

**GOD'S NEW COVENANT****Acts 3:1–4:31**

**Memory Verse:** *“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12 ESV).

**Background Helps:**

The passage this week consists of one continuous dramatic story including the following scenes:

- The healing of a man lame from birth by the apostles Peter and John (Acts 3:1-11)
- Peter's subsequent sermon to the crowd that gathered in Solomon's portico in the temple (3:12-26)
- The apostles' arrest by the Jewish authorities and their further opportunity to witness at a hearing before the Sanhedrin (4:1-22)
- The believers' prayer to the Lord for boldness in response to the threat of persecution (4:23-31)

In his sermon Peter makes explicit reference to God's covenant with Abraham (3:25), quoting God's promise to him from Genesis 22:18: “And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Notice the following about Peter's message:

- He preaches to a Jewish audience (v. 12).
- He uses the healing of the man born lame as an opportunity to charge the Jews with condemning and crucifying their own Messiah. But he also announces the good news that God has reversed their verdict by raising Jesus from the dead (vv. 13-16).
- He calls the people to repentance with the incentive of a threefold promise: (1) the forgiveness of sins (v. 19), (2) times of refreshing from the Lord (v. 20), and (3) the return of Christ to restore all things (v. 21).
- He explains how Christ fulfilled Old Testament prophecies (v. 18)—specifically those of Moses (vv. 22-23) and of Samuel and his successors (v. 24)—as well as the promise that God made in his covenant with Abraham to bless all the families of the earth (v. 25).
- Still, he indicates that God's servant, the Messiah, was sent to the Jewish people *first* in order that they might be blessed by turning from their wickedness (v. 26).

A large number of people respond to Peter's sermon by believing (4:4). Peter's message shows us that God's covenant with Abraham finds its ultimate fulfillment in the new covenant he has established through his Servant-Son, Jesus (3:13, 26).

**Lesson Helps:**

A possible lesson aim: My students will learn about God's fulfillment of his covenant with Abraham, so that they will receive the blessing of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

A possible lesson plan: rapidly sketch the story of Acts 3:1–4:31 from beginning to end. (With younger children you may want to abbreviate the story, concentrating on Acts 3.) Then focus on

Peter's sermon, using material from the Background Helps above. Show how God's covenant with Abraham, specifically, his promise to bless all families of the earth in Abraham's offspring or seed, has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the offspring of Abraham (Gal. 3:16)! By repentance and faith in him, first the Jews (Acts 3:26) and ultimately all peoples will be blessed through Christ. Some of these blessings are indicated in Acts 3:19-21 (see above). Conclude your lesson with the memory verse, Acts 4:12, encouraging your students to trust in Christ alone for salvation.

**Home Assignment:**

 Read Acts 6–7.

 Memorize Revelation 2:10b ESV.