

**Peter's Second Sermon (Part 2)****Acts 3:11—21**

Peter's first sermon in chapter 2 was directed to Israel and called for them to repent of killing their Messiah, and to be baptized for their sins in order to be forgiven. They would then receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Repentance and baptism were for a future promise of forgiveness (Jeremiah 31:31—34; Romans 11:27), and to prepare them to enter the priesthood (Exodus 19:6; Isaiah 61:6; 1 Peter 2:5, 9). These promises are given exclusively to Israel by God, and will be fulfilled as Israel is brought into the Millennial Kingdom.

Peter is preaching to Israel to continue his ministry of gathering the lost sheep of Israel into the fold. This Little Flock of believers were not only to be baptized, but were to sell their possessions (Luke 12:32—33), which is what we see happening in early Acts. This is contrary to what Paul teaches us in this dispensation of grace. We are to work diligently, supplying the wherewithal for those we live with (2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8).

**Peter's second sermon**

Having just healed the lame man, which was a picture of Israel's condition and a future promise of complete physical and spiritual healing as they go into the Kingdom, Peter now preaches his second sermon. This sermon was being preached from the portico of Solomon, a covered area inside the temple compound forming the outer wall. This is where Jesus told the religious leaders that they were not His sheep because they refused to believe in Him (John 10:222—30). These religious leaders surely remembered this incident since it happened only a few months previous to Peter's sermon.

Now Peter is shown standing in that same spot Jesus was standing, and he is preaching that Jesus Christ made this man's healing possible. Peter was once again very direct and blunt, accusing Israel of putting their Messiah to death. He adds that Pilate was going to release Jesus, until the crowd demanded that He be put to death and that Pilate release a known murderer. Israel was up to their elbows in the shed blood of Jesus. In fact, the people willingly took credit for His death by saying His blood would be on them and their children (Matthew 27:25). Peter was using their own words to accuse them (Acts 5:28).

Peter always refers to Jesus's death as a shame to Israel. This is as also how many churches today portray Jesus. He is shown weak, bloody and humbly surrendering Himself at the feet of His mother, Mary. In their theology, His work is never completed, and He must be shamefully nailed to the cross time and time again. People even emulate Jesus' last few hours before His death by scourging themselves, or even go so far as being crucified.

Paul had a completely different view of the cross. He actually gloried in the cross (Galatians 6:14), not seeing the cross as an instrument of death, but one of life. Peter looked at the cross as a failure for Israel to recognize and accept their Messiah. Paul looked at it as the means to bring salvation to the world. The two gospels these men preached reflected this. The Gospel of the Kingdom was the good news of the soon-to-come Kingdom, not the bad news of Israel killing their Messiah. Paul preached the good news of Christ's work on the cross, His death, burial and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1—4). These two gospels clearly mark a dispensational change in God's dealings with mankind.

**Repent (verse 19)**

After Peter's message of condemnation for rejecting and killing the Messiah, he now gives a message of hope. The solution for Israel having ignorantly killed Jesus is to repent of that act and be converted. This word is translated as turn, turn about, return or turn again. I believe this is a message to the nation of

Israel, and they are being told to turn back to God. In any case, they are to quit going the way they were going (rejecting Jesus Christ as Messiah) and begin to believe in Him as their Messiah.

Although pastors often apply this passage to unbelievers today, we do not need to believe in Jesus Christ as our Messiah. We do need to believe in Him as the Son of God and as our only pathway to heaven. Israel was only required to believe in Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah.

Many dispensationalists run from the word *repentance* thinking it only applies to Israel. However, knowing that to repent is to turn away from, or to think differently, is exactly what we did when we realized that we needed to be saved. When Paul speaks of the Corinthians not repenting of uncleanness, fornication and lasciviousness, all he is saying is that they have not turned away from such sins (2 Corinthians 12:21). When Paul speaks of them being sorry unto repentance, he is saying they felt sorry for what they were doing and turned away from their sins (2 Corinthians 7:9—10).

### **Times of refreshing** (verse 19—21)

The promise that Peter gives to Israel, if they turn away from what they were believing about Jesus and turn to accept Him as their Messiah, is that God will send Jesus Christ back to earth and they will experience the times of refreshing and restitution.

These times are all predicted in the Old Testament by the prophets. This time of refreshing is a time of rest for Israel. It is pictured in the last of the seven main feasts given to Israel by God within the Mosaic Law. This is the Feast of Tabernacles or in the Hebrew, Sukkot (Leviticus 23:33—43). This final rest is given to Israel when they enter the Millennial Kingdom and is mentioned in Hebrews 4. It is closely related to the Sabbath when Israel was required to rest after working for six days. It is called a times of refreshing because Israel will finally have the rest promised them as they settle in the Promised Land. They will be safe from their enemies, and blessed monetarily by the entire Gentile world. They will finally have nothing to fear as Christ rules from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2—4; 11; Psalm 2:6; Ezekiel 36:22—38; Micah 4:1—3).

### **Restitution**

Not only are the people of Israel looking forward to a time of refreshing, they will also be restored as a nation. There is a promised future regathering when God will bring Israel back into her land and they will be able to live in peace and enjoy restored fortunes (Isaiah 11:12; 40:10—11; 54:4—8; Jeremiah 23:3; Jeremiah 31:7—8; 29:14; 32:37; Ezekiel 28:25). This national restoration is what the Disciples were asking about in Acts 1:6 when they asked Jesus if He was going to restore Israel at this time.

Most people misunderstand that Israel being given land in the Middle East and becoming a nation in 1948 was a fulfillment of the above prophecies. On the surface this would appear to be the case. However, there are a number of problems with this thinking. First, God had set Israel aside and is not currently working with them as a nation (Romans 11). They are currently not covered by any covenant promises. Israel is promised a future, and this future includes God giving them their Promised Land.

Second, according to prophecy, Israel will be forced out of their land during the seven-year Tribulation (Matthew 24:15). When God gives them their land, they will remain there in perfect safety. Third, When Israel is gathered by God, they will be going into the Kingdom with Jesus Christ physically ruling from Jerusalem. Obviously, this is still in the future. God will give them the land at the Second Coming, as the above prophetic verses indicate, and He will be ruling over them in a restored system of government.

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