

feet and ankle bones

Acts 3:1 – 26

~ In our previous report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God, we considered the formation and birth of the church; and we learned why the Day of Pentecost was a day that can never be repeated – just as the events in Bethlehem when Jesus was born can never be repeated. The day before Pentecost, there was no church; the day after Pentecost, there was a church. The Holy Spirit has manifest Himself in the world in this section of Scripture, and God has filled those who will accept and trust the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior with His Spirit. The Spirit of God fills us with love, power and blesses us for service. That is the all-important line in history at the time in which we are studying. Today, the Holy Spirit is in the world, convicting the world and restraining evil – and indwelling us as believers, bringing us spiritual discernment when we seek His will....

1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

~ The ninth hour would be the hour the high priest entered the temple to pray. Of course, we learned in Matthew that Zechariahs wasn't really the high priest, but he did go up and serve at the golden altar at this time. The golden altar of incense speaks of prayer. That means, at this time, there would have been a large group of people in the temple area praying. Well, here comes a man who was born in a terrible condition. It wasn't a beautiful man that was placed by the gate called Beautiful. The "Beautiful gate" was a work of man, and a man who was marred was brought to it. Man can make beautiful things, but man cannot improve himself. Of course, a man can trim his hair, take a bath and wear a five-thousand-dollar

suit, but he can never expel his old nature! What a contrast. Begging for help was how this man made a living....

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

~ It is quite a revelation to witness Peter and John going to the temple AFTER the Day of Pentecost. They're going to pray. They're not leading a lamb or bull there, though - and this crowd is one hundred percent Israelites. More accurately, they are proselytes; all continuing to go to the temple in prayer. Well, this poor crippled man certainly thought the apostles could give him something. When Peter and John instructed him to look upon them, he definitely believed he would be receiving something.

An early saint in Rome walked into the church accounting office one day where the Pope was counting donations. When the saint saw he had intruded upon something obviously private, he turned to walk back out. The Pope said, "... no longer can the church say, 'silver and gold I have none.'" The saint, without even blinking, said, "... yes, but no longer can the church say to an impotent man, 'arise and walk!'"

Today, the church has wealth beyond imagination. If you combined the church holdings regarding properties and assets of all denominations and non-denominations across the globe it would far surpass the wealth of all major corporations combined. The problem is the church today has become utterly impotent at reaching a lost and dying world with an effective Gospel message....

7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

~ Remember, this is Luke writing the book of Acts - and when Luke wrote, we received details not discoverable elsewhere. Luke is specific about what happened. I suppose there were no muscle tissues or nerves left in the ankle region after all of these years. Don't miss the word "leaping" - it occurred two times in the same verse; and we're going to find something quite remarkable in this chapter about leaping: Peter is going to offer the kingdom to the nation again; because, at this time, the church is one hundred percent Jewish. There are NO outsiders in this group whatsoever. The church began at Jerusalem, as Jesus had told them to, and is now to go to the ends of the earth. What we are studying in this section of Scripture is the Jerusalem period and NOT another dispensation. We have too many modern hyper-dispensationalists running around making outrageous claims. This is the transitional period from the age of law to the age of grace. The early church didn't begin at the ends of the earth.

Alright, the nation Israel is going to be given the opportunity to receive the kingdom again at this time in which we are studying. This will be their final opportunity. We are told the mark of the kingdom establishing opportunity will be that the lame shall leap! These people thought this was that - which was a fair assumption! In Isaiah we find in conjunction with this account the desert will blossom as the rose.

Isaiah 35:6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart ~

It was a miracle when the man leaped - and every instructed Israelite in the temple marveled as they understood it could be the beginning of the kingdom. All they needed was the Messiah Who had been crucified and ascended into Heaven - but - if they would have received Him, then He would have come at that time. In the past several weeks, the Jews had seen the crucifixion of Jesus, the resurrection, His ascension and the Day of Pentecost. The learned Jew was amazed at what was happening. However, I'm afraid most of them, as with most students of Scripture today, simply

haven't caught the significance of the record we have in front of us at this time....

10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

~ In this marvelous sermon, Peter is speaking to "ye men of Israel" – not ye men of America, not ye men of Africa - and not ye men of wherever else. This is the Jerusalem period of this historical record, and I cannot stress the time specificity enough. The church is going to move out, but it hasn't moved out yet at the time in which we are studying. No one in Rome had heard a single word of the Gospel at this time. America doesn't exist yet; and England was still totally in the darkness of heathen paganism.

I wish people reading the Bible would bring to it the same common sense they use when reading other literature. The far-out assumptions and baseless conclusions made in God's Word is appalling to me; and it should be to you, too. Candidly, the church has literally everything they practice turned absolutely backwards today. Peter is directing these men back to the Old Testament in verse twelve. They were all well acquainted with Zechariah chapter twelve verse ten:

Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn ~

Israel was in total rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ and had no intention of repenting at this time. The prophecy had not – and has STILL not – been fulfilled because that can only happen at the second Advent of Christ. Peter is telling them the kingdom would come at THIS time IF they would turn to Him and accept Him. They didn't.

Ezekiel 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them ~

Isaiah 12:1 And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. 2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. 3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. 4 And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. 5 Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. 6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee ~

Isaiah 35:10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away ~

These prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel speak of the worship IN THAT DAY during the time in the future when the millennial kingdom is here on earth. The people present at the time in which we are studying should have seen, in this simplistic and plain man, they were beholding a miniature for the entire nation - if they would only have turned to God....

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

~ Neither Simon Peter nor Paul the apostle will ever preach a sermon without the mention of the resurrection. Today, unfortunately, we rarely hear a sermon that DOES mention the resurrection – and usually only once each year at Easter time! The man who leaped represented what they will do in the kingdom! The only question is: do you really want the Messiah to return? Do you truly desire to receive Him? ~

16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins ~

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

~ The question remains: IF they had accepted Jesus would He have returned to the earth at this time? – The answer is yes because Peter says He would have returned. So, what would the program of God be after that? Well, I am going to let you know something, and I hope you won't tell

anyone else: I have no idea what His program would be if this had happened at this time! Bear in mind; however, that neither does anyone else – except God Himself! Let's forget these "iffy" questions; because what I DO know is this: they didn't believe, and it DIDN'T happen at this time. That's the only satisfactory answer to iffy questions. The wildest speculation in the world won't even get you close to a correct answer....

21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

~ This brings us to the verse that is used by those who believe everyone will ultimately be saved and go to Heaven. "All things" just happens to be "all things spoken of by the prophets." That is, all things which are the subject of restitution! Paul said, "... I have suffered the loss of all things." Paul didn't mean all things in God's universe; Paul meant all the things he had to lose he had lost. What we are talking about are all things that are to be restored; and Scripture makes it abundantly clear that not all things will be restored....

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

~ Our safari concludes this report with Israel on the verge of tremendous judgment; and in 70 AD, Titus the Roman will be coming along and literally level Jerusalem. Over one million perished and the rest were sold into slavery throughout the Roman Empire. Judgment is coming friends! These people are being given one final opportunity to accept the Messiah.

This has been a relatively dry report, but we're in a transitional period that is absolutely critical to correctly understand. When Paul makes it onto the scene as the apostle to the Gentiles, this will all change. No longer will the Messiah come based on the belief of this nation. They will have had their opportunity to turn to Christ and they will have turned away. Whatever would have happened is all speculation, as we have said. They didn't turn to God at this time; but, even so, this all works out according to the plan and purpose of God – Who is never surprised by what man does.

God's plan and purposes are never frustrated by mankind's rebellion and sin, either. God is sovereign and all things work out in connection with the plans and purposes that He has established according to His will. We considered that in the Book of Ruth; and now we see it again. We can expect it to be true in our own lives and in the time we live in, also. We're going to see some outstanding truths of prophecy as we move along now and, in our next report, we will see the results of the second sermon Simon Peter gave ~
