

Acts 3 & 4: The Name of Jesus

Opening Question: The author Luke wrote at the end of Chapter two that "...awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles." (Acts 2:43 ESV) Dr. Luke does not say what these signs and wonders were nor does he seem to think that is even necessary. So, aside from the fulfillment of prophecy of Isaiah 35:6 of lame men being healed and leaping like deer, why does he present the healing of the lame man?

Answer: Because that good deed in the Name of Jesus and Peter's preaching in the Name of Jesus led to the first persecution of the body of Christ.

From a literary point of view, the prayer of the saints, their comfort rooted in the sovereignty of God, (Acts 4:23-31), coupled with the fulfillment of Psalm 2 and Jesus' own teaching regarding the certainty of being persecuted (Matthew 5:10-12), is the climax of the story that begins with healing of the lame man. The persecution of Peter & John by the priests, the Temple Captain, the Sadducees, and the family of the High Priest, was a reaction to the Name and the Authority of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:7).

The Name and Names of Jesus: Toscanini and the young musician.

Acts 2 God has made Jesus of Nazareth both Lord and Christ

- v. 22 Jesus of Nazareth
- v. 22 a Man
- v. 25 the LORD
- v. 30 Christ
- v. 36 Lord and Christ
- v. 38 baptized in the name of Jesus Christ

Acts 3 Jesus of Nazareth is God's Messiah, God's Servant, God's Prophet

- v. 6 Jesus Christ of Nazareth
- v. 13 His Servant Jesus
- v. 14 The Holy One and the Just (NKJV, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, Geneva), The Holy and Righteous One (NASB & ESV)
- v. 15 the maker of life (Wyc.), Lord of life (Tyn & Geneva), Prince of Life (Cov, KJV, NASB, NKJV), Chief or Chief leader of life (APG), Author of life (ESV)
- v. 16 His Name, Him
- v. 18 the Christ or His Christ
- v. 20 Jesus Christ
- v. 22-23 The prophet, a Prophet, that Prophet
- v. 26 His Servant Jesus

Acts 4 Jesus of Nazareth is God's chief cornerstone and mankind's only salvation

- v.10 the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, by Him
- v. 11 the stone rejected by the builders, chief cornerstone
- v. 12 only name under heaven by which we must be saved

The Kerygma and Acts 3

1. The Announcement that the age of fulfillment has arrived. V. 14, 16, and 22-26.
2. Rehearsal of the ministry, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus. Vs. 14-16, 26.
3. Citation of O.T. Scriptures whose fulfillment in these events prove Jesus to be the Messiah. Vs. 17, 22-25.

4. Call to repentance. V. 19, 26 Repentance is offered first to the Jews who killed Jesus.
5. What references does Peter make to God's Covenant? Who is included in the Covenant? Why is this important? What are its implications regarding the spread of the Gospel?

Weal and Woe

O.T. prophets declared weal¹ and woe to their audience. In Acts 2, Peter did not proclaim much weal except by inference in verses 38-39. Luke records the weal given by God to the church following Pentecost.

1. In Chapter 3, what elements of weal does Peter promise to the audience? V. 19-21, 25-26.
2. In Chapter 2, 3 & 4, what is the implied woe that can be avoided by their repentance?

The Kerygma and Acts 4

1. The Announcement that the age of fulfillment has arrived. V. 10-11.
2. Rehearsal of the ministry, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus. V. 10.
3. Citation of O.T. Scriptures whose fulfillment in these events prove Jesus to be the Messiah. V. 11.
4. Call to repentance. V. 12.

The Response to Jesus' Name and Authority (*See also Mark 13:9-11)

1. Who arrests Peter and John? The Priests, the captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees.
2. Why are they arrested? They were greatly disturbed about Jesus and his resurrection from the dead.
3. How long were they in jail? What was the purpose of the imprisonment? Intimidation tactic.
4. How many men were saved?
5. Who is present at the trial? Their rulers, elders, scribes, Caiaphas the high priest, Annas (symbolic high priest), John, and Alexander, and many from the family of the high priest.
6. How does this compare with those who arrested Jesus and conduct his trial?
 - a. See Luke 22:52, 66; John 18:3, 12-14; Matt. 26:47, 57, 59; Mark 14:43, 46, 53, 55.
 - b. What group that participated in Jesus' trial seems to be missing for Peter & John's trial? Pharisees.
7. What question is asked by the Sanhedrin? By what power, authority, or name have you done this?
8. What happens before Peter speaks? He is filled with the Holy Spirit.
9. **Why is this significant?** Because he is given boldness to speak and preach about Jesus.
10. What does Peter say is the charge against them? A good deed done in the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
11. What sins does Peter charge the Sanhedrin? Murder, rejection of God's stone & chief cornerstone.
12. A crucified Messiah was a contradiction of terms. How does Peter reconcile the apparent contradiction? The resurrection and ascension validated Jesus as God's Anointed (Is. 52:13)
13. Whose purpose was established and fulfilled in spite of human opposition? God's vs. 11
14. What ultimate authority is vested in Jesus' name?

Persecution and Civil Disobedience

1. What observations are made about Peter & John by the Sanhedrin?
2. What prohibition is ordered by the Sanhedrin? To not teach in the name of Jesus
3. Why did the Sanhedrin not execute their threats at this time? Vs. 14, 21-22.
4. What is Peter's response to their command? We must speak the things which we have seen and heard.
5. Does Peter deny the authority the Sanhedrin exercised? No, see vs. 19.

¹ WEAL, n. [G., L., to be strong, to avail, to prevail. The primary sense of weal is strength, soundness, from the sense of straining, stretching or advancing.]

1. A sound state of a person or thing; a state which is prosperous, or at least not unfortunate, not declining; prosperity; happiness. As we love the weal of our souls and bodies. The weal or wo in thee is plac'd. So we say, the public weal, the general weal, the weal of the nation or state. (Websters 1828 Dictionary)

2. a general state of well-being, prosperity, and happiness. (Encarta Dictionary)

6. What is the response of the other saints to this command? They choose to obey God.

The Prayer of the Saints

“We should neither be afraid of the threats of our enemies, neither yet foolishly condemn their rage and madness against us: but we have to set against their force and malice an earnest thinking upon the power and good will of God (both which we manifestly behold in Christ) and so flee to the aid and assistance of our Father.” (Acts 4: 24 Geneva Bible Commentary)

1. Adoration: Proper acknowledgement of God’s Omnipotence and Sovereignty over all creation.
 - a. God is the *Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.*(Matthew Henry)
 - b. The heathens and pagans worship a god they have created; we worship the God who created us. (Henry)
 - c. It is a great encouragement to God's servants, both in doing work and suffering work, that they serve the God that made all things, and therefore has the disposal of their times, and all events concerning them, and is able to strengthen them under all their difficulties. And, if we give him the glory of this, we may take the comfort of it. (Henry)
2. Scripture must be fulfilled. (Henry)
 - a. Their reconciling themselves to the present dispensations of Providence, by reflecting upon those scriptures in the Old Testament which foretold that the kingdom of the Messiah would meet with such opposition as this at the first setting of it up in the world, [Act 4:25](#), [Act 4:26](#).
 - b. Let it not therefore be a surprise to them, nor any discouragement to any in embracing their doctrine, for the *scripture must be fulfilled*. It was foretold, [Psa 2:1](#), [Psa 2:2](#),
 - i. That the heathen would rage at Christ and his kingdom, and be angry at the attempts to set it up, because that would be the pulling down of the gods of the heathen, and giving a check to the wickedness of the heathen,
 - ii. That the people would imagine all the things that could be against it, to silence the teachers of it, to discountenance the subjects of it, and to crush all the interests of it,
 - iii. That the kings of the earth, particularly, would stand up in opposition to the kingdom of Christ,
 - iv. That the rulers would gather together against God and Christ; not only monarchs, that have the power in their single persons, but where the power is in many rulers, councils, and senates, they *gather together*, to consult and decree *against the Lord and against his Christ*.
 - c. They only do what Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.
 - i. Sin is not the less evil for God's bringing good out of it, but he is by this the more glorified, and will appear to be so when the mystery of God shall be finished.
 - ii. **“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 Timothy 3:12-13 ESV).**
 - d. Enable us to boldly continue to do Your will
 - i. Their prayer is not, “*Lord, behold their threatenings*, and frighten them, and stop their mouths, and fill their faces with shame;” but, “*Behold their threatenings*, and animate us, open our mouths and fill our hearts with courage.” They do not pray, “*Lord, give us a fair opportunity to retire from our work, now that it is become dangerous;*” but, “*Lord, give us grace to go on in our work and not to be afraid of the face of man.*”
 - ii. Those that are sent on God's errands ought to deliver their message with boldness, with all boldness, with all liberty of speech, *not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God*, whoever is offended; not doubting of what they say, nor of being borne out in saying it.
 - iii. God is to be sought unto for an ability to speak his word with boldness, and those that desire divine aids and encouragements may depend upon them, and ought to go forth and go on *in the strength of the Lord God*.

- iv. The threatenings of our enemies, that are designed to weaken our hands and drive us off from our work, should rather stir us up to so much the more courage and resolution in our work. Are they daring that fight against Christ? For shame, let not us be sneaking that are for him.
- e. Request for signs and wonders
 - i. "...while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." (Acts 4:30 ESV)
 - ii. Observe, It is the honour of Christ that they aim at in this request, that the wonders might be done by the name of Jesus, the holy child Jesus, and his name shall have all the glory.
- f. God's answer to their prayer
 - i. "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31 ESV)
 - ii. Luke declareth now that God did not only hear this prayer, but did also testify the same by a visible sign from heaven. For the shaking of the place should, of itself, have done them small good; but it tendeth to another end, that the faithful may know that God is present with them. Finally, it is nothing else but a token of the presence of God. But the fruit followeth, for they are all filled with the Holy Ghost, and endowed with greater boldness. We ought rather to stand upon this second member. For whereas God did declare his power then by shaking the place it was a rare and extraordinary thing; and whereas it appeared by the effect, that the apostles did obtain that which they desired, this is a perpetual profit of prayer, which is also set before us for an example. (Calvin, Commentary on Acts)

This prayer of the believing community illustrates the way in which the church should be empowered and encouraged by God's sovereignty. In the face of the threat of physical violence, the church affirmed God's control of the situation (v. 28) and, encouraged by this, they petitioned for greater boldness. (Reformation Study Bible)

What is a Christian's Response to Civil Government?

<http://www.ligonier.org/learn/qas/what-christians-responsibility-government/>

The New Testament gives us some broad principles on how we are supposed to respond to government. For example, Romans 13 elaborates on the origin and institution of government as something that God ordains.

The great theologian Augustine said that government is a necessary evil, that it is necessary because of evil. And most theologians in the history of the church have said that human evil is the reason even corrupt government is better than no government at all. The function of government is to restrain evil and to maintain, uphold, and protect the sanctity of life and of property. Given this function, the Christian understands that government is ordained of God, and so Christians, first of all, are called to respect whatever it is that God institutes and ordains. For God's sake we are called to be model citizens. We are told to bend over backwards to honor the king or be obedient to the civil magistrates. That doesn't mean a slavish obedience to the civil magistrates. There are occasions on which Christians not only may but must disobey the civil magistrates. Anytime a civil government requires a Christian to do what God forbids or forbids them to do what God commands, then the person must disobey. But our basic posture toward government, according to the New Testament, is to be submissive and obedient citizens of the state. We are also given the duty of praying for earthly governments that they may fulfill the tasks God has given to them.

We have another responsibility, and this is the one that sometimes brings us into controversial areas. I personally believe in a separation of spheres of authority between the church and state. I think it is a

marvelous structure in the United States of America that does not allow for the state to rule the church or the church to rule the state. Historically that meant that the church was answerable to God and the state was answerable to God. Separation of church and state assumed a division of labor; the church has its job, and the state has its job. The church is not to maintain a standing army, and the state is not to do evangelism or to administer the sacraments. Nevertheless, they are both regarded as being under God.

Unfortunately, in today's culture separation of church and state means separation of state and God, as if the state and the government were answerable to no one but themselves—as if the government didn't have to respond to God. But God monitors governments; God raises them up and brings them down. Every human government is accountable to God and is accountable to maintain its affairs with justice and with righteousness. When the government is no longer acting justly and no longer protecting life—sanctioning abortions, for example—then it is the task of the church to be the prophetic voice, to call the state to task and tell the state to repent and do what God commands it to do.