

# OpenTheo

## Acts 3:1 - 3:26



### Acts - Steve Gregg

In Acts 3, Peter and John perform signs and wonders that lead to a sermon focused on the healing of a lame man. Despite their conversion to Christianity, the apostles continued to participate in Jewish forms of worship, including temple rituals. The healing of the lame man fulfilled prophetic predictions of the coming Messianic Age and served as an opportunity for Peter to preach about Jesus as God's servant and prophet foretold by Moses. Through his preaching, Peter urges repentance and turning to Jesus for forgiveness and times of refreshing in the presence of the Lord.

### Transcript

We're now picking up our study of the book of Acts in chapter 3. Racing right through, we've only had, what, seven lectures so far? Is that what we've had? I'm not sure. We've had a lot, and we just got through two chapters. So, are we going to get through the whole book, 28 chapters? We'll see.

All right, chapter 3. The last we read was simply a generic summary of the early church life, how the congregation lived as a community, and also the fact that it says that signs and wonders were being worked by the apostles. It says that in chapter 2 and verse 43, and so chapter 3 begins with an example of one of those signs and wonders. Now, it says signs and wonders plural, so there must have been more like this or more of various kinds of miracles that the apostles were working, and yet we have not very many examples given.

Chapter 3 gives us a notable example, and no doubt it is given maybe in order to give us the idea that this is the kind of thing that's happening a lot, and it is just characteristic, or because it was, in fact, somewhat different. And so, at the beginning of chapter 3, we have an example of one of the signs and wonders to which Luke alluded in chapter 2 and verse 43. There were two apostles involved in this, Peter and John.

Peter's the main speaker in the story, but this particular miracle set things up for Peter to give his second recorded sermon. Now, we don't know how long this happened after the Day of Pentecost. This could be weeks later, or it could be the next day.

How much time has skipped over, we do not know, but we do know that at the end of this story, Peter preaches, and the number of the disciples rises from the 3,000, which we found at the end of the Day of Pentecost, to about 5,000. So, the church is continuing to grow, and as we will see, preaching often was done on the occasion of the working of a miracle. Actually, on the Day of Pentecost, it was because of the miraculous speech and other tongues that gathered the attention of the crowd.

Now, some preaching, as in the case of chapter 2 and chapter 3 of Acts, is open-air preaching, and there's nothing wrong with open-air preaching. Now, there's a lot of people today who are open-air preachers, and, you know, they kind of go out on a street corner and start shouting at people as they pass by, and most of the people do not appreciate it, honestly. I don't know of very many people, if any, that I've ever met that got saved from a street-corner preacher.

Maybe some have. I have known some street-corner preachers, and they're an odd sort of person, usually, because it's not everybody that's got the temperament to just go out and make himself an annoyance to everybody on the street corner. And yet, I grew up thinking that was a very commendable thing.

I thought, boy, I wish I had the boldness of that guy. I wish I was just on fire for Jesus. I'd go out there and endure the spitting and the shame and the cursing and the rejection on the part of the people that he endures.

I always thought that was very commendable, but then I realized, as I studied the Bible, that that's not really a biblical model. I'm not saying that outdoor preaching is not a biblical model. Jesus preached on the hillsides, in many cases, and so did the apostles in the public places, as we read.

But they didn't just go out and start shouting at people who didn't care to hear. Virtually every sermon Jesus preached to a crowd was because he found a crowd had chased him down and wanted to hear him. Actually, they wanted to see miracles.

He had a reputation for healing people, and people came in droves to hear him, so he exploited their curiosity, as did the apostles. In Acts chapter 2, Peter exploited the curiosity of the people who had seen a miracle of the speaking in tongues of the Galileans in the upper room. Here we will see Peter exploits another opportunity.

This is apparently the model. We don't really find the apostles going to uninterested people and getting in their faces and saying, I have a message I'm going to tell you whether you like it or not. It might seem very bold and very commendable, but it's not a biblical model.

In fact, in all of Jesus' regarded ministry, there's only one instance that I can think of where Jesus actually spoke to a crowd that had not already gathered to hear him. That

was on the Feast of Tabernacles in John chapter 7, and the crowd was gathered for a religious event, the celebration of a Jewish feast. They weren't gathered to hear Jesus, but he stood up and gave a brief announcement.

If anyone thirsts, let him come unto me and drink. And he that believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. A brief message to a gathered group, though not in that case gathered specifically to hear him.

But all the other recorded public speeches of Jesus, whether they're in the synagogue or in the open air or anywhere else or in the temple, were given to people who actually wanted to hear him. And they wanted to hear him because either his reputation had caused them to be curious or an immediate miracle had gotten their attention, and they wanted to hear more. They want to figure out what's going on here.

That's what happened in chapter 3. That's what happened apparently very frequently in the lives of the apostles. And because they preached in the open air on these occasions, there was mass conversions. You know, evangelism often takes place one on one.

Jesus evangelized Nicodemus and the woman at the well and no doubt many other people one on one. I'm sure the disciples did that, too. But when you witness one on one, of course, you're going to get one convert at the most at a time.

If you're talking to a crowd, you might get a lot of them. And that's what we see in the early preaching of the apostles. God opened up the opportunities through this miraculous demonstration of his power and the resultant curiosity of the crowds.

God opened the doors for Peter to speak to multitudes and therefore multitudes were saved as a result. And remember, when the people have gathered on their own because they're curious, they can't complain about you preaching to them. It was their idea.

At least they think it was. They came out of curiosity. They don't resent you talking to them.

If they were curious and wanted to hear an explanation, you're here. Okay, I'll tell you. This is what's happening.

This is why this happened. And it's always, I think, more advisable, although it's not always necessary, but I think it's always more advisable to present the gospel to somebody who thinks they're interested or at least curious. I like to witness to people, but I'm a Bible teacher.

I do more teaching than evangelism. But when I was younger, I did more evangelism and I would enjoy doing more. I love to talk to unbelievers, but I want them to be interested.

I'm not one of these guys who's got a gift of evangelism where you go up to a total

stranger, start talking about Jesus, and it works out fine. You know, I always feel awkward just going up to somebody who's not even thinking about God as far as we know and just say, here, let me get into your face and let me get into your life in ways that you've never invited me to do. I always love to carry a Bible because of that love.

Somebody says, oh, is that a Bible? Are you a Christian? What do you believe? You know, then they open the door or wear a shirt like this. What does that say on there? Well, look harder. What does that say? Oh, it says, you just say, yeah, this is the answer to everything right here.

Of course, he's got a shirt on that says Jesus, but it's in lettering that's not easily readable until you look at it. Right. But I mean, if you get somebody to ask a question or to exhibit curiosity, then you can, you know, the floodgates are open.

They can't say they didn't ask. They can't say that you're getting in their face. They're the ones who showed the first interest.

And that's the case when Jesus preached. Actually, Nicodemus came to him. Even the woman at the well, he just asked her for water.

He didn't say anything religious to her until she started talking about more important matters and asking more about what he's about. And so we have this miracle in the first part of chapter three, followed by a sermon, which is the second recorded sermon of Peter and Acts. There may have been many other sermons between the two chapters that are not on record.

Now, Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. The Jews had certain hours of prayer during which sacrifices were offered in the temple. And those who were available would gather to to pray at the time the priests were offering sacrifices.

The ninth hour is measured from six in the morning, the beginning of the Jewish clock, the Jewish day. And therefore, it was three in the afternoon. It was late in the day.

And interestingly, the apostles who were Christians were going to a Jewish temple ceremony. And they typically apparently did so. The Jerusalem Christians, for a very long time, for years after Pentecost, continued to participate in Jewish forms of worship in Jerusalem if they lived in Jerusalem.

Now, the Apostle Paul, working among Gentiles, he didn't encourage them to be involved in Jewish forms of worship. And he himself apparently didn't, except all those times that he visited Jerusalem. But the Jewish church always seemed to have something of a Jewish cast to it.

And why not? They were always they'd always been Jews. The temple is the way they'd

worship God from the beginning. And although we look back and say, well, the temple, what good is that? What good are animal sacrifices? They're defunct.

They just pointed forward to Jesus. And now that Jesus has come, who needs animal sacrifices? And we think that way more naturally because we never were involved with the Jewish religion. If you spent your whole life and your ancestors who were God's people, Israel, had spent their whole lives offering sacrifices.

And the temple is the house of the Lord where David said, I want to dwell there forever. I want to have one desire to meditate in the temple day and night and to behold the beauty of the Lord. That whole temple is the center of thought about God to the Jewish culture and mind.

And when Jews became Christians, they didn't immediately say, oh, well, I guess we don't need that anymore. But but Gentiles, of course, who Paul evangelized, didn't have any interest in that. But we do find virtually every time that we're dealing with the Jewish church in Jerusalem that they're pretty much temple oriented until the temple is destroyed.

In a sense, the destruction of the temple in 70, it was a favor done to the Jewish Christians. It gave them a sense of identity as Christians and not merely as another kind of Jewish person. And here we find even the apostles involved.

They're going to a sacrifice. They're not offering a sacrifice. This is a sacrifice the priests offered every day at three in the afternoon.

And but the people would go and pray there. And so they're going to pray. And a certain man, lame from his mother's womb.

Was carried whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called beautiful to ask alms of those who entered the temple. Now, there's a second reference later on in verse 10 to the gate being called the beautiful gate. Although there's a great deal known from what the rabbis wrote and even from archaeologists have dug up of the temple about the temple and its structure and so forth.

No one knows for sure which gate it was that in those days was locally referred to as the beautiful gate. Scholars have not discovered anything that would let them know which of the many gates of the temple was called the beautiful gate. And from the 5th century on, Christian tradition has associated the Shushan gate with this gate.

The Shushan gate. You have to remember, the temple is consisting of many different courts. And the widest perimeter of the temple was an outer wall that separated from the non-temple area.

And there were a number of gates, including on the east, a gate called the Shushan

gate, which entered into the whole temple complex from the east. And as I said, Christian tradition has associated that Shushan gate with what was called the beautiful gate here. Now, there are most scholars doubt that the Shushan gate is the one involved.

There's another gate called the Nicanor gate. N-I-C-A-N-O-R. Nicanor.

The Nicanor gate. Well, when you go into the temple, of course, it's not there now, but back when it was standing, you go into one of the many gates of the outer wall, and you'd be in what was called the court of the Gentiles. It was called the court of the Gentiles because Gentiles were allowed to be in that part of the temple.

They weren't allowed to be in any other part. That's as far as they could go into this most outward court of the temple. Gentiles were permitted to go.

And if they're God-fearers, they might pray in the Jewish temple to the Jewish God. And some did. But because they were uncircumcised, they couldn't go any further.

Beyond that, there was another wall. And that entered into what was called the court of the women. Now, it wasn't only that women were there, but it was as far as women could go.

Jewish women, though. Gentiles couldn't go beyond the court of the Gentiles. Women couldn't go any further than the court of the women.

Beyond the court of the women was another wall, moving more toward the interior, where you had the court of Israel, which was for men, Jewish men only. And then you had the building and, you know, the holy place and the Holy of Holies and those things in the center. But between the court of the Gentiles and the court of the women was a gate on a wall that was called the Nechanter Gate.

And most scholars believe that this was probably the gate that was in those days referred to as the Beautiful Gate. Josephus, who lived at the time and described the temple for us in some detail, he didn't call it the Beautiful Gate, but he did say that the Nechanter Gate was noted for its unusual beauty. It was a bronze gate, and apparently it glistened quite notably more than the other gates.

The others were not bronze. And because of his description of it as being remarkably beautiful, it is assumed by most scholars that this would have been the Beautiful Gate of the temple that was so-called at the time. It also was on the east side.

Now, here's the thing. Once you are inside the temple area in the court of the Gentiles, you might enter the other courts through the east. But if you are outside the temple complex completely, most people would not enter from the east.

That is, the Shushan Gate, which was on the eastern side of the temple outer wall, is not where the majority of people would enter because the city was to the west of the temple. So most people coming from the city of Jerusalem into the temple would come from the west. The east would not have as much foot traffic.

And a beggar, you would think, if his friends are going to put him at one of the gates, he'd say, hey, put me on the west gate. That's where most people are coming in. Going to have a lot more customers or more people that he can appeal to on the west side.

But the Shushan Gate was on the east side. It was used, but it was not as desirable a place for a beggar. And so many scholars do not think that he would be at the Shushan Gate, although that is the traditional gate.

But once they're in, they might move around and go around to the east gate side and go into the temple, into the Court of the Women or whatever other courts. And that is probably where the beautiful gate was. Now, what's interesting is that Jesus frequented the temple a great deal.

And in the last week or so of his life, he was there every day coming and going. He probably came in through the east because Jesus spent his nights when he was in the vicinity of Jerusalem. He spent his nights on the Mount of Olives in the town of Bethany in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

And he would, it was two miles to the east of Jerusalem. So Jesus, when he approached Jerusalem, would come from the east. And if he entered the temple, there's a good chance he came in from the east and would probably have passed this man.

Now, we're told later on in the narrative, in chapter four and verse 22, that this man was more than 40 years old. And he'd been born crippled. So he'd been crippled for more than four years.

And he had lain at that gate daily, which means that if just a couple of months earlier, Jesus probably would have passed this man and maybe multiple times. But the man was still lame. Jesus hadn't healed him.

And this is just one instance of biblical evidence that Jesus didn't heal everybody. I mean, Peter healed him, as we shall see. So it's not like God wasn't willing to heal him.

But he apparently wasn't interested in healing him through Jesus' personal ministry. But he saved him for the apostles to heal. So that is, he gave the apostles a chance to make a splash and have a chance to preach this sermon by leaving the man unhealed.

Many people think that since we, who suffer sickness, have, you know, very few things more of a priority to us when we're sick, or our loved ones are sick, than to be healed or see healing. We assume that that must be God's priority too. But God let this guy be, he

was not unwilling to heal him, but he let him be lame for over 40 years.

Similar with the man who was born blind in John chapter 9. The disciples said, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Now, he was an adult too. He'd been blind for, I think, close to 40 years, as I recall. And Jesus said, well, he wasn't born blind because he sinned or his parents sinned, but he was born blind so that the works of God could be seen in him.

You mean this guy had to be blind for decades so that on this particular day, God could show his works by healing him? Yeah, apparently God's not always in a hurry to heal people, even if he intends to heal them. He's not in a hurry. The sisters of Lazarus came to Jesus in John chapter 11 and said, the one you love is sick, obviously implying, please come and help him, heal him.

So Jesus waited a couple of days. He just kind of ignored, he didn't ignore, he answered. He said, if you believe, he said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.

But then he ignored the request for two days and just stayed where he was. And then after Lazarus died, Jesus said to the disciples, OK, we're going to go down there. Because Jesus was going to do something for him, but not what the sisters asked.

The sisters asked that he be healed, not raised from the dead. And when Jesus showed up, the sisters said, Lord, if you were here, my brother would not have died. I think he thought, well, it's exactly right.

That's why he didn't come. Him dying was in the plan and him being raised is in the plan, too. God has a plan that sometimes involves sickness.

That is to say, tolerating sickness. God didn't create sickness in the Garden of Eden. Sickness is, I'm sure, a result of sin.

But God has the power to touch anyone he wants to and heal them. But he doesn't do that. He lets us live, in many cases, with the consequences of the sinful world for a long time, maybe until we die.

But, as in the case of Lazarus, he let Lazarus die, but he raised him from the dead. And likewise, the Bible says he's going to raise us from the dead, too. So we might die sick, like Lazarus did, without Jesus choosing to heal us.

But he'll raise us. The point I'm making is that God's priorities are not the same as ours when we're sick. We can think of little else than, God, please heal me.

Heal my husband, heal my wife, heal my friend, my child. And God knows there's some things, frankly, that are more of a priority than physical comfort or even physical survival. There are spiritual issues.



There are things that promote the kingdom of God. And for him to let this man be lame for 40 years, although he intended to eventually heal him, this man spent most of his life inconvenienced by being crippled and begging. But his time came.

This was the day. Jesus had passed him by, in all likelihood, a number of times and not healed him. But this was the day that God intended to give Peter a chance to reach a couple thousand more people with the gospel.

And this man was going to be the catalyst for that. Fortunately for him. And seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms.

And fixing his eyes on him with John, Peter said, look at us. Now, he didn't know who they were. He wanted alms.

He wasn't looking to be healed. He didn't know who Peter and John were. They were just men in the crowd, strangers.

And so when Peter said, look at us, he probably went, look over here, I'm going to give you some money. At least that's what the man thought. And so it says he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

Now, he did receive something from them, but not what he expected. A lot of times we think we know what we want to receive from God, but he's got a better idea. Even Lazarus dying was a better idea.

When Jesus said, our friend Lazarus is dead, I'm glad I wasn't there so that you may believe. He said to his disciples, his sisters thought it's better for Lazarus to be healed. Jesus said, no, it's better for him to die.

I've got a better idea. I'm going to raise him. And that's what we have to assume about God.

We know what we expect and what we want, but God always either has the same idea or a better idea. His better idea might not look like a better idea from our point of view. But when all is said and done, we see it was.

This man expected money. As a beggar, he's poor. What does a poor person want? He wants money.

He wishes that God would provide more money. But God has a better idea. He's not going to give him a fish.

He's going to teach him to fish. He's going to make him able to work for a living. He's going to restore his health.

He's going to give him a life like he never dreamed of ever having. And all he wanted

was a few coins. I think sometimes people are like that.

Their prayers are selfish prayers. But they don't realize that what they're praying for is much less than what God really intends to give of a different sort. And Peter's answer to him was, silver and gold I do not have.

Now, this is interesting because Peter and the apostles distributed the finances for the Christian community. We're told that people sold houses and lands and brought the money and laid them at the apostles feet for distribution. And the apostles at this point, at least until they appointed the seven to do this in chapter six, the apostles managed probably a whole lot of money for the church.

And yet Peter said, I don't have any money. Why? Because he didn't. He managed God's money for God's people, but he didn't own any himself.

Remember, those who had possessions did not consider that the things they had were their own. He probably could have gone to the treasury of the church and found a few coins for this guy. But there apparently were different stewarding priorities with the church's money than to just help a beggar, especially when you can help him a lot better in a different way.

And so he says, I don't have silver and gold. And that guy's heart probably sank. He thought, oh, then why'd you get my attention? Well, you get my hopes up for.

I asked for alms and you say, look at me, I look at you. I have reason to expect you're going to do. And you tell me you don't have any money.

Are you teasing me? Are you cruel? What's up? He said, but what I do have, I can give you. It isn't money, but I can give you something better than that. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

And took him by the right hand, lifted him up. 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.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 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, which gives Peter the chance to exploit their curiosity.

And preach another sermon and save a bunch of people. Now, you may have heard this story. It's allegedly a true story.

There was a time in the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church was very wealthy. Of course, at this point in time, more than the peasants who attended it. Part of the reason

the peasants weren't very rich is because the church took their money to build cathedrals and things like that.

But and, you know, the church is pretty wealthy. And St. Thomas Aquinas is said to have visited the pope, who is Pope Innocent II on occasion. And the pope happened to be assessing the wealth of the church.

There's all kinds of silver and gold laid out on this large table. And he was and he saw Thomas Aquinas walked in and Pope Innocent II said, you see, Thomas. The church can no longer say silver and gold, have I done? And Thomas said, that is true.

Father, but neither can it say rise and walk. The church no longer was poor, but it was now powerless. It didn't have the power of the apostolic church.

And I think a lot of times people churches do nowadays think in terms of corporations. You know, we need a lot of money if we can build a big building, get a high paid pastor, a high paid worship team. We can get a lot of people saved and get, you know, make a big impact for the kingdom of God.

It all costs money. Yeah. But what if you don't have any money? Well, what if you only have the power of God and no money? Remember, Jesus had people who wanted to follow him.

And he said to them, birds of the air have nests. Foxes have holes, but I don't have anything. I don't even have a place to lay my head.

When the Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus with a question about money. And he wanted to make it a point from a penny, he said, anyone got a penny here? He didn't have one. They had a penny.

So whose face is on that penny? You see, Jesus didn't have a lot of money. The apostles didn't have a lot of money, but they had something better. A lot of times the churches today, they have the same kind of power that worldly corporations have.

Best case, if they're successful. You got big buildings, big paychecks, big talent, and big auditoriums and so forth. But very few Christians, very few churches can say to a layman, rise and walk.

And it happens. The church can no longer say silver and gold, have I not? But neither can they say, rise and walk. Not very often.

There are miracles that occur in the world today. But they're generally not happening in the big churches. When the television cameras are running or anything like that.

It's just not happening. You can't document them very often. So this man was healed.

And he was walking and leaping and praising God. Now you might expect a man who couldn't walk to be walking if he was healed. But leaping shows a tremendous amount of exuberance.

Like David danced and leaped in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant when it was being brought in. It shows tremendous exuberance, tremendous joy. And you can imagine if you'd never walked.

And now you were perfectly able. It's interesting, Luke, the physician, describes what happened to the man. Peter reached out his hand and reached his hand and it says his ankle, his feet and ankle bones received strength.

I'm not a doctor. I probably just said the guy walked. The guy got up.

Luke, the physician, is saying the guy's ankles and the bones in his feet, that was his problem. But they got healed. They got strong and he was able to get up and leap.

Now the statement that this man was leaping calls attention to the fact that the Messianic age had come with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Because in Isaiah chapter 35, which is one of many passages in Isaiah about the Messianic age, the age of the Messiah. Chapter 35, it's a short chapter, but it's entirely about the age of the Messiah.

And it's in poetry, so you've got to take the poetic language for what it is. But it says in verse 5, Then the eyes of the blind will be open. The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Then the lame shall leap like a deer. And the tongue of the dumb shall sing. For water shall burst forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

The parched ground shall become a pool. The thirsty land springs of water. The habitation of jackals where each lay.

There shall be grass and reeds and rushes. We already saw in Isaiah that's a reference to the Spirit being poured out. Isaiah 32, just three chapters earlier, mentions that everything's a desert until the Spirit is poured out.

And then the desert blossoms like a rose. So spiritual fruitfulness is talked about here. But notice the miracles.

Everything that is realistic, Jesus did. And the Apostle did many of those things too. Jesus opened the eyes of the blind.

He loosened the tongue of the dumb. He opened the ears of the deaf. And in this case, Peter caused the lame man to leap like a deer.

He was leaping and walking. And so the very imagery of him leaping calls to mind the prediction. By the way, when Jesus was on earth, most Jews, including his disciples,

thought that the Messianic mission was different than it really turned out to be.

They thought the Messiah was supposed to be a conqueror, a deliverer, a military captain who would lead the children of Israel into victory against their oppressors, the Romans, and then make them an independent state, as David had done. David had destroyed the Philistines and the Edomites and the other enemies of Israel and made them an independent nation and a respected nation. And that's what the Messiah was expected to do.

Jesus came along, didn't do any of that stuff, didn't even try. And John the Baptist, just like the disciples of Jesus, he didn't know really any better than most people what the Messiah was supposed to do. He was a prophet, but it doesn't mean he understood all the prophecies that other prophets had gotten.

He gave words from the Lord, but he, too, was concerned that Jesus wasn't doing what the Messiah was supposed to do. And John was in prison, in a Roman prison, no less, so that John would say, if Jesus was just going to get with the program, get the Romans out of here, I'd be free here, but I'm sitting rotting in a Roman prison, and Jesus is out there just kind of being a nice guy. How can he not be a militant? And John sent messengers to Jesus and said, Are you the one or not? Are you the one we're looking for or do we look for someone else? Trying to needle Jesus a little bit, trying to maybe goad him a little bit.

Come on, get with the program. And Jesus said to the messengers, You go back and tell John what you see. The blind have their eyes open.

The deaf have their ears open. The lame are healed. And he's referring to this passage in Isaiah.

He's pointing out, listen, didn't Isaiah said these things are going to happen in the Messianic age? These things are going to happen. Go tell John, that's what you're seeing, they're happening. That'll answer his question.

He wonders if I'm the Messiah or not. Remind him what the prophet said the Messiah would do and what you're observing here happening. And so the lame leaping like a deer is one of the things in that passage that proves that Jesus is the Messiah and Peter is the instrument through whom Jesus heals this man.

Now remember everyone healed through the hands of the apostles or through hands are healed by Jesus. That's why in chapter 9 of Acts, when Peter healed a lame man named Aeneas, he said to him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. And the man was healed.

What the apostles did miraculously was Jesus Christ doing it. Jesus continuing his activities, the same kind of activities he'd done on earth when he was a man from Galilee. He now did through his body, the church, through Peter and the apostles and others.

Okay, so everyone is impressed. Everyone's astonished. Everyone wants to know what happened.

This man was a familiar figure. He'd had to be a beggar for 40 years or more there so that a lot of people would have a chance to know he was a beggar for sure. And that does seem to be the reason for mentioning his age because it says people were astonished.

If you look at chapter 4, it says in verse 21, for when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them because of the people since they all glorified God for what had been done because the man was over 40 years old upon whom this miracle of healing had taken place. So the man had been there for 40 years. That gave everybody who was in the habit of Jerusalem a chance to become familiar with his face and familiar with his plight.

And now they could all see something had changed. So it got everybody's attention. This was no longer at the festival, so it was local Jerusalemites, not pilgrims from faraway countries who wouldn't know this guy.

The locals are the ones who were reached on this particular occasion. And so Peter takes advantage. In verse 11, it says, now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John and all the people ran together to them to the porch, which is called Solomon's Porch, greatly amazed.

And Peter saw it and he responded to the people. Notice he preached the gospel. He was responding to them.

He wasn't intruding into their private lives. He was responding to their gathering in their interest. I might just mention Solomon's Porch has been excavated.

Archaeologists know about it. It was an eastern corridor within the Court of the Gentiles on the eastern extremity, the eastern wall of the temple compound. There's a long corridor with columns marked it off from the other part.

And it was a covered porch. And it was a place where people sometimes would gather in bad weather. We know that apparently the early church gathered in Solomon's Porch with some degree of regularity.

And even Jesus did. We read in John chapter 10 that when the people came to Jesus, when the Pharisees came to said, you know, how long will you keep us in suspense? Are you the Messiah or not? It says he was walking in Solomon's Porch. Solomon's Porch must have been a convenient place to be in the wintertime.

That was December when they did that in John chapter 10. And so this is where they are now, too. We don't know what season it was, but it's a place where Jesus himself had

walked and taught in this very part of the temple before.

Now, Peter is there and the crowd has gathered. And when Peter saw it, he responded to the people, men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why do you so intently look at us as though we, by our own power or godliness, made this man walk? 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 Pontius Pilate when he was determined to let him go. But you denied the holy one in the just and asked for a murderer to be granted to you.

And you killed the prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. 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.

Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all his prophets, that the Christ would suffer, he is thus fulfilled. Repent, therefore, and be converted, and your sins may be blotted out, so that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

And that he may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of the restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. 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 and whatever he says to you.

And it should come to pass that every soul who will not hear the prophet, that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with the fathers, saying to Abraham, And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

To you first God, having raised up his servant Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from your iniquities. Sermon ends. Actually, what happened next in the chapter is that Peter got arrested.

Peter and John got arrested. The temple authorities didn't like them talking this way, and they got arrested. We read about that in chapters four and five, some conflicts they had with the temple authorities.

Now, in chapter two, we didn't read of any conflicts like that. It was just the day of Pentecost. You know, three thousand people got saved.

There's a wonderful new Christian community in town, and they have favor with all the people. That couldn't last forever. Eventually, the devil had to counterattack.

Eventually, there had to be opposition, and that would come as a result of this sermon. But also because of this sermon, we shall find that the number in chapter four, verse four says, However, many of those who heard the word believed, and the number of men came to be about five thousand. And so, it was a tremendous advance for the kingdom of God, but it was also something that the devil found threatening and counterpunched and came at them.

But the next couple chapters are going to show, which we won't cover today. I want to talk about his sermon, but in the next couple chapters, we'll find that the devil's counterpunches were powerless. And God was continually giving the apostles, you know, the upper hand, as we shall see in this conflict with the Sanhedrin.

But let's talk quickly about this sermon and its contents. First of all, I suppose one of the main features of this sermon, unlike his previous sermon in chapter two, is the number of ways in which he speaks of Jesus by different titles. In chapter two in the sermon, when he talked of Jesus, he just referred to him in chapter two, verse 22, as Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you by miracles and so forth.

He doesn't go into detail, doesn't give him special titles or anything like that, except at the end, he says, know that God has made this Jesus the Christ, the Messiah. Okay, so he's the title Messiah is used of Christ in the first sermon. In this, there's a bunch of titles.

First of all, God's servant. And to say God's servant in this sense, he uses that term in verse 13 and in verse 26. Twice, Jesus is referred to as God's servant, Jesus.

I just want to say that in the Old Testament, every prophet of God was called God's servant. Elijah was called the servant of God. And other prophets were called servants of God.

But there are four passages in the book of Isaiah that are unique and which speak very specifically of the servant of Yahweh, the servant of the Lord. And they are messianic. Actually, what's interesting about these four passages in Isaiah and scholars refer to them as the servant songs because the Messiah is referred to as the servant.

But one thing that's interesting about them is that the servant is identified as Israel initially. But as you go through Isaiah, you see that Israel fails in the role of the servant of Yahweh. They don't do what the master has to do.

And now there's another person, the servant of Yahweh, that rise up even to redeem Israel themselves, the former servant and the Gentiles, too. I won't go into all those passages. All I can say is that many times in the New Testament, these servant passages are identified with Jesus.

Most notably, Isaiah 53, probably the most famous Old Testament prophecy about Jesus.



Isaiah 53 talks about his rejection, his humiliation, his death, and God glorifying him. That's the last of the four servant songs in Isaiah.

The earlier ones are also used. Isaiah 42 is the first of them, and that is quoted about Jesus in Matthew chapter 12, verses 8 through 11, I believe it is. No, it isn't.

It's verses 18 through 21. Not 8 through 11, but 18 through 21. Matthew 12, 18 through 21 quotes at length the first four verses of Isaiah 42, the first of the servant songs in Isaiah, and applies it to Jesus.

That's the one about, Behold my servant, he will do my will. That's the one that says, A bruised reed he will not break, a smoking flax he will not quench, he will establish justice among the nations, and so forth. That's the first of the servant songs, and it's quoted in Matthew 12 about Jesus.

The last of the four servant songs is Isaiah 53, which is the most quoted chapter of Isaiah. It's quoted by Jesus about himself. It's quoted by the apostles about himself.

It's quoted by Philip. Well, actually, when Philip finds the Ethiopian eunuch, the man in his chair is actually reading that passage, and Philip runs up and explains it to him. Peter makes reference to that passage in 1 Peter chapter 2 and applies it to Christ.

The servant of Yahweh is recognized in the New Testament as the Messiah, although initially in Isaiah it's Israel. Israel corporately is first seen as the servant of Yahweh, but also in the Old Testament, Israel corporately is first seen as the son of God. When Israel were slaves in Egypt, God told Moses to speak to Pharaoh and say, Israel is my firstborn.

If you don't let my firstborn go, I'm going to kill your firstborn. In other words, God looks at Israel collectively in the Old Testament as his child, as his servant, and so forth. But because Israel fails as the servant, he raises up one Israelite, the Messiah, who is now in the New Testament, he's the son of God.

He's the servant of Yahweh. He's the one who is the new Israel in himself, and those who come to be in him are the new Israel in him. But this gets a little off target.

The main thing is this is the first place, and there's only four times in the New Testament that Jesus is called the servant. These servant passages are often quoted about him, but as far as calling him the servant of God or the servant of Yahweh, this only happens in this chapter and also in chapter four a couple of times. Twice in this chapter, twice in chapter four.

And that's how it begins. The sermon begins, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant, Jesus. Now, this is an allusion to the last servant song and specifically to Isaiah 52, 13, which is the beginning of that last servant song.

Isaiah 52 and verse 13 says, Behold, my servant, Yahweh says, shall deal prudently. He shall be exalted and extolled very high. But then it goes on to say, but he was badly esteemed.

He was bruised for our iniquities. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was rejected by men.

He suffered. He died. It goes on to talk about that, but it says, therefore, it's like when Paul said that Jesus humbles himself, therefore, God highly exalted him in Philippians 2. Isaiah starts out by saying the servant of Yahweh is exalted and glorified very high.

But then he goes back tracks kind of flashback because before that he was badly treated and badly rejected by Israel. That's the that's the fourth servant song and I say and Peter begins by saying God has glorified or exalted his servant, which is a statement from Isaiah 52, 13, and therefore identifying Christ for the Israelites as the servant of Yahweh. So that's one of the titles for Jesus found in this sermon.

There's others. In verse 14, he calls Jesus the holy one and the just. Which is interesting, the holy one, because in the Old Testament, God is called the holy one of Israel.

Yahweh is called the holy one. And now Jesus is called the holy one, which means that Peter and the early church had come to see Jesus is the holy one. He is Yahweh.

In the flesh. And he's the just one. God was, of course, the just God, the one who in whom is no injustice in the Old Testament.

And then so Jesus is called the servant of God. He's called the holy one and the just. And in verse 15, he's called the prince of life.

A term that's not really used of Jesus elsewhere. He's called the prince of peace in Isaiah 9, 7. But the prince of life is a term that Peter uses here uniquely of Jesus. And he does so apparently to deliberately contrast with the word murderer.

You chose to deliver a murderer. And you denied and killed the prince of life. One man is taking life.

The other is the giver of life. The founder of life. The ruler of the realm of life.

You killed him. The murderer, the guy who kills people. You liked him.

You didn't like Jesus. Not so much. And so that's one of the terms.

Now he also refers to Jesus in verse 22 as the prophet. The one whom Moses said would come. Moses said the Lord will raise up a prophet after me.

This quotation is found in here in this chapter, verses 22 and 23. It is a compound

quotation from several verses in Numbers chapter 18. Deuteronomy 18, excuse me.

Deuteronomy 18, verse 15 and 18 and 19 in that chapter. God tells the children of Israel that after Moses is gone, they may be tempted to consult sorcerers and witches and soothsayers and astrologers. He says don't talk to any of those people.

Don't get involved in any of that stuff. God forbids that. But instead, the Lord your God will raise up a prophet like me, Moses said.

And you'll listen to him. And if you don't listen to him, you'll be cut off from the people. In other words, when God raises up this prophet like Moses, then it'll be mandatory that everybody follow him or else, as it says here, he quotes it, be destroyed from among the people.

The Israelites in this time that Peter is living had a choice. They could follow the prophet that Moses said would become like him or they could be destroyed from among the people. There's not going to be a third group, you know, Jews who love Jesus, Jews who get destroyed, and Jews who are kind of neutral.

Everyone had to make a choice. There's a prophet God just like when Moses. Moses said you want to cross the Red Sea, follow me.

We're going right across. You stay on this side, the Egyptians are going to get you. You'll be destroyed.

You follow Moses, you're saved. Now there's going to be another prophet comparable to Moses. You're going to have to follow him to be saved too.

And anyone who doesn't follow him is destroyed. And Jesus is that prophet, which means anyone who doesn't follow Jesus, including every Israelite, and it was the Israelites to whom Moses was speaking on this occasion, every Israelite who does not become a follower of Christ, a Messianic Israelite, is cut off from the people of Israel as far as God's concerned. And destroyed.

And there was an actual physical destruction, of course, that came upon them when the Romans came a few decades after this. But we see him identifying Jesus as this prophet like Moses. By the way, this same passage in Deuteronomy 18 is quoted again by Stephen in his sermon in Acts chapter 7. So it's obvious that the church had come already to see this prophet in Deuteronomy 18 as a reference to the same person who was the Messiah.

The Jews had not come to that conclusion yet. The Jews were looking for the prophet and they were looking for the Messiah. But they didn't know that the prophet Moses spoke of is the same person as the Messiah.

We see this, for example, in John chapter 1, when John the Baptist was preaching and the Pharisees came to him to ask who he was. In John chapter 1, it says in verse 21, well, in verse 20, he confessed. In verse 19, they ask, who are you? And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, I'm not the Messiah.

The word Christ, of course, is Greek for Messiah. I'm not the Messiah. You're expecting the Messiah? I'm not him, John says.

Then they said, what then? Are you Elijah? He said, no, I'm not. Are you the prophet? He said, no. When they said, are you the prophet? They didn't say, are you a prophet? John would have to say yes to that.

He was a prophet. He was not the prophet. Which prophet? The one that Moses said would come.

Now, he'd already told him he wasn't the Messiah. So in separately asking, are you the prophet? It's clear the Jews had not yet made up their minds. And Jews, frankly, the rabbis hardly made up their minds about anything.

The rabbis disagreed on many things. But there was no agreement among the Jews at this time that the prophet of which Moses spoke was the same as the Messiah that the other prophets spoke about. But the early church had no question about that.

Jesus was the servant of Yahweh. He was the Messiah. He was the prophet that Moses spoke about.

And not only did Peter say so, but Stephen said so in his sermon too. Apparently it was common knowledge in the early church by this time that the Messiah was also the prophet. Now, he's also called by another name.

And that is the seed of Abraham. In verse 25, Peter says, You are the 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. Now, God spoke to Abraham a number of times with a similar promise.

When he first spoke to Abraham in chapter 12 of Genesis, he just said, I will bless you and make you a blessing. Later on he said in another place in Genesis, In you all the nations will be blessed. But he clarified later it wasn't going to be Abraham himself, but in his offspring.

So the first time that God actually said what is quoted here of him saying to Abraham is in Genesis 22, 18. God said to Abraham, In your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed. Later, the exact same promise was made to Isaac, his son, in Genesis 26, 4. And later, still another generation later, God said the exact same words to his son, Jacob.

So Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all specifically told, Through your seed all the nations will be blessed. Now, who's the seed? Israel certainly thought they were the seed. They also thought they were the servant of Yahweh and the son of Yahweh, too.

In the New Testament, it's clear who the seed is. The same as the servant of Yahweh, the same as the son of Yahweh, the same as the seed of Abraham. All these terms referred to Israel in the Old Testament, they all refer to Christ in the New.

In Galatians 3 and verse 16, Galatians 3, verse 16, Paul said, Now to Abraham and his seed the promises were made. Then Paul explains, He does not say to seeds as of many, but to your seed, singular, which is Christ. So Paul is saying these promises that God made to Abraham's seed do not take it to be a bunch of people like the Israelites.

It's one seed, Christ. The fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham is Christ the seed. So here we have yet another label for the Messiah.

He's called in this chapter the servant of Yahweh. He is the holy one and the just. He's the prince of life.

He's that prophet like Moses. He's the seed of Abraham. All these things reflect some measure of contemplation on the Apostles' part, theologically, to realize how many of these streams of ideas in the Old Testament are fulfilled in Christ.

I don't know that Peter understood that on the day of Pentecost, but in the time in between that sermon and this, he had filled out his understanding of the way the whole Old Testament points toward Jesus and is summed up in him. Now, seeing this also, Peter three times in this sermon mentions things that all the prophets say. If you look at verse 18, but those things which God foretold by the mouth of all his prophets that the Christ would suffer, he is thus fulfilled.

Then verse 21, And then in verse 24, Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and all those who followed after, as many as have spoken, also foretold these days. There's three things he said that all the prophets in the Old Testament spoke of. All the prophets from the beginning of the world, from Samuel on, spoke of these days.

Now, what did they speak of? First of all, in verse 18, they foretold the sufferings of Christ. In verse 21, they all foretold the restoration of all things. And in verse 24, we read, So, all the prophets, according to Peter, spoke of the sufferings of Christ, of the church age, and of the restoration of all things.

Those three items are, Peter, like a broken record, says all the prophets talked about this. Now, I have to say, this is an example of hyperbole. Because not every prophet spoke about the sufferings of Christ.

Isaiah did. One could argue that in some passages, Jeremiah did. There are a few places I

think Zechariah alludes to.

And a few others, perhaps. But not all 17 prophets in the Old Testament, you can't find references to the Messiah's suffering in all of them. Likewise, there's practically no subject that all the prophets spoke about.

And therefore, I think we have to understand that it's a hyperbole. He's basically saying, this was the general theme of prophets from the beginning. To say, all the prophets.

I mean, that kind of hyperbole is commonly used. Even in modern times. And even in biblical times.

In fact, Jesus said something similar in Luke 21, 22. Luke 21, 22. Jesus was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem.

He said, for these are the days of vengeance that all things that were written may be fulfilled. He means in the prophets. Well, not everything in the prophets was talking about 70 A.D. There were some other things.

For example, the fall of Tyre, the fall of Babylon, the fall of Egypt to Assyria. Those weren't the fall of, that wasn't 70 A.D. And the prophets talked about those. The prophets didn't, not all of them talked about, but this is a hyperbole.

Basically, it's a way of saying, this was a common theme that you run into all the time in the prophets. Right from the very beginning. I mean, even Samuel.

When he anointed David, this was in type and shadow. An anointing of the future Messiah of whom David was a type. There's, you know, and the sufferings of David might be seen as a type of the sufferings of the Messiah.

But it's interesting that Peter did believe that what he was testifying to was the common teaching of the Old Testament in general. Now, what is the restoration of all things? That's interesting to explore, but we don't have time to go into it very much. I wish I had twice as much time, because I've skipped over some things I would like to talk about.

But he says in verse 21, the heavens must receive Christ, and it says he must be retained in heaven and not come back here until the time of the restoration of all things, which God has spoken of by the mouth of all his holy prophets. Well, again, you won't find all the holy prophets speaking about the restoration of all things anywhere, but you do find that God does talk about, for example, the Messiah restoring Israel, restoring the Gentiles, you know, establishing righteousness, the first servant song in Isaiah 42 says three times in four verses that Messiah will establish justice among the nations. In other words, God's not satisfied to leave things as they are.

Things got broken in the Garden of Eden, and God didn't just say, oh, well, whatever, it's

broken. I know what I'll do. I'll just save a few of them, take them to heaven, and leave the whole thing broken down here.

No, God was not content to have his beautiful creation never repaired. He intends to restore all things. The Bible says that there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth.

The Bible says that the creation itself is going to be delivered from the bondage of decay, which has come upon it because of the fall. It says that in Romans chapter 8 and verse 21. It talks about how God's going to restore what was lost.

Jesus said he came to seek and to save what is lost, to restore it to God. Those who've fallen from God, he's come to restore them, to call them back. Now, all things might be a hyperbole too, maybe not every last thing, but God is not content to leave things unrestored.

His intention throughout Scripture is to restore what was broken. Many Christians don't understand that. They think that the goal of Christianity is to get out of here and go to heaven and that there's no more real plans for the earth to be fixed.

It's just a dead loss. It's just going to go on and on as a bad deal, and some people will get rescued out of it and go to heaven when they die and never have to worry about the earth again. The Bible says the meek will inherit the earth.

The Bible says Jesus will reign over the earth. The Bible says that God will give him the nations for his inheritance and the outermost parts of the earth for his possession. God is going to restore the earth to Christ and to us, and we will be in resurrected bodies that can live in it forever.

We'll be raised immortal. Our physical bodies are sown in weakness. They're raised in power, Paul said.

There's going to be a time of God setting things right. And, again, it's what the Messiah is supposed to do. He's going to restore justice to the nations.

That hasn't happened yet. People who have followed Christ have become just, more just, not all of them, but they're supposed to be more just than they were before. That's part of the plan.

But it says in Isaiah 42 forward that the Messiah will not fail, and he will not be discouraged until he has established justice in the earth, and the islands will await his law and his rule. So for the earth to become a just place under the Messiah is not only the plan. It's determined.

The Messiah will not fail. He won't even be discouraged if it takes a long time. He's going to do it, and he will not fail in it.

And so this is a restoration of all things. What that exactly looks like, I'm not sure we can envision. I'm not sure we could say.

But Peter, from the very beginning of his preaching ministry, sees the fulfillment of the prophetic expectations that God has given from the beginning, that he's going to restore things, all things. And all the prophets spoke about these things. Now I just want to, I should quit, but I want to say one more thing about the last verse.

He mentions in the next to the last verse, the penultimate verse, that God had promised to bless all nations through the seed of Abraham. Now the seed of Abraham is Christ. And he applies it here.

He says, okay, to you first. Now the gospel is to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Paul said that a couple times in Romans.

You first, you Jews. To you first, God, having raised up his servant, Jesus, sent him to bless you. Now all the nations will be blessed, but you're the first nation that he intends to bless.

God, through the seed of Abraham, will bless all nations, but to you first. God has sent him to you first to bless you. What is the blessing? In turning every one of you away from his iniquities.

In other words, saving you from your sins. That's the blessing. How does the seed of Abraham bless all nations? By turning them from their sins.

His name should be called Jesus, the angel said, because he'll save his people from their sins. People are in bondage to sin. They've been in bondage to sin since the fall.

That's something to be restored. Freedom, liberty, victory over sin. Jesus will save them from their sins.

He sent his servant to you to turn you from your sins. I know people today who ask, are we still supposed to be blessing the nation of Israel? Doesn't the Bible say, you know, whoever blesses them, he'll bless and so forth? And I say, well, sure, why not? Let's bless them in turning them away from their sins. That's the blessing that God has for them and for all nations.

Let's turn Israel and the rest of the world from their sins. I don't think God has a special obligation on us to do something for the nation of Israel other than other nations. But they're one of the nations too.

And God's blessing for all nations through the Messiah is to turn them to salvation. And that's what Peter is offering and announcing to the Jews, the very ones in some cases who crucified Christ in the first century. Now, I'm not going to detain you any longer, but



this is not the end of the story.

Chapters 4 and 5 continue with the response of the enemies of the gospel to Peter and John. And they get hauled off to jail for this sermon and for the miracle they work. But we'll hold off until next time to discuss that.