

9—Acts 3.1-10—How Will the Lame Get in?

I. Introduction

- a. As a kid, I dreamed of playing professional football, baseball, or basketball. I guess every kid who enjoys those sports has those kinds of dreams. I'd count down the clock and hit the winning shot in the imaginary game I was playing by myself. I'd hit the walk-off homerun and roar for the imaginary crowd or score the go-ahead touchdown to win the game.
- b. The stats were against me. Kids like me do not get in to professional sports.
- c. The percentage is even more staggering when it comes to getting in with God. Zero percent get in by how good you are. There's only been One who met His approval and his Name is Jesus.
- d. However, he is the Beautiful Gate by which sinners like you and me can enter. The worthless and lame can enter in through repentance and faith in the person and finished work of Jesus.

II. Main Point

- a. The Messianic Kingdom of God has dawned because we see the lame leaping like the deer. Anyone can come to God through the risen Lord Jesus—the gate!

III. Outline

- a. Brief Summary
- b. The Old Temple Keeps the Lame out
- c. The New Temple brings the Lame in
- d. The Lame will be leaping and praising God in His Kingdom

IV. Exposition

- a. Brief Summary
 - i. The Spirit has come. The gospel is being proclaimed. The promises and demands are clearly laid out. All who call upon the Name of the Lord will be saved. All who repent and are baptized in the Name of Jesus will be forgiven of their sins and counted righteous by faith alone. Those who believe will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and as a result gather with each other to be strengthened to endure to the end together. They do that by devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers.
 - ii. On this Easter morning, we get to see the risen Lord Jesus act in such a way that we will know that he is risen and reigning from heaven. The messianic Kingdom has dawned!
- b. Let's take a look at this story of a lame man who begs for money outside the Beautiful Gate. Let's think of this helpless lame man in terms of a helpless sinner unable to save himself. Like the blind, he knows how helpless he is. Unlike the spiritually blind, they do not know they are blind. Only God can make that known.
 - i. We immediately see Peter and John going. I just want to point this out because this is part of the Great Commission. The disciples of Jesus are commanded to make disciples. You cannot do that unless you are encountering people. The best way to do that is as you are going.
 - ii. Where are the apostles going? It says they are going into the temple at the hour of prayer.
 1. There was a daily sacrifice at 3pm and that's when people would gather for prayer at the temple.
 - a. All they need are listening ears. All they need is an inroad. How will the Lord open a door of opportunity? Let's see.
 - iii. As the apostles go, they encounter a need.
 1. That's why it is so important that you be devoted to the means of grace we spoke of last week. Otherwise, we will be consumed with our needs only.
 2. We are not even given the name of the person they encounter. He is described as a man lame from his mother's womb. We will find out later he is 40 years of age. The situation is described in such detail so that we know how impossible this is apart from Christ.

3. As you see, this man must be carried around daily. Surely, it was some family or friends who took him to the gate of the temple every day. He would be placed there for the purpose of asking for alms—money.
 - a. He is helpless. Every job would have been impossible for him to do. There was no social welfare. There was no disability available. This man was dependent on the daily generosity of others.
 - b. How would you like to be this man in his day? We wouldn't have many options. He was sitting at the gate of the temple where people who were responsible to care for the lame would be walking by.
 - c. Alms were a gift for the poor. It was not a loan. He was not asking to borrow a couple of bucks. No, this was for his survival.
- iv. Now, the lame man sees Peter and John about to enter the temple. So, he asked to receive alms.
 1. What will the apostles do? What hope does this man have?
 2. He is very similar to the woman with the issue of blood. She had tried everything. No other option was available. She remained in a constant state of uncleanness and unable to be in the presence of God.
- v. My point is that the old temple kept the lame out. You could not even sacrifice a lame animal. I hope you have noticed that already. No amount of money would change this man condition. His feet and ankles could not be fixed even with compassion.
 1. And by all means, compassion touches the soul. Be compassionate. But my point is that we are helpless to fix his problem with money and he is helpless to get to God.
 2. A man like this was not permitted in the temple. (Lev. 21:18) ¹⁸ For no one who has a blemish shall draw near, a man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long.
 3. As close as he could get was to sit towards the gate and he depended on others to get him there.
 4. All he could do was stare at the gate called Beautiful from a distance. That which was beyond that he did not have access to.
- c. That leads us to the next point. The New Temple brings the lame to the presence of God.
 - i. In verse 4, Peter and John respond to the lame man. Who knows how many have passed him by on the way to worship and prayer. (Acts 3:4-5) ⁴ And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." ⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.
 1. I don't know of any specific reason why Peter commands that he look at him other than him knowing who it is speaking to him. If you've never had to ask for money every day of your life to survive you probably have no idea how humiliating it is. I'm sure his head hung down most of the time.
 2. But when they responded to him, he did expect to receive something. I am certain his expectation wasn't anywhere close to what was coming.
 - ii. So, this man cannot get into the temple. No amount of money can buy his way in. The law demands that he stay out. How can this be fixed?
 1. Then comes verse 6: (Acts 3:6) ⁶ But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"
 2. Can the apostles do the same things Jesus did? Let's see what happens.
 - a. (Acts 3:7) ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.

- b. We were just told back in verse (Acts 2:43) [that] many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.
 - i. The key word is “through.” These miracles were validating the authority and teaching of the apostles. These confirming acts ought to be sufficient for us to submit to the apostles’ teachings as well.
- c. We must also take note that Peter appeals to the risen, Lord Jesus. Peter has no power. That’s why he says, “In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.”
 - i. This man’s feet and ankles cannot be made strong if Jesus is still dead. This act confirms that he is risen and reigning.
 - ii. It must be said of these healings that we should not see this as our pattern of everyday ministry. Oh, I wish it were. The miracles of Jesus and the apostles were signs that the Messianic Kingdom had arrived and was continuing in his apostles. They point to what the Kingdom will be like when Christ returns!
 - iii. These miracles are to be witnesses for us, too, that the Kingdom of God had come in Messiah Jesus and that his apostles continued the work he began.
 - iv. I do not mean to say that God does not heal, today. I believe He does through all kinds of means. These healings were for us to see what God’s Kingdom will be like at the resurrection and eternal life. All will be completely restored.
 - v. Our greatest problem is not our physical health. Our greatest problem is sin. And the gospel is the cure.
 - vi. So, by all means pray for physical needs. We should love the whole person. But just know that you have a message that will bring forgiveness and the promise of eternal life with Jesus. (Jn. 11:25) ²⁵ Jesus said..., “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.
 - vii. And one day there will be no more sin, no death, no sorrow, no suffering, no pain, no tears, and no more lame.
- 3. Thomas Walker commenting on this verse: But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” And he took him by the right hand and raised him up - Acts 3:6-7 “The power was Christ’s, but the hand was Peter’s”
 - a. Let’s go be the hands and feet of Jesus sharing the love of Christ with the people we encounter.
 - b. God does not need us but He invites us to join Him in the mission of sharing the gospel with those we encounter. Many times, we get an opportunity to speak the gospel when we are caring for their needs. Don’t miss those divine encounters.
- iii. The new temple brings the lame and broken to God through the gospel. Anyone has access to God through repentance and faith in Jesus, the Gate.
 - 1. Take note of this beautiful scene when he not only couldn’t come inside the gate but he couldn’t get to God. See the salvation of the Lord.
 - a. (Acts 3:7-8) ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸ And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them.

- b. This is who all of us are—broken. We who have been redeemed should sing:
 - c. “Man of Sorrows,” what a name
For the Son of God who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah! what a Savior!
 - d. And that easily leads us to the last point. The Lame will be leaping and praising God in His Kingdom
 - i. What would you do if 40+ years of your life were spent sitting at a gate you could not enter? How would you respond after begging for every meal and depending on people to give and you didn’t have to do that anymore? What would you do if you could only imagine what it would be like to be in the presence of God, forgiven and counted righteous by faith alone?
 - ii. This man lame from birth is a picture of lost sinners who hear the good news and receive the gift of salvation.
 - iii. Notice his obvious response. (Acts 3:8-9) ⁸ And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God
 - iv. Notice the repeated themes: leaping, standing, walking, and praising!
 - v. You might not have understood why we read “then shall the lame man leap like a deer.” It was a sign that God’s salvation had come. Not by entering that Beautiful Gate he sat outside of everyday but through Jesus—the gate! And this cannot happen unless he died on Good Friday and was raised on Sunday!
 - 1. (Jn. 10:1-7) "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.
 - vi. (Isa. 35:4-6) ⁴ Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
 - vii. Guess what? As you might understand this lame man from the gate leaping and walking and praising the Lord INSIDE THE GATE...drew some attention.
 - 1. Those inside the gate of the old temple needed to enter the new temple through Jesus, the Gate! Those inside the haven’t entered through the Gate, Jesus, yet. In fact, they are as lame and unable to save themselves as the one leaping like a deer. The problem is, they do not know it. But this event is part of means by which God is making it known to them.
 - 2. (Acts 3:9-10) ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.
 - 3. Can you guess what might happen next? The one leads to many hearing the gospel and many coming to faith. They were inside the gate but had no access to God.

V. Conclusion

- a. Do you want access to God? Jesus can forgive your sins, fully and completely. Come to Jesus and he will save you.
 - i. (Rom. 10:9-10) if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.
- b. I want to end like this, at this point in the story, we have only seen the lame man's physical healing which shows us what spiritual healing will look like at the end of age. But like the 10 lepers healed by Jesus in Luke 11, only one turned back and praised the Lord. Some enjoy the benefits of Jesus but care nothing about Jesus himself. Do not be one of the 9 who didn't turn back.