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Peter Heals a Lame Beggar

3: 1-10

31-33 AD

The events of Acts 3-8 transpire with mounting concern on the part of the Jews, and especially the Jewish authorities in Yerushalayim. The rising tension resulted in vigilante action taken against Stephen, and then an authorized effort under Rabbi Sha'ul to disrupt and destroy that new Messianic movement, involving persecution and even death of the believers. The persecution led various believers such as Philip to go to Samaria and bear witness of Yeshua.

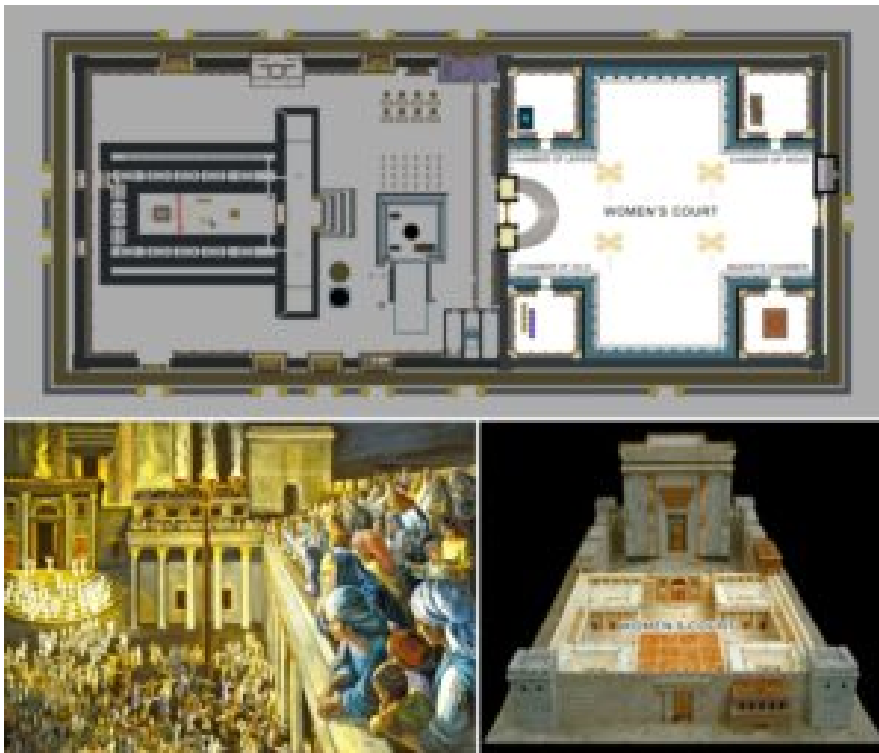
Peter heals a lame beggar DIG: As the lame man, what would you write as a diary entry for a typical day? When Peter grabs your hand, what thoughts flood your mind? What do you write in your diary after the events here? What was the purpose of miracles at that time (see 2:19 and 22). What happened to this gift after all the apostles had passed away?

REFLECT: Since ADONAI still heals today, why doesn't He heal everyone in need? Can we demand that God heal us or a loved one that we know? If that were true, who would be God? Are we not healed because of our lack of faith or God's sovereign will? Many times people who have a loved one died blame God? Why would a loving God take my child? My wife? My husband? My best friend? Who is responsible for all the misery and heart ache in the world (John 10:10)? How can you comfort yourself or others?

The main theme in Acts Chapters 3-5 is the way in which the witness of the first believers brought themselves into conflict with the Jewish leaders, who continually attempted to put a stop to their preaching. Two such incidents are recorded in 3:1 to 4:31 and 5:17-42, which are separated by an account of the Messianic community and how it dealt with its first internal problem in 4:32-5:16. On each occasion the power of **the apostles** to perform **miracles** led an attempt by **the Sanhedrin** to stop **them**.⁶²

As was **their** custom, **Peter and John went up together to the Temple one afternoon at three o'clock, the hour of the afternoon** (Hebrew: *minchah*) **prayers**. The believers

were still attached to **the Temple** and to the traditional **hour of prayer (Psalm 55:17; Dani'el 6:10; Acts 10:30)**, which followed the afternoon sacrifice. This did not compromise **their** new faith in **Yeshua** in any way. The word **went up** (Greek: *anebainon*) indicates *continuous action*; **they were continually going up to the Temple to pray**. **Luke** mentions both **Peter** and **John**, but while **John** played a major role in the gospels, **he** plays no major role in the book of **Acts**. If **John** is mentioned at all, it is always in conjunction with someone else. The key figures in **Acts** are **Peter** and **Paul** and others are brought into the story only as they relate to these two **men**. Earlier **Luke** told us that **many signs and wonders were happening through the apostles (2:43)**, and here we are going to see what one of those **signs and wonders** were. In addition, we learned that **day-by-day they continued with one mind, spending time at the Temple (2:46a)**. **Peter and John went to the Temple at the ninth hour** (three o'clock in the afternoon and the time of the evening sacrifice), **the hour of prayer (3:1)**.⁶³



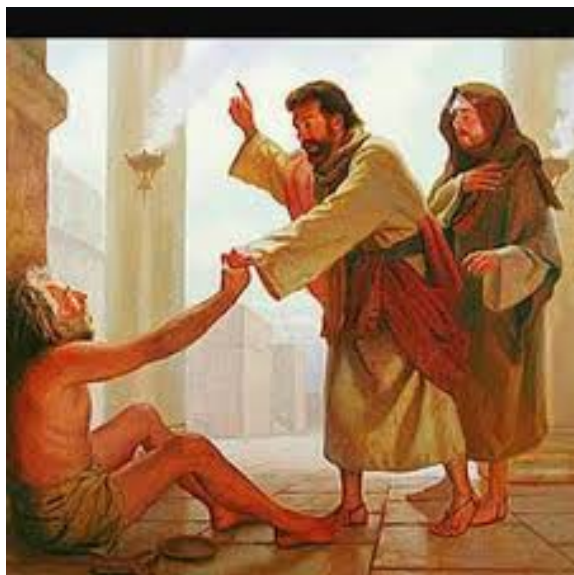
At that time **they** had a unique meeting with a **lame man** who **they** had seen many times before. **And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the Beautiful Gate to ask alms from those who entered the Temple (3:2)**. **The rabbis teach that there three pillars of Judaism, the Torah, worship and the showing of kindness, or charity. Almsgiving was one of the main ways to show kindness and is thus considered a major expression of one's devotion to God.** With

their minds set on worship, those who entered the Temple for the **afternoon prayers** would be particularly disposed to practice their piety by generously giving **alms** to **the lame beggar**.⁶⁴ **The Beautiful Gate** was located inside the wall of partition that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of the Women. For **the lame man** it was a very strategic **gate** because it was the entrance to the court of the Women. This inner area of **the Temple** compound was open to both men and women. It was the common place for worship for everyone, functioning to a certain extent, as **a Temple** synagogue in the open air. It was a large area that covered 70.87 by 70.87 meters, 5,023 square meters, or 16,475 square feet.⁶⁵



And along the same wall as the Nicanor Gate there were positioned 13 **chests** (**shopharoth**) for **offerings** called **the Treasury**. **These chests were called shophars in the Talmud because they were narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom, and therefore each looked like a trumpet.** Each was specifically marked. Eight of them were the receipt of what was legally due by worshipers, the other five, however, were strictly for voluntary gifts. **He** was there for **the hour of prayer** so that there would be a lot of traffic through **the gate**. Therefore, all those tithing had to walk right past this **lame beggar** with money in their hands.

When **he** saw **Peter and John about to go into the Temple he** made the request that **he** had made countless times before and stretched out **his** hand **asking them for alms. And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something more than normal from them. But** since the believers had pooled their resources (**2:44-45**), **the two apostles** had no money to **give**, but money was not what **lame beggar** needed most. **He** needed salvation for **his** soul and healing for **his** body. Money could provide neither.



So, Peter said: Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk (Greek: *peripatei*, meaning *begin to walk and keep on walking*). **The beggar**, however, didn't move. **He** had never walked in **his** whole life. **He** didn't know how to **walk**. **So Peter** decided to take matters into **his** own hands and **he took him by the stretched out right hand and lifted him up**.

And immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength (3:4-7). The genuine gift of **healing**, in contrast to the alleged "healings" of today, resulted in **immediate** cures. Our **Lord's healings** were instantaneous (**Matthew 8:13; Mark 5:29; Luke 5:13, 17:14; John 5:9**), there was no gradual process involved. Scripture knows nothing of "progressive healings." **The beggar** did not need to be "taught" how to walk. **He** received **his** coordination and balance instantly. **God still heals today in response to the prayers of His children, when consistent with His will** (to see a short testimony about **healing** from Joni Eareckson-Tada click [here](#)). Not every believer at that time had the power to do **miracles**. Contrary to the teaching of many today, the Messianic community was not a miracle-working community. Rather, it was a Messianic community with miracle-working **apostles**.⁶⁶

So, he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the Court of the Women with them (3:8). This was an outstanding fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy: **Then the lame will leap like a deer (Isaiah 35:6)**. Before, as **the lame beggar**, **he sat at the Beautiful Gate**. Day after day **he sat** there at the threshold to the place of worship unable to go in. **He was lame**, blemished, and denied access to the inner courts (**Lev 21:17-20; 2 Sam 5:8**). Now, **he** had not only received physical **healing**, but spiritual acceptance as well. For

the first time **he** was deemed worthy to enter **the House of Worship**. This theme will be repeated in the book of **Acts**. Those who were rejected as unworthy for worship under the Dispensation of Torah, would find full acceptance in the name of the risen **Lord**, whether a **lame beggar**, an **Ethiopian eunuch**, a **woman**, or a **Gentile**.⁶⁷

He was walking, leaping, and praising God. Like a child with a new toy, **he** could not resist using **his** new-found ability. **His** joy knew no bounds. **He** had never done this before. **And all the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he, the lame man, who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement as they began to fully realize what had happened to him (3:9-10)**. The sight of **the once lame man walking and praising God** was proof to **all the people** that **he** had been truly **healed**. **He** was such a well-known figure after **his** years of **begging** that there could be no doubt about **his** identity and therefore about the reality of **his healing**.⁶⁸ As a result, the word spread rapidly in **the Temple Compound** and **a crowd** gathered.

Had **Peter** not performed the miracle of **healing the lame man**, **he** would have had little or no audience. At Shavu'ot the Church was born. A new era had come (see the commentary on **Hebrews**, **to see link click Bp - The Dispensation of Grace**), and **YHVH** gave miraculous abilities to **His apostles** to help **them** proclaim **their** message. According to the Scriptures, those who possessed the miraculous gifts could use them *at will*. Contemporary "healers," for example, do not **heal** at will. They are forced to dodge the difficulty by saying, "It's not my doing, it's **the Lord's**." Thus **God** - or the person seeking **healing** - is blamed for their repeated failures. If they could really **heal**, why aren't they clearing out hospital wings?

There is an obvious attempt by **Luke** to parallel the **miracles** of **Peter** and **Paul** in the book of Acts. For example, both **heal** people, both raise the dead, both exhibit supernatural knowledge, both being miraculously released from prison, both perform punitive **miracles**, and the like. This does not happen by accident, for **Luke** wishes to present **Peter** and **Paul** as being on a rather equal plane in terms of **their** authority and power, and thus in terms of witness and success of **their** respective ministries.⁶⁹

A Closer Look at Miracles in Acts: In fact, we can see that the same six characteristics of the **miracles** and **healing** done by **Messiah** also characterize **the apostles' healing**. **They healed** with a word or a touch (**9:32-35, 28:8**), **they healed** instantly (**3:2-8**), **they healed** totally (**9:34**), **they were able to heal** anyone (**5:12-16, 28:9**), **they healed** organic disease from birth (**3:2-8, 28:8**) and **they raised the dead**. In **9:36-42** we learn that

Peter brought **Dorcus (Tabitha)** back to life. Note especially **verse 42: This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.** Again we see a miracle giving credence and impact to the gospel message. In **20:9-12** a young man named **Eutychus** died in a fall; however, **Paul** brought him back to life. Do you know of any person who claims to have the gift of **healing** raise anyone from the dead lately? I didn't think so. Despite all the claims being made today, no one is exhibiting those six traits in any **healing** ministry.

Most biblical **miracles** performed *by men* happened in three relatively brief periods of Bible history: in the days of Moses and Joshua, during the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, and in the time of **Messiah** and **the apostles** (a fourth period of **miracles** yet to come is described in the book of **Revelation**). None of these periods lasted much more than a hundred years. Each of them saw a proliferation of **miracles** unheard of in other eras. Even during those three time periods, however, **miracles** were not exactly happening every day. **The miracles** that happened involved men who were extraordinary messengers from **God**.

Aside from those three periods of time **God, Himself**, continued to perform **sign miracles** in isolated events, because that is **His** nature. In the days of **Isaiah**, for example, **ADONAI** supernaturally defeated the Sennacherib's army (see the commentary on **Isaiah Gw - Then the Angel of the LORD Put To Death a Hundred and Eighty Five Thousand Men in the Assyrian Camp**), then **He healed** Hezekiah and turned the sun's shadows back (see the commentary on **Isaiah Gy - Hezekiah Became Ill and Was at the Point of Death**). In the days of **Dani'el**, **God** preserved **Hananiah, Azariah** and **Mishael** in the fiery furnace (**Dani'el 3:20-26**). But once again, **God**, and not men, performed those **miracles**.

A look into the TaNaKh reveals that aside from those already mentioned - Moses, Joshua, Elijah and Elisha - the only person who routinely performed supernatural feats was Samson. As miracle workers go, Samson was an exception in almost every category. He taught no great truth; in fact, he was neither a preacher nor a teacher. He was unfaithful and immoral. His only role seems to have been the preservation of Isra'el, and his power was given to him specifically for that task. No one else in recorded history displayed physical power like his.

Of course **YHVH** can interject **Himself** into the stream of history supernaturally any time **He** wants. But **the LORD** chose to limit **Himself** primarily to these three periods of biblical **miracles**, with very rare supernatural displays in between. The rest of the time **God** directs the course of human events to fulfill the purposes that **He** has in mind.

At least **three characteristics** of **miracles** in Scripture help us understand why **ADONAI** has worked the way **He** has. **First, miracles introduced new eras of revelation.** All three

periods of **miracles** were in times when **God** had **His** revelation written in substantial quantities. Those doing the **miracles** were essentially the same ones heralding a new era of revelation. Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible. Elijah and Elisha introduced the prophetic age. And **the apostles** wrote nearly all of the B'rit Chadashah.

Second, miracles authenticated the messengers of revelation. All **the miracles** served an important purpose. **They** were not simply divine exhibitionism; they substantiated and authenticated the prophets' claim that they spoke for **Ha'Shem**. For example, Moses' **miracles** confirmed first to Pharaoh, and then to the Israelites, that he spoke for **God**. Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, and **Messiah** and **the apostles** all had the ability to do frequent **signs and wonders**. These were designed to convince people that **YHVH** was with these men and that **He** was speaking through them.

Third, miracles called attention to new revelation. **ADONAI** used **miracles** to get the attention of the people to whom the message was directed so that they would know for sure it was **the** divine **LORD** speaking. Then **He** was able to tell them what to do. Therefore, **miracles** have an instructive purpose that goes beyond the immediate effect of the miracle itself. For example, the **miracles** Moses did in Egypt were meant to enlighten both the Israelites and the Egyptians. The **miracles** of Elijah and Elisha were also effective in convincing both believers and unbelievers that what those men spoke was the word (Greek: *rhema*, meaning the spoken word) of **God (First Kings 18:16-39)**. In the New Covenant, **miracles** and **signs** were again used to confirm believers and convince unbelievers. That is the theme of the gospel of **John**, which was written so **that you may believe that Yeshua is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name (John 20:31)**. The **miracles** and **signs** of **Jesus** were recorded so that unbelieving people might believe. The same was true of **the apostles** (see [At - Ananias and Sapphira Lie to the Ruach](#)). When the TaNaKh and the B'rit Chadashah were completed, **God's** revelation was finished (see the commentary on [Hebrews Ai - The Superiority of Messiah to the Prophets](#)). Through many **signs, wonders, and miracles, God** authenticated **His** book.

The gift of **healing** was one of the miraculous **sign** gifts given to help the messianic Community confirm the authority of the gospel message in the early years of the Church. Once the Word of **God** was complete with the book of **Revelation** in about 95 or 96 AD, the **signs** ceased. They were no longer needed. **The apostles** used **healing** only as a powerful **sign** to convince people of the validity of the gospel message.

In **Philippians 2:25-27** Paul mentioned his good friend Ephpropditus, who had been very sick. Paul had previously displayed the gift of **healing**. Why didn't Paul simply **heal** his

friend? Because Paul refused to pervert the gift by using it for his own ends. That would have been beyond the purpose of the gift of **healing**. The gift was not given to keep believers healthy. It was a **sign** to unbelievers to convince them that the gospel was divine truth. We find a similar case in **Second Timothy 4:20**, where Paul mentioned that he had left Trophimus sick at Miletus. Why should Paul leave one of his good friends sick? Why didn't he **heal** him? Once again, because that was not the purpose of the gift of **healing** (also see **1 Timothy 5:23** and **2 Cor 12:7b**).

Healing was a miraculous **sign** gift to be used for special purposes. It was not intended as a permanent way to keep believers in perfect health. Yet today most charismatics teach that **God** wants every believer to be healthy. If that is true, why does **Ha'Shem** allow believers to get sick in the first place?

In a world where believers are subject to the consequences of sin, why should we assume that suffering is excluded? If every believer were well and healthy, if perfect health were a guaranteed benefit of salvation, millions of people would be stampeding to the saved - but for the wrong reason. **God** wants people to come to **Him** in repentance for sin, and for **His** glory, not because they see **Him** as a panacea for their physical ills.⁷⁰

Yes, **God** still **heals** today. But **He** **heals** according to **His** own sovereign will and in **His** own timing. Sometimes we can't figure out why **He** allows believers to get sick or even die at what seems to us to be an untimely death. That's where **faith** comes in. We have to **trust** that **ADONAI** loves us and **for now we see only a reflection as in a mirror**. But eventually **we will see God face to face** and then everything will be made clear to us. **Now we know in part; then we shall know fully (First Corinthians 13:12)**.