the real reason the miracle had occurred.

12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

"We didn't do this," he proclaimed. We have neither the power nor the degree of holiness required for us to do such a thing.

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

The God of your ancestors, the God of your history, has done this to glorify His Son, Jesus, Whom, by the way: **You delivered up,**

You denied Him before Pilate,

Even when Pilate was desire to let Him go,

Your asked for a murderer instead,

Denying the Holy and Just One,

You killed the Prince of Life.

"Now God has raised Him from the dead, (we are eye witnesses of the fact) and His power has healed this man."

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets,

that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

Peter continued, “I know that you did this in ignorance, you didn’t know Who He is. But you really did not have any excuse because all of the prophets testified of Him and His sufferings, which things have been fulfilled.”

I want you to stop here and notice how rude Peter must have sounded. We know that this would be rude in our day, right? Would anyone today listen to such a man speaking in this way to them? They would be heartily offended.

I was noticing this week as I was listening to the radio something that struck me as amusing. A man was talking about how direct and forceful Jesus was in many of the things He said. The guy was trying to make the point, I think, that we should be bold and unapologetic as we proclaim truth. Yet he was dancing all around the subject, trying, I guess, to keep from offending anyone while declaring that his audience should not worry about offending folks.

Folks, we live in a wishy-washy day when no one except for the enemies of truth and the enemies of the gospel wants to stake out a position, say it plainly, and then stand there while being assaulted from all sides. I guess this works particularly on the radio because at some point the speaker is going to try to get you to send him some money under one guise or another, so he doesn’t want to make anybody mad.

But Peter didn’t have any money and he was not going to pass a collection that day to gather any. What he did was declare truth, plainly and forcefully, and God used him to bring five thousands souls (at least) into the kingdom. The number is only of the men, maybe because only the men could come around to that portion of the temple grounds. The effect must have been multiplied several times over when these men shared what they had seen and heard with their families.

For the moment I am going to skip over his call for repentance. We will come back to that at the end. I want you to see an important piece of theology that he introduced here for the first time that we know about.

- 22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.**
- 23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.**
- 24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.**
- 25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.**
- 26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.**

You may or may not know that Moses actually prophesied of Christ right as he ended his life and

gave finalizing admonitions to the Jews there on the east bank of the Jordan before he ascended Mt. Nebo never to come down again.

Deut 18:15

15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; KJV

Deut 18:18-19

18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. KJV

In the mind of the Jews, this 'Prophet' exist as an almost mythical figure. It does not seem that they had him linked directly with the Messiah but thought of him as someone else. We see that reflected in some of the questions they asked.

John 1:19-25

19 And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? KJV

There seems to have been three figures that they were expecting at some point to come and have something to do with the restoration of Israel to her former glory: Messiah (Christ), Elijah (Elias), and "that prophet," meaning the one that Moses had promised.

Elijah had been promised to return by Malachi, the last prophet of the OT.

Mal 4:5-6

5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. KJV

Jesus, of course, declared that John the Baptist was the fulfillment of that prophecy.

Matt 11:11-15

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

- 12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.
13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.
14 And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.
15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. KJV

There was no mistaking that Jesus was represented as the Messiah and either received or rejected by the Jews as such. But no one to this point had commented on who the “Prophet” was that Moses had foreseen... until now. Peter, here at the healing of the lame man was the first to declare it. It is obvious here in vs. 22-26 that Jesus was the “Prophet.”

It may very well be that Jesus had taught His disciples on this matter but if He did there is no record of it in our gospels. Peter seemed to have no doubt, however, that his reading of Deut 18 pointed directly to Christ.

So, in all, this is a new teaching for the Jews and for scripture. This “Prophet” revealed to Moses and to the Jews through him was to be none other than the Messiah and the Messiah, the Christ, was none other than Jesus. This was nothing less than a massive information dump on those people there at the temple that day.

All that they had looked for - the very Hope to which the faithful had been holding all those years - had come and gone. Not only had they missed Him but they had counted Him an enemy and had participated, either actively or passively, in His murder. ***They had rejected Him.***

But there was more!

Let us look back now at the Gospel as Peter delivered it on that day. There is much here that we do not want to miss.

- 19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;**
20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:
21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Even though they had participated in this horrendous crime of murdering the very Prophet that Moses had promised and brought upon themselves a curse of being cut off for refusing to hear Him, there was an offer to be spared the impending doom that was certain.

Jesus had risen from the dead, That Prophet, The Messiah, The Christ and had been received into heaven until an appointed time in the future, called here, “the times of restitution of all things” spoken of by the prophets. This can be nothing other than the Day of the Lord so often mentioned in the OT, the same day that Jesus had described in Matt 24,25.

No Jew needed Rabbinical training to know that a person found guilty in That Day of rejecting The Prophet would be in serious trouble, they would be ***“destroyed from among the people.”***

There was a remedy, Peter said, but it was not “ask Jesus into your heart.”

Now, let us be clear, no one was going to follow Peter’s instructions in vs. 19-21 except those who first believed him that Jesus was “that Prophet” and the Messiah, Who had died on the cross and was now risen and in heaven. But he did not tell those people that they were now OK and safe because they believed this. Do you see that?

He called upon those who believed him to “repent and be converted” assuring them that in so doing their sins would be blotted out, that times of refreshing would come to them from the Presence of God and that Jesus Himself would actually come to them. He was not persuading them to believe so much as to repent.

No one presents the gospel like that in our day, do they?

It is obvious to me from this text that believing is not, in and of itself, repentance and that repentance is the key to seeking remedy from God for crimes against Him.

Repentance is what was occurring in the ministry of John.

Matt 3:1-6

- 1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,
- 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
- 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
- 4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

- 5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,
- 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. KJV

Repentance is confessing and forsaking one’s sins with a believing heart that actually produces what Peter called here ‘Conversion.’

But what is this being *Converted*? Hasn’t the one who has believed and called out for forgiveness, naming his sins, been converted?

Not unless there is a life change that is real. The world translated ‘be converted’ is a similar concept to the word that is translated ‘repent.’ The difference is that, to be technical, the word ‘repent’ means a change of mind and the word ‘converted’ means a change of life. To be sure, when one’s mind is truly changed there is a change of life but they are not actually the same thing.

The end we are looking for in preaching the gospel is not simply someone saying words or coming to believe something new. What we are looking for is a changed life and we should not settle for less than that. Where there is no *conversion* there is neither faith nor repentance.

We should pay close attention to the fact that this “Repent and be Converted” was the picture that Peter and all of the other preaches of scripture had in mind as the evidence of True Faith.

Understanding that will also help you see just how profoundly the gospel has been prostituted in our day.

It is said, “No one will hear such a message today.”

But the matter is not whether they will hear but whether the one proclaiming is under the Power of God, that is the real issue.

Do we wonder that Peter would be addressing his audience in this way?

- Certainly he was not using any psychological tactics on them,
- This is not the way one “wins friends and influences people,”
- The only rationale that can be reasonably assumed is that Peter believed this was the way that truth was to be proclaimed.
- We might also assume that.