

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Acts 3:11-21

Verses 11-16

While he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them at Solomon's Porch. When Peter saw them he addressed the people, "Israelite men, why are you amazed at this? Why do you stare at us [as though] by our own power or piety we have made him walk? The God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, glorified his servant Jesus whom you handed over and disowned in the presence of Pilate who had decided to release him. But you disowned the Holy and Righteous one and asked for a murderer to be released to you. You killed the author of life whom God raised from the dead, of whom we are witnesses. By faith in his name, this man whom you see and know, it is his name that made him strong and on the basis of faith in him [Jesus] gave to him this complete restoration in the presence of all of you.

The person healed was the paraplegic, crippled from birth and carried daily to the Beautiful Gate, in the temple (2). This was an astonishing miracle and the people could not understand it; they were **utterly astounded**. An act of mercy became the catalyst for a powerful **address by Peter**. They were assembled at **the porch or colonnade called Solomon**.

The reference to **Israelite men** probably occurred because they were in the court of the men and because it set the scene for a later reference to Israel's origin in the **God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**. The apostle Peter, spokesman for the fledgling Christian community in Jerusalem, starts his address with the reaction of the on-lookers. He clearly stated that the miracle did not occur because of their **power**, referring to John, or their **piety**. Then, he abruptly turned to the fact that the God of Israel **glorified his servant Jesus**. He was, of course, referring to Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Glorification implies two things: Jesus is alive at the present time and two, God would not glorify an imposter. Jesus had been condemned as a blasphemer by the Sanhedrin because of his claim to be God's Son. Here, Peter identified him as God's **glorified servant**, the true agent of God's last things, that is, the resurrection and judgement. The Father had reversed the judgement of men.

The connection to the restored cripple is not yet clear. Peter pressed on with the guilt that they all bore as people who acquiesced to Jesus' crucifixion and their prior rejection of Christ. He accused them of **handing him over and disowning or denying** God's glorified servant whom the governor, **Pilate, had decided to release**. These facts have been clearly recorded in the gospels. A second time Peter accused them of **disowning** the one he now calls, **Holy and Righteous**. Holy, is the cultic term for righteous. One refers to cultic perfection and the other to perfection under the law. Peter was building on Jesus' identity: **glorified, true servant, holy and righteous**; someone who is beyond a mere mortal. Finally, Peter came right out with it: Jesus is **the author of life**. This is a beautiful expression and it clearly states that Jesus is equal to God because he is the Creator. The universe exists only because of him. A terrible condemnation hung over those responsible for **killing** this being. The author of life was killed by the creatures he lovingly made. However, Peter stated: **God raised him from the dead**. And Peter and John were **witnesses** of this resurrection.

The proof for those who had gathered that Jesus was indeed God's servant, holy and righteous, the author of life and now glorified, is the man restored before their very eyes. Peter made it very clear that it was not a special power they were exercising but first of all **faith in the name** of Jesus. **The name** became a short-hand way of referring to the followers of the way (11:26). The disciples were Christ-ians, those who bore the name. Now, the cripple had been healed by his faith in the name of Jesus (6). The Risen Jesus had done the work of **making him strong** and **giving him a complete restoration**. But it was necessary that the paraplegic put his trust in the name of Jesus **on the basis of faith**. **Faith** is the way the people hearing could have access to the risen and glorified Jesus. The contrast is with works, especially the totally inadequate attempts at keeping God's law.

Verses 17-21

Now, brothers, I know that you acted out of ignorance just as your leaders [did], too, but the things which God announced beforehand through all of his prophets that his Christ would suffer, he has thus fulfilled. Therefore, repent and return [to God] so that your sins may be wiped away and times of relief from the Lord may come and he send Christ Jesus appointed for you. Heaven must receive him until the time of the restoration of all things which God spoke about through his holy prophets of long ago.