

Acts 3 - John Karmelich

1. If I had to play word-association with Chapter 3, it would be "new life."
 - a) You say "Acts, Chapter 3", and I'll say "new life."
 - b) Chapter 3 focuses on the new life of a crippled man.
 - i) It's the first recorded miracle by a follower of Jesus Christ.
 - ii) It describes a 40-something-year-old man *born* crippled, who never could walk.
 - a) Through the witness of Peter and John, the man "ups and walks."
 - iii) That crippled man was a true story.
 - iv) It is also an "analogy" for all human beings in general, and it summarizes our new life in Jesus after we are born again.
2. The second part of this chapter is Peter doing an impromptu sermon to a bunch of religious Jews who happened to see the miracle.
 - a) Given the fact the speech was not planned, the detail and information packed into that speech is amazing!
 - b) It gives us insight into what God can do with *anyone* once they are born again.
3. Chapter 3 is, in one sense, an epilogue to one verse of Chapter 2:
 - a) In the end of Chapter 2, we read of the 3,000 new believers getting together, helping each other in need, and listening to the teaching of the apostles. Then the author, Luke, adds this comment in Verse 43 of Chapter 2:
 - i) "Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles." (Acts 2:43, NIV)
 - b) Chapter 3 is one of those "many wonders and miraculous signs".
 - c) This takes place after the Pentecost holiday has come and gone, along with the crowds.
4. We're going to talk tonight about the power of miracles. I want to get into the subject of miracles and what place they have in the church today: how they are used, how they are abused, and to how to know when to trust them.
 - a) I don't believe miracles work like an "on/off" switch. God is in charge, and He supplies the power of miracles to anyone at anytime. I don't believe he gives them to any one person as a regular gift. (Especially if they are a televangelist! ☺)
 - i) Have you ever read, in the Gospels, where Jesus has said, "Okay, everybody out there who is sick, crippled and hurting, I command you to be well right now"? No!
 - a) Not that Jesus doesn't care for those who are hurting.
 - b) In fact we are instructed to pray for those who are sick. (James 5:14)
 - c) What we have to accept, as Christians, is that it is *God's will, not ours*.
 - d) God chooses to heal *whoever* and *whenever* He chooses.
 - (1) Often God leaves us in a sick or crippled state for *years* or *life* to be a witness to others, such as the case of the crippled man in this chapter.
 - (2) It sounds cruel when you think about it. God decides to leave this man crippled for forty years of his life so that Peter could come along one day and heal him!. It does sound cruel, unless one takes the eternal perspective. What is forty years compared to eternity? If you accept the fact that you are going to live forever, and the "great commission" is to help people realize that fact, it puts suffering in a whole new perspective. Jesus himself commented on this.
 - (a) The disciples were rejoicing because they were casting out demons. Jesus told them what they should be rejoicing about:
 - (i) "However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20 NIV)

- b) Most of the stories of miracles that I hear from people I respect usually missionaries. I believe God saves his best miracles as a sign for *unbelievers*. Like the story in this text, I usually see miracles performed on people who then become a *testimony* to others. The example in Chapter 3 is a perfect example of this, as we'll read further.
 - c) One has to be cautious of miracles too. I do believe God allows Satan certain "miraculous" powers as to truly give us free-will in choosing God over any other option. When you see a miracle, be careful to listen to the message that goes with the miracle.
 - i) "But even if we, *or an angel from heaven* [emphasis added], should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galatians 1:8 NIV)
 - d) With all of that out of my system, , let's get started on the chapter.
5. Chapter 3, Verse 1: One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer--at three in the afternoon.
- i) Some background notes:
 - a) Orthodox Jews pray 3 times per day. At 9:00 a.m., 3:00 p.m., and sunset.
 - b) Peter and John, who were born again believers, were still Jewish. They still looked to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
 - c) As time progresses through the Book of Acts, they will no longer be allowed in nor near the Temple, and the Christian movement grew, the Jewish religious leaders prevented them from coming near the Temple.
 - ii) Notice that Peter & John had:
 - a) No intention of performing a healing;
 - b) No intention of giving a sermon;
 - c) They went to the Temple to pray.
 - d) The application to us is that when you are actively seeking God
 - (1) Is when God can use you for His purposes.
6. Verse 2: Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.
- a) Scholars believe the "Beautiful" gate separated the area where Gentiles (non-Jewish people) could go from the area where only Jewish men and women were allowed (i.e. "court of women"). As the name implies, the gate was beautifully decorated.
 - b) I want to pause and consider this beggar for a moment.
 - i) In Chapter 4, we'll learn that this guy was over 40 years old.
 - ii) Imagine never being able to walk your entire life. (Stop and reflect on that).
 - iii) Imagine growing up and seeing your friends walking and running around.
 - iv) Imagine thinking you'll never amount to much, other than a beggar.
 - v) Imagine seeing the people walking to and from the Temple.
 - vi) We do know that this man was religious, as after he was healed, he praised God for the miracle. People who are non-religious don't always do that, even after great miracles.
 - vii) We can logically assume that this guy was probably familiar with Jesus.
 - viii) Jesus preached many a sermon from the area where this guy was begging.
 - ix) This guy probably saw Jesus perform many miracles, but due to his inability to walk, was unable to approach Jesus through the crowd, to get close enough to touch him.
 - x) I'm sure, like all the Jews in Jerusalem, he hoped Jesus was the Messiah, and had his hopes dashed when Jesus was crucified. He probably figured that was his last hope of ever walking again.
 - xi) After 40 years, he simply accepted the fact that he was destined to be a beggar.
 - c) Verse 3: When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. ⁴ Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" ⁵ So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Like all professional beggars, the man knew how to work a crowd.

- i) He probably looked for people making eye contact with him.
 - ii) Most beggars know which type of people are likely to give and "work" them!
 - d) I'm fascinated by Peter's quote of "Look at us!":
 - i) Did the thought of a miracle enter his mind at this point?
 - ii) Luke mentioned, in the last chapter, about the apostles performing miracles in Jesus' name. Did Peter, who came to the Temple for pray look at this guy as an opportunity?
 - iii) The missionaries I've heard speak, who have performed miracles, usually say that some "inner-voice" or "feeling" tells them what to do. They are often scared of those senses and fail to perform them out of a lack of faith. One missionary told of how he took someone's shriveled leg and made it instantly grow a few inches. When he heard a voice telling him to perform this sign, the first thing he did was "rebuke the voice in Jesus' name." When he heard the command again, he performed the miracle.
 - a) I liked Jon Courson's cute joke on this verse (talking like Peter): "I hope this guy stands up; if not, it's going to look bad on my application for Pope!"
7. Verse 6: Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."
- a) There is a classic joke that goes: "The man asked for "alms" and Peter gave him "legs." ☺
 - b) Some commentators pointed out that Peter probably had access to lots of money. New believers were giving generously to support the church. Peter and John may not have had anything on them.
 - i) This is Peter, probably being led by God at this point, to lift the man up.
 - c) It is important to understand what a person's "name" means in that culture.
 - i) A "name" refers to a person's reputation. If I cure somebody in "Jesus' name," I am associating that cure with Jesus.
 - ii) The best analogy I heard is like the signature on a check. The person signing the check is saying, "That's my name. I'm associating myself with the dollar figure written on this check."
 - iii) A popular ending for Christian prayer is, "In Jesus' name we pray, Amen."
 - a) As Christians, we pray to the Father through Jesus Christ.
 - b) We can approach God only because of what Jesus did for us, not based on our "good reputation" or "good name." Therefore, it is on Jesus' reputation (name) we can approach God, and thus, the prayer ending.
8. Verse 7: Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.
- a) The author, Luke, was a doctor by profession. The Greek words used for "crippled from birth" (Verse 2), and "feet and ankles became strong" are both Greek medical terms, that only a doctor would use.
 - b) I conjectured earlier that this "formerly crippled guy" was a religious man. My argument is that his first words were not to thank Peter and John, but to thank God for the miracle. That was a person with a God-centered mind.
 - c) One of the beautiful analogies about this whole story is to see it as a "type" of any and all believers in Christ. Let me explain:
 - i) Here was a man born crippled.
 - ii) We are all born in a sinful state.
 - a) "As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one;" (Romans 3:10 NIV)
 - iii) In order to be saved, someone has to lead us to Jesus:
 - a) This passage has an "unnamed" person who carries the cripple every day to the Beautiful gate.

- b) This is a wonderful "type" of the Holy Spirit. That is, an unnamed person working in the background, drawing people to Christ.
 - iv) The "gift" of walking was without merit. It was not earned.
 - (1) "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast [emphasis added]." (Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV)
 - v) What we must do as Christians is "accept" that Gift. The man was willing to stand up and walk.
 - a) Here's a man that never experienced walking before. I bet he tried it slowly at first, then walked faster as he learned how.
 - b) Eventually, he was walking, jumping and praising God. (Verse 9)
 - vi) That should be our attitude toward our salvation. Leap with joy! As I stated a page back, we are going to live forever! For that alone we should be praising God.
 - d) Like us, the man then became a living witness for Jesus. Just like the rest of us!
 - e) Like all "baby-Christians," he didn't know the Bible. He didn't know what to say. All he knew that the power of Jesus' name made him into a new man.
 - i) Isn't that a wonderful picture of the power of the Gospel for the last 2,000 years!
- 9. Verse 9: When all the people saw him walking and praising God,¹⁰ they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.
 - a) The man became a living witness, and an opportunity.
 - b) Before we begin the next section, remember that Pentecost was gone. The people who were hanging out in the Temple at this moment were the "regulars." They were the religious Jews who lived in Jerusalem then. I would suspect some of the religious leaders were among the crowd.
- 10. Verse 11: While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade.
 - a) The Greek word for "held on" literally means "cling to."
 - b) The beggar just had the biggest moment of his life. He was not about to lose Peter and John in the crowd.
 - c) Peter, of course, saw this as an opportunity to preach about Christ.
 - i) Notice the lack of credit Peter gives to himself.
 - ii) Also notice the "Jewishness" of the speech.
 - a) When you give any type of public speech, "know your audience".
 - iii) Remember that Peter did not come to the temple with the idea of giving a sermon.
 - a) It is amazing to study this speech, considering it was improvised.
 - b) Give the Holy Spirit credit for the beauty of the speech:
 - c) Jesus himself taught on this:
 - (1) "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."
(Luke 12:11-12 NIV)
 - (2) It isn't an excuse to not study, God will just prepare us for moments like that!
- 11. On to Peter's 2nd Sermon (the 1st Sermon was in Chapter 2)
 - a) When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"
 - i) Notice Peter did not give himself nor John any credit for this miracle.
 - ii) Pride is a danger for all Christians. Our focus needs to be on Him.

12. Peter continues, in Verse 13: 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.
 - a) Remember that these were the people who were there.
 - b) These are the Jerusalem "regulars." They knew all about Jesus' miracles, his teachings, his crucifixion, the trial before Pilate.
13. Verse 14: You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.
 - a) Peter pours on the guilt here.
 - b) Unfortunately, we tend to forget that when we are teaching about Christ.
 - c) Some people need to realize they are sinful before they can come to repentance.
 - d) Getting on my soapbox for a second, too many people preach the "joys and goodness" of Christ without first teaching repentance. Satan's greatest lie to us is always "I'm a pretty good person"; "I'm not as bad as some people"; and "I deserve to be in heaven based on who I am."
 - i) This is why the law (the Ten Commandments) was established about 1,500 years prior to Jesus coming on the scene. People need to realize they are sinners before they realize they are in need of a savior.
 - ii) Some years back there's a great street preacher who works in Santa Monica named Ray Comfort. He shows people the Ten Commandments and asked, "Ever broke one of these? Once? That means you've sinned. What does that make you? A sinner." And he goes on from there.
 - iii) To put in a plug for Ray, he sells some of the best and most creative Christian tracts I've ever seen. They're available at www.raycomfort.com.
 - iv) Okay, now I've really drifted off-topic. Sorry about that.
 - e) Let's talk about Verse 15: Peter says "you killed the author of life."
 - i) Does that mean Peter is accusing his fellow Jews of first-degree murder?
 - ii) I would argue no, and my evidence is Verse 17, where Peter says they (the Jews) acted in ignorance.
 - iii) I would argue that anyone who rejects Jesus as Lord is guilty of murder, but in the "second degree." Second-degree murder is to be a "willing accomplice."
 - iv) Nobody killed Jesus. Jesus freely died for our sins out of his own will.
 - a) I like the quote by a famous (late) pastor in my area: Chuck Smith. He said, "If you want to blame somebody for the murder of Jesus, blame me, he died for my sins!"
 - f) Last part of this verse, and we'll move on. Peter concludes by saying "we are witnesses to this." Jewish law says in order for something to be true, two or more witnesses must agree on the facts (Deuteronomy 19:15, et al.). Peter was saying he and John were witnesses.
14. Back to the sermon. Verse 16: By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.
 - a) People can deny the Bible is true.
 - b) People can deny that God exists.
 - c) But people *cannot* deny a changed life.
 - d) The greatest witness one can be for God is evidence of your life.
 - i) Here was a man whose life, for all intents and purposes, was wasted. He had to beg just to survive. Now he is walking and is of use to God. Again, this was us in our sinful state before we could be of use to God.
 - e) Again, notice Peter giving Jesus the credit, not himself.

15. Peter continues, in Verse 17: "Now, brothers, 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 Christ would suffer.
- a) That is one of the great debates in history between Judaism and Christianity. Does the "Christ" have to suffer?
 - b) Most Jews are not interested in a suffering Messiah. Religious Jewish people believe they are saved because they keep the law and pray regularly. They believe they are good enough to get into heaven or they are automatically saved because they are Jewish who obey the Law.
 - c) The greatest chapter in the Bible on the concept of the "suffering" Messiah is the last part of Isaiah Chapter 52, beginning at Verse 13, and includes all of Chapter 53.
 - i) I defy anyone to read this and not see Jesus!
 - ii) I remember one time having a conversation with someone who asked, "How do you know Jesus is really the Messiah"? I had them read Isaiah 53 and they said, "Okay, that's good. I'm impressed." The conversation went on from there.
 - iii) It reads like it was describing exactly what Jesus did for us on the cross!
 - iv) The amazing thing is that crucifixion was not invented until hundreds of years later.
 - v) The Jews for Jesus were famous some time back for putting full page advertisements in The New York Times that say (in effect), "Attention fellow Jews: Why do you ignore Isaiah Chapter 53?"
 - vi) Let me give you 2 verses from this section just to give you a flavor of this:
 - a) "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all [emphasis added]. (Isaiah 53:5-6 NIV)
 - b) Modern Jews will sometimes argue that this passage speaks of Israel and not the Messiah. That argument doesn't make sense. You mean God laid the guilt of the world on Israel? How is that fair, or possible?
 - d) One other famous passage that speaks of the Messiah as suffering is Psalm 22.
 - i) When Jesus is on the cross he quotes the opening Verse of Psalm 22:
 - a) "About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46 NIV) That's the opening line of Psalm 22.
 - b) It's almost as if Jesus wanted to call our attention to this Psalm.
 - c) This Psalm reads like it was written from the Cross itself!
 - (1) It predicts how all his bones will be out of joint, a medical condition brought on by crucifixion (Verse. 14)
 - (2) It predicts suffocation, another medical condition brought on by crucifixion (Verse 15)
 - (3) It predicts how people (the soldiers) will cast lots for his clothing (Verse 18)
 - d) Not convinced yet? Coincidence? Try this verse from Psalm 22:
 - e) "They have pierced my hands and my feet." (Verse 16b, NIV)
 - (1) Crucifixion was not invented as a form of punishment until hundreds of years after David wrote this Psalm.
 - e) Okay, I've gone on for most of a page teaching "how the Christ will suffer" as predicted in the Old Testament. Again, remember that Peter was speaking to an audience who *knew* the Old Testament.
 - f) Remember, that Peter:
 - i) First focused on their guilt for rejecting their Messiah;
 - ii) Then taught that the death of the Messiah was predicted in the Bible.

16. Now its time for the closer. (This is a good simple model of teaching the Gospel!)
 Verse 19: Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,
- a) Peter is first teaching that it is not too late. Even though they have done this horrible crime of rejecting their long awaited Messiah, they have not lost their salvation.
 - b) This is an important principal for us as Christians to remember when we witness to others. Many people suffer from horrible depression about their lives. Because they don't think they are "good enough" for heaven or more likely "good enough for those church people," they are condemned because of some past action. Many a person does not go to church because they think "I'm beyond help" or "I've done too many bad things, I'll never be accepted there." It is essential to teach that God will forgive all sins, except the one of continually rejecting God's free offer of salvation. That is what "blaspheming of the Holy Spirit" is, that Jesus says is an unforgivable sin. (Matthew 12:31, et al.)
17. I'm going to repeat the last part of Verse 19 again, as it ties in to the next couple of verses.
 Verse 19, part 2: that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. ²¹ He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.
- a) Okay, it's time for me to get into trouble. I'm about to get into a doctrine that is not taught by all Christian churches. Even within the mainstream denominations, there is debate over this. So keep that in mind over the next section of comments.
 - b) There is a separate issue being taken on here besides the personal rejection of Jesus.
 - c) That is, the corporate rejection of Jesus, the Messiah.
 - d) The Jews have blown it.
 - i) The question is, what is to become of Israel?
 - ii) For centuries, the Jews have lived a more strict lifestyle than the surrounding nations, lived by a moral code.
 - a) Yes there is the promise of personal salvation.
 - b) But there are also the promises of a ruling Messiah.
 - iii) Remember that the main reason Jesus was rejected was that people didn't want a suffering Messiah (Messiah means "king"), they wanted a ruling Messiah. They wanted somebody to overthrow Rome. They wanted to setup the "millennial" kingdom now!
 - iv) Remember that the Jews were partially right, in that the Old Testament does predict a Messiah that will rule from Jerusalem.
 - a) In the New Testament, this is known as "the Millennium." It is described in Revelation, Chapter 20. In this chapter, the 1,000-year period is mentioned six times.
 - b) We know more about the millennium from reading the Old Testament than the New Testament.
 - c) Most of the passages of peace, a ruling Messiah, come from books like Isaiah and Zechariah.
 - v) Okay, here's the other view: Those who don't believe in a literal millennium are called "amillennialist," literally meaning no-millennium. This is the main view of the Roman Catholic Church, among others. They interpret the millennium as a "spiritual peace" that comes from knowing Jesus. They further argue that since the Jews have rejected their Messiah, they are no longer entitled to the promises of the Old Testament.
 - a) My view of this? Nonsense. Revelation 20 mentions the 1,000-year period six times. How many times does God have to say something to take it literally?

- b) Second, I don't believe God goes back on his promises. If we can't trust God in his unconditional promises to the nation Israel, how can we trust him in the promises made to the Christian church in New Testament?
 - c) This whole viewpoint is discussed in detail in Romans, Chapters 9, 10 and 11.
 - d) Realize that Romans 9 focuses on Israel past, Romans 10 focuses on Israel present, and 11 focuses on Israel in the future.
- vi) Here is the key verse to this whole viewpoint: "I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved [emphasis added], as it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.'" (Romans 11:25-27 NIV)
- a) "The full number of Gentiles" is like God with a hand-clicker-counter. Every time somebody gets saved, there goes another "click." Nobody knows the exact number of total believers except God the Father (Matthew 24:36). God designed it that way to keep us "on our toes" and to keep Satan working hard to prevent that last believer from coming in!
 - b) Does that mean there will be a day when a Jew can be saved just for being a Jew and not coming to God by faith in Jesus?
 - (1) No! God made promises to Israel that are unconditional upon the church. I believe that when Jesus comes back they will recognize who Jesus is, and realize their mistake, and thus turn to Jesus (in faith) realizing their error.
 - (a) Here's my supporting prophecy, from the book of Zechariah:
 - (b) "And I will (future tense!) pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son." [emphasis added] (Zechariah 12:10 NIV)
 - (c) I should also add, as a choice, you wouldn't want to get saved that way. You'd have to survive the 7-year tribulation period, which if you've read Revelation, is no easy trick!
 - e) Okay, I've been off on a tangent for a page and half now. Why? Because I think Peter is making the same point. They made the mistake of rejecting Jesus both personally and corporately. Peter is trying to "pound the point home" that it is not too late.
 - f) Listen to Verses 19-21, again, with all of this in mind: ¹⁹Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. ²¹ He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.
18. Peter continues, Verse 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. ²³ Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.'
- a) Peter is quoting from Deuteronomy 18:15.
 - b) Moses says that God will raise up a "prophet like me."
 - i) Traditional Judaism taught that this referred to Joshua his successor; or
 - ii) A future person that will *lead* the people to the Messiah.
 - iii) Remember that when John the Baptist was preaching, one of the questions they asked John is are you "the Prophet" (John 1:21). John said no. They asked this question after asking if John the Baptist was the Messiah. Therefore, at least during that period of time, the Jews thought of "the Prophet" and the Messiah as separate entities.

- c) Peter is making the point that they are one and the same. "The prophet" that Moses was referring to, does point to Jesus, as Peter is making the point here.
 - d) Peter is saying, in effect: "Hey, you guys respect Moses. Moses said you must listen to 'the Prophet.' Well Jesus is that guy, so listen to Him!"
19. Peter continues, Verse 24: Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. ²⁵ And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers.
- a) Samuel and the prophets told of "this day." What day? The "day" (i.e. time era) of Jesus' 1st coming. That is the focus of prophecy.
 - i) "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Revelation 19:10b, NIV)
 - ii) Most scholars estimate that over 300 Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus' first coming.
 - b) The Book of Samuel (today broken into 1st and 2nd Samuel) is mostly about David's rise to power and his reign as King of Israel.
 - i) Samuel himself was a prophet anointed by God, who then in turn anointed David.
 - a) It is thought that he contributed to most of the book, thus the title.
 - ii) It is difficult to find an exact passage in Samuel where the Messiah is predicted.
 - iii) I suspect Peter used this reference in that Samuel anointed David as King, and David is traditionally thought of as a "type" of the Messiah.
 - iv) Also, in 2 Samuel 7:12-16, the prophet Nathan predicts the following:
 - v) Nathan said: "When your (David's) days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom." (2 Samuel 7:12 NIV)
 - a) Part of this passage sounds like it is describing Solomon. But the scope of the prophecy goes far beyond Solomon.
 - b) Verse 16: "Your house and your kingdom will endure *forever* before me; your throne will be established forever." [emphasis added] (2 Sam 7:16 NIV)
 - c) Jesus will not just rule for 1,000 years. His kingdom will last forever.
20. Peter finishes his point: He said to Abraham, "Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed." ²⁶ When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.
- a) God made a promise to Abraham that did not have any conditions attached.
 - b) In Genesis 12:3, God told Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:3 NIV)
 - i) Notice the lack of "if you do this, Abraham..." in this statement.
 - ii) This is known as the Abrahamic Covenant (covenant just means contract).
 - iii) It's a "one-way" covenant as there are no requirements on Abraham's part.
 - c) This is closing the argument about how its not too late for the Jews individually, as well as corporately. That the reason God will *still* set up a millennial kingdom from Jerusalem is the unconditional promise of blessing through you. The "through you" refers to Abraham's offspring, i.e. the Jewish people.
 - d) Jesus does something interesting, early in his ministry:
 - i) These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'" (Matthew 10:5-7 NIV)
 - ii) What's Jesus doing?
 - iii) He is saying that the purpose of his ministry was to come to the people of Israel.
 - iv) It is only because of their rejection that Jesus turned to the Gentiles.

- v) Does that mean that if Jesus had been accepted by the Jews of that day, we wouldn't have the gentile (all non-Jews) church today? Who knows? We're speculating on what never happened. I *do know* that God knows all things. This was all part of his game plan. That doesn't excuse the Jews. Even though God knows all things, we don't. He still holds us accountable for our "free-will" decision. (There. How's that for a good balance between "pre-destiny" and "free-will" ☺)
21. Well, that's a strange place for the chapter to end, but it does just that.
- a) Just remember that the chapter divisions were added around the 11th Century, so don't take them too seriously.
 - b) The story continues next time, and so shall we.
 - c) There were not that many verses in this chapter, and so I used the opportunity to take a few detours. I hope they were helpful.
 - d) Remember that some of these views, especially those about end-times, the Church, and Jews, are a big debate among Bible scholars. It is *a* view, not *the* view.
22. On that note, I'll end it here. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, we thank you for these lessons on our new life in Jesus Christ. Like Peter, give us an *attitude* and the persistence of a strong prayer life, so that we may be of service to you at your calling. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, and the knowledge of your Word, so that we may go out in boldness, and give an answer to those who ask it of us. More importantly, help us to *live* out our lives for your Glory. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.