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ONE PREACHING SERVICE WHEN 5,000 WERE CONVERTED

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF THE ACTS
NUMBER 13
ACTS 3:12-26 - ACTS 4:4

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We have studied how the well-known lame man was cured; how he ran and jumped and shouted through the temple. The miracle gave Simon Peter an opportunity to explain something; that the miracle was not the most important thing, but the fact that the man received eternal life was the real important happening.

A Message Delivered In The Temple To Religious People

The message is so important and powerful that 5,000 people were saved. Simon Peter saw that the crowd and the religious leaders were giving main emphasis to the miracle of healing rather than to the salvation of the soul of the lame man. Simon Peter told them not to look at the miracle and not to look at them like they were supermen. They thought it was Simon Peter's power and holiness that had cured the man. They didn't realize that it was not who and what Peter was that was important, but who and what God was. So you see Peter has a real chance to preach a sermon to this mixed up crowd.

ACTS 3:13 "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go." He uses the phrase "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob". Here is the foundation of the Jewish race. Abraham was originally a Gentile, but he became a Jew for he was regenerated. Ishmael was a Gentile, and an unbeliever. Isaac was a Jew and a believer. Esau was a Gentile and an unbeliever, Jacob was a Jew and a believer. You see all three of these--Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were born again. God had a special mission for them.

Peter says, "God hath glorified his Son, Jesus". Listen to this man. He has changed quite a bit since that night he was denying he didn't even know who Christ was. You see the power to preach comes from the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Simon Peter has grown quite a bit in recent weeks since that night he stood by the fire denying that he didn't even know who Christ was. (You see the power to preach comes from the Word of God and the Holy Spirit and Simon Peter was relying on both of these sources.) In this healing of the lame man, Simon Peter might be tempted to take their praises and think what a great man he really was--but instead of anything like this, he stays true to the Gospel. He talks of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as being alive. We are going to learn a little later in the story that this lame man was really saved.

He accuses them of betraying Jesus. Judas didn't do it alone, you did it, all of you. Denied him refers to the mental attitude they had toward Jesus when he was there performing his miracles and teaching. Pilate had made the pronouncement, but they were the ones who had cried, "Crucify him, Crucify him". Five thousand are to believe before the sun goes down that night. You see thousands of those who cried crucify him are going to be saved on this day. God didn't destroy them when they crucified Christ for he knew later they would repent of what they had done and many of them would believe. This is an illustration of the Grace of God.

ACTS 3:14 "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;" Jesus was separated unto God for this purpose and was PERFECT. Jesus was qualified to be the Saviour. Barabas was a gangster, was Public Enemy No. 1, but they chose him instead of Christ.

ACTS 3:15 "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." Christ is called "The Prince Of Life" for a reason. In 1 John 5:11-12 Christ is called the prince of life. He was the crown prince for he provided salvation. "They killed him" means they killed him physically. God the Father allowed him to die spiritually for all the sins of the world were poured out on him. Religion causes his physical death, but God the Father permitted his spiritual death.

God's answer to the fact that they killed him was that he raised him from the dead. The resurrection is God's answer to them to let them know who Christ really was. "We are witnesses" is present linear action and means, "We keep on being witnesses to his resurrection".

ACTS 3:16 "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 hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." This is one of the poorest translations in the New Testament. Let us make it a little clearer. "And on the basis of faith in his name." There is only one way to be saved and that is through faith. This is what happened to the lame man. Possibly, Simon Peter pointed to him as he said, "This man". You see him and you know who he is. This faith has brought this man perfect health. Peter paused and started again. "This lame man was saved by believing in Christ." Possibly, he was saved as he was healed. Healing his lameness was the physical side, and saving his soul was the spiritual side.

ACTS 3:17 "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Though the leaders did this deliberately, I know that you did it in ignorance. In fact, Simon Peter is emphasizing that he isn't going to judge anybody, but is going to leave the judging to God. Many of us make a great issue about a person's sins and then say a few words about Christ. Simon Peter didn't make that mistake here. He doesn't make an issue of their sins, but the main issue is Christ. You see, you can give up all your sins and not be saved. You are saved by believing in Christ. The Gospel is not the bad news of your sins, but it is the good news that Christ died for your sins. So let us always emphasize what Christ did for the sins of all sinners. Our emphasis is on what Christ did about our sins, and not what we can do about our sins. Let's not judge the sins of others. That's God's prerogative. That's the Lord's responsibility. The Word of God and the Spirit of God will do the convicting.

ACTS 3:18 "But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." This is absolutely fantastic. Jesus Christ was clearly revealed in the writings of the Old Testament.

The Main Body Of The Sermon

This sermon is short, stays right on the subject and doesn't get off on side issues. In this sermon Simon Peter is going to quote from Deut. 18:18-19. The prophet, Jesus, will be like unto Moses. No one like Moses until Jesus came. Jesus was also a prophet. No matter where you look in the Old Testament, there you find Jesus. Many times it is in shadow form, for Christ had not yet been born. Hebrews 10:1 refers to this and the shadow of the reality which was yet to come. Jesus is revealed through every animal sacrifice. All the furniture of the Tabernacle and the way it was constructed spoke of Christ. Isaiah 53 speaks doctrinally of Christ. Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian Eunuch. There has never been a time when Jesus was not clearly revealed. Look at what Simon Peter meant when he said, "Jesus was revealed by the mouth of all his prophets".

1. The Pentateuch These five books were written by Moses. Moses had the gift of a Prophet. He was a genius. In Acts 3:22, ~~Moses~~ *Peter* is going to quote Deut. 18:18-19 where Jesus is described as a prophet "Like unto Moses".
2. The Second Section is the Prophets
 - a. Former prophets--Joshua--Judges--Samuel and Kings
 - b. Later prophets--Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve Minor prophets. (They are not minor in their importance, but so called for once they were all in one book.)
Now all of these had the office of prophets.
3. The Third Section is the Writings
Poetry, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Esther.
Then there were the historical books.

Now this is what Peter meant when he said, "Shewed by the mouth of all the prophets". It began with Moses, then went to Joshua and then to Malachi. David often spoke of Christ in the Psalms. So, Jesus Christ is clearly revealed in the Old Testament. Jesus and Christ are both Greek words and therefore, not used in the Old Testament. We are speaking Greek when we use these two words--Jesus and Christ.

Saviour is the word for Jesus.

Messiah is the word for Christ.

So, the English for Jesus Christ is Saviour Messiah.

Simon Peter is simply saying this--All these prophesies about Jesus have been fulfilled by his suffering and death. All these hundreds of Old Testament passages have been fulfilled in Christ. Zechariah 12 and 14 and Isaiah 53 have been fulfilled in Christ. Now, this meant much to those Jews who were listening. Peter was preaching to Jews, Jews who accepted the Old Testament scriptures. But they didn't know the one these scriptures revealed. Now, Simon Peter gives them the final link in the chain and they know for the first time the meaning of all this scripture they had learned. This was the break-through in their minds.

Peter says in verse 19 Repent ye. Often in Acts, the word, "Repent" is used instead of "believe" for this reason. The religious Jews knew Old Testament scripture but had not accepted Jesus as the Messiah. "Repent" means to change your mind about Christ. Repent never means to feel sorry for your sins, but rather to think, to change your thinking. "Repent" and "believe" are exactly the same thing. Paul used the word, "believe" when speaking to people who didn't know any scripture and didn't know anything about Christ. They didn't know enough about Christ to have to change their minds about him. They needed to believe. So, "repent" and "believe" mean exactly the same, it just is a different approach to the same thing. Now, don't let this confuse you, for you can't repent without believing and you can't believe without repenting. Repent emphasizes the information.

Believe emphasizes the appropriation.

Repent does not mean to feel sorry for your sins. Neither does it mean you are walking one way and now you turn and walk another way. Convert does mean this. Occasionally, you will see the word convert in the New Testament and this means you have been walking one way and now have turned and are walking in another direction.

When Peter says, "That your sins may be blotted out", he is not speaking of individual and all kinds of different sins. He is speaking of the sin of unbelief in Christ. The one sin for which Christ did not die is the sin of the rejection of himself. This is the unpardonable sin. In this sin, a man puts himself outside the reach of the arm of God. When you accept Christ and believe, then all your other sins are blotted out. John 16:8-9 says, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: OF SIN, BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE NOT ON ME". Notice where the emphasis is placed. It is the sin of not believing on Christ. Also, John 3:36 says, "He that believeth on the son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on Him". The whole emphasis is on believing in Christ. The construction of "Blotted out" is this--In a point of time when you believe, your sins are blotted out for you and this was the purpose of God to do this for you.

ACTS 3:20 "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you." This is a reference to the second coming of Christ. Four things must be done when Christ returns the second time--

1. The unconditional covenants will be fulfilled. These are the Abrahamic Covenant--The Palestinian Covenant--The Davidic Covenant--The New Covenant To Israel.
2. Jesus Christ will put an end to the discipline to the Jews.
3. Israel will be gathered together under the leadership of Christ.
4. The temple will be rebuilt, as told in Ezekiel 40-47.

ACTS 3:21 "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." This simply means Christ will remain in Heaven until the time of the restoration--then will come an end of the discipline of the Jews.

In these closing verses of Acts 3, Simon Peter lays it clearly on the line. Those who reject Jesus will be lost forever. Those who repent, change their minds about him, believe he is the Messiah and accept him--these are the ones who will be saved. Simon Peter closes by telling them that this message of salvation is FIRST for the Jews.

ACTS 4:4 "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." This is the conclusion of the sermon. Five thousand men were converted. This is why we say it was one of the greatest sermons of all times.