

E. The growth of the church despite opposition from the religious leaders

Acts 3.1-4.37.Pt1

Prologue: 1.1-2 on the unity of Acts with Luke

I. What Jesus continued to do and teach in Jerusalem (through the apostles)

- A. 1.3-11, Jesus' teaching in the time between His resurrection and ascension
- B. 1.12-26, Adding Matthias to the eleven apostles
- C. 2.1-36: The coming of the Spirit, the gift of tongues, and Peter's explanation
- D. 2.37-47: The expansion of the church from 120 to thousands
- E. 3.1-4.37: The growth of the church despite opposition from the religious leaders

E. 3.1-4.37: The growth of the church despite opposition from the religious leaders

- 1. The miracle that set the stage for this opposition, 3.1-11
- 2. Peter's explanation that sparked this opposition, 3.12-26
- 3. The unfolding of this opposition
 - a. Arrested one day, 4.1-4
 - b. Arraigned before the Council the next day, 4.5-22
- 4. The church's response to this opposition, 4.23-27

1. The miracle that set the stage for this opposition, 3.1-11

Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.² 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.³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms.⁴ And Peter directed his gaze 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 and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise 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 And leaping up he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God,¹⁰ 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.¹¹ While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's.

Why can we say that the miracle itself is something secondary?

It is not unimportant or trivial but it is secondary in the narrative to Peter's explanation of what occurred to the crowds amazed by it. That it takes place at the entry to the temple **in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth** presents it as part of the larger challenge to old temple worship that is coming now by the apostle-representatives of Jesus.

2. Peter's explanation that sparked this opposition, 3.12-26

- a. The one you killed, the Author of life, made this man strong, 3.12-16

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?"¹³ 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.¹⁴ But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,¹⁵ and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.¹⁶ 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.

How does the miracle itself serve the preaching of the gospel by the apostles?

To be sure, it is proof that confirms their message, but it is more; like the miracles of the Gospels, the miracle focused attention on the content of the gospel by fleshing out what is promise to sinners from birth that experience the effects of the fall on their entire existence body and soul. The faith that is through Jesus gave the man restoration from the effects of the fall: Jesus gave the man perfect health for this is what Jesus is in the process of continuing to do and teach based on the efficacy of His accomplishment on earth.