

THE REST OF THE STORY

Studies in the Book of Acts

***“We will move the world not by criticism of it, nor conformity to it –
but by combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God”***

Vance Havner

Text

Acts 3:11-26

Topic

Peter indicts the nation of Israel of killing their Messiah in ignorance. Then he encourages them that when they repent He will return and establish the promised kingdom on earth

Title

The Ignorant Miss the Bliss

Acts 3:11 Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.

Acts 3:12 So when Peter saw *it*, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

Acts 3:13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go.

Acts 3:14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

Acts 3:15 and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

Acts 3:16 And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Acts 3:17 "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers.

Acts 3:18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

Acts 3:20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

Acts 3:21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

Acts 3:22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN. HIM YOU SHALL HEAR IN ALL THINGS, WHATEVER HE SAYS TO YOU.

Acts 3:23 AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERY SOUL WHO WILL NOT HEAR THAT PROPHET SHALL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE.'

Acts 3:24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.

Acts 3:25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.'

Acts 3:26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one *of you* from your iniquities."

Introduction

If the items on the menu were things like Gefilite [geh-FILL-the] Fish, Kiskes [KISH-kess], Potato Latkes [laht-kuh], and Salmon Lox, you'd know you were in a Jewish deli or restaurant.

Our text in Acts uses terms like **times of refreshing** and **the times of restoration**. It uses names like **Servant** and the **Holy One and Just**.

It reads like a Jewish theological menu! The terms describe the promised kingdom of God on the earth. The names are Old Testament titles of the Jewish Messiah.

Peter told the nation of Israel that Jesus was their long-awaited Messiah. He came offering to establish the kingdom of God on earth. He did not establish the kingdom because they had Him killed. Since they did it in **ignorance**, God was still offering them the kingdom. When Israel repents, when there is national repentance, their Messiah, Jesus Christ, will be sent to them to rule and reign on the earth.

We want to keep the Jewish context of Peter's sermon in mind as we seek to discover its application for us as Christians living in the Church Age between the first and second comings of Jesus. We'll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 Your Walk Indicts

Ignorant Men and Women, and #2 God's Word Invites Ignorant Men And Women.

#1 Your Walk Indicts Ignorant Men And Women (v11-16)

Peter and John had just been used by God to bring a remarkable healing to a lame beggar who sat daily asking alms at the eastern gate of the Jewish Temple. You are specifically told that he leaped. The Jews who gathered around Peter, John and the formerly lame beggar would have thought of this verse from Isaiah:

Isaiah 35:6 Then the lame shall **leap** like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.

It was one of the many references to conditions that will prevail on the earth when the Messiah establishes His kingdom. The lame man leaping was a token to the Jews that their Messiah had come to rule the earth from Jerusalem in fulfillment of many promises and prophecies from their Scriptures.

Peter would explain to them that the establishing of the kingdom was being delayed because they had killed their king.

Acts 3:11 Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.

He **held on to Peter and John**, but not for support. He was fully healed. He was clinging to them the way a child holds his father or mother in a crowd. It's a picture for us of childlike faith, and of his starting over (even at forty-years old) as a spiritual baby.

Solomon's porch was a covered portico running the entire length of the eastern portion of the Temple's outer court. It was a great outdoor location for a large assembly.

Acts 3:12 So when Peter saw *it*, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

Men of Israel should not marvel that God was in their midst doing supernatural works. Their history was teeming with the supernatural. The supernatural ought to be expected.

Peter turns their attention away from he and John so he can direct them to Jesus. All effective ministry depends upon self-denial so people can see Jesus.

Acts 3:13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go.

Acts 3:14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,

Acts 3:15 and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

Peter used decidedly Jewish references that had specific meaning to his audience. He called God the **God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers**. He was referring them to the revelation of God in their Scriptures. He then used five technical terms which all described their promised Messiah:

1. The term **Servant** meant more to the Jews than it does to us. It was a descriptive name of their Messiah given to Him by the prophets in passages like Isaiah fifty-two through fifty-three.
2. **Jesus** means *the Lord saves*. Here it reminds the Jews of the oft repeated promise of a Deliverer.
3. **Holy One** was a title used of their Messiah in Psalm 16:10 and Isaiah 31:1
4. **The Just** (or **Righteous**) is a description of their Messiah in Zechariah 9:9 and Isaiah 53:11.
5. In verse eighteen Peter will use another official title by calling Jesus **the Christ**, meaning *anointed One*.
6. In verse twenty-two, the word **Prophet** is used as another title for their Messiah.

When they **delivered up** Jesus to be crucified, they killed their Messiah.

To further emphasize his point, Peter said they released a **murderer** and rejected the **Prince of life**. **Prince** means *author* and *originator*.

You remember the story. Pilate wanted to both spare Jesus and appease the crowd by releasing one prisoner. He picked the worst guy he could find, Barabbas. The crowd chose to release the **murderer** instead of the One who was the **Prince of life**.

This reads like a legal indictment accusing of a crime. Peter indicted Israel as a nation with the crime of having their Messiah killed.

There was hope for them still. God had **raised [Jesus] from the dead**. The apostles and disciples were witnesses of the resurrection. So was this miracle:

Acts 3:16 And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

There was nothing magical about the **name** of Jesus. When Peter referred to His **name**, and **faith in His name**, the Jews would understand that he meant Jesus was still alive. You could have faith in a risen, living Lord Who was able to heal.

Peter indicted them. The walking, leaping lame man proved his indictment. Before we move on, let's make application to ourselves.

Your walk can indict those who are ignorant of Jesus! You were a lame man or woman, unable to approach God, until Jesus healed you spiritually by saving you for eternity. You should be leaping with joy unspeakable and full of glory. There should be things about your life that are downright supernatural. Unbelievers should 'see' you leaping about, spiritually speaking. Drawn to you, they can be told about the Lord.

#2 God's Word Invites Ignorant Men And Women (v17-26)

If you look ahead, into the fourth verse of chapter four, you see that **many** in this crowd believed. Either **five-thousand** more were added to the already large Church, or the total number of men in the Church totaled **five-thousand** after these conversions.

It was not too late to believe! Despite their heinous crime, God was reaching out to save them.

Acts 3:17 "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers.

The sense of the word **ignorance** is that they were spiritually blind to the truth. There is a reference to this kind of ignorance in Ephesians 4:18. Paul described unbelievers as,

Ephesians 4:18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

Ignorance is not an excuse! It's a condition you are in before you get saved. God uses conscience, creation, and then His Word to open the eyes of your heart to the truth of your sin and need for a Savior. When confronted with Jesus, you must choose to remain ignorant or to receive the truth.

Acts 3:18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

The Jews ignored the verses that described the Messiah as suffering, even dying. Thus they didn't expect their Deliverer to be anything at all like Jesus. Peter was proving to them from the Word that Jesus was their Messiah. His suffering perfectly fulfilled the many prophetic passages. (Psalm twenty-two comes to mind).

You've just had your Messiah killed. Centuries of expectation by your ancestors has been defeated by your generation. But the Messiah rose from the dead and is alive. He's still working, doing miracles. What can you do?

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

Acts 3:20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

Acts 3:21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

The **times of refreshing** and the **times of restoration of all things** are technical terms referring to the spiritual and physical conditions during the kingdom of God on earth. *The kingdom was still coming!* God would **send Jesus Christ** a second time to establish it.

The kingdom is a real, literal, physical rule of Jesus over the earth from a throne in Jerusalem. We're not in it now; it is not merely a spiritual state we achieve; we will not establish it for the Lord. It will be set-up when Jesus returns from Heaven in His Second Coming to earth. We expect it to last one-thousand years because we are told it will in chapter twenty of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

God has spoken [of these things] **by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.** God made unconditional promises to Abraham and David about their physical descendants that must be literally fulfilled. God is not through with Israel as a nation. Israel remains the key to Bible prophecy.

Taking a survey of the entire Bible, this is what we expect will occur:

1. Since Israel continued to reject Jesus nationally, the kingdom on earth has been delayed. In the mean time the Lord is building His Church as men and women of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and are born-again.
2. The Church Age will end when a trumpet sounds in the heavens and the believers who have died during the Church Age are raised from the dead and brought to Heaven.
3. When the dead in Christ are raised, the believers who are alive on the earth will be Raptured. They will be immediately changed into their glorified bodies and caught-away to Heaven.
4. God will turn His attention to fulfilling His promises to the nation of Israel. A seven-year tribulation on the earth will prepare the Jews to look upon Jesus as their Messiah when He returns at its end.
5. Jesus returns in His Second Coming and He establishes the promised kingdom on the earth for one-thousand years. We return with Him to help Him rule.
6. After the thousand-years are ended, the Lord will put-down one final rebellion of unbelievers against Him.

7. Then He will create a new heaven and a new earth where we will live in bliss forever and ever.

While waiting for God's prophetic plan to unfold, all men and women (not just Jews) are commanded to **repent and be converted that [their] sins may be blotted out.** God's Word is being preached to ignorant men and women in order to open the eyes of their hearts that they might receive the Lord and be saved for eternity.

Acts 3:22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN. HIM YOU SHALL HEAR IN ALL THINGS, WHATEVER HE SAYS TO YOU.

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Peter's arguments and appeals were all based on the Word of God. It's a good model and method to follow.

The sermon ends as it began – on a decidedly Jewish note. The nation of Israel is extremely important in the scheme of Bible prophecy. God, Who cannot lie, will accomplish for Israel everything He has promised.

The ignorant will miss the bliss of eternal life. Their ignorance is overcome by exposure to the Word of God.

You and I have the Word of God to share. **The only thing missing is the leaping!** As I suggested earlier, it's spiritual. It is leaping for joy in our spirits because of who Jesus is and because of what He has done.

You were lame; why not leap? Get with the Lord and ask Him to restore unto you the joy of your salvation.