

1902- Acts 3:1-10 A CRIPPLE HEALED

PRELIMS. The Day of Pentecost has come! The disciples have been **obedient** and **gathered together** and **devoted** themselves to the apostle's teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and to prayers! And the Lord responded - by **adding** to the Church every day *those who were being saved* [2:47]! Christ was building His Church!

It never ceases to amaze me how **quickly** people were **converted** in the Early Church. People just seemed to believe and become very **passionate** about their faith! No problem being **baptised/witnessing**! It is **not** that they were **weak** in understanding about its significance in that culture and what it could have meant - ie, **martyrdom**!! They were quite prepared to **die** for what they believed about Jesus!

Like **every** writer, Luke had to **think** and then **select** what to **include** in his account and what to **leave out**! This did **not interfere** with the doctrine of **inspiration**! The Holy Spirit 'carried' Luke along - perhaps even without Luke realising he was inspired! The Apostle Peter tells us: *the prophets who prophesied...*[inquired] **what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when He** (the Holy Spirit) *predicted the sufferings of Christ* [1Pet1:11]! Ie, Peter tells us that those who wrote Scripture were themselves **unsure** what they were writing! The Person in the passage Peter probably referred to was [Dan 9:26] was Jesus, and the time was His crucifixion!

Whatever, Luke obviously felt that **this** miracle of healing **needed** to be recorded. Or rather, the Holy Spirit **wanted** this miracle recorded in Holy Scripture for all time!! So there is something **profitable** in it for all generations of Xns to learn from it! Nothing is superfluous!

For me, I find it **amazing** that some things I feel **ought** to be in Scripture are not, and some things are in Scripture that there is little need for! That, of course just shows how far away I am from the mind of the Holy Spirit! So, we have to wrestle with what **is recorded** rather than what is not! *Eg: The **Holy Spirit** does not seem to have moved any of the writers to record what kind of **standard of life** was required for being **baptised** and taking the Lord's Supper! **Only reference** is [Acts 8:37]! **Its missing! But in Textus Receptus!**

Some mss add: *And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may'. And he replied 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'* [footnote]!! Now, whether the verse is in or not, there is **still very little information** on what many of us would think is a **very important matter** - what **confession** must we make for baptism or for the Lord's Supper? And there is **still no guidance** about the **standard of life** and **witness** expected of those who **profess!**

Should they attend church **twice** every **Sunday**? But there again we are faced with what is **not mentioned** in Scripture, ie, church services are not in the Bible at all! Most of the 'expectations' of denominations today were not requirements in the early church! **Not** simply and **only** because of **social** and **cultural change**, but because they are **open** matters about which there are only **general principles!**

Thus: 'there are some circumstances concerning the **worship** of God, and **government** of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which **are to be ordered** by the light of nature and Christian prudence according to the **general principles** of the word which are always to be observed' [Con of Faith, Chap 1, para 6]. And yet, sadly, **most** of the **differences** many denominations have is over things which the Scriptures have not **specifically mentioned**, and of which there are **no hard** and **fast statements!** Most people are upset, not so much about the Word of God being broken, but about a change in **tradition!** They way, and the **practice** of former times!

So, lets get back to our passage! Luke, under inspiration, is recording for **our learning** the fact that there was this 'event' which brought about a great sermon which **led to 5,000** men being **converted!** [4:4]

We note, **first**, that Peter and John went *up to the temple* - they **still** worshipped at the temple! They did not **abandon it immediately!** And Peter and John were together again. Although John says nothing, yet L felt the need to let us know they were obeying X's command to go out **two by two!** **APP** I do not think it is right to send missionaries out alone to a city or town – they need support! Paul **always** had someone with him, Timothy or Titus or Silas when on a missionary journey. We need a base to return to after a mission!

As Xns, of course, they would probably have their own 'Gentile' area at *Solomon's Portico* [11] where they had their **own teaching** after X's example. Remember He often got into conversations - people often came up to Him, usually to catch Him, but to genuinely learn from Him. A lot of 'meeting of minds' went on around the temple! Great for 'gossip' and catching up on the latest theories and trends!!

So worshipping in the temple grounds was an excellent **opportunity** to **evangelise** the Jews! Many Jews would have been persuaded by what the apostles were saying about Jesus but would not 'come out' **openly for fear** – but secretly they would nevertheless want to hear more. Well, they did hear more - and they **saw** more – **miracles!**

They went up *at the hour of prayer – the ninth hour* [1] Now you may wonder at the **variations of times** about the same event given in NT! This is because some writers used the Jewish time and some the Roman time. Anyway, it was the time when the Jews met for prayer. Only those **interested** in their religion would be present. Any **concerned** people or people seeking truth would be sure to be there.

Now we are led into one of the **great sermons** in Acts – what started it all? How did Peter **get an audience?** Because of an **act of public kindness!** The healing of a lame man! **APP** A lesson here for the Church. If we were **more alert** to the **opportunities of helping** people, we would have more opportunities to tell of Jesus Christ! It has always amazed me that the well-known and famous preachers who were the means of converting many people, were **also philanthropists** and engaged in many works of mercy! Whitefield, Wesley, Spurgeon, Chalmers, etc, etc all started some charitable work alongside the gospel they preached. Their gratefulness to God for free salvation moved them to do what they could to help others.

The Church should have **both** charity **and** spiritual instruction! Some churches have charity but no spiritual instruction – others have spiritual instruction but no charity! This Book of Acts is clear – one of the chief circumstances which caused people to **hear** about the greatness of God and His Word was the **kindness and help** of Xns!

Postmodern man, ie, **our day** and times, is regulated very much by

feelings more than wisdom! Many people today, despite their lack of true spiritual understanding, have strong **feelings** about the **poor** and **underprivileged**! All **political Parties**! That is also why there are so many different types of **charities** today appealing for aid. Every day, every type of medium has appeals for helping this group and that group. That is excellent! With this concern for feelings more than truth in our culture, we as Xns **ought** to **make big capital** out of it!

If I were to ask you what is the **greatest/biggest characteristic** and **attribute** of God, what would you say? What **defines** God more than anything else? What does Scripture say?

It seems **compassion** is God's greatest attribute! And what a blessing that is so! Where would **you/I** be if it were not so? We would still be in our sins! You/I **need His** grace **more** than anything else in the world! Look at what the Biblical writers say about God: *But thou, O Lord, art a **God full of compassion**, and **gracious**, longsuffering, and plenteous in **mercy*** [Psa 86:15 AV] *the LORD is **gracious** and merciful* [Psa 111:4] *The Lord is **gracious** and righteous; our God is **full of compassion*** [Psa 116:5 AV] Listen: *The **steadfast** love of the LORD **never ceases**; His mercies **never** come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness* [Lam 3:22] **NT**: James The Lord is **full of compassion** and mercy [Jam 5:11 AV] Jesus is the same: *When He saw the crowds, He had **compassion** on them, because they were **harassed** and **helpless**, like sheep without a shepherd* [Mat 9:36] God is big on compassion!

Solemn to think it is the **heathen** who are *past feeling* AV, or *lost all sensitivity* NIV [Eph 4:19] Apostle John said *if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet **closes his heart** against him, **how** does God's love abide in him?* [1John 3:17 ESV]

However, the reason I am mentioning this is chiefly because **God** has **ordained** that charity, if rightly handled, very often **leads on** to be a **great means** of bringing people to ask about our faith/beliefs, and then a golden opportunity to explain the gospel. I think almost every revival or great blessing in the book of Acts **started** with a **healing** or some great act of kindness!!