

To The Ends Of The Earth

LESSON 3: PREACHING IN JERUSALEM, PART 1 (ACTS 3:1-4:4)

After Jesus had ascended and the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, the gospel was preached in Jerusalem (Acts 2). Jesus's church began at that time, and the gospel continued to be preached in Jerusalem (Acts 2:47; 1:8). Some examples of this preaching now begin to be described.

A DISABLED MAN IS HEALED (ACTS 3:1-11)

3:1-6. Peter and John went up to the temple at a time customary for prayer (3 PM; the ninth hour). Jesus had used the temple to teach (Luke 21:37-38), and now His apostles continued teaching there (Acts 5:20-21). On their way, they encountered a man who had been unable to walk since birth (now over 40 years old, Acts 4:22). This man would be carried and laid at the temple gate called "Beautiful" (specific location unknown; perhaps gate to the Court of the Women) each day so he could beg for money, thus becoming familiar to those who passed by. He asked Peter and John for money when they were about to enter (it is unknown if he knew who they were). However, rather than giving the man money (which Peter said he did not have), Peter gave the man what he did have – the ability through the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth (by His power and authority) to tell the man to get up and walk!

3:7-11. Peter took the man by the right hand and raised him up. Immediately, his feet and ankles became strong so that he could walk and jump! The man then entered the temple with Peter and John. The man was overjoyed and was walking, leaping, and praising God for what had been done for Him! Imagine the surprise of all the other people at the temple who had seen this man as a common sight outside the gate begging for money. Now, they recognized him and were filled with awe and astonishment at what happened (Acts 2:43)! This man was now clinging to Peter and John (demonstrating the connection between his healing and them). The many astonished temple attenders then ran toward them, who were now in Solomon's Colonnade (porch, inside the east wall of the Court of the Gentiles; about 600 feet long and 60 feet deep).

PREACHING IN SOLOMON'S COLONNADE (ACTS 3:12-26)

3:12-16. Peter saw the crowd of people who had gathered and used the opportunity to address them (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4). He began by directing the attention of the people away from him and John (as if they had the power to heal the man by themselves) and toward the God of their ancestors (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and His Servant, Jesus, who God glorified (God's suffering Servant, Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Philippians 2:5-11). This was the One the Israelites handed over to Pilate and denied (e.g. by demanding Him to be crucified), even though Pilate wanted to release Him, opting to have the murderer, Barabbas, released instead. In contrast, they had Jesus, the Holy and Righteous One (Mark 1:24; John 6:69, who had done nothing wrong) and the Source (Author) of life (both physical and spiritual life, John 1:1-3; 11:25; 14:6; Hebrews 5:9) put to death (Luke 23:13-25). Although the Jews had Jesus killed, Peter now declared that God had raised Him from the dead, and they were eyewitnesses of this! Then, Peter declared that it was their (Peter and John's) faith in the name of Jesus that had made the crippled man walk and given him perfect health in front of them all!

3:17-21. Peter said that he knew both the Jewish people and leaders acted in ignorance in their rejection and crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 23:34; Acts 13:27; 1 Corinthians 2:8). Their ignorance, however, was not because Jesus had failed to provide the proper proof that He is the Messiah (John 20:30-31). Instead, it was their own failures to understand the Scriptures, their own erroneous concepts of the Messiah, and their own prejudices. Yet, it was through their rejection of Jesus that God fulfilled everything He had foretold in the prophets concerning how the Messiah would suffer (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53). Despite their ignorance, they needed to repent and turn their lives to God in submission to Jesus as the Messiah/King (Acts 2:38). If they would do this, their sins would be wiped out (erased). Then, the seasons of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord through new spiritual life, rest for their souls, relief from the burden of sin, and every spiritual blessing God provides through Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:28-30; Ephesians 1:3-12) as God had promised in the period of the Messiah (Luke 1:67-79). Heaven had now received Jesus (having ascended there and reigning as King) until the time of the restoration of all things, which God foretold through the prophets. This likely has reference to the restoration that would happen through the Messiah's reign during this present period until all things are put under His feet and all enemies are defeated (1 Corinthians 15:23-28).

3:22-26. Concerning how the prophets foretold this reign of the Messiah, Peter first references Moses, who foretold God would raise up a Prophet like him among Israel (Deuteronomy 18:15-19; John 1:21, 25; 6:14; 7:40). Just like Moses was a deliverer and lawgiver, so this Prophet would also be! They were expected to listen to this Prophet. Anyone who would not listen to what this Prophet (Jesus) says would be completely cut off/destroyed from the people, thus being condemned. Yet, this is exactly what they were guilty of doing. Furthermore, Peter said all the prophets, beginning with Samuel (2 Samuel 7:8-17), contributed something to foretelling the time of the Messiah's reign that was now here (Luke 24:25-27, 44-49)! Therefore, if the Jews would accept Jesus as the Messiah, they would actually be honoring Moses and all the prophets who foretold these things, thus being children/heirs of the covenant God had made with their ancestors and foretold through the prophets, dating as far back as Abraham (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4). God's promise to Abraham plainly stated that all families/peoples of the earth would be blessed through the Seed/Offspring of Abraham, which pointed to the salvation offered through Jesus (Galatians 3:7-9, 16)! God has, therefore, raised up His Servant (Jesus) and sent Him to bless all people by providing the opportunity to turn from evil and be forgiven!

PETER AND JOHN ARE ARRESTED (ACTS 4:1-4)

4:1-4. Up to this point, we have seen the gospel preached in Jerusalem with little obstacle. However, we now see Jewish leaders and people joining to stop Peter and John from speaking to the people. This included priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees (a sect of Jews who denied the spirit and resurrection, Acts 23:8). They were offended and annoyed that Peter and John were preaching in Jesus the resurrection of the dead (Acts 3:15). Peter and John were then arrested and kept in custody until the next day (since it was already evening; the sermon starting after 3 PM, Acts 3:1). Yet, many who heard the message believed in Jesus (obedient faith, Acts 6:7; James 2:14-26; Acts 2:37-41) and the number of disciples of Christ came to be around 5,000 (Acts 2:41, 47)!

CONCLUSION

The work of preaching the good news about salvation in Jesus Christ had begun on Pentecost. As it continued spreading, more people believed and obeyed it! However, we have also witnessed the beginning of the trouble experienced by the followers of Jesus.

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

What did Peter and John give the man who was begging at the temple?

What did the man do after he was healed?

What did the people do after they recognized the miracle that had happened?

What did Peter and John say the Jews had done to Jesus?

How did the Jews need to respond?

What was promised to those who did respond to the gospel?

How would the Jews honor the prophets by listening to Jesus?

What were some different ways people responded to Peter and John's preaching?

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