**God’s Plan to Save All People**

Acts 3:12–26

**Introduction**

A. The preachers of the New Testament understood that Jesus was the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies of the Old – Colossians 2:16–17.

**“The new is in the old concealed; the old is in the new revealed” (Augustine), and “The new is in the old contained, and the old is in the new explained” (W. Graham Scroggie).**

B. In one of the most theologically rich sermons in Acts, Peter (and John) preaches Jesus to a crowd of devout Jews in the temple – Acts 3:11–26.

C. This sermon began with the healing of lame beggar at the temple gate. His healing drew a crowd and provided proof that the name of Jesus had been exalted by God.

**Figure 1: Illustration of the Temple in the First Century AD**

**The sermon in Acts 3 can be divided into two major sections: explanation (vv. 12–18) and exhortation (vv. 19–26).**

**Explanation**

A. Following the miracle, the crowd assumed Peter and John were the source. Peter quickly redirected their attention to Jesus – Acts 3:12, 16; see 10:26.

B. The miracle had been accomplished by the name of Jesus. The humiliation and exaltation of Christ was part of God’s plan – 3:13–18; see v. 6.

**Peter begins to link the good news of Jesus’s death, resurrection, and exaltation with the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament. First, he refers to God as the God of the Patriarchs (Exodus 3:6). Then, he echoes the servant-language of Isaiah when referring to Jesus (52:13). Next, Peter calls Jesus “the Holy and Righteous One,” just as the Psalms (16:10) and the Prophets (Jeremiah 23:6) do. Finally, he identifies Jesus as the Christ (Messiah).**

**The climactic statements are found at the beginning and the end of this section: “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus” (v. 13) and “But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he has thus fulfilled” (v. 18).**

**The flow of the argument and the names and descriptions applied to Jesus form the basis of the exhortation and coalesce to a powerful conclusion at the end of the sermon (vv. 19–26).**

C. The same power that provided healing to the body of the lame man was available to the souls of the hearers, if they would accept Jesus – see vv. 19–26.

**Exhortation**

A. Peter called on the Jews to act in faith and repent and turn to God – Acts 3:19; see v. 26; 2:38.

**“The truth will set us free but if often makes us miserable first. The fear of what we might discover if we honestly faced our character defects keeps us living in a prison of denial. Only as God is allowed to shine the light of his truth on our faults, failures, and hang-ups can we begin to work on them” (Rick Warren).**

B. The result of repentance would be remission of sins, refreshment in the Lord, and restoration in eternity – 3:19–21; see Matthew 11:28–30; Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:13.

**“To know Jesus is the shortest description of grace; to know him better is the surest mark of growth in grace; to know him perfectly is eternal life” (John Newton)**

C. The reason Jews (and Gentiles) should turn to Jesus is that he is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and promise – Acts 3:22–26.

1. Prophecy – vv. 22–25; Deuteronomy 18:15–19

2. Promise – v. 25; Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:7–9; Ephesians 4:14–15

3. Summary – v. 26; see v. 19

**“You can’t break God’s promises by leaning on them” (Unknown).**

**Conclusion**

A. The response among those who heard Peter’s sermon was mixed: some accepted it and others rejected it – Acts 4:1–4.

B. The same message, exhortation, and promise is available to us today. How will we respond?

**Listen to Jesus, repent, turn away from sin, turn to God, and receive forgiveness, refreshment, fellowship, and hope!**