

### **Peter and John preach to the people (Acts 3:17-26)**

Men of Israel – God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God of our fathers – Peter is making connection with the covenantal period of the OT. At the beginning and the end of the sermon he refers to Jesus as the Servant. This is a clear messianic title but it would be one that would not immediately offend his hearers. Peter is drawing them in. He increasingly raises the majesty of the titles he uses for Jesus. Holy and Righteous One and the author of life (literally the Prince of life). It is through faith in the name of Jesus that this man was healed. This is the avenue for Salvation from God.

Peter now calls them to repentance. Your sins will be wiped out. This refers to the fact that the ancient ink did not contain acid and therefore did not penetrate the papyrus but laid on top. Therefore with a wet sponge you could wipe out or erase what was written. This is referring to the wiping out of the record of their sins in heaven.

Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of Deut. 18:19. He is that prophet after Moses who will speak for God. All of the prophets spoke of Christ and now Christ is the fulfillment of all of that all the way back to the Abrahamic Covenant where it is said that all of the families of the earth will be blessed in you. This is being spoken in the temple but in the Court of the Gentiles. This is a harbinger of things to come with the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

### **Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1-22)**

In the middle of the sermon, Peter and John were interrupted by the Priests, Captain of the temple guard (a family member of the High Priest), and the Sadducees. There are several reasons why they would have been angered by the preaching

- They believed that only the priests had the right to instruct the people in spiritual matters
- They believed that the Messianic age had begun with the Hasmoneans in the second century BC
- Only believed in the Torah and did not believe in resurrection

They put them in jail until the next day because the Sanhedrin Council only meets during daylight hours.

Luke emphasizes that in spite of opposition the church grows. This will be a major theme in the book as we see the Church expand.

The next day when officially questioned, Peter is full of the Holy Spirit and he responds to them with boldness just as Jesus promised (Lk. 12:11-12; 21:15). Again he accuses them of being the ones who crucified Jesus and of having rejected Jesus. Peter says that the man was healed which is the word for “saved”. Verse 12 will then pick up this play on words as it talks about salvation spiritually.

Verse 12 is another statement of the essence of the Gospel message. Salvation is found in no one else but the name of Christ. They are astonished by their courage and responses even though they were unlearned and ordinary men. This is a powerful statement about how we are to

be as witnesses. God is not looking for the extraordinary and the educated, he is looking for those who have been with Jesus and have courage to obey and stand behind their witness.

They ordered Peter and John to leave so they could strategize. They could not deny the miracle because everyone knew that it was valid. But instead of believing themselves they plot a way that they can shut up the apostles so that they will not spread this thing further among the people.

Verse 18: The religious leaders call the Apostles in and command them not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. Peter and John reply what is better in the eyes of God, to obey you or to obey God himself? You be the judge! As for us, we cannot stop speaking of what we have seen and heard. They threatened the apostles further and then let them go, because they knew that the people all saw this as a true miracle from God.

The focus here is the boldness of a disciple's witness! The religious leaders note that they are uneducated and ordinary men. This doesn't mean that they were illiterate. They were good Jews, trained in the synagogue, they spoke at least 3 languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) but they were not trained by the rabbis in theology or the Mosaic law. They also noted that the apostles were with Jesus. This is their qualification to teach and to speak. The same is true for us. We speak and bear witness to the truth that we have experienced in our walk with Jesus. We do not need formal training in a seminary or Bible school to talk about what we have witnessed. If we are courageous, God will give us the proper things to say at the proper times. This is what Jesus promised the disciples when he was on earth with them. He called them to be witnesses and they are doing it. It wasn't easy, they were put in prison over night but there was no denying the fact that the healing that happened to the 40 year old crippled man was a miracle from God and this gave credibility to what they said. We may not be out restoring sick people, but the way we live our life, our character, our faithfulness to God, our compassion for those around us give credibility to our words – to our witness of Jesus in our life.