

Acts of the Apostles

A Study of the Early Church

Lesson 3 Acts 3:1-26

Introduction:

Following the events of Pentecost, Peter and John went to the Temple to pray in keeping with Jewish tradition. As they approached the gate called Beautiful, they encountered a man lame from birth who asked for alms. Rather than give the lame man money, Peter offered something far more valuable than he could have ever dreamed possible. The quietness of those praying was suddenly interrupted when the man was instantly healed from his lifelong infirmity, and joyously celebrated by leaping around and praising God. The miracle captured the attention of those present, and they immediately turned their attention to Peter and John.

In a sermon which in many ways is like the one Peter preached on Pentecost, the apostle spoke to the amazed crowd about Jesus Christ of Nazareth as being the one through whom this great miracle had been done. He was the same Jesus whom they and their rulers had ignorantly denied and condemned to death, but whom God had raised from the dead. To prove that the suffering and death of Jesus was no mere accident, Peter stated that even the Old Testament prophets had spoken of these things. Jesus had fulfilled every Old Testament Messianic prophecy.

Therefore, it was now time for those who had been the betrayers and murderers of Jesus to "repent and turn" so that they could be forgiven of their sins. Peter further affirmed that Jesus was now in heaven and would remain there "until the times of restoration of all things" – times which all the holy prophets of God had spoken about. Peter also told the crowd that Jesus was the Prophet of whom Moses spoke saying, "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. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people."

In a sermon which was apparently interrupted by the sudden and unexpected arrest of the two apostles (Acts 4), Peter's last words must have filled the hearts of those present with great hope. It was God's plan that the gospel of Christ first be spoken to the people of Israel to bless them and turn them away from their sins.

Memorization:

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... (Acts 3:19)

Key Events of Acts 3:

- Peter and John heal a lame man.
- Peter's second sermon.

The Exposition:

I. Peter's Second Sermon (Acts 3:1–26)

A. The Healing of a Lame Man (Acts 3:1–10)

1. Why would the apostles Peter and John observe the Jewish tradition of going to the Temple at the ninth hour of the day to pray? What time of day would that have been?
2. Why do you think Luke would make a point to mention the lame man in this story had been lame from birth, and that he was carried daily and laid at the gate of the Temple called "Beautiful?"
3. Where was the gate "Beautiful" believed to have been located on the Temple grounds, what was the gate made of, and why would this be a perfect location for someone to ask for alms – gifts of money? (Consult a Bible dictionary or other online resource. Also see illustration on page 7)
4. What is so significant about the following phrases from Peter's statement:
 - a. "In the name of Jesus Christ."
 - b. "Jesus Christ of Nazareth."

- c. "Rise up and walk."
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- 5. Why do you think Peter helped the man to his feet?
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- 6. What is significant about Luke (the physician) saying, "...and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them — walking, leaping, and praising God?"
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- 7. Why were the people "filled with wonder and amazement" at what they saw?

B. Peter Preaches His Second Sermon (Acts 3:4-26)

- 1. Why do you believe a miracle preceded Peter's second sermon?
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- 2. What miracles preceded Peter's first sermon in Acts 2?
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- 3. Identify the specific verses from Peter's first sermon in Acts 2 that correspond to the following statements from his second sermon in Acts 3:
 - a. "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus..."

- b. "...whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life..."

 - c. "...whom God raised from the dead..."

 - d. "...of which we are witnesses."

 - e. "But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled."

 - f. "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out..."
4. Whose faith healed the lame man (Acts 3:16)? Was it the lame man's faith or the faith of Peter and John? Explain your answer.
5. Peter said the people and their rulers put Jesus to death "in ignorance" (Acts 3:17). Other verses also speak of this (Luke 23:34; 1 Corinthians 2:7-9). How is it possible that even the rulers did not know Jesus was the Messiah?

- c. After considering these prerequisites and results, what would you say is implied in the command to "turn" – meaning to turn from sin and turn to the Lord?
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10. Is there a parallel between the "times of refreshing" that "come from the presence of the Lord" in Acts 3:19 with "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38? (You may want to use Isaiah 28:12; 40:1-2 to help explain your answer.)

 11. In addition to having one's sins "blotted out" ("wiped away") and the "times of refreshing" coming from the presence of the Lord what was another reason Peter gave for the need to "repent and turn" in Acts 3:19-21?

 12. How did Peter define "the times of restoration of all things?" What is this?

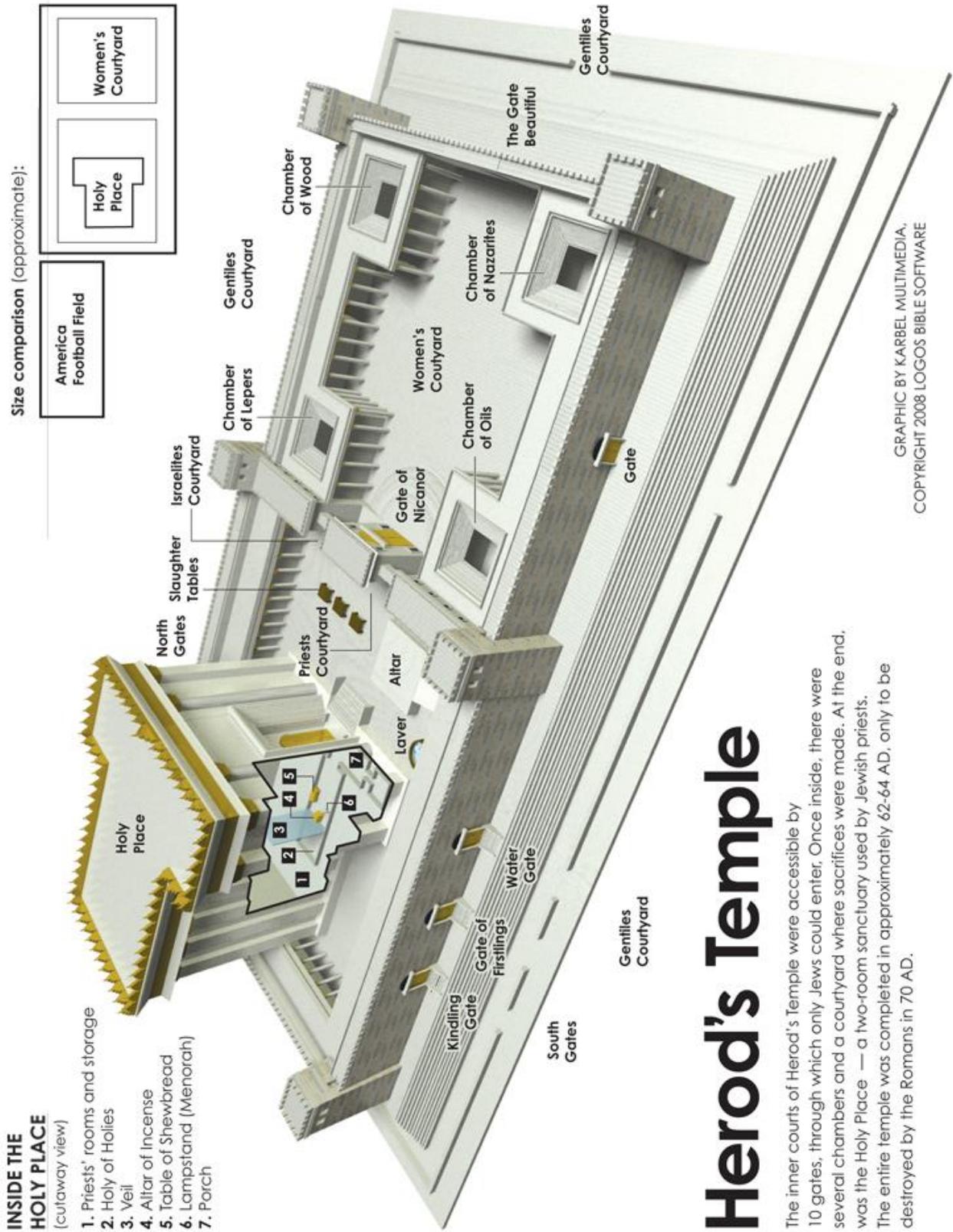
 13. Who was the prophet of whom God would raise up like Moses? (See Deuteronomy 18:15-19)

 14. What did Peter say to imply that if one rejected Jesus Christ he was also rejecting the prophets?

 15. According to Peter, to whom did God first send Jesus and for what purpose?

INSIDE THE HOLY PLACE
(cutaway view)

- 1. Priests' rooms and storage
- 2. Holy of Holies
- 3. Veil
- 4. Altar of Incense
- 5. Table of Showbread
- 6. Lampstand (Menorah)
- 7. Porch



Herod's Temple

The inner courts of Herod's Temple were accessible by 10 gates, through which only Jews could enter. Once inside, there were several chambers and a courtyard where sacrifices were made. At the end, was the Holy Place — a two-room sanctuary used by Jewish priests. The entire temple was completed in approximately 62-64 AD, only to be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.

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