

*One day at three o'clock in the afternoon, a customary time for daily prayer, Peter and John walked to the temple. <sup>2</sup> Some people were carrying in a man who had been paralyzed since birth. Every day they brought him to a place near the beautiful gate (one of the temple entrances) so he could beg for money from people entering to worship. <sup>3</sup> He saw Peter and John coming and asked them for a contribution. <sup>4</sup> Peter gazed intensely at him—so did John.*

**Peter:** *Look at us. <sup>5</sup> The man looked up at them, assuming they were about to give him some money. <sup>6</sup> I want to give you something, but I don't have any silver or gold. Here's what I can offer you: stand up and walk in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the Anointed One.*

*<sup>7</sup> Then Peter took the man's right hand and lifted him to his feet. Instantly the man's feet and ankles grew strong. <sup>8</sup> He jumped and walked, accompanying Peter and John into the temple where he walked, jumped for joy, and shouted praises to God. <sup>9-11</sup> A crowd ran to the commotion, and they gathered around this man in an open area called Solomon's Porch. There he was, standing on his own two feet, holding on to Peter and John. They knew exactly who he was—the beggar they passed at the beautiful gate every day. Everyone was absolutely amazed at this wonderful miracle; they were speechless, stunned.*

**Peter (to the crowd):** *<sup>12</sup> Why are you so amazed, my fellow Israelites? Why are you staring at my friend and me as though we did this miracle through our own power or made this fellow walk by our own holiness? <sup>13</sup> We didn't do this—God did! The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob—the God of our ancestors has glorified Jesus, God's servant—the same Jesus whom you betrayed and rejected in front of Pilate, even though Pilate was going to release Him. <sup>14</sup> He is the Holy and Righteous One, but you rejected Him and asked for a murderer to be released to you instead. <sup>15</sup> You not only rejected Him, but you killed Him—the very Author of life! But God raised Jesus from the dead, whom my friend John and I have seen with our own eyes. <sup>16</sup> So that's how this miracle happened: we have faith in the name of Jesus, and He is the power that made this man strong—this man who is known to all of you. It is faith in Jesus that has given this man his complete health here today, in front of all of you.*

## THE MIRACLE AT THE GATE

The focus now shifts from the Church to those outside of the Church, the ones who Christ died for. Those who are helpless without His saving Grace and who have no power to overcome the destruction of the enemy served upon their lives. It's as though the Holy Spirit is emphasizing what Luke wrote at the beginning of Acts. His coming is to enable the Disciples to continue what Jesus began to do and teach.

It's interesting that the Disciples were continuing to visit and pray in the Temple as Luke states elsewhere. This central place where the Spirit had descended continued to be, as it was before, a place of importance to the new Church Community. Even though we see the shift described between chapters 2 and 3, there is still the underlying emphasis that the priority for the Disciples was Prayer and Worship. We see this again emphasized in Acts chapter 6

#### THE SITUATION UNFOLDS

1. It was about the 9<sup>th</sup> hour – or about 3 o'clock in the afternoon.
2. The man, brought by his friends to the Temple was not, like others headed to the pool of Bethesda for healing, but was there to collect money. Here we have an important detail, as we shall see later. How many people attend the place of miracles but have no expectation of God moving.
3. He was lame from birth. It's interesting that several of the words used in this passage are very precise medical words. For example, when Luke is talking about feet and ankles, he uses two words that are medical terms which are only used here in the Bible. They're words which describe deformity of the feet and the ankles, something akin to having club feet. When he talks about the man leaping to his feet, he uses a term that describes the bones moving back into their rightful place.
4. We know that he was a Jew because he was beyond the Court of the Gentiles in the Court of the women, an area only Jews could enter.
5. There is no doubt that Jesus passed by him numerous times, is it possible that he did not receive healing from Jesus because his focus was elsewhere – on money?
6. Peter and John, as was their usual practice, were at the Temple to Worship & Pray

#### THE LESSON IN THE MIRACLE

As we noted previously, there is a focus shift away from the new Church community to those outside. Particularly in focus is the lame beggar, handicapped from birth, dressed in his rags and sitting in the Temple. It's a simple picture of Israel and her "teachers," the Priests, Pharisees and Sadducees who, though fearlessly committed to studying the Word of God had little understanding of God's true Character, His Love, His Faithfulness and His Mercy. These "teachers" were strong and unforgiving on the letter of the Law but blind when it came to all else. As a result, believers were growing up "handicapped from birth," indoctrinated with a warped understanding of God and His willingness to shower benefits (**Psalm 68:19, Psalm 103:2-5**) upon His people. Jesus called them "*blind leaders of the blind*" **Mat 15:14**, or we might say handicapped leaders of the handicapped.

Israel, in effect, was handicapped from birth by these teachers who dismissed the Goodness of God. Here was the man, in the Temple, the place of God's Presence, yet he was without hope and locked in pain and poverty.

Many today are locked up in such prisons, without a clear understanding of God's Mercy, His Love, His benefits and His promises. Sadly, Pharisees still exist, pedaling their legalistic teachings and leaving believers with nothing but clever intellectual reasoning about why God doesn't heal today. Those who listen are handicapped - many from birth, yet they sit in the place where His Glory abides. Only a breaking in of the Holy Spirit's power can release them. Rightly did William Booth proclaim, "We need another Pentecost, Send the Fire."

This miracle describes one such moment of liberation

#### THE MIRACLE UNFOLDS

1. Peter addressed him boldly – "Look at us!" The man responded, having an expectation of receiving some money. Peter continued, *"you think we are going to give you money, because that's your expectation, but we don't have any, but what we do have – the power and authority Jesus shared with us, this new powerful anointing of the Holy Spirit that was just visited upon us – we're going to share that with you. In the Name of Jesus, get up and walk!"*
2. Peter grabs the overwhelmed beggar and pulls him to his feet and immediately "his ankle bones fell into place". The beggar jumped and danced and screamed Praise to God. What he wanted he didn't receive, what he needed he received at the hands of the Disciples. The word "leaping" is the same Greek word used in **Isaiah 35:6** in the Greek version of the OT. *Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah. Isaiah 35:6* The river of God was breaking out in the Temple, it was flowing and creating miracles!
3. As a Jewish believer, the man had promises, but remained lame. The faith of the Disciples and the Name of Jesus connected Him to the goodness of God. *And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer." Ex 15:26 But for you who fear My name [with awe-filled reverence] the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go forward and leap [joyfully] like calves [released] from the stall. Mal 4:2*

4. The gift of healing was a sign! *And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. Acts 2:43* The Greek word used for **sign** is *semeion*, which means: "a mark, an indication or a token." A sign points the way; it draws attention to a destination. It is an unmistakable "in your face" confrontation that requires you to make a decision. The goodness of God confronted the people in the Temple that day, something that demanded their attention arrested them. That is why we need miracles. This is the ministry of Jesus, being continued. Paul says *"do you have no regard for the wealth of His kindness and tolerance and patience. Are you unaware or ignorant that God's kindness leads you to repentance **Romans 2:4***
5. Peter addresses the crowd that is drawn by the man's screaming and dancing and tells them, *"It is faith in Jesus that has given this man his complete health here today, in front of all of you."* There is POWER in the NAME of Jesus ..... to break every chain!
6. There is a lesson here for the Church. Miracles are God's gift, particularly to those who don't know Him or who lack understanding of His Mercy and Kindness. Millions are without hope, blind, lame and depressed. We must tell them, "look at us" we don't have what you're looking for, in fact, you don't need what you're looking for, you need what we have. **In the Name of Jesus** ..... This is who the Church is – those who have been called to bring in the Kingdom, with power and demonstration of the Spirit. *"Jesus Christ **IS** the same – yesterday, **TODAY** and forever" Heb 13:8*