

anyone and everyone will be healed, every time we say those “magic words.”<sup>11</sup> Let there be no doubt, Jesus’ NAME is indeed powerful. But Jesus’ power is not subject to our human whims, or our own private agendas. That’s why Jesus taught His disciples to pray Thy will be done.<sup>12</sup> In other words, when we pray “in Jesus’ name” we pray according to His purpose, not ours.

So the point of this miracle was to point people to JESUS!<sup>13</sup> In fact, Peter’s purpose was focused on a very particular group of people: his FELLOW Jews. In verse 12 Peter calls them his “Fellow Israelites.” He says it again in verse 17.<sup>14</sup> Similar to his message back in Acts 2, Peter has some pretty DIRECT words to share with this particular group of people. In Acts 3:13, Peter declares, “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of OUR fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. YOU handed him over to be killed, and YOU disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.” In other words, Pilate wanted to let Jesus go. He said, “I find no basis for a charge against him.”<sup>15</sup> Even so, the Jews called for His execution.

Peter goes on in Acts 3:14-15, “YOU disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. (*i.e. Barabbas*) YOU killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.” This is the second time that Peter uses that word “disown.” Disown: Deny, turn our back on, refuse to acknowledge our relational connection. Peter tells them, you DISOWNED Jesus; you KILLED the Author of Life. In other words, these were the Jews who had been standing in the crowd, just a couple of months earlier, shouting “Crucify Him!”

Peter himself had a keen understanding of what it felt like to disown and deny Christ. When Jesus was being beaten, mocked, and spit on, Peter was nearby, in the courtyard listening. And 3 times in a row he denied that he even knew Jesus. Then, the rooster crowed.<sup>16</sup> I’m sure that his own denial of Jesus, gave Peter some empathy, as he delivered this particular message, to this particular group of people. He was their FELLOW Israelite and he was quite familiar with how many of them were probably feeling.<sup>17</sup>

Let’s listen carefully to what Peter tells them next. In Acts 3:17-26 Peter goes on, “17 Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. 18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. 19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, 20 and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. (Peter tells them flat out, JESUS is the Messiah.) 21 Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. 22 For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. (JESUS) 23 Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.’ 24 “Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. 25 And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.’ 26 When God raised up his servant (Jesus the Messiah), he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.”<sup>18</sup> So Peter delivers a startling truth to his fellow Jews, who had disowned their long-awaited Messiah:

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<sup>11</sup> Consider the warning given to Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8:9-24.

<sup>12</sup> The lame man’s faith was important but Jesus’ power was the key. Ultimately, it is God’s prerogative and purpose that will determine if and when a healing takes place. By the way, the faith referred to in Acts 3:16 could refer to Peter and John’s. See discussion on p. 172 of Darrell L. Bock, *Acts: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007.

<sup>13</sup> “The miracle is a visual act that points to a deeper reality.” Darrell L. Bock, *Acts: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, p. 158.

<sup>14</sup> We’ll continue to see this focus on evangelizing the Jews for about the first 10 chapters of the book of Acts. It’s not until a while later that we’ll see an intentional evangelistic outreach to the Gentiles.

<sup>15</sup> John 19:6.

<sup>16</sup> In Acts 3:17 Peter says that he knows that they acted in ignorance. But Peter wasn’t acting in ignorance, he knew full well who Jesus really was. You and I cannot plead ignorance either.

<sup>17</sup> Peter’s words to his fellow Israelites should cause you and I as believers today, to examine our own faith. Do our recent actions and attitudes reveal a fully devoted follower of Jesus? Or, do they reveal a refusal to acknowledge our relational connection to Jesus? Have we denied or disowned Jesus lately? If we have, we’ll want to pay close attention to Peter’s advice in Acts 3:19.

<sup>18</sup> Acts 3 is LOADED with Christology, truths that we need to understand about who Jesus is. Consider the various titles and references to Jesus in Acts 3: Jesus Christ of Nazareth (3:6), servant Jesus (3:13), the Holy and Righteous One (3:14), the author of life (3:15), Messiah (3:18), a prophet like Moses (3:22), the offspring of Abraham (3:25 > see also Galatians 3:16). In effect, Peter preaches Jesus from the Old Testament > See Darrell L. Bock, *Acts: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, p. 182.