

# Acts

## Bible Study

### Looking to the Kingdom

#### Acts 3:1—10

John the Baptist had begun preaching that the Kingdom was at hand (Luke 16:16). He also prepared the way for Jesus, who continued with this preaching (Matthew 3:1—3; 4:17). Jesus sent out the Disciples with the same message, that the Kingdom was at hand (Matthew 10:5—8), and will be ready to enter at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Luke 21:27—31).

As the Disciples are talking with Jesus Christ, just before He ascends into heaven, they understood that these things that Jesus taught were all connected to the nearness of the Kingdom. This is why they asked Jesus Christ if the Kingdom was ready to be set up just before He ascended (Acts 1:6). They were, in effect, asking when He was going to come back. Their whole focus had been on the coming Kingdom, and now they were excited to see things progressing quick toward that end. Along with this eager anticipation, they were given many signs that indicated the nearness of the Kingdom.

#### **Lame man healed** (verses 1—10)

All through the Gospels, and into the early part of Acts, we see the coming of the Kingdom proclaimed, along with display of many miraculous signs. These signs were significant because Israel was trained to look for signs to know God's will. This goes back to Israel coming out of Egypt, and the Lord giving 10 signs to Pharaoh proving the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was superior to all of the gods of Egypt (Exodus 7:3; 10:2; Deuteronomy 26:8). Because of the events in Egypt, Israel would look for sign as proof of a message from God (Acts 2:22; John 4:48; 1 Corinthians 1:22; Matthew 12:38; 16:1; John 2:18; 6:30).

Israel had been given innumerable signs while Jesus was walking among them. God continued to show signs through Peter and the 11 Disciples, showing that they were continuing Jesus' ministry. The supernatural demonstrations were so powerful and startling that even the believing Hebrew church stood in awe and fear (Acts 2:43).

This healing of the lame man gave Israel a foretaste of the soon to come Millennial Kingdom. Those going into the Kingdom will not go in crippled or possessed. They will be made whole physically, as well as spiritually. According to Isaiah 35, God will come with vengeance, and then He will come and save them (verse 4). Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, the deaf will be made to hear, the lame man will leap as a deer and the dumb will sing (verses 5—6)(see also Isaiah 29:17—21).

The lame man's healing is a direct fulfillment of the promises made in Isaiah 35 concerning Israel's future. Just as the events surrounding the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 was related to prophecy in Joel, healings were also done in fulfillment of prophecy. Notice that when the man was healed that he leaped up because his feet and ankle bones received strength. He experienced complete healing, which allowed him to immediately jump up and walk. Not only was he given the immediate strength in his limbs, but he was also given the motor skills to balance himself and walk. He did not need to go through weeks of rehabilitation to teach him to use his rejuvenated legs.

When John the Baptist was in prison, he began to doubt that Jesus was the promised Messiah of Israel. He sent his men out to ask Jesus if He was the One who was to come, the One whom they were waiting for. Jesus did not answer them directly, but instead had them follow Him as He healed the people. John's men went back to report that Jesus caused the blind to receive their sight, the lame to walk, the lepers to be cleansed the deaf to hear, the dead raised from the dead and the gospel of the Kingdom preached. This was all John needed to know as proof that Jesus was the Christ (the Messiah). They were able to

connect Isaiah 35 with what Jesus was doing and know for sure that He was the One Israel was waiting for (Matthew 11:2—5).

All the miracles performed by Jesus were also a foretaste of the coming Kingdom. He was the One who would save and heal Israel and He was proving this with every miracle. According to Matthew 15:30—31, Jesus healed all those who came to Him. The dumb were made to speak, the maimed were made whole, the lame were made to walk and the blind were made to see. Again, this was a fulfillment of Isaiah 35. Notice that the maimed were made whole. These were people who had lost limbs. Jesus was able to regenerate their missing limbs, completely unlike so-called faith healers of today. He was proving that He had the power to give them what was promised to Israel when the Millennial Kingdom will be set up.

This account of the poor, lame beggar suddenly being made whole and shown leaping and praising God, is actually a picture of Israel going into the Millennial Kingdom. Israel will have gone from being poor and destitute spiritually (Matthew 5:3) and physically, to a completely healed nation as they go into the Kingdom to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Jeremiah 30:17; 33:6—8; Isaiah 30:26).

### **Healing today?**

This biblical account runs completely contrary to what charismatics teach and do today. If someone today is not healed, then the blame rests on that person for not having enough faith to be healed. This is so absolutely contrary to what Scripture teaches. Even the faith of a mustard seed is enough to move a mountain (Matthew 17:20). What most usually confuse is the difference between having faith and the object of that faith. The Disciples were able to perform great miracles (Acts 5:12; 6:8) because they had faith in Jesus Christ, not because they could muster up enough faith of their own. It is not about how much faith they had, but about in whom they had put their faith. This misconception is often used today by Charismatics to explain why a miracle did not happen.

Another justification used by Charismatics to explain why a healing did not happen immediately is that the healing did happen, but that it may take many days, weeks or months to experience a full healing. This certainly is not the biblical model of healing. They may use such verses as Mark 8:22—25 or Mark 9:28—29 to show a progression in healing, but these actually show healing done instantaneously, not slowly.

Does God heal miraculously? Yes, I believe He does. We have probably all heard or seen people who were healed to the surprise of doctors. Does God work through “faith healers,” people with the Spiritual gift of healing? No, these gifts have passed away and are no longer manifested in this Dispensation of Grace (1 Corinthians 13:8—10). Should we expect to be healed? No, we are not given the promise of healing, we are given the promise of peace (Philippians 4:6). Many people unfortunately become disillusioned when they take Scripture belonging to Israel and apply it to themselves. If it is not addressed to us, then we can’t claim them for ourselves. The gift of healing played a very special part in announcing the coming Millennial Kingdom, but does not apply to us in the Church, the Body of Christ.

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