

A Prophet Like Moses

In Acts 3:1-10, we read that Peter and John have just healed a man lame from birth. In his gratitude, the healed man is leaping about, praising God, and clinging to the apostles. Peter takes the opportunity to explain this phenomenal event with a powerful gospel sermon.

Acts 3:11-26

11 While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's. **12** And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? **13** The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. **14** But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, **15** and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. **16** And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus³ has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

17 "And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. **18** But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. **19** Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, **20** that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, **21** whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. **22** Moses said, "The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. **23** And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people." **24** And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. **25** You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, "And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed." **26** God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

Please observe the two major divisions of Peter's message:

I. The One Whom God has exalted, we have rejected. (vv. 11-16)

Peter is quick to explain that neither he nor John healed the lame man, but rather Jesus Christ, by faith in His Name. What a claim to make about a person, a claim that cannot be accurately made by any other who walked the earth. At the same time, Peter says nothing flattering at all about his audience; instead, he gives a scathing review of their performance in verses 13-15. It is vital for every human being to know how we stand, by nature, before the Judge of all the earth, in order for us to know why we need His mercy in the gospel.

II. The One Whom we rejected now offers to bless us. (vv. 17-26)

Rather than striking us dead because of our rebellion, Peter says, "And now..." Peter explains to us and his first audience that God is merciful and offers tremendous blessing to us through our simple act of repentance. The blessings offered in verses 19 and 20 are clear: a) our sins will be blotted out, b) God will give us times of refreshing, and c) Christ will restore all things for us when He returns at His Second Advent. These blessings are procured through simple repentance, which consists of our turning from our wickedness and turning to the Prophet promised in Deuteronomy 18. Having listened to Him and trusted Him, we now ourselves become the prophets to this world.

Discussion Questions

1. How does Peter describe the behavior of his audience in vv. 13-16? Why is it important for us and everyone else to hear the "backdrop to the gospel?"
2. If the Apostle Peter were describing the way most of us today have denied the Lord, how do you think he would say it?
3. What does the Bible mean by repentance (v.19)?
4. What are the blessings that come to us through repentance? (see especially vv. 19-21)
5. Why does Peter refer to Deuteronomy 18 in verses 22, 23? What does it mean for Jesus to be our Prophet?
6. What does it mean for us to be prophets in this world?