

## PM Acts 3

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Date: 06 April 2025

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[ 0 : 00 ] They're from the Holy Bible, from the Book of Acts, chapter 3, and it's on page 1098 of the Church Bible.

! So the Book of Acts begins with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And briefly it talks about him appearing and speaking to teaching his disciples in over a 40-day period before he is taken up into heaven.

And then about 10 days later, the Lord Jesus, who is now in heaven, he sends down his Holy Spirit upon the disciples, upon the Church.

And we read about that in Acts chapter 2. And at the end of chapter 2, we read about the fellowship of believers. And one of the things that we find in that is that many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

And chapter 3 is an example of that. So we're going to just read this chapter 3 of Acts. Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

[ 1 : 29 ] And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate, to ask alms of those entering the temple.

Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, Look at us.

And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, I have no silver and gold, but what I do have, I give to you.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and raised him up.

And immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up, he stood and began to walk. And entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

[ 2 : 34 ] And all the people saw him walking and praising God. And recognized him as the one who sat at the beautiful gate of the temple, asking for alms.

And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's.

And when Peter saw it, he addressed the people. Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this? Or why do you stare at us?

As though by our own power or piety we have made him walk. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.

But you denied the Holy One, the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you. And you killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead.

[ 3 : 56 ] To this we are witnesses. And his name, by faith in his name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know.

And the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers.

But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.

Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

Moses said, The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that

prophet shall be destroyed from the people.

And all the prophets who have spoken from Samuel and those who came after him also proclaimed these days, You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, and in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

[ 5 : 46 ] God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness. May God bless to us that reading from his word.

Just to turn back to that chapter that we read, to Acts chapter 3. And I want to begin with some words from the famous poet and singer-songwriter Bob Dylan.

This is a song called Everything is Broken. He says, Broken bottles, broken plates, broken switches, broken gates, broken dishes, broken parts, streets are filled with broken hearts, broken words, never meant to be spoken, everything is broken.

Seems like every time you stop and turn around, something else just hit the ground. Broken cutters, broken sores, broken buckles, broken lures, broken bodies, broken bones, broken voices on broken phones.

Take a deep breath, feel like you're choking, everything is broken. Every time you leave and go off someplace, things fall to pieces in my face.

[ 7 : 02 ] Everything is broken. And in many ways, that's a good summary of the world that we live in. And perhaps that, it resonates with your own experience today.

Of course, there is much in our world of great beauty that causes us to wonder and awe and gives us joy and delight. But also, things fall apart.

Things break down. There are accidents, diseases, disasters, illness, decay, and ultimately death. We also live in a world where there is so much violence and cruelty and oppression and war. And according to the Bible, all of these are ultimately the result of human sinfulness, human revolt against God, our maker.

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, were placed as rulers over the rest of creation. And they revolted against God, their maker.

[ 8 : 14 ] And it was like as if they were the captains of an oil tanker. They steered onto the rocks. Not only they went down, but the whole tanker went down with them.

The whole of creation was affected and impacted by their rebellion against God. And yet the Bible also tells us that God has a great plan, a great mission to mend, to heal, and to restore his broken creation.

And in Acts chapter 3, we see a great display of God's mission of restoring the broken. Here is this severely disabled beggar, a layman who is healed.

And so I want to look at this chapter. I've got four headings. First of all, just the miracle. Second, the explanation that Peter gives. Third, God's great plan through the Messiah.

And fourth, what God requires of us. So first of all, the miracle. This takes place one day at 3pm, that's the ninth hour in the translation we have, about three o'clock in the afternoon, which was the time of the second of the two daily prayers at the temple.

[ 9 : 37 ] And Peter and John go to the temple at that time to pray. And they pass through this gate called the beautiful gate, and there's this beggar who's asking for money.

This man has been lame from birth, and he's now over 40 years old. We're told that in the next chapter, chapter 4. He's obviously very lame.

He had to be carried there. He's unable to walk himself. And in that time and place, the only way he could live was by begging. So here is a broken man, a picture of brokenness.

and he asked Peter and John for money. And we read in verse 4 that Peter looked straight at him, as did John.

And Peter said, look at us. And the man gives them his attention, expecting to get something from them. And Peter says, I don't have any silver or gold, but what I do have you, I will give you.

[ 10 : 38 ] In the name of Jesus, the Messiah of Nazareth, walk. And Peter takes him by the right hand and helps him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles become strong.

And he jumps to his feet and begins to walk. And he goes with them into the temple courts, walking and leaping and praising God. And the language that Luke, Luke is the writer of the book of Acts, as well as the gospel of Luke, Luke's language there, I think, deliberately echoes the language of that passage from Isaiah 35 that we just sang from, that speaks of when your God will come, be strong and do not fear, your God will come.

He will come with vengeance and divine retribution. He will come to save you. Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

Then will the lame leap like a deer. And the mute tongue shout for joy. And Luke's language here, I think, deliberately kind of echoes that, that when God will come, and of course God has come in the person, in and as the person of Jesus Christ.

And we will see it's in his name that this healing takes place. Well, in verses 9 and 10, all the people see him walking and praising God. they recognize him, he's the same guy who used to sit there at the gate begging, unable to move, and they're filled with wonder and amazement at what has happened.

[12:17] And that leads to Peter's explanation of this event. In verse 11, they all come running to the portico, or sort of covered colonnade, in the temple.

people, and Peter addresses them, men of Israel, why do you wonder at this? Why do you stare at us as though by our own piety or power we were able to make this man walk?

So Peter rejects this false explanation. It's not nothing to do with Peter or John, their ability or their godliness, their piety. And he goes on to give the correct explanation in verse 13.

The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. And Peter himself there is using words also from the prophet Isaiah.

In Isaiah 52 and 53, there's a passage that speaks about the servant of the Lord. There's a number of passages in Isaiah that speak about this figure called the servant of the Lord.

[13:29] But Isaiah 52 and 53 is probably the most detailed and the longest passage about the servant. And it speaks about this servant of the Lord who suffers in the place of others and is then exalted by God and honoured by God.

And Peter's language here deliberately, I think it is deliberate, deliberately echoes Isaiah 52, 13. Because that passage starts, it says, see my servant will act wisely.

He will be raised up, lifted up and highly exalted. And actually the word exalted there is the same word as the word glorified that Peter used.

English translations translate it differently but it's the same word. God has glorified his servant Jesus God says in Isaiah 52, see my servant will act wisely, he will be raised and lifted up and highly glorified.

And even the word for servant there is not the most common word for servant. It's a different word but it's the same word that Peter uses. And so Peter is kind of referring, he's deliberately echoing Isaiah 52 and he's basically saying and he'll come back to this that Jesus is the one who fulfills that prophecy.

[15:03] Peter and the others recognize that Jesus' death and resurrection are in fulfillment of that prophecy in Isaiah 52 and 53. But Peter goes on in verse 13 he says, you delivered over Jesus and denied him in the presence of Pilate when he had decided to release him.

And you asked for a murderer to be released to you. That's talking about Barabbas who we read about in the Gospels was released. People asked for him to be released and Jesus to be condemned.

And he's saying you in doing that you condemned the holy and righteous one. That of course refers to Jesus' innocence of the charges that were against him but more than that just that he was supremely holy and good and righteous in his life and in all his ways.

If anyone should not have been condemned it was Jesus. And he says you killed the author of life. That word author can mean the ruler of life or the one who leads to life. And so the Messiah who had come to bring them life, they killed him.

[16:28] But then God overturned that action. Humans had condemned Jesus, they had killed him, but God turned that judgment on its head by raising him from the dead.

And so vindicating Jesus, proving him to be in the right. And in verse 14 Peter says we are witnesses of this. We the apostles and other disciples we are witnesses of this because they saw with their own eyes the risen Lord Jesus risen from the dead.

And that is something that is repeated again and again in these messages and these speeches in the book of Acts. These apostles they claim we are witnesses, we saw, we are not just reporting something we have heard, we have seen with our own eyes this Jesus who was crucified now alive.

And then in verse 16 he comes back to the miracle, he says it is his name, Jesus' name, and by faith in his name that has made this man strong whom you see and know.

And the faith that is through Jesus has given this man this perfect health in the presence of you all. Peter has been very clear that it is not his and John's power or godliness that has made this man walk.

[ 17 : 54 ] No, it is the name of Jesus that has power to heal. In verse 6, Peter had said, in the name of Jesus, the Messiah of Nazareth, walk.

And when he talks about being in the name of Jesus or using the name of Jesus, name signifies Jesus' power and authority. It is on the basis of who Jesus is, Jesus' identity. It is almost like we sometimes use the word name for reputation. So if something has a good name, it has a good reputation. And so it is Jesus' identity, his reputation, who he is, who is being focused on here.

here. And so Peter, he gives the credit to where it is due.

It is to Jesus, not to himself or to John. And it kind of chimes with the purpose of the book of Acts. If we turn to the beginning of Acts in chapter one, right at the beginning of the book, this is Luke writing, he says, in the first book, and that's the first book refers to what we call the gospel of Luke, in the first book of Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day when he was taken up after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

[ 19 : 20 ] So the first book, the gospel of Luke, is about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken to heaven. And the implication of that is that at Acts is all about what Jesus continued to do and to teach after he was taken into heaven.

And so in other words, this miracle, this healing of this lame man is the work of the risen, the exalted Lord Jesus Christ. Well then Peter goes on to speak about God's great plan through the Messiah.

And he speaks of two causes of the death of Jesus. There's a human cause and a divine cause. In verse 17 he says, Now brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance as did also your rulers. See, they didn't know what they were doing.

They didn't. It doesn't excuse them. they're still guilty. They still need to repent. There's a call to them to repent of what they did. But they didn't realize that this person they were crucifying was the Messiah.

[ 20 : 38 ] And they were ignorant of that. Of course it was foolish ignorance. It was prejudiced ignorance. It was wrong and wicked ignorance.

But it was ignorance. So human beings didn't know what they were doing. But God knew exactly what he was doing.

Because in verse 18 Peter goes on to say that what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.

So Peter's saying that Jesus' death, this travesty of justice, this horrendous, cruel, brutality, barbaric death, was not an accident.

It didn't take God by surprise. It wasn't as if God was sort of trying to do his thing in the world and it all went wrong. No, it wasn't.

[ 21 : 35 ] God foretold this through the prophets and it was fulfilled in this way. God had prepared for this. God knew this was going to happen and he had spoken about it centuries beforehand through the writings of the prophets.

prophets. Now that was particularly relevant to this Jewish audience because the Jews, they would know, many of them would know very well the Old Testament, what we call the Old Testament, their scriptures.

But also for us today, it speaks to us powerfully of two things. First of all, of the Bible itself, that the Bible is an amazing supernatural book which foretells future events and then we find those events being fulfilled.

And if we read and study the Old Testament, we find these events, the events of Jesus' death and resurrection, being foretold. world. But also it points to Jesus Christ as the central person in world history.

God prepared for his coming and his mission through earlier prophets, in fact going back a very, very long way, even right to the beginning of the Bible, the Old Testament.

[ 22 : 53 ] we find Jesus Christ being prepared, his way being prepared. I may have used this illustration before but I think it helps to see this.

I come from a small village in Yorkshire called Carlton Minyot which probably most of you have never heard of. And if you're driving towards Carlton Minyot, you maybe get, I think it's about a mile away that you come to the first sign saying, Carlton Minyot, one mile.

If you're ten miles away, you don't see any sign for it. Because it's just a small place, it's not a big place, it's not important. Now I live in Glasgow which of course is a big city.

And you leave Dumfries and you'll see a sign saying Glasgow I think is about 75 miles. Because Glasgow is a big place, it's an important place. And so the bigger the place, the more important place, the further back you start seeing the signposts.

Well Jesus Christ is the most important person in history. And that is shown by the fact that the signposts to him go back right to the beginning of the Bible, to the beginning of history.

[ 24 : 12 ] Even in Genesis, the beginning of Genesis we see signposts beginning to point to his coming. Well Peter gives some examples of the prophets.

We've already noted his use of Isaiah chapter 52 and 53 that speak about the servant of the Lord who suffers for the sins of others in the place of others and who then God exalts and raises up. Pointing to Jesus' death and resurrection. In verse 22 he speaks of Moses. This is Peter speaking of Moses. He says that Moses said the Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.

You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And that prophet that is like Moses is Jesus.

He is the prophet who is like Moses but also greater than Moses. In verse 24 he mentions Samuel. He says all the prophets who have spoken from Samuel and those who came after him also proclaimed these days.

[ 25 : 26 ] Samuel was the prophet who basically instigated kingship in ancient Israel. And then in verse 25 he mentions Abraham.

You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers saying to Abraham and in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Who is that offspring? Well ultimately it is Jesus Christ. He is the offspring of Abraham through whom all the nations of the earth receive God's blessing.

And so these prophets they show that all of this that happened to Jesus, his death, his resurrection, it was prepared, it was in God's plan from the beginning.

God's plan was that the Messiah should suffer and then rise from the dead. And then in verse 21 Peter says about Jesus whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

[ 26 : 39 ] So Jesus Christ is ascended, he's gone up into heaven and he is now in heaven. Heaven must receive him. But he will return at the end of this age.

And when Jesus Christ returns God will restore everything. And that is the ultimate hope that we have if we are believers in Christ, if we have faith in him.

That time when God will restore all things. What will he restore everything to? Well, in the original creation at the beginning of the book of Genesis when we read of God's created activity God creates things and he declares them good.

And at the end of Genesis chapter 1 we read of God like an artist sort of standing back and surveying his creation and he declares it all. Very good.

And it's a creation that God blessed that was under God's blessing. Now because the first humans disobeyed God and of course followed by all their descendants including ourselves because of that everything is broken to quote from the Bob Dylan song.

[ 27 : 59 ] There is illness. There are accidents. There are disasters. There is so much sadness and misery in the world. there is violence and oppression and war and ultimately there is death that faces us all.

But one day when Jesus Christ returns from heaven to earth God is going to fix and to heal and to restore all that is broken.

healing of this lame man is a trailer of that future restoration. again I'm sure I've used this illustration before but you might see a trailer of a film that's going to be released and you just get a glimpse of it for maybe 30 or 60 seconds of the action of the film to make you want to go and see the whole film. Or like in the children's talk you go in and you can smell your favourite meal and you just think oh what a wonderful smell and maybe you get a spoonful of it and it's a foretaste to make you long for the full meal the full dinner.

And that's what this healing of this lame man is like it's a trailer it's a foretaste of when Jesus Christ will return and will heal the whole of creation.

[ 29 : 22 ] When these bodies of ours will be raised from the dead. When the whole of heaven and earth will be renewed. When there will be eternal life in a renewed restored universe.

In J.R.R. Tolkien's book *The Return of the King* part of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy there's a scene where after a battle Aragorn who is the king who's returned and is in some ways I suppose a Christ-like figure because Tolkien was a Christian.

And there's a it's like a prophecy within the book but these words which I think are just so apt in description of Christ.

The hands of the king are the hands of a healer and so shall the rightful king be known. The hands of the king are the hands of a healer and so shall the rightful king be known.

one day the whole of creation is going to be healed by the hands of king Jesus. Well finally what God requires of us.

[ 30 : 39 ] You see Peter in this message doesn't just give information it's not just interesting stuff there is a call to act a call to respond.

And that comes out in a number of places in verse 19 Peter says repent therefore and turn again that your sins may be blotted out.

In verse 26 he says that God has raised up his servant and sent him to you first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.

So there's a call to turn to repent. Repentance means basically doing a U-turn in your life. From following your own ways your sins to following God.

And it's a call for all of us. Now we were not personally there when Jesus was crucified but in all sorts of ways we sin. We have our idols we have our sins that we follow and we are to turn from them.

[ 31 : 44 ] That's what Peter is here and what the whole Bible calls us to do to turn from our sins and to turn to God. Then in verse 22 Peter's quoting about when Moses said the Lord will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.

You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And that Peter's implying there that Jesus is still speaking to them today and indeed to us today.

that Jesus speaks to us through the apostles through their preaching their message which of course comes to us today in the Bible in the New Testament. And so we are called to listen to him to read to study to obey to follow what Jesus says to us in his word.

And there's a warning in verse 23. it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be cut off or destroyed from the people.

And to be cut off from the people was to be separated from the people of God, those who were under God's blessing. And that is a danger, a danger for them, a danger for us that if we are cut off, if we disobey Christ, if we do not follow his teaching, what he says, then we will be cut off from his people and from the blessings of God and from God himself.

[ 33 : 19 ] But there is also promise here in verse 19, repent therefore and turn again that your sins may be blotted out.

So it speaks of sins being forgiven, even the sin of killing the Messiah, Jesus. And if that can be forgiven, what can't be forgiven, however bad your sin, if you repent of that sin, you will be forgiven of that.

That is the promise that is given here. There is a promise of forgiveness and also of new life now. In verse 20, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus.

Jesus. So there is new life even now before Jesus comes back for those who believe, those who repent. And also the presence of Jesus with us through his spirit, the Holy Spirit whom he gives us. And then also the promise of blessing. Verse 25 and 26, the promise to Abraham, in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

[ 34 : 30 ] God having raised up his servant sent him to you first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness. And so God promises blessing to all who repent, who receive the Messiah Jesus.

And that includes the blessing, the ultimate blessing, the immense blessing of being part of God's renewed, restored creation. Where all that is broken, will be healed in the life that is everlasting,

when God will restore all things.  
Why would you miss out on that? Turn to Jesus Christ and receive that blessing and new life.  
Amen. May God bless his word to us.  
Let's pray together.