

## **THE LAME MAN HEALED.**

– *JAN. 24. – ACTS 3:1-16.* –

**"His name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong."**

THE stirring scenes of the Day of Pentecost were past, and this lesson introduces us to another notable discourse by the Apostle Peter, delivered probably not long after the day of Pentecost in company with the Apostle John. They had gone up to the temple at the hour of prayer. The clear intimation is that the apostles were praying men and that under the leading of the holy spirit they were guided in their ministrations of the truths connected with the new dispensation to the praying Jews, "devout" people, rather than to the godless. And so it is with the true gospel ever since. There is a message or a call to repentance which is [R2095 : page 26] applicable to every member of the human family; but the special message of the gospel is not to the unregenerate, but to the repentant, to the forgiven, to the reconciled. The Jews who assembled to worship the Lord at the temple were of course not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore were not justified by faith in his blood, but, under their Jewish covenant, the Law covenant, and by means of its typical sacrifices, they were up to this time typically justified as a people, and the grace of God was offered to them from that standpoint: they were not treated as strangers, aliens, foreigners, but as heirs of all the divine promises and blessings. And as a people the Jews continued to occupy this position for three and one-half years after our Lord's crucifixion and their national rejection. The Lord's favor according to promise continued with them individually until the full end of their "seventy weeks."\*

\*See *MILLENNIAL DAWN*, [Vol. II., Chap. 3.](#)

(2,3) At that time hospitals, homes for incurables, blind asylums, poor houses, etc., apparently were not thought of, and were not instituted as we have them to-day in civilized lands; nor are they yet institutions in the East. Thus public alms-giving was probably considered a duty. We might here remark that, in our judgment, the course adopted by civilized nations of taxing all property and wealth for the reasonable and comfortable support of the incapables of society is eminently proper, and should be so completely carried out as to make public begging unnecessary.

(4-7) Peter's statement would indicate that he at least was a very poor man. "Silver and gold have I *none*." Although he said, "Look on *us*," thus directing the cripple's attention to the Apostle John as well as to himself; yet, speaking of their financial condition, he does not say, "Silver and gold have *we* none." The fact is that there is good ground for supposing that the Apostle John had some property. We remember that our Lord with his dying words commended his mother to the care of John – possibly not merely because of his love for John and John's love for him, but also because John had some means wherewith to care for Mary. We remember furthermore that the account states that John took Mary "into his *own* home." – John 19:27.

The Apostle Peter seems to have exercised his individual gift in the healing of the cripple – "Such as I have give I thee:" nevertheless, it was not in his own name that the miracle was performed, but properly all credit was given to the Lord Jesus. This was evidently not a case of "prayer cure," for we have no record that the Apostles prayed over the man, nor that they anointed him with oil in the name of the Lord. It was on the contrary an exercise of "the *gift* of healing," which was then with the Church for the purpose of introducing the apostles and the gospel which they preached.

Although fully conscious of the power of God operating through him to perform the miracle, Peter, apparently to assist the exercise of faith on the part of the cripple, stretched forth his hand and helped him

to his feet; thus illustrating the propriety of acting according to our faith, and permitting the influence of our faith to reach others in a natural and helpful manner.

(8-10) It is very evident that the poor cripple was not an impostor, for such a one instead of leaping about and enjoying his blessing, and praising God, would have regretted any circumstance which would deprive him of the opportunity for preying upon the sympathies of the people in order to avoid working for a living.

(11,12) We may reasonably suppose that the going of Peter at this particular time to the temple was of premeditation; we may suppose that he had been there frequently before; and that frequently before he as well as the others who attended at the temple had seen this same cripple. If Peter did not plan this particular visit and healing, we may reasonably suppose that the holy spirit planned and directed it for him. At all events the whole matter was very successful in that it drew the attention of the most devout, prayerful Jews to the gospel of Christ. The Apostle Peter was quick to use any and every opportunity to tell the good tidings. He began by modestly assuring the people that it was nothing wonderful in John and himself that had produced the miracle, and that the man was not cured either by their holiness or by their power, but by the power of the risen Christ Jesus. It is worthy of note that although in addressing the man Peter exercised his own faith only, yet now in speaking of the matter he associates John with himself as a sharer in whatever honor might belong to them as the instruments of God. How unselfish and how beautiful! What a lesson is in this verse for all who attempt any service for the King of kings. How necessary that we should realize not only our own insufficiency and nothingness in connection with the work of God, but how proper that self should sink entirely out of our thoughts and the glory all be given to Him whose right it is.

(13-15) The apostles' discourse as narrated was a short one, but well directed and right to the point. Beginning with a statement by which his hearers would understand him to be also a devout Israelite,

he proceeded directly to the point – Christ, a crucified and risen Savior. Nor did he spare his hearers, but drove home the truth that the nation of Israel were the real crucifiers of God's dear Son, even when a Roman governor found no fault in him and desired to set him at liberty. [R2095 : page 27]

"Ye killed the Prince of life!" What a thought! They all realized themselves as death-condemned and dying creatures. They felt their need of life, eternal life, and had been praying for it and hoping that according to the divine promise it should come through Messiah, a Savior – a Life-giver, and now they were almost staggered by the Apostle's words, "Ye killed the Prince of Life" – the Life-giver! It is presumed that our Lord and the Apostles spoke in the Syriac language; and in the Syriac version of the New Testament the word "Life-giver" is used where in the English the word "Savior" occurs. The Apostle must have struck a very tender chord in the hopes and aspirations of these devout, prayerful Jews. We fancy them looking with incredulity, and saying within themselves, "Could it be possible that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah, the Life-giver?"

(16) While they were yet wondering on the subject, the inspired Apostle quickly drew their attention to the evidences before them in the healing of the cripple, which attested the truth of his declaration that Jesus was no longer dead but risen. Here was just such a miracle as those which he a few months before had performed in their midst. It was another of Jesus' miracles; the apostles themselves performing it in his name and utterly disclaiming any ability to do such things themselves.

(17-21) Thus pointing them to the fact that Jesus was still a living, powerful, sympathetic and gracious Savior, he urged them to repent, assuring them that it [R2096 : page 27] was God's intention to send great blessings through Jesus and to send Jesus himself back again a second time: assuring them also that at his second coming there would

be an abundance of such manifestations as these which they had just witnessed, saying, –

"Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you whom the heavens must receive [retain] until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began."

Note that the Apostle began by expressing confidence in the "fathers" and in Israel's hope, built upon Jehovah's promise to them. Note also that after connecting those promises and hopes with Christ and his sacrifice, and linking it with the cure of the cripple, he points them down to the Millennial age as the grand consummation-time for all the blessings, all the good things, which God had promised by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. Is it any wonder that such testimony – both reasonable and comprehensible – delivered to such devout Israelites, drawn together by a desire to worship the Lord, resulted as it did, in the conversion of about five thousand? As in the case of those noted in our last lesson, these were the "wheat" of that Jewish age, which the Lord was gathering out preparatory to the blinding of all the remainder of that people for the period of the Gospel age, at the close of which their blindness will be turned away. – Rom. 11:25,26.

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