



Sunday School Lesson
Acts 3:1-10
 by **Lorin L. Cranford**
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Lame and then Walking



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This third lesson the “Miracle of Healing” series in the Symth-Helwys Formations series focuses on the healing of the lame man by Peter in the temple in Jerusalem. This miracle is the first of [ten miracle narratives](#) in the book of Acts. One of the fascinating aspects of such a study is the way that Luke treats miracles in his two volume work of the gospel and acts. Nineteen of [the thirty five specific miracles](#) described by the four gospel writers are found in Luke, either in parallel with the other two synoptic writers or standing alone in the Lukan gospel. Add to that a [miracle summary narrative](#) in 7:21 and a total of twenty instances surface in the gospel. This is twice the number of miracles that Jesus did, over those connected to either Peter or Paul. In his Acts account, the ten miracles are evenly split with five each linked to either Peter or Paul.

This provides an important clue to what Luke is attempting to accomplish in both Luke and Acts. In the gospel Jesus stands clearly as God’s Son bringing salvation to a lost world. One important confirmation of that is the vestment of God’s supernatural power in Jesus’ ministry, especially his ability to do miracles that benefit those in need. That the commissioning of the disciples by Jesus gave them authorization to continue that ministry of proclaiming the message of salvation under God’s power is evidenced in the demonstration of God’s supernatural power in the ministries of both Peter and Paul. Peter, as the leader of the Jewish Christian community in beginning years after Jesus’ ascension, stands with Jesus in his ability to become a channel of God’s supernatural power to benefit others. Then Paul, as the leader of the exploding ministry to non-Jews, also finds confirmation of God’s approval with the same divine power flowing through his ministry to Gentiles. The role of the miracle as a confirmation of God’s presence and His approval of gospel proclamation stands as a critical part of understanding the miraculous in the Bible.

This study will provide some opportunity to explore in more detail the whole idea of miracles in the New Testament. Contemporarily in some traditions, a very different way than tury Christianity. This dif- leads to a misunder- cient NT texts should ap- Early Christian under- must also be viewed

Miracles were thought to happen by Jews, Romans, Greeks, and Christians -- and others -- in the first century world. Miracles workers traveled all over the Mediterranean world claiming supernatural powers of healing etc.

rary Christianity, espe- tends to view miracles in was the case in first cen- ferent perspective often standing of how the an- ply to Christians today. standing of miracles against the background

of both first century Jewish views, and Greco-Roman views. Both of these traditions about miracles -- and they were extensive traditions -- give a backdrop for seeing apostolic Christianity in a clearer way. Only then can we find a correct link of the teaching of the Bible on miracles to their application in our day. Otherwise, confusion and misunderstanding will continue to prevail in Christian belief today.

I Context

Again understanding both the historical and literary setting of our passage is essential to accurate interpretation of the passage, and especially to its application to our world. Careful attention will thus be given to both these elements. Relevant materials from [a previous study](#) in Acts 1:1-11 will be used here.

a. Historical

The [external history](#) of the book of Acts is closely linked to the Gospel of Luke because of the Prologue of Acts, along with that of the Lucan gospel. The list below illustrates how this is:

[Acts 1:1-5](#)

1 In the first book, **Theophilus**, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning 2 until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3 After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. 4 **While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father.** "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

[Luke 1:1-4](#)

1 Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, 3 I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent **Theophilus**, 4 so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

[Luke 24:44-53](#)

44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; **so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.**"

50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; 53 and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Theophilus is a common link between the Gospel and Acts. But his identity has remained a puzzle down to the present. Was he a real person? If so, then who? Or, was the name a cover to all friends of God?

Acts intersects Luke here at two important points. First, both books are dedicated to Theophilus (more on that below). This links the two documents together, and as coming from one source. Second, the instruction to stay in Jerusalem, along with the ascension of Jesus into heaven, is a second link to Luke 24 -- the only gospel writer to describe these two items.

Who then was this writer? When and where were these materials produced? Who was targeted initially by these writings? What was the writer trying to accomplish with these writing? To whom were these documents written? Were there different purposes for each of these writings? Or a common purpose for both? Also, what is the literary form (=genre) of Acts in terms of the ancient world? And how is Acts different from [the other books of Acts](#) that showed up in early Christian history? Early Christianity had to sort through at

least a dozen such books in order to decide which one to include in the New Testament. These are the questions about the external history of the book of Acts.

Now let's explore the answers to these questions as far as the available information provides answers. The "who" question answer has traditionally been Luke the physician. No where in either the Gospel or Acts is Luke specifically identified as being responsible for these two documents. This identification comes from early church tradition, not from something specific inside either document. This early church tradition begins in the late second century with the [Muratorian Canon](#), as Julius Scott in his article on "Luke-Acts" in the [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#) notes:

A second-century document, the Muratorian Canon, states that the third Gospel and the Book of Acts were written by "Luke."

In assessing this tradition -- mainly for the Lucan gospel -- John Nolland in the *Word Biblical Commentary* volume one on Luke's Gospel notes the following about Luke:

How do we evaluate this traditional ascription? The role attributed to Luke in the NT is quite modest. In Philem 24 he occurs in a list of Paul's fellow workers. In Col 4:14 Luke the beloved physician sends greetings (and is normally thought to be of non-Jewish origin on the basis of v 11, though this can be read in other ways). In 2 Tim 4:11 he is said to be Paul's sole companion. That is all, unless we identify this Luke with the Lucius (Λούκιος) who is said to be kinsman of Paul in Rom 16:21. The tradition has certainly exploited these texts to maximize the link with Paul; but this is clearly in the context of the sub-apostolic standing of Luke, which itself constituted a problem for the recognition of this text as Scripture and canon.

Thus modern scholars, working with procedures to determine factual history that are derived mostly from the modern western culture's scientific methodology, tend to not be as confident of this identification as early church leaders were. To be sure, Luke does not show up often in the pages of the New Testament; only [three times](#) by name. He was a physician according to Col. 4:14. Now one needs to keep in mind the huge difference between physicians in the ancient Roman world and the modern world. In that Roman world [most physicians](#), as well as lawyers, were slaves with education in medicine gained in the temple to the god [Asklepios](#) or through an apprenticeship with another doctor. Differing attitudes toward medicine and doctors existed in the ancient world. The Egyptians probably had the highest esteem for doctors, while the Romans had one of the lowest. The Jewish attitude fell somewhere between the two extremes. One must remember that physical illness and medical treatment were generally linked to religious belief and practice. R.K Harrison in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* has a good summary of the early Christian view, as expressed in the New Testament, in his article on "Medicine":

The NT has very little indeed to say about medical treatment, and such references as occur appear in an incidental manner. The Good Samaritan rendered effective first aid (Luke 10:34) by applying antiseptic and soothing dressings to the unfortunate victim of an assault. The anointing of Luke 7:37-38 was more of a cosmetic technique than a specifically therapeutic one. This practice was one of several connected with the preparation of a corpse for burial (Luke 23:56). The anointing with spittle (John 9:6) was of a symbolic nature, and as employed by Jesus was not strictly a therapeutic pro-

cedure.

The administration of sour wine mixed with gall and myrrh to those being crucified (Mark 15:23) was an act of charity intended to lessen the sufferings of the victims. But unless the potion contained some such narcotic as opium, its effect on the crucified persons would be negligible, since myrrh is only slightly sedative.

The kindly counsel of Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23) is typical of folk medicine in all ages. Probably Timothy was suffering from flatulent dyspepsia, the discomfort of which would be relieved temporarily by alcohol. However, there seem to be good reasons for believing that the gastric condition was only a part of a larger pathological pattern ("frequent ailments"), which was probably psychosomatic in nature. The anointing with oil in the name of God was symbolic rather than therapeutic, and intimately associated with the "prayer of faith."

If early church tradition is correct about Luke being responsible for these two documents, then the remaining questions (When? Where? Why? To whom?) become helpful to answer. First, the **When** question. Normally the assumption is that the gospel was written first, especially in light of Acts 1:1

reference to "the former word that I did..." (τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποιησάμην...). With Acts 28 ending with the apostle Paul under house arrest in Rome,

this would place Acts no earlier than about AD 61. The dating of the Gospel depends upon the literary connection of Mark, Matthew and Luke to one another (the so-called Synoptic Gospels). Most scholars, including me, work off the conviction that Mark is the first one to be written, and was brought together in the mid to late 60s. This would place the Lucan gospel later into the early-to-mid 70s, with Acts following it. Acts ends with Paul in Rome, primarily because one of the major principles of history writing in the ancient world was to trace the movement of significant events from one major starting point to a climatic ending point geographically. For Luke, this meant tracing the beginning of the Christian movement from its beginnings in Jerusalem (the Jewish/Christian religious center of the world) to the imperial capital of the world of that day (Rome) over a thirty year period (AD 33 to AD 61). The **Where** question remains a matter of pure speculation with no clear cut answers. If the older When tradition of Luke-Acts being a part of Paul's defense before the Roman emperor Nero were accurate, then the location of these writings would be easy to determine: the

Luke, the physician and slave, is the composer of both the gospel and acts. He also traveled with Paul during the third missionary journey and to Rome.

imperial capital of Rome. But this view is virtually impossible to sustain in light of the literary connection of the gospel to that of Mark's gospel. Luke most likely will have left Rome after Paul's trial before the emperor. Where he may be by the early 70s is impossible to determine.

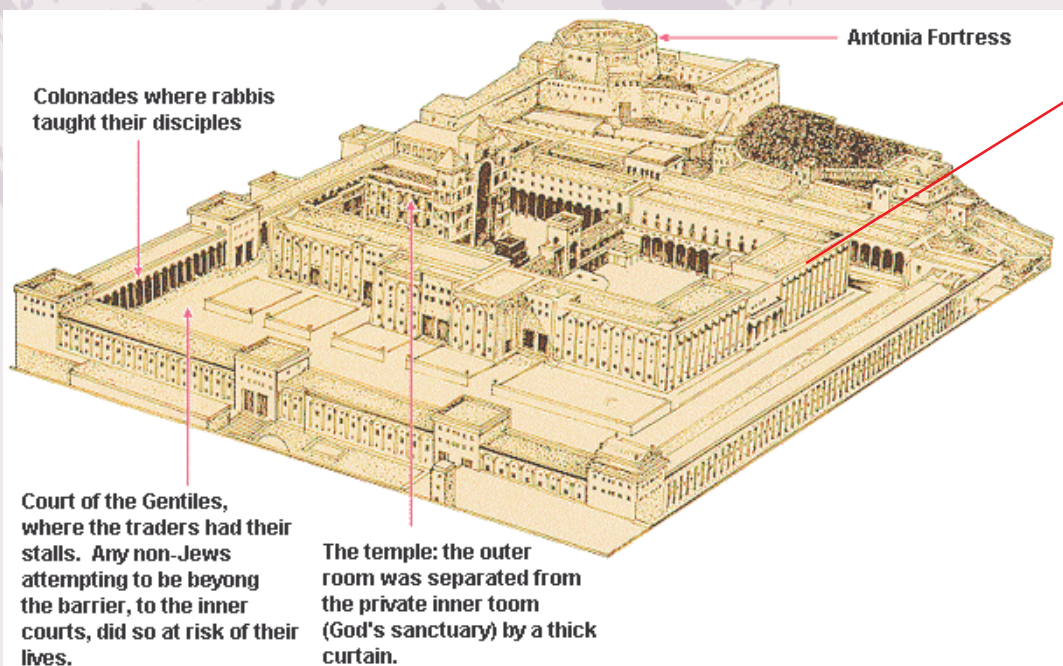
The **To Whom** and **Why** questions are tied up in the [Prologues](#) of both documents. Theophilus is the mystery figure who is identified in both documents as the one to whom Luke dedicates both documents. Although many different views of his identity exist, the one that most appeals to me -- especially after supervising a Ph.D. dissertation on Luke 1:1-4 -- is that Theophilus was a new convert to Christianity, who as a rich person and most likely a person of substantial position in the Roman government, decided to follow a well established pattern in the ancient world: to serve as a patron to underwrite the expense of a trusted authority to write out an account of the Christian movement and to have numerous copies of it produced and distributed widely in order to help promote the spread of this movement. This was commonly done by wealthy patrons who became disciples of individual philosophers in that day. Thus, Luke-Acts would both help him better understand his new Christian faith, as well as help promote it to others. Where Luke was when he penned these two documents could range all the way from Rome to northern Palestine, and is probably the least important of these "reporter" questions to answer.

In light of these perspectives, therefore, Luke-Acts stands as an early effort to put into written expression the beginnings of the Christian movement first with its founder, Jesus Christ, and then with the first three decades of its expansion out of Jerusalem to the imperial capital of Rome. The apostles Peter (chaps 1-12) and Paul (chaps 13-28) stand as the representatives of both the Jewish and the non-Jewish focus of this spreading move-

ment. The doctrinal ("philosophical viewpoint") aspects of this presentation are significant. Luke saw Jesus (phase 2) as the climatic fulfillment of what God had begun through Moses and the prophets (phase 1) and this salvational work was continued by God in the early work of the apostles (phase 3). Since the 1950s this has been labeled in German as *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history). Since in the ancient world, history along with theology were subdivisions of philosophy, one could easily use history to espouse a philosophy with strong religious overtones. This is what -- in my estimation -- Luke has done. This was intended in large part to meet the needs of Theophilus and those who would subsequently read these two documents. Hopefully the readers would be attracted to this new religious movement and become converts to Christ, and the new converts could use these two documents to gain a strong grounding in their faith commitment to Christ.

Thus theology and history stand along side each other as important emphases for the Lucan writer. One cannot understand Acts as pure history, nor as pure theology. The two aspects are inseparably intertwined with one another in the writing of Acts. The interpretative process must take this into account, if a correct understanding of the text is to be achieved.

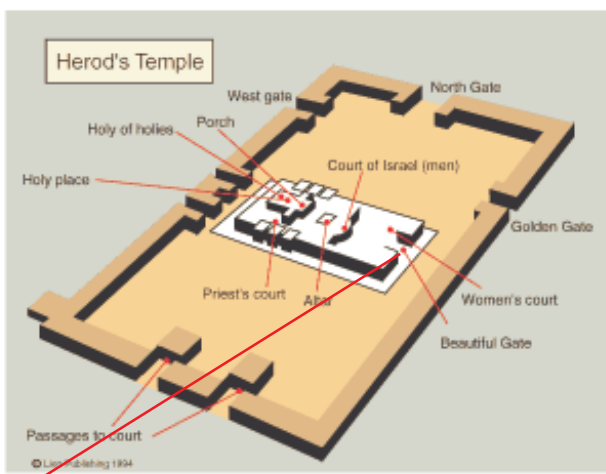
The [internal history](#) of 3:1-10 centers on the event that took place in the outer courts of the temple in Jerusalem. The layout of the temple complex in the first century suggests a possible location for the healing event, but one cannot be absolutely certain.



Acts 3:2 places it near the “Beautiful Gate” in the temple. Where was this? We can’t know with precise certainty as is stated in the article “Beautiful Gate” in the *Baker’s Encyclopedia of the Bible*:

Gate of Herod’s temple in Jerusalem where a man born lame was miraculously healed through the ministry of Peter and John (Acts 3:2, 10). The location of this gate is uncertain, but it was probably the gate leading from the Court of the Gentiles into the Women’s Court, called the Corinthian Gate (for its Corinthian bronze) by the Jewish historian Josephus. According to him it measured 75 feet high by 60 feet wide. A burial inscription found on Mt Olivet attributes the building of the gate to an Alexandrian Jew named Nicanor.

If this is accurate, then the location would be situated as the map below suggests. This would be a



place where high volume traffic would normally occur. Thus the chances of the beggar receiving a maximum amount of money in alms would be increased.

Appendix: Miracles in the Ancient World. An important part of the historical background of 3:1-10 is the ancient attitude toward miracles. At the beginning of the Christian era, the thought of miracles taking place would have not been questioned by virtually anyone, in contrast to modern skepticism. Modern approaches vary and have been largely shaped by the emerging view of the natural world at the beginning of the Enlightenment. For an in-depth discussion emphasizing this perception, see the article “Miracles,” in the [Wikipedia web site](#).

The Greco-Roman world of the first century was filled with superstition at all levels of society. The Roman generals looked for supernatural “signs” before entering into battle. Most peasants approached daily life seeking deliverance from harm through magical charms etc. The surrounding world

was saturated with powers beyond the human that could either bring prosperity or severe harm. Into that pagan world came the Θεός Ἀνήρ (Theos Aner), the so-called “God Man.” The best known of these is [Apollonius of Tyana](#), who lived in the second half of the first Christian century. He was neo-Pythagorean philosopher of Greece who acquired a reputation for his magical powers. In claiming to be able to control and redirect these supernatural powers, they supposedly could heal, prevent disasters, predict the future etc. Usually all this came with a monetary fee.

First century Jews also had strong belief in miracle workers, as Donald Howard Bromiley in his [MA thesis](#), “Jesus: Magician or Miracle Worker?,” asserts (pp. 39-40):

From Jewish writings we know about several miracle-working holy men who lived around the time of Jesus. Chief among these are Hanina ben Dosa and Honi “the Circle-Drawer.” Hanina ben Dosa lived in Galilee during the first century C.E., while Honi lived during the first century B.C.E. Characteristic of the stories recounting Hanina’s powers is the following in the Talmud:

Our Rabbis taught: Once the son of R. Gamaliel fell ill. He sent two scholars to R. Hanina b. Dosa to ask him to pray for him. When he saw them he went up to an upper chamber and prayed for him. When he came down he said to them: Go, the fever has left him. They said to him: Are you a prophet? He replied: I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I learnt this from experience. If my prayer is fluent in my mouth, I know that he is accepted: but if not, I know that he is rejected. They sat down and made a note of the exact moment. When they came to R. Gamaliel, he said to them: By the temple service! You have not been a moment too soon or too late, but so it happened: at that very moment the fever left him and he asked for water to drink.¹¹²

Likewise, another famous story of Hanina has him praying for the son of R. Johanan ben Zakkai, who was ill. His prayer is immediately effective, and the boy lives.¹¹³

Honi the Circle Drawer (also known as Onias) is most known for the miracle that is his namesake. According to the Mishnah, the Land of Israel was in the midst of a terrible drought:

Once they said to Onias the Circle-maker, ‘Pray that rain may fall’...He prayed, but the rain did not fall. What did he do? He drew a circle and stood within it and said before God, ‘O Lord of the world, thy children have turned their faces to me, for that I am like a son of the house before thee. I swear by thy great name that I will not stir hence until thou have pity on thy children.’ Rain began falling drop by drop. He said, ‘Not for such rain have I prayed, but for rain that will fill the cisterns, pits, and caverns’. It began to rain with violence. He said, ‘Not for such rain have I prayed, but

for rain of goodwill, blessing, and graciousness'. Then it rained in moderation...¹⁴

Against this backdrop comes the picture of miracles in the New Testament. Seung Ai Yang, in the *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, offers this depiction of miracles in the Bible:

Extraordinary events that manifest divine power, that are wonders to human understanding, and therefore what human beings perceive as signs from God. The various Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek words used in the Bible to describe "miracles" actually denote "wonders," "powers," and "signs." The manifestation of the divine power may happen with or without human agents of God.

The early Christian perspective understood God to be present inside His creation, not outside it as is generally understood in modern views of the miraculous. On occasion that presence would be marked by the expression of extraordinary power that produced an event clearly marking God's presence and superior power. In a world where the demonic and the divine were constantly battling one another on planet earth, that expression of God's power dramatically signaled the superiority of His power over the powers of evil. No where would this be more clear than in the exorcism of demons from humans. In the New Testament that divine power could be brought to bear against disease, against the demonic, and against dangerous situations arising in the created world.

In Jesus' ministry, the miracle working activity by him simply marked Jesus as one unusually blessed by the presence of God. This stood as a clear indicator that Jesus was indeed God's Son and our Savior. Thus Jesus' miracle working was just one part of a much larger mission and ministry, not the center of it. Although Jesus healed many people with dire physical needs, in reality that represented only an extremely small percentage of the people just in Galilee alone that could have benefited from his healing power.

In the book of Acts, the linking of that divine presence with extraordinary power to Peter and Paul serves a couple of objectives for Luke. First, it connects these two leaders of very different Christian communities to Jesus in a continuous expression of God's blessing. Just as Jesus was favored by God in his mission, both Peter and Paul were also

favored in preaching the gospel to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. Second, the miracles linked to Paul helped convince an apprehensive Jewish Christian community that a gospel without circumcision was being approved by God. Paul's stance that one is "justified by faith apart from works of law" was in part confirmed by this extraordinary expression of God's presence and approval. Also to be noted is the minimal role that miracle working played in the ministries of both apostles. Note the chart below:

Miracles in Peter:

Lame man healed:
[Acts 3:1-10](#)
Death Curse on Ananias and Sapphira
[Acts 5:1-10](#)
Aeneas healed of paralysis
[Acts 9:32-35](#)
Tabitha raised from dead
[Acts 9:36-43](#)
Peter miraculously released from prison
[Acts 12:6-19](#)

Miracles in Paul:

Crippled man healed
[Acts 14:8-20](#)
Exorcism of slave girl
[Acts 16:16-18](#)
Attempt to copy Paul's miracles by itinerant Jewish exorcists
[Acts 19:11-20](#)
Eutychus raised from dead
[Acts 20:7-12](#)
Paul unharmed by poisonous snake bite
[Acts 28:1-10](#)

Remarkable parallelism between Peter and Paul exists here in the miracles linked to their ministries. For Luke this meant that God favored the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews. But one must note also that the working of miracles lay on the very fringe of the ministries of both of these apostles. The center of ministry for both was to proclaim the saving message of life in Christ.

What can be gleaned for today's world? Some things come to mind. First, we must recognize God's continual presence in our world and in our lives. He is always there to lead, to assist, and on occasion to heal. We will receive from Him what we need within the parameters of His will and purpose for our life. Any "miracle" we sense is but

a part of His presence and activity in our life. When "miracle" becomes foremost in our desires, the great danger is that our will has superseded God's will. When we are fully committed to doing His will, God then has freedom to work however He chooses in our lives, even in miraculous fashion if He desires.

Second, miracles in the sense of expressions of God's activity in our lives are taking place con-

Miracles in the Bible are extraordinary expressions of the power of the God who already is present and active in His creation. He's not sitting somewhere up there in the sky and suddenly decides to set aside some law of nature in order to do a miracle.

stantly. Most of them happen without our being spiritually sensitive enough to recognize them. But any time God works in our life, for whatever purpose, we are experiencing a miracle in the biblical sense of an expression of divine power.

Thirdly, God's power can flow directly into our life or it can flow through mediated channels. Both patterns surface in the pages of the New Testament. We must never limit God's activity to some human channel such as a miracle worker. And also, that human channel of divine power doesn't need be some special "religious person." In Paul's listing of the "gifts of the Spirit" in [1 Cor. 12:4-11](#), the gifts of healing and of miracle working (vv. 9-10; ἄλλα δὲ χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων ἐν τῷ ἐνὶ πνεύματι, ἄλλα δὲ ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων,) arise from within the community of faith and do not indicate some special "calling" to be a miracle worker. No where in the New Testament does one find a Christian itinerant miracle worker traveling from place to place doing miracles, although in the surrounding Greco-Roman culture such could be found. Any suggestion that one needs a "healer" to be healed is outside the bounds of biblical teaching. What one can use, however, is the prayers of the church, and especially those of the churches leadership. [James 5:14-15](#) makes this point clear:

14 Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.

Fourthly, miracles in the Bible serve a purpose beyond themselves and beyond the deliverance of an individual. That is, they didn't take place for their own sake. They were validations of the mission of Jesus and of the preaching about Jesus by Peter and Paul. We should expect God to work in our lives in ways that serve the same objective. The saving message of Jesus lays at the heart of God's plan, not doing miracles. Where they will contribute to that central objective of God, they become possible and useful.

Finally, the modern TV Preacher-Miracle Worker has far more associations with the idea of miracle worker that emerged in second century heresy, than he does with Jesus, Peter or Paul. In the second half of the first Christian century, a heretical movement gradually began showing up in some circles of

the Christian movement. It quickly began to be condemned by some NT writers, especially Paul and John. In [Colossians 2](#), Paul takes a strong stand against it. [First John 4](#) these people are condemned. The movement evolved to become known as [Gnosticism](#) by the early decades of the second century. From that multi-faceted movement came a body of writings known as the [New Testament Apocrypha](#). In most of these writings, especially the Gospels, miracle working plays an important role in their presentation of a Gnostic Jesus. But this Jesus is a miracle worker of a sensationalist type, shaped largely from the Greco-Roman model of the God-Man. The canonical NT role and nature of the miraculous are lost in the dust and takes on a pattern very similar to the modern TV miracle worker. Not accidentally, some of the main doctrinal foundations for the modern miracle worker are virtually the same as for the 2nd century Christian Gnostic movement.

Do I believe in miracles? You bet I do! But only those that are real and flow out of the pattern of genuine miracles set forth in the Bible. As W.T. Conner used to say in the 1930s at Southwestern Seminary, "I believe in miracles, not miracle workers."

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b. Literary

The **literary gene** of 3:1-10 is that of a healing miracle. [Miracles](#) in the New Testament tend to fall into either miracles of healing, exorcisms or nature miracles. Our passage is a healing miracle. This type of narrative in ancient literature was typically organized around three segments: introduction detailing the need for a miracle; description of the miracle itself; and a depiction of the impact of the doing of the miracle on the individual, as well as occasionally also upon the bystanders watching the miracle being done. Acts 3:1-10 follows closely that ancient model.

The **literary setting** of 3:1-10 is important to understand. This episode comes after a summarizing narrative in 2:43-47 that depicts dominant patterns in the life of the believing community for several years after the day of Pentecost. The healing of the lame man happens as a circumstance for Peter and John while intending to enter the temple to pray in a manner typical of pious Jews in that day. The dramatic impact of the healing leads to an evangelistic sermon by Peter using the healing to validate the gospel message to the curious crowds that gathered

(3:11-26). This in turn leads to the arrest of Peter and John by the religious authorities in an effort to silence the preaching of the gospel (4:1-22). The believing community realizes the power of God in their praying for boldness (4:23-31) to speak the gospel in the face of this hostility. This segment is climaxed by another summarizing statement (4:32-35) emphasizing the unity of the believers.

In the literary strategy of this part of Acts (chaps. 3-4), the healing narrative is what triggers a succession of events that brings the Christian community in Jerusalem to a greater spiritual maturity in facing growing hostility to their preaching. The miracle becomes God's affirmation of his blessing not just upon Peter but upon the entire Christian community for

their stance in preaching the gospel of Christ. In the face of the religious leaders accusing them of being heretics, God's verdict was that they were dead center in His will. He proved it by his using Peter as a channel of healing. Through these two chapters God's power is expressed not just by the healing, but in Peter's bold preaching, in the miraculous escaping with their lives after Peter and John were arrested, in the bold preaching of the believing community, and in the free sharing of possessions with those in need. So this miracle of healing is but one of many expressions of that divine presence and power at work in the community of believers at Jerusalem.

II. Message

The internal literary structure of 3:1-10 follows the [typical form](#) of ancient miracle narratives. We will organize our study around that threefold structure.

a. The Situation, vv. 1-3

Greek NT

<3:1> Πέτρος δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννης ἀνέβαινον εἰς τὸ ἱερόν ἐπὶ τὴν ὥραν τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν ἑνάτην. <3:2> καὶ τις ἀνὴρ χωλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ ὑπάρχων ἐβαστάζετο, ὃν ἐτίθουν καθ' ἡμέραν πρὸς τὴν θύραν τοῦ ἱεροῦ τὴν λεγομένην Ὠραίαν τοῦ αἰτεῖν ἐλεημοσύνην παρὰ τῶν εἰσπορευομένων εἰς τὸ ἱερόν· <3:3> ὃς ἰδὼν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην μέλλοντας εἰσιέναι εἰς τὸ ἱερόν, ἠρώτα ἐλεημοσύνην λαβεῖν.

NASB

1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. 2 And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms.

NRSV

1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. 2 And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms.

NLT

1 Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. 2 As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple.

Notes:

These verses set the scene for the interaction between the lame man and the two apostles. At the heart of this are three core declarations: 1) *Peter and John were going up to the temple*; 2) *a certain name was being carried to it*; 3) *Peter spoke to the man*. For more details, see the [Block Diagram of the Greek text](#) in the larger internet version of this Bible study. The expansion elements of each of these three core statements flesh out the skeleton

thoughts.

First, *Peter and John were going up to the temple*. Luke sets up the episode as an isolated event rather detached from the preceding summary narrative in 2:43-47. Some early copies of Acts (i.e., the Western text) do attempt to link 3:1-10 with 2:47, but this was an attempt to smooth out the original sharp turn of thought that 3:1 introduces, and wasn't contained in the original version of the text. The earlier depic-

tion of the [literary setting](#) is an important background here. Our assumption is that this event took place sometime after the day of Pentecost. How soon after? We have no way of knowing. But sometime afterward, Peter and John met this unnamed lame man in the temple. The NRSV translation captures this well with its rendering “One day Peter and John were going up...”

How did this happen? And where did this happen? The two expansion elements along with the tense of the core verb provide clues to answering these questions. The Greek verb tense suggests that this praying activity was not an isolated event, but rather a regular pattern by these two disciples. The locational designation, “to the temple” (εἰς τὸ ἱερόν) defines their destination as the temple. This explains why Luke describes their movement as “going up” (ἀνέβαινον). In the mind of first century Jews, any one going toward the temple was going “up” and any one going away from the temple was going “down.” This had little or nothing to do with elevation. Instead, it was a theologically based expression, since God dwelled in the temple and any movement toward Him was going up and movement away was going down. So these two apostolic leaders were headed into the temple when they came across the lame man.

The purpose for their trip to the temple is stated in “at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon” (ἐπὶ τὴν ὥραν τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν ἐνάτην). The ninth hour of prayer was about mid-afternoon in our way of counting time, as the NRSV translation interprets in the second phrase above. What we notice here is that Peter and John are continuing the traditional pattern of Jewish piety that had its roots in intertestamental Judaism. Luke is careful to stress this aspect to his readers. C.K. Barrett (*International Critical Commentary* on Acts) provides helpful insight into this tradition:

Temple prayers may be intended by ταῖς προσευχαῖς in 2:42; here Peter and John are about to engage in public, not private, prayer. According to Pesch (137) the Temple is for Luke a place of prayer only, no longer of sacrifice; this however overlooks 21:26. The hours of prayer are discussed in detail in StrB 2:696–702; see for example T. Berakoth 3:6; [Berakoth 26 ab](#); for Christian borrowing of the three hours of prayer see [Didache 8:3](#); Tertullian, *Prayer* 25. There can be no doubt that prayer at the ninth hour, referred to in the present passage, was that which took its name from the offering of the

afternoon Tamid sacrifice (see Josephus, *Ant.* 14:65 for the hour of the sacrifice; Dan. 9:21; Judith 9:1 for transference to prayer), or Minhah. The corresponding morning offering provided another recognized time at which the people gathered in the Temple for prayer; the time of the third (see further Ps. 55:18; Sirach 50:13ff.) is not clear.

Interestingly, John is introduced with Peter in the narrative here, although John neither speaks nor does virtually any thing in the interaction with the

lame man. These two -- and only these two -- apostles are linked together in both this episode (3:1-4:37 -- 3:1,

4, 11: 4:1, 13, 19) and the trip to Samaria to investigate the new Christian community there ([Acts 8:4-25](#) -- 8:14, 17, 25). The reason for singling out John with Peter rather than any or all of the other apostles isn't clear. Given the latter ministries of the original Twelve, only Peter and John would have been well known in the northern and north eastern Mediterranean region. From early church tradition we know that the others had rather limited regional ministries in the south eastern Mediterranean region, mainly in Palestine. Again Barrett (*ICC*) gives an assessment of the ranges of perspective here:

Why should John be introduced? There is no hint (here, or in chs. 4 and 8) of an interest in the two as representative church leaders or ministers, as in Jn 21 (see *St John* 586f.; *Essays on John* 165–7); probably Luke wished to make it clear that from the beginning the church, represented by the Twelve, acted as a fellowship (ch. 5 expands the two into twelve), and of the names mentioned in 1:13 (with Matthias, 1:26) only Peter and John were known outside Palestine. This seems more probable than that Luke was showing that the requirement (Deut. 19:15) of two or three witnesses had been complied with. He refers frequently to witnesses (1:8; etc.), but never with the number two or three or an allusion to Deuteronomy.

Second, *a certain name was being carried to it.*

This core expression has a larger amount of expansion elements attached and thus fleshes out the situation in greater detail, since it focuses upon the need for miraculous action.

On the top side of the core expression is the indication of his physical condition: χαλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ ὑπάρχων (“lame from birth”). Since he had been born (lit.: “from the womb of his mother”) he had been χαλὸς (cholos). The significance of his condition evidently goes beyond just a description of the physical healing of this health problem, as is

Core Ideas in 3:1-3

- 1) *Peter and John were going up to the temple;*
- 2) *a certain name was being carried to it;*
- 3) *Peter spoke to the man.*

asserted in the *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* article on “Lame” by A.C. Meyers:

LAME, CRIPPLED A congenital or acquired condition that impedes walking. Lameness was among the physical defects that disqualified priests from serving in the tabernacle and temple of Israel (Lev. 21:18; the same restriction applied to sacrificial animals [Deut. 15:21; Mal. 1:8, 13]). In other ways lameness was a handicap that set apart those so afflicted from society in general. The crippled were regarded with contempt because they were considered unable to perform military or other functions (cf. 2 Sam. 5:6, 8; Ps. 35:15; Isa. 33:23). Jesus warned that it was better to risk lameness by cutting off an offending foot than to endure the hell of fire (Matt. 18:8 par.). Yet it was the lameness of Mephibosheth that gained his preservation at David’s court (2 Sam. 4:4; ch. 9). The righteous were expected to assist the lame (Job 29:15; Ezek. 34:4).

Prophetic eschatology cites the healing of the lame as one example of the restoration of Israel (e.g., Isa. 35:6; Ezek. 34:16). The lame are to be included in the eschatological ingathering of the people of God (Jer. 31:8; Mic. 4:6–7; Zeph. 3:19; cf. Luke 14:13, 21). The healings of the lame by Jesus (e.g., Matt. 15:30–31; 21:14) and leaders in the early Church (Acts 3:1–8; 4:7–10; 8:7; 14:8–10) were understood, in part, as representing the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises (cf. Matt. 11:5 par.). The Jews challenged Jesus’ healing of the lame at Bethzatha (Bethesda) as a violation of the Sabbath (John 5:3; KJV “halt”).

His condition was not temporary, but was permanent and had plagued him from his birth. He thus became totally dependent on others, even to carry him to the temple so that he could eke out a living through begging.

Following the core statement come two relative clauses that depict his horrible situation: 1) “whom they placed...” and 2) “who...began asking...” Both these descriptors emphasize his routine of begging. Friends daily brought him to the temple. They place him “at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate.” The map and previous discussion under [Internal History](#) explore the likely location of this. This location maximized the number of potential donors to him,

since it was a primary entrance into the part of the temple where male Jewish worshippers would pass through. Jewish tradition placed great emphasis upon “almsgiving” as an expression of devotion to God. Thus, as Luke describes, his objective was “to beg alms of those who were entering the temple.”

This generalized description is following by the particular event of encountering Peter and John. He saw them entering the temple along with others and sensed they might give him some money as alms. Thus “he began asking to receive alms” (ἤρῳτα ἐλεημοσύνην λαβεῖν).

Almsgiving (ἐλεημοσύνη) in the Bible has a high stamp of divine approval placed on it. The Greek word *eleemosune* (ἐλεημοσύνη) is derived from the Greek word *eleos* (ἔλεος), which means “mercy.” Jews were exhorted to show mercy in light of the mercy that God had shown them, as the article “Contributions” by Darrell Bock in the *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* highlights. Jesus continued that emphasis with strong emphasis in passages such as [Mt. 6:1-4](#) and [Mt. 25:31-46](#).

What can we learn from these first three verses? For one thing, our world of growing homelessness is not unique. People all around us are dependent upon others to help them survive in life, just like in the ancient Jewish world. Ancient Judaism placed tremendous importance upon taking care of Jews who were unable to care for themselves and who didn’t have family who could. This stands in strong contrast to the surrounding Greco-Roman society that did very little to help such people. The Romans more often either let such people die or just got rid of them, if no family was available or was willing to take care of them. Any society that moves away from compassion of the poor and outcast is itself moving into a poverty of spirit that will become the source of its eventual downfall. The beggar sitting at the entrance to God’s house reminds us that service to God means helping those in need. This we cannot and must not ignore.

b. The Action, vv. 4-7

Greek NT

<3:4> ἀτενίσας δὲ Πέτρος εἰς αὐτὸν σὺν τῷ Ἰωάννῃ εἶπεν, Βλέψον εἰς ἡμᾶς. <3:5> ὁ δὲ ἐπέιχεν αὐτοῖς προσδοκῶν τι παρ’ αὐτῶν λαβεῖν. <3:6> εἶπεν δὲ Πέτρος, Ἀργύριον καὶ χρυσίον

NASB

4 But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!" 5 And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6

NRSV

4 Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." 5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said,

NLT

4 Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!" 5 The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting a gift. 6 But Peter said, "I don't have

οὐχ ὑπάρχει μοι, ὃ δὲ ἔχω τοῦτό σοι δίδωμι· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου [ἔγειρε καὶ] περιπάτει. <3:7> καὶ πιάσας αὐτὸν τῆς δεξιᾶς χειρὸς ἤγειρεν αὐτόν· παραχρῆμα δὲ ἔστρερώθησαν αἱ βάσεις αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ σφυδρά,

But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene--walk!" 7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.

"I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.

any money for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" 7 Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and ankle-bones were healed and strengthened.

Notes:

This second part of the passage gives a rather detailed description of the miracle taking place. In comparison to [the individual miracles](#) described in the New Testament, this provides more detail than is typical. In contrast to the Greco-Roman miracle

workers neither Jesus nor Peter or Paul had a set way of "doing miracles." A [variety of actions](#) are described in the New Testament. Most often Jesus just gave a verbal command and the divine power manifested itself, like with the "Water into Wine" miracle in [John 2:1-10](#). The person in need didn't have to be present before Jesus for a miraculous action to occur, like [the centurion's son](#). Sometimes Jesus took a person by the hand and lifted them up, like [Peter's mother-in-law](#). Peter's action in our text follows this pattern of Jesus. Sometimes Jesus gave others instructions to do certain things and a miracle would occur, such as [the catch of fish](#) on the Sea of Galilee. Occasionally, Jesus would touch the body part of the individual with the problem, such as the [blind eyes of two men](#). All of this stands as testimony of the absolute power that the Father had entrusted to Jesus which he then used to help others. Jesus' actions did not depend upon magic or some secret words that possessed power within themselves.

The core expressions in vv. 4-7 stresses interaction between Peter and the lame man (See the [Block Diagram](#) of the Greek text for details): 1) *Peter spoke*; 2) *the lame man looked at Peter and John*; 3) *Peter spoke*; and 4) *Peter raised the man up*. Clearly the central person in these verses is Peter. The lame man is the object of Peter's speaking and action, but the man never speaks or does anything except look at Peter and John.

The details of the healing action are then devel-

oped off these core assertions.

1) *Peter spoke*. The first time Peter speaks to the lame man, it is to get his attention and to signal that something beyond a few coins of money are going to be given to the beggar. The beggar had

asked for money but Peter responded first by looking straight at him before speaking. The Greek text isn't real clear, but most likely John gazed at the beggar

along with Peter. Yet, Peter is the one who did the talking. In either case, this got the man's hopes up. Especially when Peter said to him, "Look at us!" 2) *The lame man looked at Peter and John*. The man responded in kind by giving them his undivided attention: "And he fixed his attention on them" (ὁ δὲ ἐπέιχεν αὐτοῖς). But his expectation was very different from what Peter had in mind: "expecting to receive something from them" (προσδοκῶν τι παρ' αὐτῶν λαβεῖν). In his mind was the idea that today was going to be a good day in collecting money from people, since few hardly ever stopped to speak to him as they passed by and dropped a coin or two in his basket. 3) *Peter spoke*. But his hopes were dashed when he heard Peter say, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk" (Ἄργύριον καὶ χρυσίον οὐχ ὑπάρχει μοι, ὃ δὲ ἔχω τοῦτό σοι δίδωμι· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου [ἔγειρε καὶ] περιπάτει).

The exact wording of the biblical text here is very uncertain. A considerable number of very early and important copies of the Greek NT (most importantly are mss B D cop^{sa} et als.) leave out the "rise up and" part of Peter's words. Fortunately, the meaning of Peter's words remain essentially the same in either instance of the possible original wording of the

Core Ideas of 3:4-7

- 1) *Peter spoke*;
- 2) *The lame man looked at Peter and John*;
- 3) *Peter spoke*;
- 4) *Peter raised the man up*.

text.

Peter first says that he has no money (=silver and gold). This may be proof that they were “Baptists”! That is, three decades ago it might have been so understood, but hardly any more. The point of Peter’s initial statement is to affirm that money was not in abundant supply for this itinerant disciple of Jesus. C. K. Barrett (*ICC*) reminds us that “Luke presents the apostles as poor men. Cf. 2:44f.; 4:32, 34f.; the Christians shared their goods and did not consider that money belonged to them personally.” One should resist the interpretative tradition of seeing in this statement the Roman Catholic vow of poverty for the priesthood. The passage does not provide a basis for such a stance.

Next Peter reflects the posture of first century Christians of being willing to share whatever they possessed: “but what I have I give you” (ὃ δὲ ἔχω τοῦτό σοι δίδωμι). The generosity of apostolic Christianity is asserted by Luke in [his summary narratives](#) in 2:42-47; 4:32-35; 5:12-16. Peter’s statement mirrors that generous spirit of sharing. What Peter has to share is far more valuable than a few coins of money in almsgiving.

The climatic part of Peter’s words to the lame beggar is his command of healing: “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk” (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου [ἔγειρε καὶ] περιπάτει). Unlike Jesus who in his verbal commands in healing simply gave the command “to walk”, Peter couches the command in the name of Jesus.

Some interpreters over the years have mistakenly seen this as a magical formula for miracle working. Once more C.K. Barrett (*ICC*) has a helpful summation of this phrase and its literary context:

A word of command addressed by the healer to the sick person is found in many miracle stories; in miracles performed by Christians there is a natural invocation of the name of Jesus. Cf. e.g. *Acta Petri et Andreae* 18 (L.-B. 2:1:125), ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐσταυρωμένου καλέω σοι κάμελε ἵνα εἰσέλθῃς διὰ τῆς ῥαφίδος ταύτης. This is the first of a number of references in chs. 3 and 4 to the *name* of Jesus (3:6, 16; 4:10, 12, 17, 18, 30; cf. 4:7). The significance of the use of this word must be viewed in the light of all the references; here it must suffice to note in a preliminary way that the evidence does not support the view that *name* is used in Acts as a magical formula (see Additional Note XI by Silva New in *Begs*. 5:121–40). So still, however, Schille, 125: ‘Die Meinung ist magisch-volkstümlich.’ This view does not do justice

to Luke’s position. H. Bietenhard, after mentioning the present miracle and the exorcism of 16:18 refers to 9:34 and concludes, ‘Von dieser Stelle aus gesehen, wird D 8 geradezu als *praesentia Christi* gefasst werden müssen’ (*TWNT* 5:277). H. D. Betz (155) questions this conclusion, but acknowledges that 19:13ff., where mere invocation of the name has an effect very different from that which its users hope for, shows a belief that Jesus is exalted above all magical compulsion. In fact Acts 3 and 19 are both among Luke’s great anti-magical passages. To say this is not to say that no early Christians ever understood the name of Jesus to have magical significance and power; it is very probable that some did so understand it. Luke however did not share their view, and in Acts 3 and 4, as well as elsewhere, he does his best to combat it. So rightly Weiser (109): ‘Damit ist weder eine magische Wirksamkeit noch eine Art Namenszauber gemeint... Die Namensformel drückt aus, dass Jesus Christus es ist, der heilt.’ The point was rightly seen by Calvin (94): ‘... *name* is taken for authority and power. We must not dream that there is any magic virtue in the sound of the word.’ Cf. however Justin, *Trypho* 85:κατὰ γὰρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ...πᾶν δαιμόνιον ἐξορκιζόμενον νικᾶται καὶ ὑποτάσσεται.

[God’s name](#) is the same as God, and invoking that name is calling upon God to take action. For early Christians the name of Jesus equals the name of God. Peter stands under the calling and authority of Jesus. To be sure, that name can be viewed magically as some itinerant Jewish

exorcists in Ephesus attempted to use after observing Paul’s authorization to heal in the name of Jesus ([Acts. 19:11-20](#)). But they soon discovered to their dismay that Jesus’ name didn’t work as a magical power. Jesus even warned that some would try to use his name in such a manner ([Mt. 7:21-23](#)):

“21 Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, *and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?*’ 23 Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.’”

Peter’s word of command is for the lame man to begin walking. This was the decisive moment. Would the man accept this command? Would the name of Jesus possess the power to enable him to walk?

Peter, as he spoke, took the man’s right hand, thus making contact with him physically. Such physical contact in a moment of miraculous healing is

The lame beggar shows us that our God cares and can heal those in desperate need of His presence and power.

rather typical in the New Testament. Its significance is primarily a demonstration of confidence in divine power to overcome the danger of physical contact with an individual deemed “untouchable” by Jewish law. To see magical transfer of power through the contact is to misunderstand what is happening.

What relevancy does this part of the miracle narrative have to Christians today? Some in the Pentecostal tradition see a one-to-one connection. True preachers of the gospel have been anointed by God to miraculously heal the sick as a part of their ministry. Others, especially those in the older Scofield Bible tradition, contend that such power to work miracles was limited to the apostolic age of the first century and was terminated with the death of the last of the original Twelve Apostles. Neither of these views does justice to either this text or the others

touching on miracles in the Bible; for details see [the early appendix](#) on the history of miracles. To focus on the miracle worker here is to miss the point of the biblical text. Peter, as miracle worker, is not the point. Instead, the point is the demonstration of God’s wonderful power to overcome a life long crippling health issue in the life of a poor beggar. In this we come face to face with the reality that God really does care for everyone, and especially for those that most people have written off as undeserving of their time and attention. Also, we are reminded again that the power of our God is unlimited. No health issue presents too great a problem for Him to solve. In this we are challenged as God’s people to follow our God’s example of caring and bringing such people to God for his care.

c. The Impact, vv. 8-10

Greek NT

‹3:8› καὶ ἐξαλλόμενος ἔστη καὶ περιεπάτει καὶ εἰσῆλθεν σὺν αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ ἱερόν περιπατῶν καὶ ἀλλόμενος καὶ αἰνῶν τὸν θεόν. ‹3:9› καὶ εἶδεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸν περιπατοῦντα καὶ αἰνοῦντα τὸν θεόν· ‹3:10› ἐπεγίνωσκον δὲ αὐτὸν ὅτι αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ πρὸς τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην καθημένος ἐπὶ τῇ Ὠραία Πύλῃ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν θάμβους καὶ ἐκστάσεως ἐπὶ τῷ συμβεβηκότι αὐτῷ

NASB

8 With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God; 10 and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

NRSV

8 Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 All the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

NLT

8 He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them. 9 All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God. 10 When they realized he was the lame beggar they had seen so often at the Beautiful Gate, they were absolutely astounded!

Notes:

Here we see the impact of the miracle, first upon the beggar and then upon the bystanders. The NASB captures the tone of the Greek expression more graphically, “with a leap, he stood up.” His immediate reaction was to enter the inner court of the temple that he, up to now, had been forbidden to do and burst out praising God in excited joy. His jumping around certainly attracted attention as a proof of his healing. The beggar focused his praise correctly: not on Peter, but on God who did the healing.

All this caught the attention of many worshippers in this Jewish male only inner court of the temple; see [earlier map](#) for location. They knew about him from his regular pattern of begging. To their amazement he was now inside the temple as a healed man.

The following pericope, 3:11-26, will further describe the crowd’s reaction and while standing in Solomon’s Portico Peter’s seizing the opportunity to explain how Jesus had healed this man. The exact location of this is unclear since ancient copies of the text have it either inside or outside the Beautiful Gate, reflecting uncertainty of location going all the way back to the third century AD.

What a marvelous account! A man’s life is changed by God. This gives an opportunity for testimony to Jesus as God’s Son. People stand amazed by the power of God demonstrated in undeniable fashion. We see again the loving care and unlimited power of our God in action. May we never lose sight of this!

Greek NT

<3:1> Πέτρος δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννης ἀνέβαινον εἰς τὸ ἱερόν ἐπὶ τὴν ὥραν τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν ἐνάτην. <3:2> καὶ τις ἀνὴρ χωλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ ὑπάρχων ἐβαστάζετο, ὃν ἐτίθουν καθ' ἡμέραν πρὸς τὴν θύραν τοῦ ἱεροῦ τὴν λεγομένην Ὠραίαν τοῦ αἰτεῖν ἐλεημοσύνην παρὰ τῶν εἰσπορευομένων εἰς τὸ ἱερόν. <3:3> ὃς ἰδὼν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην μέλλοντας εἰσιέναι εἰς τὸ ἱερόν, ἠρώτα ἐλεημοσύνην λαβεῖν.

<3:4> ἀτενίσας δὲ Πέτρος εἰς αὐτὸν σὺν τῷ Ἰωάννῃ εἶπεν, Βλέψον εἰς ἡμᾶς. <3:5> ὁ δὲ ἐπεῖχεν αὐτοῖς προσδοκῶν τι παρ' αὐτῶν λαβεῖν. <3:6> εἶπεν δὲ Πέτρος, Ἄργύριον καὶ χρυσίον οὐχ ὑπάρχει μοι, ὃ δὲ ἔχω τοῦτό σοι δίδωμι· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου [ἔγειρε καὶ] περιπάτει. <3:7> καὶ πιάσας αὐτὸν τῆς δεξιᾶς χειρὸς ἤγειρεν αὐτόν· παραχρῆμα δὲ ἐστερεώθησαν αἱ βάσεις αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ σφυδρά,

<3:8> καὶ ἐξαλλόμενος ἔστη καὶ περιπάτει καὶ εἰσῆλθεν σὺν αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ ἱερόν περιπατῶν καὶ ἀλλόμενος καὶ αἰνῶν τὸν θεόν. <3:9> καὶ εἶδεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸν περιπατοῦντα καὶ αἰνοῦντα τὸν θεόν· <3:10> ἐπεγίνωσκον δὲ αὐτὸν ὅτι αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ πρὸς τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην καθημένος ἐπὶ τῇ Ὠραίᾳ Πύλῃ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν θάμβους καὶ ἐκστάσεως ἐπὶ τῷ συμβεβηκότι αὐτῷ.

NASB

1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer. 2 And a man who had been lame from his mother's womb was being carried along, whom they used to set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, in order to beg alms of those who were entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking to receive alms.

4 But Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze on him and said, "Look at us!" 5 And he began to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene--walk!" 7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened.

8 With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God; 10 and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

NRSV

1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. 2 And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms.

4 Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." 5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.

8 Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 All the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

NLT

1 Peter and John went to the Temple one afternoon to take part in the three o'clock prayer service. 2 As they approached the Temple, a man lame from birth was being carried in. Each day he was put beside the Temple gate, the one called the Beautiful Gate, so he could beg from the people going into the Temple.

3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for some money. 4 Peter and John looked at him intently, and Peter said, "Look at us!" 5 The lame man looked at them eagerly, expecting a gift. 6 But Peter said, "I don't have any money for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" 7 Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man's feet and anklebones were healed and strengthened.

8 He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them. 9 All the people saw him walking and heard him praising God. 10 When they realized he was the lame beggar they had seen so often at the Beautiful Gate, they were absolutely astounded!

Greek NT Diagram

3:1 δὲ
1 Πέτρος καὶ Ἰωάννης ἀνέβαινον
εἰς τὸ ἱερόν
ἐπὶ τὴν ὥραν τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν ἐνάτην.

3:2 καὶ
2 τὸν ἀπὸ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ
καὶ ἄρχων
τις ἀνὴρ... ἐβαστάζετο,
ὃν ἐτίθουν
καθ' ἡμέραν
πρὸς τὴν θύραν τοῦ ἱεροῦ
τὴν λεγομένην Ὠραίαν
τοῦ αἰτεῖν ἐλεημοσύνην
παρὰ τῶν εἰσπορευομένων
εἰς τὸ ἱερόν·

3:3 ὃς ἰδὼν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην... ἠρώτα ἐλεημοσύνην λαβεῖν.
μέλλοντας εἰσιέναι
εἰς τὸ ἱερόν,

3:4 δὲ
3 α Πέτρος... εἶπεν,
ἀτενίσας
εἰς αὐτὸν
σὺν τῷ Ἰωάννῃ
Βλέπον εἰς ἡμᾶς.

3:5 δὲ
4 ὁ ἐπεῖχεν αὐτοῖς
προσδοκῶν τι παρ' αὐτῶν λαβεῖν.

3:6 δὲ
5 β εἶπεν Πέτρος,
Ἄργύριον καὶ χρυσίον οὐχ ὑπάρχει μοι,
δὲ
γ ὃ ἔχω τοῦτό σοι δίδωμι·
ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου
δ [ἐγειρε
καὶ]
ε περιπάτει.

3:7 καὶ
6 πιάσας αὐτὸν τῆς δεξιᾶς χειρὸς
ἤγειρεν αὐτόν·
δὲ
7 παρακρῆμα ἐστερεώθησαν αἱ βάσεις αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ σφυδρά,
3:8 καὶ
8 ἐξαλλόμενος
καὶ
9 περιεπάτει
καὶ

10 εἰσῆλθεν
σὺν αὐτοῖς
εἰς τὸ ἱερόν
περιπατῶν
καὶ
ἀλλόμενος
καὶ
αἰνῶν τὸν θεόν.

3:9 καὶ
11 εἶδεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸν
περιπατοῦντα
καὶ
αἰνοῦντα τὸν θεόν·

3:10 δὲ
12 ἐπεγίνωσκον αὐτὸν
πρὸς τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην
ὅτι αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ...καθήμενος
ἐπὶ τῇ Ὠραίᾳ Πύλῃ τοῦ ἱεροῦ
καὶ
13 ἐπλήσθησαν θάμβους
καὶ
ἐκστάσεως
ἐπὶ τῷ συμβεβηκότι αὐτῷ.