

The Harvester



Preparing Souls

To Serve The Lord



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Repent and Turn

By Brian R. Kenyon

In Acts 3:1-11, Jesus healed a man over forty years old who had been lame from birth (Acts 4:22). The power behind the “name of Jesus” was what made this man whole (Acts 3:6 cf. 3:16; 4:7, 10, 12, 17, 30; 5:28, 40-41)! This miracle provided a great opportunity for Peter to preach the Gospel (Acts 3:11-12a). In this second sermon recorded in Acts, Peter spoke of Christ’s ministry on earth in the context of what happened to Jesus, what the prophets said, and what was the people’s response.

Treatment of Christ

Leading up to the main imperative of the sermon, “Repent and be converted,” Peter spoke of how Christ came, died, was rejected (Acts 3:12b-18), and glorified by God (Acts 3:12b-13a). Who was this Jesus? Peter referred to Him as “Servant Jesus” (Acts 3:13, 26); “the Holy One” (Acts 3:13); “the Just” (Acts 3:14); “the Prince of life” (Acts 3:15); “the Christ” (Acts 3:18); “Jesus Christ” (Acts 3:20); and “that Prophet” (Acts 3:23). God’s being the God of the patriarchs illustrated God’s faithfulness (Acts 3:13a).

Yet, the people killed the Son of God (Acts 3:13b-15a). Pilate gave them every opportunity to relent, but they would not allow it (Acts 3:13b). “Denied [disowned, NAS]” means the people disowned, renounced, and refused Pilate to release the innocent “Holy One” of God (same Greek word translated “denied” is also in Acts 3:14; 7:35; Mt. 26:70-72; 2 Tim. 2:12-13; Tit. 1:16; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Jn. 2:22-23; Jude 4). Instead, the people chose a “murder” over Jesus (Acts 3:14). Note the paradox: they insisted on killing the “Prince of life” (Acts 3:15a).

In spite of this, however, God fulfilled His plan (Acts 3:15b-18). God raised Jesus from the dead, and that same power was shown in healing the lame man (Acts 3:15b-

17). Thus, God fulfilled the sufferings of Christ foretold by His prophets (Acts 3:18).

Turn to God

Having summarized the treatment of Christ that resulted in His death, Peter made the application to those standing by and even to those today who read His word,

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, 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. (Acts 3:19-21)

Conversion here is summarized by two requirements (Acts 3:19a). First, “repent” (from *metanoeo*), which means to have a change of heart, turn from one’s sins, change one’s ways. The imperative mood, as here, is found again only in Acts 2:38. Second, “be converted [turn again, ESV; return, NAS]” (from *epistrepho*), which means to turn back, return; turn to; turn around. This word indicates that “genuine repentance involves a radical reorientation of life, turning back to God to seek reconciliation and to express a new obedience” (Acts 3:26:20) (Peterson 179). Acts 2:38 summarizes the requirements of conversion as



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“repent and be baptized” (cf. Acts 2:41, 47); therefore, to truly turn to God includes being baptized into Christ!

Conversion results in three blessings (Acts 3:19b-21). First, those who repent and turn have the removal of their sins’ guilt—“your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19b). The word translated “blotted out [wiped away, NAS]” (from *exaleipho*) means to wipe away or out, remove; cancel, destroy (Col. 2:14; Rev. 3:5; 7:17; 21:4). God’s pardon wipes the slate clean (cf. Ps. 51:9; 109:14; Isa. 43:25)!

Second, those who repent and turn participate in the Messianic kingdom now. Peter said, “so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19b). To what does “times of refreshing” refer (Acts 3:19c)? The word translated “times [seasons, ASV]” (from *kairos*) means time (viewed as an occasion rather than an extent), appointed or proper time, season, age (same form of the word here is also in Lk. 21:24; 2 Tim. 3:1). The word “refreshing” refers to a recovery of breath; refreshment; spiritual strength (again only in Ex. 8:11, LXX [which is verse 15 in English translations], concerning the relief that came to Egypt after the plague of frogs ceased). One commentator says it is the “cooling off that comes from blowing, like the refreshment of a cool breeze” (cf. Gen. 3:8) (Polhill 134). Another states the word means “breathing space, relaxation, relief... those periods of refreshment during which God strengthens the human spirit” (Newman and Nida 83).

Thus, this “times of refreshing” is the time of spiritual relief that comes to those who are added to the church, the kingdom of God (Col.

1:13), through their being baptized into Christ, having the guilt of past sins removed (Mt. 16:18-19 cf. Acts 2:38, 41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13). Many Christians today experienced that same kind of joy the eunuch felt following his baptism as he “went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39)!

Third, those who repent and turn will participate in the Messianic kingdom then. Peter preached that God would “send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things...” (Acts 3:20-21).

The participation in the kingdom mentioned earlier is immediate, following baptism. The aspect of participation in the kingdom contemplated in these verses follows the consummation of all things. It will occur when Jesus Christ comes again to bring a close to this world! Jesus will be sent from heaven (cf. Acts 1:9-11), where the word “send” is the verb form of the word “apostle,” and thus means sent with a specific message and/or purpose (Mt. 10:5, 16, 40; 11:10). The word “preached [appointed, ESV]” (from *procheirizomai*) means to be chosen, or appointed (Acts 22:14; 26:16).

The word translated “times [period, NAS]” (from *kronos*) is different than the word in verse 19b. Here, it refers to an extension or period of time (same as in 1 Thes. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:20). The Greek word behind “restoration [restitution,

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KJV]" (*apokatastasis*) simply means restoration, and the expression refers to "the fulfillment of God's purpose in attempting to reclaim fallen [sinful] humanity, as now being implemented in the gospel age, the consummation of which will occur when Christ comes again" (cf. Rom. 8:18-23; 1 Cor. 15:24-28) (Jackson 38).

Take Heed

Peter reminded his audience what Moses wrote, which was applicable to the very moment Peter was preaching,

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. ²³And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:22-23)

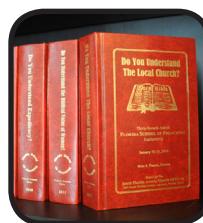
Jesus Christ, the one they crucified, was (and is) the very one about whom Moses spoke. In fact, "all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days" (Acts 3:24). Peter also made the point that the people to whom he spoke were the first heirs of all that God planned (Acts

3:25-26). We also are heirs of that promise. We must not reject Christ like so many through the centuries have. If we are not right with God, let us "Repent ... therefore and be converted"!

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