

## **ACTS 3:1 to Acts 4:4: THE CHURCH**

### **Introduction**

Our reading for this week is from Acts chapter 3:1 to Acts 4:4. In this passage, Luke continues to describe the life of the early church after the Pentecost, focusing on the factors that contribute to its growth and development. In our study of chapter 2, we saw how the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, powerful preaching of the gospel, and inspiring church life led to the birth and growth of the early church. Today's passage introduces us to other important keys, such as prayer and supernatural manifestations, that contribute to the development of the church. You will notice that our last reading ended with the phrase, "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47b). Our reading today also ends with a similar phrase "But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand." (Acts 4:4) This is a common pattern as you study the book of Acts. The writer, Luke, uses these kinds of passages as an inflection point between his accounts. This tells us that his motivation for writing this book is to show us that the church is growing, the factors contributing to its growth, and that the early disciples are fulfilling the commandment of Jesus in Acts 1:8.

The passage today describes a notable miracle performed by Peter and John. From this account, it is clear that the miracle was somewhat "accidental"; it was unplanned and happened on the spur of the moment. However, it became a significant catalyst in the early church's growth; no wonder Luke chose to record this event. We also see the reaction of the people to the miracle, Peter's follow-up reaction, which is a powerful presentation of the gospel, and the ultimate result, which is another two thousand souls added to the church. In addition, we also see the response of the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees.

### **Study the Scriptures: Read the Passage Acts 3:1-26, Acts 1:1-4**

Note your thoughts as you read:

Write down any questions that come to mind as you read:

**Think Through the Following Questions**

1. What do you think the phrase “the time of prayer” or the “hour of prayer” connotes?
2. This may be the first miracle performed by Peter post-resurrection. Reading through verses 4-7, can you describe what could have prompted Peter to attempt this miracle and what could have been going on in his mind as the event unfolded?
3. What do you think is the significance of this miracle to the beggar, the people watching, Apostle Peter and John, and the early church?
4. Are there lessons for us today about the connection between signs and wonders and the gospel?
5. What is the significance of Peter’s response in verse 12? What lessons can we learn from this today?
6. Read Acts 3:11-16. What is the essence of Peter’s message to the crowd?
7. Why do you think the captain of the temple and the Sadducees were greatly disturbed by the whole event?

**Lesson Learned: Are there any new things you learned from this passage today**

**Application: How Do You think this will impact your thinking and/or actions going forward?**