

## Jesus Works Through Peter and John

Acts 3:1-4:35

**Note:** This is the beginning of phase two of Jesus' ministry to Jerusalem (see introduction). These events occur @ 33-35 AD. This is recorded as the first miracle associated with the new church in Jerusalem.

- 1) **Jesus works through the sign of healing**—3:1-10
  - a) The location and time of the miracle—3:1
    - i) The early believers did not instantly distance themselves from Judaism when the church was established. It took time. It carries over in chapters 1-7 (@ two years, from April 33 AD – April 35 AD).
    - ii) The afternoon burnt offering sacrifice was at 3 pm. (cf. Exod. 29:38-42; Num. 28:3-8)
    - iii) The third (?) of the three (?) daily prayer times was at 3 pm.
      - (1) Some argue for 9 am, noon, and 3 pm based on Ps. 55:17.
      - (2) Some argue for 9 am, 3 pm, and sunset based on some Dead Sea Scrolls and Josephus.
      - (3) Some argue for only 9 am and 3 pm based on Dan. 9:21.
  - b) The man's desperate condition—3:2-3; 4:22
    - i) Lifelong, congenital, humanly irreversible, immobility for 40+ years.
      - (1) Grasp this: this man had never learned how to walk.
      - (2) Similarly lame people were healed by Jesus (Matt. 15:30), Philip (Acts 8:6-7), Peter (Acts 9:32-34) and Paul (Acts 14:8-10).
    - ii) A well-known, accomplished, strategic beggar.
      - (1) At one of the primary gates on the east side of the Temple.
        - (a) From the Court of the Women into the Court of Israel.
        - (b) From the Court of the Gentiles into the Court of the Women.
        - (c) \*\*From outside the Temple complex into the Court of the Gentiles.
      - (i) Cf. 3:11
  - c) Peter responds to the man's request—3:4-7
    - i) Peter demands the man's attention—3:4-5
      - (1) Peter gives him his full attention, rather than the uncomfortable disregard to which beggars have often grown accustomed.
    - ii) Peter demonstrates the right priorities and the right authority—3:6
      - (1) The lame beggar does not get what he asked for. He needs Someone of greater value than money.
      - (2) Peter gives the man something of greater value than he asked for. The man can now go and make his own living.
      - (3) Peter does not use the right formula or magic to heal (i.e. using the name of Jesus). He uses the authority granted to him by Jesus.
    - iii) Having grabbed the man's right hand, Peter pulls him up, and an instantaneous, public miracle takes place—3:7

- (1) Note Luke's specific medical details of his feet [*basis*] and ankles [*sphudron*].
  - (2) This would have to include balance and coordination as well.
  - (3) The word "walk" is used 5x for emphasis in 3:6-8, 12.
  - d) The man responds to Peter's command—3:8
    - i) **Proof:** The man does three primary things for the first time in his life: stands up rapidly, walks around, and enters the Temple complex.
    - ii) **Effect:** Having entered the Temple proper, the man does three things: walking, leaping, and praising God. Cf. Is. 35:3-6
  - e) The people react to Jesus' miracle through Peter and John—3:9-10
    - i) The people observe his actions, recognize him from past experiences, and are filled with astonishment and amazement.
    - ii) Being pleasantly surprised by an act of God does not equal saving faith, nor does being positively impressed equal genuine faith.
- 2) **Jesus works through preaching**—3:11-4:4
- a) The audience: Jews in Solomon's Porch/Portico/Colonnade/Stoa who had just witnessed the healing of the crippled man—3:11-12a
  - b) The summary and theme of the sermon: the need to repent for crucifying Jesus the Messiah—3:12b-26
    - It is less "polished" than Peter's sermon on Pentecost a few weeks earlier.
    - The sermon begins and ends with identifying Jesus as God's servant [*pais*]. (3:13, 26) Cf. Isaiah 52:13 in the LXX.
    - Most of the audience would be Jerusalem Jews because everyone else has gone back home by now.
  - i) Who is responsible?—3:12b-16 "*Men of Israel*"
    - (1) For the miracle—3:12b-13
      - (a) Note the unusual activity of God glorifying someone.
    - (2) For the death of Christ—3:14-15
      - (a) The Jews demanded Jesus' death.
      - (b) The Jews rejected Jesus and asked for Barabbas.
      - (c) The Jews killed Jesus.
    - (3) For the miracle—3:16
      - (a) Christ is the source of both the healing and the faith.
  - ii) What does God want you to do?—3:17-26 "*And now, brothers*"
    - (1) Recognizing both human ignorance and God's omniscience—3:17-18
    - (2) Repent and return—3:19-21 (cf. Lam. 5:21)
      - (a) The **immediate** result (3:19a): the wiping away of their sins
      - (b) The **remote** results (3:19b-21): the times of refreshing would come and God would send Jesus the Messiah.
        - (i) Cf. Zech. 12:10; Rom. 11:25-27
        - (ii) Jesus is waiting in heaven (cf. Ps. 110:1) until the period of restoration (cf. Matt. 19:28; the Kingdom) is ready to begin.

- (c) This is a legitimate reoffer of the kingdom to Israel. Cf. Matt. 22:1-7.
- (3) Biblical basis—3:22-25
  - (a) Quotes the **Law** from Deut. 18:15, 18-19—3:22-23
  - (b) Summarizes the OT **prophets**—3:24
  - (c) Quotes the **Law** from Gen. 22:18; 26:4—3:25
- (4) Summary—3:26
  - (a) “First” Cf. Rom. 1:16
- iii) The most important point in this story is not the physical healing of the lame man but the source of the power that brought the healing. (William Marty, MBC)
- iv) Note God the Father’s activity and God the Son’s identity:
  - (1) **God the Father’s activity**: glorified His Servant Jesus (13); raised Jesus from the dead (15); fulfilled His promises in the death of Jesus (18); will send times of refreshing (20); appointed Christ (20); spoke about the period of restoration (21); raised up a prophet like Moses (22); made a covenant with Israel (25); raised up His servant (as the Prophet) and sent Him to Israel (26).
  - (2) **God the Son’s identity**: the Servant of God (13, 26); the Holy and Righteous One (14); the Author of life (15); the Christ/Messiah (18, 20); the Prophet (22).
- c) The responses to the sermon—4:1-4
  - i) **Negative**: by the liberal Jewish elite—4:1-3
    - Three groups who run the Temple confront Peter and John: priests, the captain [*strategos*] (*Sagan* in Hebrew) of the temple guard, and the Sadducees.
    - The Sadducees: reject any resurrection (Lk. 20:27), reject angels (Ac. 23:8), loyal to Rome, maintain the status quo (“the state in which”), wealthy class, corrupt, resented, accept only the Pentateuch as authoritative.
  - (1) They are greatly agitated by two actions of the apostles—4:2
    - They can’t deny the miracle occurred. (Cf. 4:14)
    - (a) The teaching of the people.
    - (b) The proclamation in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.
  - (2) They place Peter and John in custody overnight—4:3
    - (a) Evening is the time between 3 pm and sunset (7-8 pm).
- ii) **Positive**: by the common people—4:4
  - (1) Many believe the preaching of the Word.
  - (2) The total number of men in the church is now about 5,000.
    - (a) Cf. 1:15; 2:41

3) **Jesus works through persecution—4:5-22**

- This is the first of 14 trial scenes in Acts (4:1-22; 5:17-42; 6:12-7:60; 12:2; 12:3-19; 16:19-40; 17:5-9; 18:12-17; 19:23-20:1; 21:27-22:30a; 22:30b-23:11; 24:1-26; 25:1-12; 25:13-26:32)
- Trials are suspense-builders in most stories.
- a) The leaders of the persecution—4:5-7
  - i) Their identity—4:5-6
    - (1) Generally: the Sanhedrin council—4:5 (cf. 4:15)
      - (a) The rulers—mostly Sadducees
      - (b) The elders—blend of Sadducees and Pharisees
      - (c) The scribes—Law-experts, mostly Pharisees
    - (2) Specific celebrities: the elite dynasty, The Family—4:6
      - (a) Annas—former high priest (6-15 AD)
        - (i) The real power (cf. Luke 3:2; John 18:13)
        - (ii) Appointed by Rome.
      - (b) Caiaphas—current high priest (18-36 AD), son-in-law of Annas
      - (c) John [possibly Jonathan]—son of Annas (36-37 AD)
      - (d) Alexander—unknown
  - ii) Their leading question about the source of Peter and John’s power and authority—4:7
    - (1) Source of power: “By what power [*dunamis*]”—how were you enabled?
    - (2) Source of authority: “in what name [*onoma*]” (cf. 4:10)
    - (3) Note that they do not deny or dispute the healing of the crippled man.
    - (4) They already know the negative answer to their own question: **THEY** (as the Sanhedrin) did not authorize such activity.
    - (5) Their fear is observed in 5:28.
- b) Peter’s response to the religious leaders—4:8-12
  - This is Peter’s fourth speech in Acts.
  - i) Peter declares the Son is the Source of their power and authority—4:8-11
    - (1) God the Spirit enables Peter to speak—4:8a
    - (2) God the Son is the Source of the healing—4:8b-10a
      - (a) Peter notes a physical rescue [*sozo*] in v. 9.
      - (b) Peter addresses the real crime and real guilt of sin.
    - (3) God the Father raised the Son—4:10b
    - (4) God the Son is the Source of the healing—4:10c-11
      - (a) Quote from Ps. 118:22
  - ii) Peter declares the Son to be the exclusive Source of this necessary salvation—4:12
    - (1) Peter notes a spiritual rescue [*sozo*]. (cf. 4:9)
    - (2) Peter echoes Jesus words in John 14:6.
- c) The religious leaders’ decision to restrict the apostles’ message—4:13-18
  - i) The leaders recognized that, despite Peter and John not being formally educated by Jewish or Greek standards like the elite of the Sanhedrin [*agrammatos* and *idiotes*], they demonstrated candid courage (not

- harshness). This leads to astonishment and a recognition that they were followers of Jesus.—4:13
- (1) This does NOT mean that Christians should avoid higher education.
  - (2) Further understanding of “courage.”
    - (a) Noun [*parresia*]: 2:29; 4:13, 29, 31; 28:31
    - (b) Verb [*parresiazomai*]: 9:27, 28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:28; 26:26
- ii) They had nothing more to say about the healed man, so they ordered Peter and John out of the council chambers.—4:14-15a
  - iii) The council meets in closed session for “damage control”—4:15b-17
    - (1) How does Luke know what was said? Perhaps Nicodemus (John 3:1; 7:50), Joseph of Arimathea (Mark 15:43), or Saul/Paul (Acts 22:4-5; 26:9-10)?
    - (2) Their concerns are not theological but socially pragmatic.
  - iv) The council attempts to muzzle Peter and John by intimidation—4:18
    - (1) The human authority is attempting to control God’s authority.
- d) Peter and John’s response to the religious leaders—4:19-20
- i) Peter and John hold the Sanhedrin accountable to a Higher Authority—4:19
  - ii) Peter and John freely admit their inability to not stop speaking about what they have seen and heard—4:20
    - (1) Cf. with the Sanhedrin’s inability in 4:16.
    - (2) This is an accusation of an attempt to suppress legitimate testimony (a gag order) from legitimate witnesses. It is an attempt to silence and control the apostles.
  - iii) Principles:
    - (1) Christians should obey the God-ordained government’s authority. (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17)
    - (2) Christians should disobey the government when its orders are clearly contrary to God’s Word. (Ex. 1:15-17; Dan. 6:4-10; Luke 20:25; Acts 5:29)
- e) The religious leaders’ inability to deal with the people—4:21-22
- i) The leaders attempt to salvage their respectability with the people with a hollow threat.
    - (1) When religion is imposed, it always does damage to someone.
  - ii) Luke clearly shows how spiritually backwards the Sanhedrin really is.
  - iii) How can the Sanhedrin punish the apostles for an undeniable, miraculous act of mercy?

- 4) **Jesus works through prayer**—4:23-31
- a) They are unified in their prayer—4:23-24a
    - i) Remember: “With one accord” can be used of both believers (1:14; 2:1 (?), 46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25) and unbelievers (7:57; 8:6; 12:20; 18:12; 19:29)
    - ii) This is the second example of the content of the believers’ prayer (1:24-25).
  - b) They express their adoration to God the Father—4:24b-28
    - i) They acknowledge God the Father as absolute Master [*despotes*] and Creator—4:24 (cf. Luke 2:29; 2 Tim. 2:21; 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 1:4; Rev. 6:10)  
(1) Echoes of Exod. 20:11; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 146:6
    - ii) They acknowledge God the Father’s revelation through the Holy Spirit through David the servant [*pais*]—4:25-26 (cf. Acts 28:25)  
(1) Quote from Ps. 2:1-2 (LXX, Septuagint).
    - iii) They acknowledge God the Father’s sovereignty—4:27-28
      - (1) They consider the Roman political rulers, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel all joined together in opposition to Jesus.
      - (2) The Father anointed [*chrrio*] His holy servant [*pais*] Jesus (the Christ).
      - (3) The Father’s ability (hand) and previous decision (will) determined the events concerning Jesus’ death.
  - c) They express their requests to God the Father—4:29-30
    - Note: the request is not for a stop to the persecution. Nor do they pray for the destruction of God’s enemies, as mentioned in Ps. 2:9.
    - i) Demonstrate justice; look at what the leaders’ have done—*threats*
    - ii) Grant us boldness to speak Your word.
      - (1) They humbly acknowledge themselves as the Master’s (4:24) slaves [*doulos*] (4:29)
    - iii) (Grant) additional signs and wonders to be done through Jesus’ name.
  - d) God the Father answers their prayer—4:31
    - i) God’s presence demonstrated by physical shaking (cf. Exod. 19:18; Ps. 114:7; Isa. 6:4; Acts 16:26)
    - ii) Spirit-enabling
    - iii) Bold speaking of God’s Word

**PROGRESS REPORT # 2—OF JESUS’ WORK DONE IN JERUSALEM—4:32-35**

1. THEY WERE SHARING **MATERIAL** THINGS WITH OTHER BELIEVERS
2. THEY WERE SHARING **SPIRITUAL** THINGS WITH NON-BELIEVERS