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## WHAT REALLY HAPPENED WHEN THE LAME MAN WAS HEALED?

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF THE ACTS  
NUMBER 12  
ACTS 3:1-11

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The setting for this miracle was the temple. You recall in 587 B.C, the temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The whole city of Jerusalem was also destroyed. After seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, the Jews returned and the temple was rebuilt. Forty years from the time of this scripture we are studying today, the temple and Jerusalem will be destroyed by the Romans. The date is 70 A.D. Remember, the temple depicts the life and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, why would Peter and John go to the temple? Because all they saw there spoke to them of the life and work of Jesus Christ. You see, they didn't have the New Testament, and the temple was a glorious place to go and meditate and pray. Remember that prayer always is addressed to God the Father, through the name of Jesus Christ.

Peter and John went up together--the imperfect tense of the verb indicates that this was habitual with them. The ninth hour means three o'clock in the afternoon. You recall they had three stated times of prayer--nine in the morning, at noon, and at three in the afternoon.

ACTS 3:2 "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" Remember this man is a picture of a man born physically alive but spiritually dead. The helpless man speaks of the fact that no man can save himself. So, this passage is designed to show what the church should do for hopeless, helpless people. The language shows that the man was carried to that spot every day so he could beg for his living.

ACTS 3:3 "Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms." This lame man asks for money. In this incident, the whole message and mission of the church was challenged. Remember, the main task of the church is not to feed the hungry and cure the sick, but to give salvation to lost men. Though this man is a hopeless cripple, this is not his main problem. His main problem was sin, and his need of a Saviour. Peter and John are going straight to this lame man's central need, but they need credentials so they can preach in the temple. They are going to need a credit card so they can attract the multitudes to hear them preach. Please remember that this lame man could be healed, he could jump up and run all over the place and still not be any better off so far as his spiritual need was concerned. The mission of the church is the saving gospel, it is regeneration, not the social gospel. The church must not be indifferent to all the needs of man, but the church must always keep central the fact that the problem of eternity is the real problem of man. The poor lame man's real problem is his relationship to God. Don't let people get you sidetracked by the do-goodism of life. Simon Peter and John are without funds. Now we are so accustomed to believe that money solves everything, but this is not true. One of the reasons the church was so powerful in that early day is that they didn't have money and they didn't rely on money. This passage teaches us this--giving money to the poor does not solve the problems of the poor. Peter is going to heal his lameness, but this does not solve his problem. As a result of this incident, Peter is going to get to preach a sermon, and five thousand people are going to be converted. It is not so much that the lame man was healed, as that he was saved. Regeneration is the solution to the main problems of man. The power of the church is not money.

ACTS 3:4 "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us." First, Peter and John had to get his attention. (When I was a boy, I once asked a workman on our farm why he hit the mule over the head with a 2 by 4, and he said it was to get his attention. I suppose that's one way to do it, but you can't use exactly that same method in the church.)

Peter is going to use the 2 by 4 treatment on this man and he says, "Now you listen to me". Peter got his attention and his eyes. This was a poor lame man and you might at first think Peter was rough with him.. But you see, feeling sorry for this man, speaking softly to him and being emotional would not solve the poor man's problems. Peter is dealing realistically with him. Sympathy and emotionalism really doesn't solve anything.

ACTS 3:5 "And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them." This man got quite excited, thinking that he was going to receive a rather large handout from these two men.

ACTS 3:6 "Then Peter said, 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." I am sure his face fell when he heard Peter say, "Silver and gold have I none". Notice these principles about money.

1. Money is a bonified means of exchange. Money is not bad in itself.
2. It is neither wrong nor sinful to possess money nor to spend money.
3. There is sin connected with money--stealing, lusting for money, etc.
4. There are some illusions concerning money. Some think money can buy happiness and this is not true. Money cannot buy friends. Money cannot produce security. Most insecure people are those who have money.
5. Money as a God is idolatry and blasphemous.
6. Money cannot buy salvation. "For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

So, Peter says to this man, "I don't possess silver or gold". Whatever Peter needed, he didn't need money. (Please remember, this doesn't mean you are to starve the preacher.) Peter needed divine power.

It is reported that Pope Innocent 12th said to Thomas Aquinas: "I now sit on a throne of money. The church can no longer say silver and gold have I none". It is reported Thomas Aquinas replied: "Neither can the church say any more, rise up and walk". Peter says, "Such as I have I give".

"Rise up" is not in the original. Peter just took him by the hand and lifted him up. Peter says, "In the name of Jesus Christ keep on walking". This man had never walked in all his life. Now he is going to walk. No doubt he jumped up and walked all around. He jumped, possibly shouted, possibly I should call it "Operation kangaroo", he hopped all over the place. Here healing is a picture of salvation. Walking is a picture of the fact that after a man is saved, he has to walk for himself. The mission of the church is to get a man to do his own walking by entering into the plan of God. The main purpose of this healing of the lame man was not to alleviate suffering, but to provide an opportunity for many people to be saved.

ACTS 3:7 "And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ancle bones received strength." This was their credit card. Helpless legs became strong.

ACTS 3:8 "And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God." It was quite an experience. He had never walked before and now he is leaping up and walking. He was walking, leaping up, praising God. All three of those verbs are in the present tense. It is indeed a glorious picture.

ACTS 3:9 "And all the people saw him walking and praising God" All the people recognized this man. They had seen him there begging for many years. The hour of prayer was over. But those self-righteous Jews didn't need to pray anyhow, for their prayers didn't get any higher than their heads. What they needed was salvation.

Look at what this miracle did for Simon Peter.

1. It established Peter's apostolic authority.
2. It provided the basis for meeting the needs of the people. They all needed the gospel.
3. What happened to the man illustrated the gospel.
4. It established an analogy to the discipline God placed on the Jews--It was a picture of the hopeless Jewish nation in unbelief, but in time, they will walk again.

ACTS 3:10-11 "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 at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. Here we have the public reaction to the miracle - they saw him. They looked up from their prayers and they saw him hopping and leaping around. They knew who he was and they were all shocked and amazed. He kept on holding on to Peter and John. He would run and leap and then come back and hold to them. The crowd was now gathered so Peter could preach to them. Peter is going to reveal that this poor lame man was not only healed physically, but that he was saved.