

Acts 3

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Tape #8092
By Chuck Smith

Turn now to Acts chapter three, a very exciting chapter. In the second chapter, in verse 43, we read, *Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles*. So now as we get into chapter three, one of those wonders and signs is recorded for us. This is just one of many of the things that were happening in the early church.

¹ Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. Now the Jews had three times for prayer. They had prayer at nine in the morning, at twelve noon and three in the afternoon. So this is the three o'clock prayer session. It was called the evening prayer session. Peter and John were going into the temple to pray. The early Christians did not really see themselves as separate from Judaism. They still went to the temple to worship. It was still that center place of the religious life of the nation of Israel. So Peter and John were going into the temple just for prayer. And as we look at chapter three, we see the men that God used in such a marvelous way. I think that there is probably in each of our hearts, that desire to be used of God. How I desire that God would use my life in the accomplishing of His purposes! I think one of the most oft asked questions is, how can I know the will of God? We desire to know God's will. We desire to be used of God because we've come to realize that nothing else really matters. Life apart from the fulfilling of God's purpose is very empty indeed. What does God want me to do? What of eternal value can I do?

So here are the men that God used. It is interesting to note the characteristics of these men. Of course, right off the top we see that they were men of prayer. God uses men of prayer. That should not surprise us. Surely if I want God to use my life, I need to be in contact with God, daily contact with God. I need to seek His guidance. I need to seek His counsel. I should not move or act independent of God's directions. So men of prayer, looking to the Lord in prayer for guidance, for strength, for wisdom.

Now as they were going into the temple. ² And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; Now even to the present day you go to the Middle East and you will find beggars. People, who have physical disabilities, are there by the Damascus Gate especially, by St. Stephen's Gate, who are begging for money from the people who enter into the gates of the old city of Jerusalem. This man was carried each day to this spot at the temple, where he begged people for money, who were going in to worship. ³ who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. For some money. ⁴ And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." ⁵ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So here is a man about forty years of age. He's never been able to walk. He is a common sight to the people in Jerusalem because daily he is there at the gate, begging. And Peter speaks to this man the word of faith. He said to him, what I have I will give to you in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk! Jesus had said to the disciples whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, that I will do that the Father might be glorified in the Son. Here now they are beginning to exercise the power of the name of Jesus Christ. God has given Him a name that is above all names. That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess.

We know that in the New Testament the name of Jesus was used in the exorcising of the demonic powers. The seven sons of Sceva we will find later on in the Book of Acts, (Acts 19:13-16), were watching the Apostles casting out these evil spirits in the name of Jesus. They got hold of a man who was possessed by evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" And they turned on the seven fellows, ripped their clothes off and they fled for their lives. But it only shows that the name of Jesus was used in the exorcising of evil spirits. The

name of Jesus was used in the healing of those people who were in need of healing. So in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

Now I believe that it took a great deal of faith for Peter to take the man by the right hand and lift him to his feet. Can you imagine yourself doing such a thing? What do you suppose was going through Peter's mind? I know what would be going through my mind. I hope this guy stands! I hope he doesn't collapse. You know, being accused of cruelty to the disabled if this guy should collapse! I believe that as the New Testament teaches in 1 Corinthians 12, that there is a special gift of faith that God gives to us at certain times in certain situations. It isn't something that we have at all times but there are certain times when God just sort of assures our hearts that he is going to do a work and He gives us special faith, where we boldly step out on that strong impression that comes to us by the Spirit.

Several years ago when Calvary Chapel was worshipping a few blocks away in the little chapel, after a Sunday morning service, some young people wheeled their grandfather up to the front where Pastor Chuck was standing. They asked him if he would pray for their grandfather. Pastor Chuck had just been reading the third chapter of Acts and reading about Peter speaking the word of faith in the name of Jesus Christ, rise up and walk and then lifting the crippled man to his feet. So Pastor Chuck prayed for this grandfather of theirs, sitting in the wheelchair. As he was praying, he got this strong impression, speak the word of faith and lift him up. (Oh no, no way!) But it was so strong, okay here goes. So when he was through praying, he said, "Stand up and walk". He lifted the man out of the wheelchair and set him on his feet. And he began to walk! He walked up the aisle of the church and sort of trotted back. The grandkids were doing cartwheels practically, I mean they were so excited. They said, "We wanted you to pray for his cold!" They said he hasn't walked in five years, you know. Of course they all rejoiced in the power of the Lord.

The following Wednesday night Pastor Chuck was in Tucson, Arizona. It was Thanksgiving Eve. He was invited to speak there at a church. And so after service, a man came up. His wife was in a wheelchair. He explained that she had had a stroke and he asked Pastor Chuck to pray for her, that God would heal her. A beautiful Christian couple. And Pastor Chuck prayed for her that God would heal her and he patted her on the shoulder and said, May the Lord bless you. We will continue to pray. We know that God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think. Then her husband wheeled her out of the church. Pastor Chuck's son who was with him that Sunday morning turned to him and said, Dad, how come you didn't lift her out of the chair like you did that guy last Sunday morning? Pastor Chuck responded, because I didn't have the faith. God didn't give to me the faith to do it. So apparently there are times that it is just very strong. It's not all the time. Pastor Chuck does not make it a practice of lifting people out of wheelchairs, in fact that was the only time he has ever done it. In the natural he would be very frightened to do it, but yet I believe that this is one of the characteristics of the man that God uses. It is a man who dares to step out in faith, men of faith.

Now I'm sure much to Peter's relief, ⁸*So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them--walking, leaping, and praising God.* You can imagine! He's never walked in his life before! He's about forty years old. Suddenly he has the capacity, so he is not just walking. He is jumping, too! So excited over this miracle that has happened.

⁹*And all the people saw him walking and praising God.* ¹⁰*Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.* Again back in the last chapter, many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles and the people were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto this man.

¹¹*Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed.* Here is a marvelous thing. People don't understand it but the crowd is gathering together quickly because it just, you know, just that buzz that goes through the whole place. And thousands of people came crowding into Solomon's porch to see what is happening, what is going on.

¹²*So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? Notice that the inference here is that the people were looking at Peter and John as though they were some kind of special, holy instruments. They were relating the miracle to Peter and John.*

Now later on in the Book of Acts as Paul was in Lystra and as he is preaching, there is a lame man there that is about forty years old. Paul perceived that this man had faith to be healed and he said, brother Jesus Christ makes you whole. Stand up! And the fellow stood up. The people said the gods have come down. Well, that is pretty much the reaction and the response of the people here. They are looking, like ooooooh. You must be very holy and very close to God! They are beginning to look at them in awe, almost idolizing. There is a incumbent danger to exercising any of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. That is whenever God is working in a special way through an individual, people are very prone to exalt the individual. To begin to look at that person as though he is closer to God than anyone else. There comes almost an aura of wonder when people get around those people that God uses. They develop foolish little things like wanting to come up and just touch them, you know. I touched Billy Graham! We are so prone to exalt the instrument.

Now the danger for the person who is exercising those gifts of the Holy Spirit is, the danger is that they start sometimes receiving the adulation, the admiration from the crowd. The moment you begin to receive, the credit or you begin to accept the adulation, your ministry is in a very precarious position. Notice how Peter immediately disassociates himself from the miracle. He corrects them immediately. Why look so intently at us as though as by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? We didn't have anything to do with it. Why do you look at us? Then he begins to explain the miracle that they saw. The men that God uses are men who are not seeking glory or fame for themselves. They are men who have come to the cross in their own lives.

As Paul the Apostle, (Galatians 2:20) *I am crucified with Christ; it no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

Paul said (Colossians 3:4) *When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.* And they are men who are not looking for fame. They're not looking for glory. They're not attracting people to themselves nor or they desiring to attract people to themselves. They are men who are wanting to bring glory unto God's Son. That is their chief and preeminent desire just to bring men to Jesus not to themselves, but to Jesus. So Peter immediately points them away from himself. He points them to God.

¹³*The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.* John in his gospel shows the effort that Pilate made to release Jesus. (John 19:12) John points out that Pilate did not want to condemn Jesus and that he sought his best to release Jesus, but they pressured and badgered him until he was forced to release Jesus unto them to be crucified. But he was reluctant to do so and ultimately washed his hands. He said look, I've washed my hands of this whole thing. I'm innocent of this just Person. You see to it.

So here Peter reminds them that God has now glorified His Son, Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. ¹⁴*But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you,* So he is showing them how horrible. Here is Jesus. He is Holy. He is just. And you rejected Him. You wanted a murderer to be delivered. ¹⁵*and killed the Prince of life,* That sounds like a real oxymoron, doesn't it? You've killed the Prince of Life. *whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.* Now, as we have said before, the resurrection of Christ was the gospel that was preached by the Apostles. Here is it is! You've killed Him. God has raised Him from the dead and we are witnesses! We have seen Him! And so again, bearing witness of the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is the heart of the gospel! Without the resurrection you have no gospel.

As Paul said, (1 Corinthians 15:17) *And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins and of all people the most pitiable or miserable!*

So the witness of the resurrection of Jesus. God raised Him from the dead. ¹⁶*And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know.* So men of faith, Peter is declaring it. It is through His name and faith in His name, this man is standing here whole.

But notice he goes on to say, *Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.* So Peter is not only saying, it's through faith and faith in His name. He doesn't stop there because people would say, oh, a great man of faith! Aren't you wonderful? I wish I had the faith that you have. They would be exalting him for his faith. So Peter isn't willing to take credit for the faith. He said, it is the faith which comes through Him. So He is the author and the finisher of our faith according to Hebrews. (Hebrews 12:2). Paul tells us (Romans 12:3) that God is given to every man a measure of faith. Then in the Corinthians epistle, as he lists the gifts of the Spirit, he lists that gift of faith. So Peter is saying this is an exercise of a gift of God. The Lord gave me the faith! I don't go around raising lame people to their feet, but the Lord gave me the faith. It is the faith. It is the faith which is by Him, that this man has this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. So that complete turning them over to Jesus Christ and away from himself. So important in any ministry that you might exercise for the Lord!

Now Peter has laid a heavy, heavy, trip on them. You denied the Holy One and the Just. Pilate was determined to let Him go, but you desired a murder. This was a heavy accusation. So Peter says, ¹⁷*Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance,* (You were ignorant of the truth. I know that.) *as did also your rulers.* ¹⁸*But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.* Now you remember in the study last week, Peter said, Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death. Now when he talks to them again about the crucifixion of Jesus, he makes reference to all that the prophets spoke or that God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Now as you read Isaiah 53 and as you read Psalm 22 and as you read these other passages of Scriptures that speak of the suffering of the Messiah, you wonder, how is it that the Jews knowing the Scriptures as they did, didn't realize that the Messiah was to suffer when it is so plainly prophesied in the Word? How is it that they didn't recognize that this had to happen to the Messiah? What they usually did is spiritualize the Scriptures that had to do with the suffering and they only accepted as literal the Scriptures that spoke of His glorious reign, of the kingdom, of His sitting upon the throne. That was accepted as literal but they spiritualized the other prophecies that dealt with His suffering and with His death. With His being despised and rejected, they spiritualized those Scriptures. That's why it's dangerous to spiritualize Scriptures, because you can take away the meaning through spiritualizing Scriptures. Pastor Chuck tries very hard not to spiritualize. There are some who make everything mean something. You can lose the real meaning of a passage by spiritualizing the passage. That's what they did with the passages that dealt with the suffering of the Messiah and thus through ignorance they participated in the very things that were prophesied that should happen to the Messiah. So those things which God had shown before by the mouth of His prophets that the Messiah should suffer, He has so fulfilled.

So, ¹⁹*Repent* Now in the second chapter when Peter had finished his message and they said, Men and brethren, what shall we do, we have crucified the Lord of Glory? Peter said to repent, change! *Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,* (Oh, I love those words, blotted out, especially when it refers to my sin. Isn't it glorious, blotted out? Made not to exist! Your sins can be blotted out. You don't need to carry the guilt of your past! You don't need to go around condemned! God will blot out that past. All of that past, God will blot out!) *so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,* Oh, isn't it a glorious and refreshing thing to just be in the Lord's presence? You know, we come into worship services sometimes and be so physically weary, but by the time the services are over to feel such strength, refreshed from the presence of the Lord! ²⁰*and that He may send Jesus Christ,* (the Messiah) *who was preached to you before,* ²¹*whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has*

spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. So he makes reference to the Scriptures that told of the suffering of the Messiah, but then he is now making references to the Scriptures that tell of the glorious reign of the Messiah! But He must be in heaven, He must be received into heaven until the time when God is going to restore all things, that is, when God is again going to deal with the nation of Israel. And God is again going to make them His primary focus of work upon the earth.

We currently are living in a time gap that is called the “times of the Gentiles.” And this time of the Gentiles, basically began with the death of Zedekiah, the last king of Israel, and the Babylonian captivity. And from the time of the Babylonian captivity of the nation of Israel and so forth, back around 600 BC, from that time until now has been known in the Scriptures as the times of the Gentiles. Now Jesus said that Jerusalem will be trodden under the foot of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. This prophecy seems to be coming close to fulfillment. It would appear that in 1967 when the Jews came in and they took Jerusalem again, that the times of the Gentiles were pretty much over because Jerusalem was then under Jewish control. But I believe that the times of the Gentiles will not be over until the church is taken out. Then we will begin once more, God’s dealing with the nation of Israel for God has seven years that He has yet to deal with them. The final seven years of God’s dealing with the nation of Israel and the restitution of all things. The prophet Ezekiel in chapters thirty six, thirty seven, thirty eight, and thirty nine, he speaks of these times. Also in chapter forty, the later portion of the Book of Ezekiel, deals with these times when God is going to restore the nation of Israel to its prominent place that God once had placed it in as God’s chosen people and God working among them. That is yet to come. All of the prophets prophesied of this time when the restoration of the nation of Israel would take place. There are those who take this Scripture, the final restitution of all things and they have the doctrine of what they call final restitution. They say that ultimately in the end everybody is going to be saved. Even Satan is going to come and is going to be converted and, you know, everybody will get to heaven by some way or another. You’ll all make it you know, the final restitution of everything. The Bible does not teach that because this is the passage of Scripture that they use. This doesn’t teach it because he points out that these are the things that God has spoken by the mouth of all of His holy prophets since the world began. So if you go back and you get the gist of the prophecies from the beginning, they all deal with God’s taking back again the nation of Israel. Look at Hosea the prophet. You remember the story. God said, marry this gal. He did. She became unfaithful and went out and committed adultery and so forth and went to the bottom. God said now go get her. Wash her up and take her back as your wife again. Then he preached to them of God’s relationship with Israel. How God had chosen Israel, but they had turned away from God. And they had committed spiritual fornication and adultery and yet how God is going to take them back as His people again. And throughout the Scriptures, over and over, the prophets tell of this work of God among the nation of Israel in the last days. So heaven is going to receive Jesus until this happens. At the end of the seven year period, then Jesus will come again and He will establish God’s Kingdom upon the earth. But He has to be received into heaven until these things are fulfilled. So we watch with keen interest as we have definitely entered into this beginning of this final restitution. You take Ezekiel, chapter thirty six, the prophecy concerning the mountains of Israel being covered with trees again and all. That has happened and is happening. The fields bringing forth and the agricultural development. That is happening. Chapter thirty seven, their becoming a nation once more. That has happened. Then in chapter thirty eight, this has not yet happened, but that is where we are. Between chapters thirty seven and thirty eight. One day you are going to read that Iran, Syria, Russia, Libya and Turkey and all have joined together in an invasion of Israel. That will be chapter thirty eight of Ezekiel. But we are right in there. It has begun but it will culminate in the seven years in which the Lord will be dealing very powerfully and directly with the nation of Israel.

So these are the things spoken by the prophets, ²²*For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.* The prophecy of Moses concerning the Messiah. God will raise up a prophet like unto me, he said. And to Him you shall hear in all things. The Jews today take this prophecy of Moses as one of the reasons for

their rejecting Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Moses said the Lord will raise up a prophet like unto me. And they say Moses was just a man and the Messiah will be just a man. He will not be the Son of God. We reject Jesus as the Messiah because He claimed He was the Son of God. That is their argument and their reasoning. But they have difficulty with Isaiah chapter nine (Isaiah 9:6) that said, *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* That one gives them problems. Also Psalm two (Psalm 2:7), *You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.* And the interesting thing is that the earlier Rabbis, at the time of Christ, all felt that the Messiah would be the Son of God. In fact when Jesus was being cross examined by the high priest, he said, are You the Messiah? He said, Jesus said, you said it. He then said are You the Son of God? Because they equated the Messiah with the Son of God, because of the prophecy. This is sort of a new invention by the rabbis of late, saying, you know, He is going to be a man because Moses was a man. When Peter made his confession (Matthew 16:16), he said, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Because they believed that the Messiah was to be, and they were correct, He was to be the Son of God. Today, with this denial of Jesus because He said He was the Son of God, it makes a real dilemma for them. And that is why many of them were deceived in believing that this rabbi, Schneerson was the Messiah, because he was a man. And if the Messiah is only going to be a man, then how will you know he is the Messiah? How will you recognize him as the Messiah, if he is just a man? And they have difficulty with that, but their stock answer is usually is that he will lead us in the rebuilding of the temple. Now that is rather interesting in light according to the prophecy in Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27), God had these seventy, seven year periods that He was going to deal with the nation of Israel, of which sixty nine have already been fulfilled and the seventieth is this seven year cycle which is yet to come, which we mentioned earlier. That at the beginning of this final seven year cycle, the man of sin, the antichrist, is going to make a covenant with the nation of Israel. And through this covenant they will rebuild their temple and will begin sacrificing again. And it is in the middle of that seven year period that he comes and he profanes the new temple. He offers the abomination which will bring on the great tribulation. So it's an interesting thing that today the Jews are ready to accept some man who will come along and help them rebuild their temple. And if the antichrist makes a covenant and in that covenant there is that agreement for the rebuilding of the temple, they are ready to hail him as their Messiah, their Savior! Jesus said (John 5:43), *"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive."* It seems like they are perfectly setup for that right now because of the prophecy of Moses that there shall come a man, a prophet like me and him you shall hear in all things, whatever he says to you.

²³ *And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'* ²⁴ *Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.* It's general. It's laced throughout all of the prophecies, going back, of course, from the beginning. He said all of the prophets from the beginning and then He comes, and since the time of Samuel. This has been the general theme of the prophets concerning the Messiah and concerning the glorious reign of the Messiah.

He said, ²⁵ *You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers,* (you are the Jews) *saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'* You are the children of Abraham. God promised to Abraham that through his seed all of the nations of the earth would be blessed. (Genesis 12:3) Now Abraham understood that promise as did those in the Old Testament that God had made to Abraham that the Messiah would be a descendent of Abraham. Later, God repeated that promise to David. So in order to lay claim to the Messiah, you would have to prove that you are a descendent of Abraham and a descendent of David. That is why in the New Testament when it gives to us the genealogy of Mary, it traces her genealogy back to Abraham, to show, and it goes through David, to show that Jesus was a descendent of David and a descendent of Abraham, the requirements of the prophecies. Abraham was promised that through his seed. Now Paul in Galatians chapter three (Galatians 3:16) points out that that is singular in the

Hebrew. It is seed as unto one. Not seeds as unto many. In other words, the Jewish nation wasn't to be a blessing to all nations. That wasn't the promise. The promise was that there would one of Abraham's descendants that would bring a blessing to all of the nations. So here are we today, blessed because of Jesus Christ who came from the seed of Abraham. So the prophecy is fulfilled! The promise is fulfilled! We are blessed through Jesus, that was what the promise was. Through Him all the nations of the world would be blessed. Not just the nation of Israel. The Gospel wasn't just for the Jews only. Jews first, but also to the Greeks. Thus, all of the nations of the world, blessed through Jesus!

²⁶*To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."* The glorious blessing that comes to us through Jesus by His turning us away from our iniquities. Now it is our iniquities that has caused the curse. You see the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. (Psalm 19:7) The testimonies of the Lord are true and righteous all together. There is nothing wrong with the law of the Lord. The law of the Lord was for man's good. As Jesus said, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. It was for their good that God gave that law. And as you go through the laws you find that they were given by God to protect man. They were to guide men into a good life, a happy life, a joyful life. That was the purpose of the law. And God, as at you look at the law today, you realize that He was protecting them and He was protecting the social order. If men will keep the laws of God. And God said if you will keep all my statutes then none of the afflictions that came upon the Egyptians will come upon you. There are laws that deal with diet, good diet that make you healthy. Laws that deal with sanitation, important for good health. The law of the Lord is good! The law of the Lord is perfect! The problem is men could not keep or would not keep the law of the Lord. We've all come short. We've all sinned.

Now God was trying to protect man through His law from destroying himself. I believe that in that tree in the Garden of Eden there were probably certain chemicals, perhaps viruses, that when it was eaten began a process of breaking down the cells of the human body. I believe that when God created Adam, He created him a perfect physical specimen and there were no aging factors. That, Adam was as young, physically, when he was one hundred twenty years old as he was when he was twenty five. I believe that God created him a perfect physical specimen. I believe that in the eating of that tree there was something within that fruit that caused the cells to begin to break down and the aging process began when he ate of that fruit. God had commanded him not to eat of it to protect him. And as you look at each of the laws of God. As you look at each of the ten commandments, you find that there is a reason and a purpose behind them. They are for our good! They are to protect us from disease, from social chaos. And as man has come to disregard the laws of God, as the result of it, we find our world plagued with viruses and diseases and death and suffering and pain and social disorder and chaos.

Now He came to bless us by taking away our iniquities. How glorious it is to live not under the curse, but under the blessings of God! It is interesting that when they gave the law and they instituted the law with the people, that they had when they came into the land, they had some of the priests up on Mount Gerizim and others on Mount Ebal, and they began to read the curses of the law. There is a list there in the law of several Scriptures that begin with cursed is he that, cursed is he that, cursed is he that, and it goes down the list of the curses on those that did not keep the law. Then in contrast the blessings of those who would keep the law of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 27 & 28) Again it is just God protecting us and declaring the consequences of certain activities. People don't believe God. They believe that they can do these things and not be hurt or harmed. Not suffer as a result. That's wrong! You're being deceived. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. So, it's for our good that God has given to us the law! It would be wise for us to seek to follow and obey the law of the Lord.

Father, we thank You for Jesus Christ whom You sent to deliver us from our iniquities. We thank You Lord for the new life that we have in Him. Lord, we thank You that not only do You forgive our sins, but You blot out the past and You receive us as Your children. We can know the joys and the benefits and the blessings

of living in fellowship with You. Lord our hearts long after You. We hunger and thirst after righteousness. Make us, Lord, the instruments that You would have us to be. Use our lives, Lord, to accomplish Your purposes. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.