

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Mystery of God's Saving Plan **Acts 3:19-26**

Keywords: Acts 3, Evangelism, Millennium, Salvation, End Times, Return of Christ, Kingdom of God.

PowerPoint Presentation included: none

Sermon Audio Blurb: Peter gives three key results attached to the repentance and return of Israel back to God. The first is the blotting out of sin but the second and third are often overlooked by readers and students. In some way or another it will usher in a time of refreshing of all things, which is very expansive; and it will bring about the return of Jesus Christ. The focus of this sermon are those last two results were we are able to examine the Scripture and walk away with a glimpse into the mysterious and marvelous plan of salvation God has for us.

I. Introduction.

- A. Read Acts 3:19-26.
- B. Our focus last week and today is found in vs 19 and 20.
- C. Last week's review.
 1. Though they sinned and willfully did so, it was also done in ignorance (17). This is a word of hope in the midst of a painful, confrontational sermon.
 2. The call is to repent and return.
 - a. A change of mind.
 - b. A change of direction.
 3. The promise is threefold but we only focused on the first point—a wiping/blotting out of sins.
 - a. This is immensely important to get your heads around. Sin is our enemy. It is the tool of Satan and its wound is eternal death.
 - b. Even if you and I could stop sinning on our own it cannot resolve the innumerable ways we already have sinned.
 - c. And yet the promise is there for all who believe. All who turn from their many methods of saving themselves to Jesus and only Jesus.

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- d. The promise is so grand and yet even Christians struggle to believe it. We are assaulted by whispers and shouts of our failings and sins. We resist going to the Father in our need because we are intimately aware of how many times we have sinned yet again.
 - e. But it is because we forget. We forget that we have a High Priest who has made the entrance into the presence of our heavenly Father completely open and welcoming. We are told to come boldly but we sulk and shuffle our way outside His throne room because we listen to these whispers and voices.
 - f. Why, oh child of God do you do this? The bible says in Micah that God casts our sins in the depths of the sea. So why do you choose over and over to row out to the deepest part of the ocean simply to dive into the depths of the sea to search out those very sins and allow them to condemn you?
 - g. Paul tells us as clearly as it can be said that there is NOW therefore no condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ.
 - h. And this passage tells us that truth as well. Sins are wiped away, never to be rewritten upon our record. Instead, in Jesus Christ we have only the word “righteous” written in their place.
- D. The near purpose and the remote purposes of vss 19-20.
- 1. In vs 19a there is a near purpose. It is what we just heard—sins being wiped away.
 - 2. In vss 19b-20 (depending on the translation they are divided between vss 19-20 or merely in vs 20, such as ESV) there is another purpose statement, it is grammatically designed to show it as a remote purpose, one that is to come. Actually there are two purposes but they are interconnected in a way that makes them essentially one.
 - a. The first is that something called the “times of refreshing” would come.
 - b. The second is the return of Jesus Christ.
- E. These are what we will explore today and I ask you to follow carefully with your bible. These are not hard to see but they are pregnant with meaning and that will take some work on our part to see what is happening here.
- F. The Christian faith is a forwarding, anticipatory reality that has a tendency to look backward too much.

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1. Titus 2:11-13.
 - a. Teaches us to have a forward-looking hope that is based upon Christ's saving work in the past.
 - b. Vs 12 tells us how we live now.
 - c. Note in vs 13 the call is to be looking for two things: the blessed hope and the appearing of our God, Jesus Christ. Two events and in fact the same two events found in our passage in Acts 3.
 2. 1 Corinthians 1:7 " . . . awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 3. Philippians 3:20 "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."
 4. 1 Timothy 6:14 "that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- G. This is all very similar to what Israel was doing as a nation. They were waiting, anticipating the day God would send them the Messiah, the Savior. But when He came, they killed Him because they did not realize Jesus was the one they were waiting for.
- H. So what will bring about the restoration of this world and the reign of Jesus Christ on earth? What will bring about the return of Jesus Christ? And the answer is simple, when Israel repents.

II. Two Final Results of Repentance.

- A. A quick exegesis of vss 19-21.
1. The conclusion of his sermon in "therefore."
 2. First "so that" is one that refers to a near purpose. The blotting away of their sins.
 3. Second "so that" is a different term that is one of remote purpose. It is two-fold: times of refreshing will come AND the Father will send back Jesus, **the** Christ who is appointed the Christ for "you"=Israel.
 4. Note temporal statement in vs 21 "until." The "must receive" (*dei*) which speaks to necessity. It is not optional. That term, *dei*, is a key little word by Luke. It is used to speak of the necessity of prophetic events/activities.
 - a. So the return of Jesus Christ is contingent upon something.

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- b. That something is spelled out in vs 21, literally “The times/seasons of restoration.”
 - c. These “times” are displayed and taught in the prophets of the Old Testament.
- B. The establishing of the millennial kingdom is connected to the repentance of Israel.
- 1. What is meant by the phrase millennial kingdom? Revelation 19 and 20 summarize it nicely (19:11 - 20:6).
 - 2. This is what is meant by “times of refreshing may come.” A unique phrase found only here but it is explained a bit more by vs 21 with the idea of all things being restored.
 - 3. The imagery of “refreshing” is one of a long, cool drink in the midst of a time of great heat and effort. How the body is rejuvenated and refreshed.
 - a. Isaiah 44:2-6.
 - b. Ezekiel 34:20-26.
 - 4. This time of refreshing is due to the physical presence of Jesus Christ as king over all. It is a time that is described in many different ways in the bible, all of which are beautiful.
 - 5. But before we speak of that we should consider the second part of this call for Israel to repent.
- C. The return of Christ is connected to the repentance of Israel.
- 1. In the gospels we see John the Baptist, Jesus and the disciples all calling for the nation to repent for the Kingdom of God is near. But they didn’t.
 - 2. We then see this same point brought up by Peter in these early chapters of Acts. God was faithful to His promise, Jesus is the Christ sent by God, and you killed Him. But God raised Him from the dead. He is to return so repent or be judged.
 - 3. So what is to happen now? It has been 2000 years since Peter preached this and still no return? Why?
 - a. Because Israel has not yet repented and returned to Jesus Christ. But it is bigger than just that.
 - b. The “mystery” of the Church and Gentiles.
 - (1) Romans 16:25-26.

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- (2) Ephesians 1:9-10; 2:11-16; 3:1-6.
- c. The “mystery” of a hardening of Israel for the sake of the Gentiles (Romans 11:7-28).
- d. This ingathering of non-Jews has a end point established by God, as Paul called it in 11:25, “the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”
- 4. Two final passages:
 - a. Matthew 24:30, note the term “mourn.”
 - b. Zechariah 12:10.
 - c. When you take all of these passages into account you see what Peter is speaking about. There is this need for repentance. When not just some Jews repent but when the nation repents.
 - d. In Acts 4 we know more than 5000 Israelites repented, but these events did not occur. For the nation as a whole continued in rejection and unbelief.
 - e. But what Acts also shows us is how God then turned His attention and saving grace to us.
- D. We take all of this together and we have a beautiful picture of the return of Christ and the reign of Christ on earth.
 - 1. Where is the Church? We will co-reign with Him.
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18.
 - b. Note how this whole passage is connected to Christ’s return.
 - 2. What will it be like? It will be a time of unparalleled blessing, or as Peter says, times of refreshing.
 - a. The greatest of this is the glorious presence of the risen Lord upon this globe.
 - (1) The glory of His reign. The goodness of His reign. All of this sets the stage for everything else.
 - (2) The bible talks about the nations coming to see and to learn from Him.
 - (3) Isaiah 40: speaks of how the glory of YHWH shall be revealed to us in that day.

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- b. But it also describes this millennial kingdom as a time where the curses on creation brought about by Adam's sin are reversed.
 - (1) So animals become as peace with one another. Isaiah says in chapter 11 how the wolf will dwell with the lam, the cow and the bear will graze together.
 - (2) The shortened life spans of people will be lengthened. So Isaiah 65 that if a person dies at the age of 100 it is because of their unrepentant sin.
 - (3) Peace shall reign for Christ is the king over all. So Micah tells us that nation will not life up a sword against nation nor shall they wage war anymore.
 - (4) True justice will be finally seen and experienced. Why? Because Jesus is king and therefore He shall judge and rule righteously.
- c. Consider just these things and think about what is upon the minds of most humans?
 - (1) The haunting pursuit of death. Most of the world is very well acquainted with its presence.
 - (2) The lack of justice, true justice.
 - (3) And the yearning for someone who can lead rightly.
 - (4) We keep looking to the wrong places and actions to bring this about. We look to fallen men, fallen systems and fallen ideas and then wonder why we walk away holding nothing but air in our hands.
 - (5) Instead we should set our eyes upon what is to come and to see what must occur before our Lord returns. We need to be like Paul, working to see Gentiles come to faith so as to hasten the coming of the Lord.

III. Conclusion.

- A. The promise is still true and the command is still valid to the nation of Israel. Repent and return. But what is the content of that repentance? What are they to change their mind about? It is what Peter then says in vss 22-26.

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1. In vs 22 it is that Jesus is the Prophet promised to Israel who would be like Moses, **but** they must listen to and follow Him or they will instead of receiving the promise of salvation, instead receive judgment (23).
 2. In vss 24-25 it is the promise given to Abraham that through him one would come who shall bring blessing to all the earth. This is the promise of the Messiah, the Christ.
 3. In vs 26 it is the great Servant of YHWH promised in the Old Testament who is raised up for Israel. And what is His task? To turn Israel from her wickedness.
 4. This is what still remains even to this day. Though many Jews individually have repented and believed; the nation itself continues in unbelief. But the promises of God are not vain.
- B. And it is true for us as well.
1. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”
 2. There is no doubt in those words, there is only promise given.
 3. You who come, do you believe in Jesus? Or is it Jesus plus something else?
 4. Jesus calls you to come, believe and follow Him. To turn from your wicked ways and turn to Him.

Benediction

May God cause you all to not stumble and to make you stand one day in His presence filled with joy. May God’s Spirit hold you in His mighty hand until the day of redemption. And may you find your hope, joy and life in His Son Jesus the Lord. To Him be the glory and majesty and dominion for all time. Amen

Community Group Questions

- **Based upon this sermon, why do we evangelize?**
- **What challenged or intrigued you in this message and why?**