Jim Gunn Vineland Park Baptist Church Hueytown, Alabama

Title: "The Power of Jesus' Name"

Acts 3:1-26

Sermon Number: 08

Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, 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 from those who entered the temple; ³ who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. ⁴ And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." ⁵ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸ So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them — walking, leaping, and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰ Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

¹¹ Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. ¹² So when Peter saw *it*, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

¹⁷ "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers. ¹⁸ But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, ²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

²² For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. ²³ And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' ²⁴ Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. ²⁵ You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' ²⁶ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." NKJV

In our last study of Acts 2:36-47, we saw how Jesus through His Holy Spirit guided some of the remnant [what is left over]; those who were being saved; those whom God was adding to the church daily into a local body of Christ; with the emphasis on their continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

In Acts 3, Jesus continues to work through His Holy Spirit:

It is time for prayer: Acts 3:1

In the worship in the tabernacle and later in the temple there were three hours of daily prayer: the third hour {9 am}; the sixth hour {noon}; and the ninth hour {3 pm}. The morning and evening time of prayer coincided with the morning and evening sacrifices.

Ex 29:38-42

³⁸ "Now this *is* what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. ³⁹ One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. ⁴⁰ With the one lamb shall be one-tenth *of an ephah* of flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine *as* a drink offering. ⁴¹ And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and you shall offer with it the grain offering and the drink offering, as in the morning, for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. ⁴² *This shall be* a continual burnt offering throughout your generations *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you.

Peter and John knew the hour that the animals were being sacrificed and they knew what they would preach would cause the Jewish leaders to have them arrested and stoned. They would preach that Jesus of Nazareth was the end of the sacrificial system; that Jesus was the object to which all the other sacrifices and offerings pointed. Yet they went to the temple at the ninth hour to pray.

Acts 3 is the record of Peter and John who continue their Jewish practice of going to the temple to pray at the prescribed hour of prayer. When these first Christians, who were raised as Jews, were saved, they didn't stop being Jews. What changed for those who were truly justified by the blood of Jesus was that they understood that Jesus was the sufficient Sacrifice for sin and they no longer needed a priest to present an animal sacrifice on the altar.

Jesus and the apostles did not command these Jewish Christians to stop being Jews; they could go to the temple and to the synagogues. And especially they could preach that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah who was the main subject of the OT prophets.

So it is as though Jesus is still with them healing the lame. And Jesus is still with them because He sent His Holy Spirit and they have power from God to do mighty works in the name of Jesus.

The Book of Acts begins with the announcement that it is an account of "all that Jesus began both to do and teach..." Acts 1:1

Jesus went to the cross and He was crucified for the sins of His people; He was buried, and exactly according to the Scriptures, He came forth from the grave on the third day; He ascended into heaven: But He is the same Jesus!

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Heb 13:8

Before His passion, Jesus Christ, the eternal Second Person of the Holy Trinity, took for Himself a true human body with a true human nature. In His time of humiliation, the sinless Man confined Himself to one physical location at a time.

It is true that He healed the Centurion's servant from a distance; His power was not confined to geographical boundaries, but His physical body stayed at one place.

Matt 8:5-13

⁵ Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, ⁶ saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

⁷ And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

⁸ The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *one*, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it*."

¹⁰ When Jesus heard *it*, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! ¹¹ And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹² But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³ Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, *so* let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

When Jesus sent down His Holy Spirit to live in His disciples they could do "greater works" through the name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus: Acts 3:6

If I counted correctly the name of Jesus in some form occurs eight times in chapters 3 and 4. The name of Jesus refers to His power, authority, personality, essence, character, reputation: i.e. who Jesus is.

He is the Christ, His Servant, the Holy One, the Just, the Prince of Life, the Prophet, the Lord, and Jesus Christ.

Be careful how you use the name of God.

Ex 20:7

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Taking the name of the Lord in vain involves much more than just cursing, although that certainly is included in the sin.

The essence of taking the name of the Lord in vain is to utter or think His name when your mind is not reverently on who He is.

The most blatant violation in our time is OMG! It sickens me to watch some nitwit jumping up and down yelling OMG, OMG! No one who knows and loves God can be so stupidly irreverent. They might as well be shouting, "I don't know God!" If such a person claims to be a Christian, they are showing that at the least they are ignorant.

The beggar got more than he expected: Acts 3:2-10

The blind and the lame were allowed to come to the various gates or entrances to the temple. Those who came to worship and passed through the gates believed that giving to the poor was well-pleasing to God.

A notable exception to alms-giving was the rich man who ignored Lazarus. Whether this is a parable or an actual event is not a part of this exposition. This is simply an example of the custom of helping the poor.

¹⁹ "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰ But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ... Luke 16:19-20

In the case before us it is virtually impossible to capture the excitement of this story. We are informed that this certain beggar who was born lame [3:2] was over 40 years old [4:22]!

Day by day someone had to carry him to the temple so he could beg for alms from the worshipers. That is surely a hard way to survive.

The gate called Beautiful was the entrance to the Court of the Gentiles so anyone could use it and thus it was the gate with the most traffic. This is where Jesus twice drove out the moneychangers {Canaanites}.

Here come two kind-looking men, maybe they will give me something.

Peter and John looked intently at the beggar and Peter said: "Look at us!"

Acts 3:4-8

⁵ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸ So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them — walking, leaping, and praising God.

How many miracles can you count? I believe the man was saved, not because he was healed but because he believed in the name of Jesus.

A man who never learned to walk, who never took a step in over 40 years stood up; he took one step and didn't fall down; he took another step, then he leaped into the air!

His withered feet and useless ankle bones received strength. Praise God! Praise God!

⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰ Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

What do you do with him now? Acts 3:11-16

You give all the glory to God and you preach Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ.

Acts 3:11-16

¹¹ Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. ¹² So when Peter saw *it*, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

The evening sacrifices and prayers have no doubt run their course for the day but something has happened that cannot be ignored. Many of the worshipers who have seen this beggar year after year lying there unable to help himself, even to stand up are gathered at Solomon's Porch. Now this same beggar is leaping about.

No wonder they were amazed!

Peter then gives the source of every act of recovery and healing; either through the use of medical means or a miracle directly from God.

Peter is sure to point out; it was not us! We don't have any such power!

It is through faith in Jesus that this man has been made strong.

The Man you crucified is the One who healed this beggar.

You had the Holy One of God and instead you asked for a murderer, Barabbas, to be released.

You thought you had rid yourself of this troubling Rabbi but God raised Him from the dead and your wicked scheme is overthrown.

The proof is this once lame beggar who now is standing before you in full strength of limb praising God for the power of Jesus!

The apostles rightly used the unjust trial and murder of Jesus to bring conviction of guilt. This was not a mean-spirited accusation; it was a merciful way to cause many of them to realize what their sin had moved them to do.

This crucial event was used in 2:23; 3:13-15; 4:10-11; 5:29-30; 7:52, et al.

It is my strong belief that no one is justified unless they come to acknowledge their sin and guilt. By that I am not requiring some formula "in order to be saved," but simply saying that God saves sinners!

You were ignorant: Acts 3:17-21

To show that Peter is not hard-hearted he says, "You did it in ignorance, as also your rulers." Did not the Lord Himself pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The apostle Paul, Saul of Tarsus, says the he was once ignorant of the truth.

1 Tim 1:12-13

¹² And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, ¹³ although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief.

We have the case of Nicodemus in John 3 who was ignorant, but he was teachable.

Then there are those who are willfully ignorant, such as the preachers of evolution in the face of irrefutable evidence of the Creator.

See Brother Bunger's letter written in response to a believer in evolution.

Rom 1:18-21

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

There are those who are ignorant but to whom God reveals His Son in grace; and there are those who are confronted with the Gospel and die in unbelief.

John 8:24

Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

John 15:22

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Dear souls if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, why do you suppose that is? What bosom sin is it that you love so much that you refuse to repent?

Tell me what you find so objectionable about Jesus Christ that you will not submit to His absolute authority over your eternal destiny.

Don't die in your sin!

The Great Prophet: Acts 3:22-24

You will be weakened in your interpretation of the OT prophets as long as you insist that they were mainly about restoring the Jews to the land of promise.

Rev 19:10

... Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The message of the OT prophets was mainly about Christ who is the Prophet of God. The work of a prophet is to give to the people of God the words of God. The OT prophets from Samuel to John the Baptist spoke about Christ.

²² For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. ²³ And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' ²⁴ Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.

Jesus is the Great Prophet!

Moses wrote in Deuteronomy about a Prophet that God would send.

Deut 18:15-18

¹⁵ "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, ¹⁶ according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'

¹⁷ "And the LORD said to me: What they have spoken is good. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

The last thing that Moses wrote about in Deuteronomy was the Great Prophet.

Deut 34:10-12

¹⁰ But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, ¹¹ in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, ¹² and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

Through long centuries the faithful looked for the Prophet.

When John the Baptist appeared as the forerunner of Christ one of the things the priests and the Levites asked him was are you the Prophet?

John 1:19-28

¹⁹ Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

²⁰ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

And he answered, "No."

²² Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"

²³ He said: "I am

'The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

'Make straight the way of the LORD," as the prophet Isaiah said."

²⁴ Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. ²⁵ And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

²⁶ John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. ²⁷ It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."

²⁸ These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The woman at the well in Samaria as she was being led by Jesus to the knowledge of who He is at one point said, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet." John 4:19

When Jesus fed the Five Thousand some of them rightly perceived that He was the Prophet that God had promised.

John 6:10-14

¹⁰ Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. ¹¹ And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples* to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that

remain, so that nothing is lost." ¹³ Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

There is no doubt that Philip was thinking about the Prophet.

John 1:45

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

The promise of the Great Prophet, the Word of God, is fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.

The promise to Abraham: Acts 3:25-26

²⁵ You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' ²⁶ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

The NT is very clear that the seed of Abraham is Christ, and by faith, those who believe, Gentiles and Jews, are also the seed of Abraham.

Gal 3:15-18

¹⁵ Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though *it is* only a man's covenant, yet *if it is* confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. ¹⁶ Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. ¹⁷ And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

Rom 4:13-17

¹³ For the promise that he would be the heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ For if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, ¹⁵ because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

¹⁶ Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ¹⁷ (as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations")

Rom 9:6-8

⁶ But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, ⁷ nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." ⁸ That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.

Lest anyone is confused about Christ being the seed of Abraham and believers also being the seed of Abraham know that those who are in Christ are considered by God the Father to be joint-heirs with Christ.

In Acts 3 we have Peter and John continuing to go the temple for prayer and being used by God to give life in Christ and strength of limb to a man who was lame from birth for over 40 years.

Peter preached that Jesus is the Christ. In Chapter 4 we will see that the priests, the temple guards, and the Sadducees arrest them because they preached Jesus and the resurrection.

Peter calls for repentance and belief in the Gospel.

Peter preached that Jesus is the Great Prophet.

What doth hinder you from repenting and putting your unreserved trust in Jesus Christ?

Are you one of Abraham's seed? You cannot know if you are unless and until you repent and confess faith in Jesus. Not "will" you but "can" you commit your sinful soul to Jesus as your sufficient Savior?

Letter in The Birmingham News September 11, 2010

EVOLUTION

Faith, evolution not contradictory

I believe there is a growing development in our national consciousness that allows the acceptance of faith in God and in evolution as two noncontradictory realities. Why can there not be an all-powerful, all-wise lord of the universe who employs an evolutionary process as his way of developing suns, souls and life?

Can religionists accept that dinosaurs roamed the Earth for more than 100 million years prior to the coming of an Adam and an Eve? And can science-mined folks accept that evolution is a great process that shows us the physical dynamics of our universe, while we must study religion I order to learn of God's plan for humanity?

The evidence of evolution is clear and irrefutable. Yet only God and his messengers justify faith, hope and love, and give us peace of mind.

Jim Scott Birmingham

Response by Bob Bunger {not yet published}

EVOLUTION

Faith, evolution contradictory

"Faith, evolution not contradictory" (News, 9/11/10) asks if "religionists" and "science-minded folks" can accept each others' views as consistent with their own.

First, a follower of Christ must agree with Christ's literal understanding of Genesis, when He says, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning 'made them male and female'". (Matthew 19:4) Christ's literal understanding of Genesis is inconsistent with evolution.

Second, an atheist like the evolutionist Richard Dawkins will not accept anything supernatural; it is inconsistent with materialism. Dawkins specifically states that science and religion overlap.

Third, the evidence AGAINST life arising by natural means is "clear and irrefutable", but this evidence is suppressed. Chemists are unable to make even the basic building blocks of life (left-handed amino acids and right-handed sugars) ON PURPOSE, yet evolutionists claim they arose naturally by accident. When made in the lab, every batch of amino acids and every batch of sugars is a 50-50 mixture of right- and left-handed molecules, which scientists are unable to separate. The only way to make a one-handed batch is by first seeding it with material from a living or formerly living creature. You see, science proves that only life can produce life. To quote organic chemist Dr. Charles McCombs, Ph.D., "Evolution hopes you don't know chemistry".

Robert Bunger

My addition to the two letters:

"There are two kinds of wisdom that need to be clearly distinguished. The first is worldly wisdom which looks at the world as if God were not real, and thus has not revealed himself in the person and work of Christ. The other is the true wisdom which comes from God, who alone can tell us what the universe really means. Yet in daily life we draw constantly on worldly wisdom because it works. It is based on human experience and involves the recognition that there is order in the universe. But when it addresses the ultimate or eternal significance of things worldly wisdom is opposed to the wisdom of God. Within the limited view of practical living, worldly and godly wisdom may coincide so that there is a meeting of the minds of Christian and non-Christian, of Israelite and pagan. But there is no agreement about the basis upon which we ultimately interpret things and events. The Christian's distinctive claim is that God the Creator alone can interpret all things in the universe."

Graeme Goldsworthy, The Goldsworthy Trilogy; Gospel and Wisdom; Paternoster Press 2008, page 358.

1 Corinthians 1: 20

Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?