

Introduction: Understanding Acts 3 From A Jewish Perspective

What did we talk about last week?

Jewish mindset and how well do you know the scriptures that you could share the truth of Messiah through the Tenach?

Continuing on through the book of Acts – what is Acts 3 about?

Chapter 3 we have Kefa and Yochanan going to the Temple for Minchah prayers:

Act 3:1 One afternoon at three o'clock, **the hour of minchah prayers**, as Kefa and Yochanan were going up to the Temple,

Other translations – “the hour of prayer”

- According to one Talmudic source (B'rakhot 26b) the three prayer services were instituted after the fall of the First Temple to replace the sacrifices (see Dan_6:11 for a comparable custom during the Babylonian Exile). The three services are called *Shacharit* ("morning"), *Minchah* ("afternoon"; the word means "gift, offering") and *Ma'ariv* ("evening").

Dan 6:10 (6:11) On learning that the document had been signed, Dani'el went home. The windows of his upstairs room were open in the direction of Yerushalayim; and there he kneeled down three times a day and prayed, giving thanks before his God, just as he had been doing before.

Upon their entry they see a man crippled who is at one of the gates of the Temple:

Act 3:5 The crippled man fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them.

Act 3:6 Kefa said, "I don't have silver, and I don't have gold, but what I do have I give to you: in the name of the Messiah, Yeshua of Natzeret, walk!"

Act 3:7 And taking hold of him by his right hand, Kefa pulled him up. Instantly his feet and ankles became strong;

Act 3:8 so that he sprang up, stood a moment, and began walking. Then he entered the Temple court with them, walking and leaping and praising God!

Act 3:9 Everyone saw him walking and praising God.

Act 3:10 They recognized him as the same man who had formerly sat begging at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, and they were utterly amazed and confounded at what had happened to him.

Act 3:12 Seeing this, Kefa addressed the people: "Men of Isra'el! Why are you amazed at this? Or why do you stare at us as if we had made this man walk through some power or godliness of our own?"

Act 3:13 **The God of Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya`akov, the God of our fathers**, has glorified **his servant Yeshua** – the same Yeshua you handed over and disowned before Pilate, even after he had decided to release him.

Why would Kefa make such a statement?

- This phrase is not accidental in Kefa's sermon. Its two parts are found in the first paragraph of the *'Amidah*, the central section of the *Minchah* prayer service which begins, "Praised be You, *Adonai* our God and God of our fathers, God of Avraham, God of Yitzchak and God of Ya'akov,..." and which his hearers would just then have been reciting in their *minchah* prayers in *minyans* throughout the Temple grounds, much as is done today at the Western Wall ("Wailing Wall") in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Why does Kefa identify Yeshua as his servant?

- Kefa's point: the very God to whom you have just now been praying in these words has glorified his servant Yeshua. In using the word "servant" Kefa identifies Yeshua as God's suffering servant spoken of in Isaiah 42-53; he makes the same identification at 1Pe_2:21-25 by citing Isaiah 53.

1Pe 2:21 Indeed, this is what you were called to; because the Messiah too suffered, on your behalf, leaving an example so that you should follow in his steps.

1Pe 2:22 "He committed no sin, nor was any deceit found on his lips."

1Pe 2:23 When he was insulted, he didn't retaliate with insults; when he suffered, he didn't threaten, but handed them over to him who judges justly.

1Pe 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the stake, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness — by his wounds you were healed.

1Pe 2:25 For you used to be like sheep gone astray, but now you have turned to the Shepherd, who watches over you.

Act 3:14 You denied the holy and innocent one, and instead asked for the reprieve of a murderer!

Act 3:15 You killed the author of life! "But God has raised him from the dead! Of this **we are witnesses**.

- We are witnesses – two or more: Deuteronomy 19:15

Deu 19:15 "One witness alone will not be sufficient to convict a person of any offense or sin of any kind; the matter will be established only if there are two or three witnesses testifying against him.

- If one witness alone is not sufficient to convict, then one witness alone is not sufficient to substantiate.

Act 3:16 And it is through **putting trust in his name that his name has given strength to this man** whom you see and know. Yes, it is the trust that comes through Yeshua which has given him this perfect healing in the presence of you all.

- His name is not a magic word. Greek *onoma* corresponds to Hebrew *shem*, which, biblically, means not just a name but everything that the named individual is and represents-his work, personality, power, authority and reputation.

Act 3:17 "Now, brothers, **I know that you did not understand the significance of what you were doing**; neither did your leaders.

Act 3:18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had announced in advance, when he spoke through all the prophets, namely, that his Messiah was to die.

In the *Torah*, atonement avails only for unintended sins; for sins committed presumptuously there is no atonement (see Num 15:22-31, Leviticus 4-5). Even the *cohanim* and *P'rushim* involved in the events leading up to Yeshua's execution may be forgiven through trusting Yeshua, and some availed themselves of the opportunity

Act 3:19 "Therefore, **repent and turn to God**, so that your sins may be erased;

- Repent and turn to God, literally, "Change your mind and turn." KJV has "Repent and be converted"; Convert to what?
- To the modern reader this suggests changing religions, *e.g.*, from Judaism to Christianity, which is not what Kefa was talking about. For at that time "Christianity" as such did not exist; there was Judaism with Yeshua and Judaism without him (the same choice, along with the possibility of rejecting both, faces Jews today).
- This point remains consistent with the previous passage regarding atonement for unintended sin.
- This very same message is consistent with the Torah and the Prophets:
 - Leviticus 26:40 – 42
 - Deuteronomy 4:29 – 31
 - Isaiah 55:6 – 7
 - Jeremiah 3:12 – 14
 - Ezekiel 18:30 – 32
 - Hosea 14:1
 - Zechariah 1:3
 - Malachi 3:7
 - Yochanan the Immerser – Matthew 3:2

Continuing on with the subject of T'shuvah, repentance...

Act 3:20 so that **times of refreshing** may come from the Lord's presence; and he may send the Messiah appointed in advance for you, that is, Yeshua.

- Times of refreshing, that is, the Messianic Age. Compare the Mishna:

"Rabbi Ya'akov used to say, 'Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the world to come; and better is one hour of contentment (*korat-ruach*, "cooling of spirit") in the world to come than all the life of this world.' " (Avot 4:17)

- In these "times of refreshing" self-rule will be restored to Israel (see [Act 1:6-8](#)), and the Messiah appointed in advance for you, namely, Yeshua, will return. Kefa's audience, like today's Orthodox Jews, expected the Messiah in the future. Kefa says that the very Messiah they expect will turn out to be Yeshua, and he goes on in the following verses to explain why he doesn't come at once.

Act 3:21 He has to **remain in heaven until the time comes for restoring everything**, as God said long ago, when he spoke through the holy prophets.

If He is to remain, indicates that He is to return...

Dan 7:13 "I kept watching the night visions, when I saw, coming with the clouds of heaven, someone like a son of man. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence.

Dan 7:14 To him was given rulership, glory and a kingdom, so that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him. His rulership is an eternal rulership that will not pass away; and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

Act 3:22 For Moshe himself said, 'Adonai will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You are to listen to everything he tells you.

Act 3:23 Everyone who fails to listen to that prophet will be removed from the people and destroyed.'

Act 3:24 Indeed, all the prophets announced these days, starting with Sh'mu'el and continuing through all who followed.

Act 3:25 "You are the sons of the prophets; and you are included in the covenant which God made with our fathers when he said to Avraham, 'By your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.'

Act 3:26 So it is to you first that God has sent his servant whom he has raised up, so that he might bless you by turning each one of you from your evil ways."

Kefa is quoting Deuteronomy 18:15 – 19

The question of whether Yeshua was a prophet, is one of Messianic expectation. This passage was asked or referenced at various times with the expectation that Deuteronomy 18:15-19 was a Messianic expectation.

- Yochanan the Immerser asking the question – Yochanan 1:21
- At the time of the feeding of the 5000 – Yochanan 6:14
- To the crowd that was offered living water – Yochanan 7:40
- Stephen's testimony – Acts 7:37

Was Yeshua "a prophet like Moshe"?

Yes, and so much more.

- A prophet speaks for God, which Yeshua did; but he also spoke as God.
- He spoke what the Father gave him to say, as did all the prophets; but he and the Father are one (**Joh 10:31**).
- Moshe explained the sacrificial system for atonement; Yeshua was the final sacrifice for sin, the eternally effective atonement.
- Moshe established the system of *cohanim*, with his brother Aaron as the first *cohen gadol* of the Tabernacle; the resurrected Yeshua is the eternal *cohen gadol* in the heavenly Tabernacle that served as model for the earthly one (Messianic Jews 7-10).
- At no point did Yeshua contradict what Moshe said; rather, he clarified and strengthened the *Torah* (Mat_5:17-20), made its application plainer (Mat. 5:21-Mat. 7:29), and sometimes himself *was* the application. See also Act_2:42.

Before, you probably viewed Acts 3 as a miracle of the disciples, a crippled man being healed, however it is so much more than just that.

How important is it to understand scripture from a Jewish perspective?

This is the mindset I am trying to convey, in the hopes that you will also embrace this way in viewing scripture.

How did I present Acts 3 to you?