

HARASSMENT FOR HEALING A LAME MAN

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Introduction

One of the major themes in Acts is the second offering of the Kingdom to the Jews and their rejection of it. Another major theme is the development of the local church. Both themes are developed simultaneously throughout the book. As the rejection of the Kingdom becomes more and more clear, the local church becomes more prominent. In the early chapters of the book, the local church is not as evident as the Kingdom. This is especially true of chapters 3 and 4.

I. The Miracle of Healing — 3:1-11

The healing of the lame man at the temple gate gave Peter an opening to exhort the people to repent and be converted so Jesus can be their Messianic King and rule all nations from Zion (Ps 2:6-9). The miracle served as a window of what life will be like in Christ's Kingdom.

A. The Plight of the Man — 3:1-3

3:2 — He was a man lame from birth — over 40 years (cf. 4:22).

3:3 — He was in poverty and had to beg for his living.

B. The Power of the Lord — 3:4-11

1. The Command of Peter — 3:4-6

3:6 — Peter made no attempt to take any of the glory for the miracle to himself (cf. v. 12). Peter merely spoke in the name of the Lord Jesus, that is, by His authority.

2. The Miraculous Result — 3:7-8

3:7-8 — Several things happened to the lame man, all of them happened immediately upon the command of Peter, "Rise up and walk." Whatever the physical ailment was that impaired the man, it was taken away. The unused muscles of the feet and the ankle bones were strengthened that very moment. The man received the necessary coordination to walk and to leap his way into the temple.

3. The Response of the People — 3:9-11

3:9-11 — Many of the people present at the temple were familiar with the lame man. They had seen him many times sitting at the temple gate in his wretched condition. Now, as he entered the temple leaping, giving praise to God, and clasping Peter and John, they were amazed, and gathered together in wonder before Peter and John.

II. The Message of Peter — 3:12-26

Peter's message had two main points. First, he told them that Jesus Christ, whom they had rejected as their Messiah and had killed the Prince of life, was raised from the dead by God. It was by faith in His name that the man was made whole. Second, he told them to repent of their sin and be converted so God could send Christ back to earth to establish His Kingdom when refreshing times will be enjoyed by all His people.

A. The Person of the Lord — 3:12-18

3:12-18 — Peter made sure the people understood that this miracle had not been performed by his power, but by the power of the Lord Jesus. He reminded the people of their denial of Jesus and placed the blame for His death upon them. He then went further and testified to the people that God had raised Jesus from the dead, and that Jesus had the power to perform miracles. In this part of his message he established three points: 1) Jesus is the Messiah of

the Jews; 2) the Jews had sinned terribly in rejecting and killing their Messiah; 3) God had raised their Messiah in all power and glory.

B. The Promise of the Kingdom — 3:19-26

3:19-26 — To any of the Jews present who had understood Peter's message thus far, a question would immediately come to mind: if the glorified, resurrected Jesus is the Messiah, why isn't He on the throne now? Peter answered this question in verses 19 and 20. The Jews had to repent before God would send Jesus to be their Messiah. It was this very thing that had prevented the nation from accepting Jesus during His earthly ministry and now they were faced with it again. As John the Baptist and Jesus had preached, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," Peter now preached, "Repent... and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ" (to establish His Kingdom). "The time of refreshing" (v. 19), "the times of restitution of all things" (v. 21) and "in your seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed" (v. 25) refer to the Kingdom.

III. The Menace of the Rulers — 4:1-22

Acts 4 gives the official response of the Jewish nation through the Sanhedrin to Peter's offer of the Kingdom. It was a response of flat, incorrigible rejection.

A The Arrest of Peter and John — 4:1-4

4:1-4 — The Jewish leaders were grieved with Peter and John because they taught and preached in the temple that the resurrection of the dead was through Jesus. The Sadducees were in charge of the temple and they did not believe in the resurrection. Since it was evening, they put them in jail for the night. However, many had heard them throughout the day and about 5,000 men believed their message about Christ.

B. The Inquiry of the Sanhedrin — 4:5-7

4:5-7 — The religious leaders tried to intimidate the disciples by having the high priests and other important officials in the meeting when they asked the disciples by what authority they had for preaching in the temple. They did not expect that they would claim that they had Jesus' authority to preach in the temple, but they were wrong.

C. The Answer of Peter — 4:8-12

4:8-12 — Peter's answer was bold and precise. Jesus had healed the lame man, the very One they had crucified, but God had raised from the dead (v. 10); Jesus was the stone which the builders rejected (the Jews), but has become the cornerstone (the Messiah) of God's building (v. 11); and Jesus was the only Savior **who** could save them (v. 12). His boldness was from the Holy Spirit (v. 8).

D. The Hardness of the Rulers — 4:13-22

4:13-22 — This section brings out the willful sin of the Jewish leaders. They had previously seen Jesus perform miracles, and rejected Him. Now, faced with yet another miracle, one that they admitted among themselves and could not deny (v. 16), their response was not to repent but to command the disciples not to preach anymore in the name of Jesus (v. 18). Peter's refusal to obey this order divided Jerusalem into two groups: (1) those who glorified God and were ready to accept Peter's message, and (2) those who stoutly rejected it.

IV. The Ministry of the Spirit — 4:23-37

A. The Prayer of the Disciples — 4:23-30

4:23-30 — The disciples acknowledged God's power, and asked God for boldness to witness for Jesus in the face of the rulers' threats. They also asked God to support their witness with miracles. Their hope was that the Jews would see, hear, and repent, so that God would establish the Kingdom at that time.

B. The Response of the Father — 4:31

4:31 — The Lord responded positively to their prayer by giving them boldness to witness through the Holy Spirit.

C. The Results of Spirit-filling — 4:31-37

4:32 — In addition to boldness, the disciples also were blessed with unity and generosity. They shared what they had with those who did not have enough. They practiced this communal living for a while, but later on they ceased to follow this practice. No doubt it became impractical and the system produced more problems than answers. Generosity was encouraged among all Christians, but communal living was not practiced by Christians except at Jerusalem during the early days of the church.

4:34-37 — God did not command them to share their possessions with all believers, but it was done of a free will. They loved each other and their focus was on the Kingdom, which they thought would soon be established on earth. Their possessions were less important to them than the immediate needs of their brothers and sisters in Christ. They were obeying Jesus' command to love one another.