

The Lamé Man Who Danced

Acts 3

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The day of Pentecost has come and actually gone. It's interesting that at the end of Acts 2, Luke mentions that many wonders and signs were done by the hands of the apostles. Dr. Luke, the author of the book of Acts, picks out one of those signs and wonders. We commonly call it the healing of the lame man. It wasn't the only miracle that probably happened lately, but he picks this one out for a very specific reason because it brings the apostles and the believers into conflict with the Jewish authorities resulting in persecution. The story we read in Acts 3 carries all the way into chapter 4. We're going to look at the whole third chapter tonight, Lord willing, and then follow the results of what happened—the conflict, the persecution, the prayer and the power—that comes in Acts 4. There are two main divisions in chapter 3. Let me give them to you. In verses 1-11 we have the miracle, and in verses 12-26 we have the message that Peter preached as a result of the miracle. The lame man is healed, the crowd is drawn, and then Peter preaches his second sermon that is recorded for us in the book of Acts.

We first find the circumstances of the miracle in verses 1-3. Let's look at that. Luke tells us, "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. 2 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 them that entered into the temple; 3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms." Peter and John are often coupled together in the Scriptures. Actually, the book of Acts is kind of laid out the acts of Peter and Paul, and really those two characters are the most prominent in the whole book. It starts with Peter, then Paul's conversion (first known as Saul in Acts 9), and then the focus is Saul and his missionary travels and journeys from there on out. Peter and John went where? They went together up to the temple (verse 1). It's interesting that they were Christians now but still Jewish in their practice. They hadn't really broken away from the Jewish temple even though they'd been born again and found the Messiah—they know Jesus is truly the Messiah—and they're still going back to the temple to worship God.

It says that they went at the hour of prayer. What hour was that? It was three in the afternoon. This was one of the times during the day that the Jews devoted to prayer. They prayed in the morning, in the afternoon, there would be the afternoon incense burnt, and the sacrifice. It was just kind of a time when the Jews would pray, so they made their way to the temple. The temple is the same temple that Jesus went into, that Jesus frequented. Jesus would go to the temple in what was known as the court of the women. (If you get the commentary I mentioned by Homer Kent, he's got a lot of great diagrams that show the temple, its layout, the courtyards, Solomon's Portico, and all the different areas. You get a feel for how it's all laid out.) They went to this temple known as Solomon's Temple. Jesus talked about it in Matthew 24 when He gave what was called His great Olivet Discourse. This temple (it would be about another 35-40 years later) would be destroyed in 70 AD by the Romans as they would lay siege to the city of Jerusalem. They're on their way into the temple, and they're going to pray.

It says that there was a certain man. Actually, there are four characters that are laid out for us in this story that we're going to read in chapter 3. There is Peter and John, the lame man, and the risen Lord. Those are the three main characters. Now we're introduced to the second character; that is, the "certain man lame from his mother's womb." We don't have his name. We don't know a lot about him; but we know this, he was actually lame from the time that he was born and carried every day to the gate of the temple. In Acts 4:22, it actually tells us how old the man was. It said he was above 40 years of age. I want you to kind of think like this and feel that this guy was unable to walk from the time he was born. He's over 40; and now in his adult age, every day they would carry him and set him in this strategic location by this gate. He mentions the name of the gate. It's called "Beautiful."

We are not absolutely sure which gate is considered to be gate "Beautiful." There are two prospects; that is, the Corinthian Gate and the Nicanor Gate. As you would go in the outer gate there would be these two inner areas. The first would be the Corinthian Gate and then the inner Nicanor Gate. Some believe that inside the Nicanor Gate was this beautiful gate. It had gold engravings, and this man would sit on these steps. He was basically a beggar. He was basically kind of like a homeless person that would be on the offramp of the freeway begging for food and money. He's actually begging for alms. I thought, What better place to beg than on the steps of the church, right? People love God, people worship God, and they're on their way to worship God and see this man in need.

How would you have responded? How do you respond? Every one of us can encounter people in need like that. So often we want to turn away. We want to look away. We want to avoid them rather than engaging, reaching out, or seeking to try to share with them. I think there's a lesson for us here as believers today that Peter and John didn't say, "Oh, no. Look at this dude. He's going to hit us up for money. Let's go on the other side gate today. Man, don't you hate these people begging for money all the time?" No. Peter and John are going to minister to him. They're going to share Christ with him. They're going to pray for him, and this man is going to be healed. What an awesome thing that is! We see that they're filled with the Spirit and want to share Jesus with this man who is in need. I believe what we have here in verses 2 and 3, it says, "Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms."

This is the lame man's special day. Isn't it awesome to think that after all these years that this is the day that God has ordained for this man to be healed? For this man to experience the power of God? What a picture that is of us in our sinful, lame, helpless, hopeless state, unable to walk in the ways of the Lord, and then God came to us and rescued us. We were all lame. We've all gone astray. None of us can walk in a way that pleases God, but God came to us in His love, mercy, and grace, and rescued us. Maybe He sent a Peter and John to you. Maybe He sent a person you work with or maybe a family member that prayed for or shared with you. Maybe you were bothered by them but God eventually used them to bring you to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Peter and John were about to go into the temple, and he asked them for alms. You have this lame man, you have the disciples, Peter and John, and they're entering in. It's an interesting

contrast too because he's laid there in his helpless, sad, hopeless state by the Gate Beautiful. What a contrast between the Beautiful Gate and this helpless man, but this helpless man's life is going to be changed into something beautiful. Isn't it awesome that Jesus can take that which is helpless and hopeless and make something of beauty out of it (amen?) as Jesus has done with our lives.

In verses 4-8 we now have the cure or the actual miracle. It says, "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him," I love that, "with John, said, Look on us." Again, they could've looked away and just ran by him, but it says "fastening his eyes upon him," it's the same word used in Acts 1:10 where the disciples were staring up into heaven when they saw the Lord ascend and the angels appeared and said, "...why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" It's the same Greek word. He was staring at them and fastening his eyes upon them, and Peter says, "Look on us. And he gave heed unto them," the lame man looked at them in verse 5, "expecting to receive something of them. 6 Then Peter said," and here's the classic statement, "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. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." Isn't that awesome? Walking, and leaping, and praising God.

I have a little sanctified humor as I see this. We see the disciples going in and this man is begging for alms. He's lame, and he sees Peter and John and looks up at them expecting to receive something, and Peter actually says, "Look at us." This guy is thinking, Okay, great. What are you going to give me? "Look at us." He looks at him and Peter says, "Silver and gold have I none." Thank you very much, I'm sure the lame man thought. It's like going up to somebody begging from them, "Look at me. I don't have any money," you know, "I have no silver and I have no gold, but what I do have I give unto you." There's an amazing principle there—you can only give what you have. It's kind of like the measles, you've got to have them to give them. If you don't have the joy of the Lord, if you don't have the power of the Lord in your life, if you don't have the overflow of the Spirit in your life you're not going to be able to give that to anybody else. If you want Jesus to spill onto others, then let Him fill your cup to overflowing. Amen? "...but such as I have give I thee."

It's interesting that Peter and John made this confession, "We don't have any money." They're not like a lot of preachers today, right? A lot of the health and wealth preachers don't really like this verse. A lot of the tv evangelists can't say, "Silver and gold have I none." They've got plenty of silver and gold and jets and million-dollar homes to go with it, but here you have the apostle Peter and the apostle John and they have no silver or gold. One commentary I read said the lame man probably had more silver and gold than Peter and John did already. It could be the lame man said, "Well, let me give you some silver and gold." The lame man is going to receive something far superior to silver and gold. It's interesting that the story has been told that Thomas Aquinas visited the Pope. The Pope was giving him a tour of the Vatican and of the treasures of the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope looked at Thomas Aquinas with kind of a twinkle in his eye and said, "Thomas, no more like our first Pope," they believed that Peter was

the first Pope, “no more can we say, silver and gold have we none.” Thomas Aquinas looked at the Pope and said, “Yeah, and no more can you say, in the name of Jesus Christ rise and walk, either,” because they had lost the power. Isn’t it funny how that when the Church is powerful and the Church is rich many times it loses its power? Here we have a church that’s poor. They don’t have any money, but they had the Holy Spirit, right? What more do we want? All they had was the Holy Spirit, and that’s all that we need. If Jesus isn’t enough, than what else is there? They had the power of God in their behalf.

Peter says, “Look on us...silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee.” We need to give to others in need what we do have. I don’t have any money. I can’t give you riches, but I can give you Jesus and it’s far more valuable than silver and gold could ever possibly be. Peter then says, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,” when the Bible uses that phrase “name of Jesus,” it’s saying His person, His power, His authority. It’s not necessarily the actual name, it’s the Person that it stands for. It’s like a policeman knocking on your door, “Open up in the name of the law.” What does he mean, “name of the law?” He means the authority of the law. He’s talking about the authority and the power of who Jesus Christ is, and he knew that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead and has ascended into heaven and sent forth the Holy Spirit, so “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,” he tells him to “rise up and walk.” To help the man, he reaches out and “took him by the right hand.” He didn’t need Peter to lift him up. Peter did that as an act of faith, and God was leading in the situation and directing Peter by faith to reach out and take this man.

Notice the details that Dr. Luke, the author of the book of Acts, puts in this miracle of healing which was, by the way, instantaneous and complete. It says there, “...and lifted him up: and immediately...,” notice that word. It was instantaneous. It wasn’t a long process. “...his feet and ankle bones,” only a doctor would give us that information. Anyone else would’ve just said, “He just stood up and jumped around.” That’s what we would’ve said. The doctor puts in the details that “his feet and his ankle bones received strength,” and he did several things, “And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking,” all around “and leaping, and praising God.” Now, think about that. Isn’t that amazing? This guy was so filled with joy. When Jesus is working by His Spirit in our lives, guess what results? Joy. There is overflowing joy and praise to God, and then there’s testimony. His life is changed and others say, “Isn’t that the lame man that was by the gate? We’ve seen him all these years, and his life was completely transformed!” God makes the lame to walk, brings joy, and restores our lives; and he begins to praise God. He’s walking around, leaping, and he’s hanging onto Peter and John praising God. Actually, the miracle caused quite a disturbance and quite an uproar in the temple that day.

Notice, beginning in verses 9-11, we have the consequences of this miracle. “And all the people saw him walking and praising God,” I love that, “And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement,” they were wondering, “Wow! This is amazing!” They were in awe and struck out of themselves with amazement “at that which had happened unto him.” The power of God to change a life! “And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John,” he’s not going to let them go. I

can actually picture him just hanging onto them, “Man! You guys are awesome! You’re not going anywhere! I want to hang out with you!” He’s jumping up and down and praising God as he was hanging onto Peter and John, “all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering.”

Again, if you study a little layout of the temple, as you come into this area known as the court of the Gentiles, there is this wall surrounding the temple with these colonnades and what we would call a patio. It’s kind of like an enclosed patio with these big colonnades. It’s called the portico or Solomon’s porch. It was connected to the area known as the court of the women. It was in this outer courtyard area that this man is walking, leaping, and praising God.

In this healing, as so often in the Bible, is a picture. I’m not saying it wasn’t an actual person that was actually healed. I believe it was. I believe that this was a divine miracle of God. God can heal our bodies! Amen? He’s not only the Savior of our souls, but He’s the healer of our bodies. We can trust God to touch and heal us and make us whole. So, this man is a picture of the sinner. We all are lame. We all are outside the blessings of God and can’t go in on our own. We can’t walk in the ways of holiness. We can’t walk in the ways of righteousness. We’re all sinners. We’ve all fallen short of the glory of God. We’re lame. We’re hopeless, and we need Jesus to come to us and rescue us. It really kind of gives us a picture of how God comes, rescues, and saves the sinner by His marvelous grace.

We move to the second division, verses 12-26, where we now have Peter’s sermon. We first had the miracle, now we have the message. His sermon is introduced beginning in verse 12, “And when Peter saw it,” saw what? He saw the crowd gathering around and they were in awe and wonder and the man jumping up and down and praising God, “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?” In other words, Peter is saying, “Why are you looking at us as though we’re the ones that healed him?”

One of the dangers, when God begins to use you in any way, is that people begin to look to you like you’re something special. It’s important that you realize that it’s God not me. It’s important that you realize that you’re just a vessel. If you stuck a straw in a milkshake and took a sip of that milkshake and it was really, really good. You wouldn’t pull the straw and say, “This is the best straw I’ve ever used! I’m going to save this sucker. This thing’s awesome!” No. All it is is a channel, right? SLURP “Man! This is an awesome milkshake!” You’re not going to worship the straw! “Oh, this is amazing!” That’s great that God would use a human instrument through which He would touch your life, but never get your eyes on the man. Remember that. Always keep your eyes on Jesus Christ. Amen? If and when God uses you, direct the glory to Jesus. Reflect the glory to Jesus. He’s the Son, we’re just like the moon. We just want to reflect the glory, but it’s the glory of the Son, Jesus Christ. In humility, and rightfully so, Peter realizes, “Why are you looking at us or marvel?” It’s sad when some so-called men of God who preach and have healing ministries seem to want the credit and the glory for what God is doing. God will not share His glory with another. The Bible says, “Take heed when you think you stand lest you fall,” so may we stay humble and dependent on God as He uses us.

Peter starts his message, verses 13-18. We have the heart of his sermon and its theme is Jesus Christ. Peter is always preaching Christ and Him crucified, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, the Messiah or the Savior of Israel. He says in verse 13, "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son," now most scholars agree that a better rendering there is that God has glorified his servant Jesus.

There are several pictures of Jesus that Peter uses here to describe Him. He first pictures Him as a servant—his servant Jesus. Why? Because he's preaching to a Jewish audience that was familiar with Isaiah 53. As a matter of fact, they didn't have a New Testament yet and Isaiah 53 talks about the Messiah as the suffering servant, so Peter's going to be preaching the death and resurrection of Jesus and wants them to understand that He is the Messiah. He's that "servant" that would come and suffer and die. "...whom ye delivered," he indicts them for their rejection and crucifixion of Jesus as he's speaking to the Jews in the nation of Israel. He says, "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," here's the second word picture description of Jesus. He's the servant, and now He's the "Holy One and the Just One." "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you," he was speaking of Barabbas who was released in place of Jesus, "and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; 15 And killed the Prince of Life," here's the third description of Jesus in Peter's sermon. He's the servant, the Holy One, and the Prince of Life. What an interesting paradoxical statement. Notice he says, "And killed the Prince of Life."

That word "Prince" in the Greek actually means source. This is one of the beautiful descriptions, word pictures of Jesus. He's the source of life. Think about that. God incarnate and you killed Him. He's the source of all life, and you crucified Him on a cross. "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." Peter focuses on His death on the cross where He died for our sins and His resurrection. If you're going to preach the gospel, you've got to center it on Jesus. Christ died for our sins, Christ was buried, Christ rose again the third day, and salvation is through Christ alone by faith alone and the grace of God alone. You've got to keep Jesus central in your preaching.

Peter says, "Whereof we are witnesses," we saw the risen Christ, "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," the faith that brought the healing to this man was also granted by the Lord Himself, "hath given him this perfect soundness," this guy was perfectly whole! He wasn't walking with a limp or walking with difficulty. You think about that, born lame, had never walked, he was over 40, and CLAP instantly he jumps up and is jamming around the temple jumping up and down praising God. When God heals, God heals perfectly. Perfect soundness, "...in the presence of you all. 17 And now, brethren," speaking to the Jews, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." He says, "I know that you were ignorant of who Jesus is." "But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ," or Messiah, "should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." I want you to notice that God had foretold, God had prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures, "by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ," the word "Christ" is the word Messiah which means the anointed one, "should suffer, he hath so fulfilled."

One of the big stumbling blocks to the Jews believing in Jesus both then and now (it hasn't changed) is that Jesus died on a cross. You say, "Well, the Bible is full of verses in the Old Testament about the suffering Messiah, Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, by His stripes we are healed; but their eyes are blinded to that. Their focus is what we know will be the Second Coming and the Kingdom Age, the Millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ. They are unaware of the fact that Christ would come the first time in humility not as a conquering, ruling Messiah but as a humble, suffering servant. That's what they stumble over. They don't realize that Jesus had to first come, not as the Lion of the tribe of Judah but the lamb who would lay down His life for the sins of the world. When they come to understand and realize that, how amazing that is for a person that is Jewish to realize, "I've found my Messiah! That it's Jesus Christ." Think of all these years that they're waiting for their Messiah. He has actually already come, and atonement has been made.

You know, we need to pray for people that are Jewish. We need to take the gospel to those that are Jewish, not specifically just to those people, but the Bible does say to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. I think sometimes we, as Christians, kind of forget to reach out to Jews evangelistically. If you meet somebody that's Jewish, tell them, "Hey, thank you." "Well, why are you thanking me?" "Because my Messiah was Jewish. My Bible is Jewish, and I want to thank you for giving me the Savior of the world." Share with them that Jesus is the Messiah, that He came to suffer and die, and God spoke of this in the Old Testament prophets and these are all fulfilled, verse 18.

In verses 19-26 we come to the conclusion of Peter's amazing sermon. He drives home the point....every good sermon has an introduction, a body, main points, and it's focused on Christ. Now he has the conclusion and says, "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."

Let's stop right there for just a moment. It's kind of hard to stop because it just flows all the way to the conclusion in verse 26, but I want you to notice (going back to verse 19) that Peter's call is for repentance. "Repent," the word "repent" again, *metanoeo* means to change your mind. You need to ask the question, "About what?" It's not about what you eat. It's not about how you comb your hair. It's not about what church you go to. It's about Jesus and your sin. You change your mind about your sin. You realize, I am a sinner, and I'm headed for hell. You turn around. You change your mind about Jesus, who He is, that He is the Savior. I am a sinner. He is the Savior. No one comes to Christ in true conversion without coming with a sense of

sinfulness. You don't just try Jesus. He died for your sins. He came to save you from your sins, so you need to change your mind. It results in a change of direction—180 degree. You're going this way, you repent, you turn around, and you're going the other direction. That's what happens when you're converted, right?

You're following the world and your own lust, living in darkness, following the passions of the flesh, and you repent. You change your mind. I'm a sinner. I need a Savior. Jesus died for me. Jesus rose for me. He's my Savior. You turn around and receive Christ. Then you begin to follow Him. That's what's called repentance. Someone said, "Repentance is to leave, the sins we loved before, and show that we in earnest grieve, by doing so no more." If you just keep going this way and say, "I repent, I repent, I repent, I repent," and you don't turn, you haven't repented. You might be sorry; you might feel guilty. A lot of people come to church and feel sad and guilty and, "Oh, I'm sorry." Maybe you even cry, "Oh, God, please forgive me," but they haven't changed their minds. They haven't really turned around. They haven't really repented and followed Jesus Christ.

Peter calls them to repent. I would just want you to note too in contrast to Acts 2 that Peter doesn't mention, "and be baptized." I told you I would point those out as you go through the book of Acts. Baptism is not necessary for salvation. Should we be baptized? Yes, but we're only baptized as an outward showing of an inward work that God does in our life. If you're baptized but you haven't been born again, all it's going to do is get you wet. You're just going to be a wet sinner. You're not going to be saved. You can be baptized a bunch of times, and we can swish you around for a while. I've always thought it'd be cool to baptize off the pier in Oceanside, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!" Throw them over the pier. If you make it back, you're born again. I'm kidding. I shouldn't kid like that. I mean, baptism isn't going to save you. Confirmation isn't going to save you. Catechism isn't going to save you. Communion isn't going to save you. It's just believing in Jesus Christ. I just wanted you to know that there's no reference to baptism there, so as you go back to Acts 2:38 and try to build a case on the fact that Peter said, "and be baptized...for the remission of sins," that's not what the Bible teaches, and it's not consistent even through the book of Acts, so "Repent ye therefore, and be converted," he doesn't even use the word "believe" here in this passage, but he says you need to be converted. You need to be born again, "that your sins may be blotted out," I love that!

When you become a Christian, God blots out your sins! I'm sure many of you have some horrible sins to blot out and I have. You're thinking, "Why don't you share a few of 'em with us?" No. They're buried right now in the deepest sea of forgetfulness, and God put up a sign: Satan, No fishing. He doesn't want anyone bringing them back. I encourage you not to go back and visit your old sinful life or thinking about, "Oh, remember when we used to do that? Oh, no, but I'm a Christian now." Just realize, "Man, those were sins that are forgiven. They're dead and gone," and you never want to look back. You never want to turn back. Your sins have been blotted out so that you might have the blotting out of your sins.

I need to point out something that has caused some to misinterpret and come up with some ideas that are unbiblical from some statements that are made here. The little phrase, "...when

the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,” and then mentions, “And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: 21 Whom the heaven must receive,” and then he uses another statement (verse 21), “until the times of restitution of all things.” The confusion lies with, “the times of refreshing,” verse 19, and verse 21, “...the times of restitution of all things.” Some conclude that Peter is teaching universalism, that if you Jews would repent right now, God is going to save everybody or God is going to restore all things. They see that phrase in verse 21, “times of restitution of all things,” “Well, there it is in the Bible, God is going to restore all things.” They take it to the point where they even say that satan, all the fallen angels, all unbelievers are going to be saved, and we’re all going to be in heaven. No one will be in hell, and we’re all going to be one happy family for all eternity. We know that’s not what the Bible teaches.

The Bible says, “...for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.” So, what does he mean by this term, “the times of restitution of all things,” or “when the times of refreshing”? I believe that Peter is talking about a future restitution of all things of the Millennium or the Kingdom Age. I want you to notice the next statement in verse 21, “...which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” That which God is going to restore is that which He said He would in His prophecies in the Old Testament. Over and over and over and over and over again God speaks in the Old Testament of what is known as, we call it most commonly, the Millennium, meaning the thousand-year reign of Christ. It’s known as the Kingdom Age when Christ will rule on earth for a thousand years, which is ushered in at His Second Coming. I believe that there will be the rapture of the Church—the Church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air—there will be seven years of the tribulation, three-and-a-half at the end known as the great tribulation. It’s known as the time of Jacob’s trouble. Then, Christ returns in His Second Coming and establishes a kingdom on earth known as the Millennium. Satan is bound during that thousand years, and He rules in righteousness. At the end of which, there is the resurrection of the wicked dead. They stand before the Great White Throne and are judged for their sins. They are thrown into the lake of fire, and then there’s a new heaven and a new earth. It goes into the eternal state. When we pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,” we’re looking forward to the coming of the Lord, and His bringing in that Kingdom Age when we will reign with Christ for that thousand years.

It does have...it seems to be a dual fulfillment because Peter talks about “when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,” would indicate that if they repented and turned to Christ that there would be forgiveness, their sins would be blotted out, and they would have refreshment and renewal; but we know that God has already had a program laid out—God’s sovereign plan—that there would be this time period between the first coming of Christ and the Second Coming of Christ. There would be this seven years of Jacob’s trouble when God would pour out His wrath on the earth, and Christ would come back. He’s not really, I don’t believe, saying that if Israel repented right then and there that the Kingdom would come because God also spoke about the Church Age that we’re living in right now—which has actually been two thousand years of the Church—which was born in Acts 2 and continues to this day. It has a double fulfillment. They would be forgiven, there would be refreshing, but it

looks in anticipation also to that time that they were looking for when the Messiah will come in glory and establish His Kingdom and power. Then it will flow into the eternal state. We studied that in the book of Daniel and in Revelation, but it certainly doesn't teach in verse 21 that all will be saved, only that which God has spoken by the mouth of His prophets.

Peter then mentions "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," that's from Deuteronomy 18 where Moses actually prophesied of the Messiah. Moses, actually is a prophet, said another prophet is going to come. Again, he's actually saying that Jesus was a prophet. This was prophetic. He was a priest, a king, and a prophet. "...like unto me; him shall ye hear," so Moses, in a sense, is kind of a prefigure or a type of Jesus, the prophet who would come. Then, he says, "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." You reject the Messiah, and you will reap destruction. "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel," it's interesting that he starts and mentions Samuel there as the prophets. Samuel was the one that anointed King David who, of course, was the one God promised through whom the Messiah would come. He says, "...and those that follow after," all the other prophets, "as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days."

Speaking to the Jews he said, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed," I want you to note that word "seed" there. It's a reference to Jesus Christ. "...shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." Remember God made that promise to Abraham? In thy seed (not seeds but seed), speaking of One; that is, Jesus the Messiah, and all the nations of the earth indicate that the Gentiles would actually come and believe in Christ and be saved. They will be blessed. I put alongside that John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He concludes (verse 26), "Unto you first..." you Jews, you house of Israel, "God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." God sent His Son so that you would turn, and He would cleanse you from all of your iniquities.

I want to take two overarching kind of practical lessons to conclude with. When we look at the story of this lame and impotent man who was healed by the power of God, it reminds us that our impossibilities are God's opportunities. Our impossibilities are God's possibilities and opportunities. What are you facing tonight? Are you lame? You say, "Are you calling me lame, preacher?" No. I'm asking you, metaphorically, are you having a hard time in your marriage where you can't really fulfill what you need to? Are you having a hard time on your job? Are you having a hard time resisting temptation? Are you having a hard time living a life that's pleasing to God? Do you have a hard time struggling...maybe you need a healing tonight. Maybe you're sick. Maybe you're just in a deep, dark pit of depression and discouragement or fear or doubt?

Some of God's greatest saints experienced depression and discouragement. Elijah, the great power prophet of God, got so down in the dumps. He actually prayed and asked God to kill him, "Just take me out." Can you imagine praying, "Lord, just kill me right now in Jesus' name."

Aren't you glad God doesn't always answer those prayers? We would've been a little pile of ashes a long time ago. We get so discouraged, but you need to understand that though it is impossible with man, it's possible with God.

When that lame man got up that morning and the sun was shining like every other day, and he was carried by his friends to lay all day long, just lay at that gate and beg for alms. Little did he realize that this was going to be the day that God would turn his life—that He would give him beauty for ashes, the spirit of praise for the spirit of heaviness—that He would bring a new joy and a new sunshine. That man's heart was filled with joy! He'd never walked and now he's walking, leaping, and praising God! God can turn the tables. The point is, run to Him. Seek Him. Call on the Lord while He may be found. Look to God right now, tonight. Just say, "Lord, I'm like that lame man. I'm in this impossible situation. If You don't send help or if You don't send deliverance...I've tried. There's nothing I can do. I can't work out this problem. I can't work out this situation. I need You, Lord. I need You to come to me." Our impossibilities are God's opportunities—if you turn to Him and trust Him.

Secondly, God's mercy is your opportunity to tell others. When God comes to you and God does deliver you and God does save you and God does rescue you...do you know one thing that's cool about the picture of this lame man? When he was healed everyone saw him, everyone was in awe of him, and everyone knew that his life had been changed! When God changes you and touches you and delivers you, others see that. It's time for you to tell them. Amen? It's time for you to open your mouth and witness to and testify to them. In this case, Peter was the one that spoke up, but God was using the changed life of this man. God wants to use your changed life in the house that you live in, the family you're with, in the job that you have, people are going to be in awe. Like, "Wow! What's happened to you?" "It's Jesus! He rescued me. He saved me! I was a lame man, and He came and He's given me strength to walk in His ways. He's healed my marriage. He's healed my body. He's forgiven my sins." You use that opportunity as God showing you mercy to be able to testify to others. Amen?