

Jesus Builds – the book of Acts

Lesson Five | Acts 3

Background

The book of Acts was written by the physician, Luke, as a continuation of his Gospel. Jesus said he would build his church and Acts is the earliest history we have about that. It begins with the Ascension on Mount Olivet and then tracks the development of the early church with a particular focus on Peter in the early chapters and Paul in the later chapters, taking us to the early AD 60s.

Context

The events of Acts 2 took place on the Feast of Weeks (or Pentecost, meaning fifty), on Sunday, May 24, AD 33. On that day, 3,000 were added to the church. It seems the events of Acts 3 take place shortly after Acts 2, in the summer of AD 33. Also, the events of Acts 3 – the healing of a lame man and preaching at the Temple complex – set up and lead into the dispute with the Jewish leadership in Acts 4. In that dispute, Peter and John refuse to stop preaching about Jesus.

Bible Study Tip

Take notes in your Bible. A Bible with wider margins for notes is recommended.

A Miracle at Beautiful Gate (3:1-26)

1. Acts 3 focuses on events related to the apostles Peter and John, shortly after the events of Acts 2.
2. Peter and John meet a beggar “lame from birth” at the gate to the Temple complex that is called Beautiful. (3:2) Why do you think Luke includes the comment that the man was “lame from birth”?
3. Peter grants healing to the lame man by commanding him “in the name of Jesus Christ” to walk. (3:6) Is there a particular Messianic significance to healing those that could not walk? (Matthew 11:2-5; John 5:5-9)
4. Because of the reaction of the healed man, this was a very public miracle. (3:8-10)
 - this was sure to get the notice of the Jewish leadership
 - the apostles are continuing to do the things Jesus did
5. Through the healing of the lame man, Peter and John drew a ready audience at a part of the Temple complex known as Solomon’s Colonnade (a long walkway with a roof supported by a line of columns). (3:11)
6. The NT miracles were always to validate who Jesus claimed to be, or in this instance, what the apostles said of Jesus.
7. As in Peter’s sermon in Acts 2, note the key factual elements of his Acts 3 sermon to his Jewish audience:
 - he directs his words to the “Men of Israel” (3:12)
 - they picked the murderer Barabbas over the Holy One Jesus (3:13-14) and killed him (3:15)
 - God raised Jesus from the dead (3:15)
 - Peter points to undeniable facts they know, namely that the lame man is now in perfect health (3:16) and attributes the healing to the power of Jesus
 - the facts about Jesus were predicted by the prophets (3:18, 22-24)
 - “therefore” they need to believe in Jesus as the Christ so that their sins may be forgiven (3:19)
8. Peter also links the promise in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-3) to Jesus, through whom the families of the earth will be blessed. But Jesus first came to the Jewish people to bless them. (3:25-26)