



G R A C E

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ◇ DEO ◇ GLORIA

THE BOOK OF ACTS

Sermon Notes

Peter's Sermon of Repentance

Acts 3:11-26

March 25, 2007

- I. **The Whole World [without exception] is Guilty in Light of the Cross**
 - II. **The Whole World Must Repent and Turn To Christ**
 - III. **God WILL Bless ALL who Repent and Turn to Christ [Because of the work of Christ]**
 - a. **Our Sins are Wiped Away**
 - b. **We Avoid the Wrath of God**
 - c. **Times of Refreshing Will Come**
 - d. **He Will Send Jesus**
- Luke opens passage by stating that healed man ‘was clinging to Peter and John’ and ‘all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon...’
 - As a result of the healing of the lame man by Peter, the people are now ‘full of amazement.’
 - Furthermore, because of the nature of the healing, Luke makes it clear that ‘all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon.’
 - In other words, the miracle had drawn a crowd, setting the stage for the second sermon of Peter following the descent of the Holy Spirit.
 - ❖ Just like his first sermon following Pentecost, Peter uses this opportunity to demonstrate that the miracle the crowd witnessed is a result of the **Exalted Christ**.
 - ❖ However, unlike his first sermon, Peter does NOT explicitly proclaim the exalted Christ as the long-awaited Messiah; rather, he uses this sermon to proclaim the need of the Jews to repent and embrace Jesus as Lord, the ‘Prince of life.’

- ❑ Peter begins this second sermon in a similar manner as the first, saying, ‘Men of Israel...’ [Verse 12].
- ❑ This initial address provides the reader with the proper context as to the primary, original audience: the Jewish people.
- ❑ Furthermore, Peter will work to establish the guilt of the Jews [and Gentiles as well], in the death of Jesus of Nazareth.
- ❑ After Peter addresses the ‘Men of Israel’, he asks, ‘why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk?’
 - Again, like his first sermon, Peter begins by correcting the common misunderstanding of the miracle which just occurred [Acts 2:15, ‘these men are not drunk...’].
 - Here, Peter is essentially saying, ‘Don’t look at us, it wasn’t our power that healed this man!’
 - This of course, sets the stage for Peter’s explanation of the true power behind the lame man’s healing: **the power of the exalted Christ** [the Christ whom the Jews delivered over for execution].

I. **The Whole World [without exception] is Guilty in Light of the Cross**

- ❑ Peter, however, does not simply deny his own power in the healing of the lame man, he powerfully proclaims the identity of the One who healed the man: the glorified Christ!
- ❑ Peter uses a Old Testament title to describe the identity of Jesus Christ: the glorified servant of the ‘God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’
 - This passage effectively demonstrates the direct continuity that Jesus provides between the Old and the New Testaments.
 - In His revelation of Himself to Moses as the burning bush, YHWH reveals Himself as, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...’ [Exodus 3:6, 15]
 - Not only this, Peter is identifying Jesus of Nazareth as the ‘glorified servant’ of YHWH.
 - This language reflects the suffering servant passages of Isaiah 52:13-53:12: ‘Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.’ [52:13]

- Just as Isaiah does [in 52:13-53:12], Peter begins with the glorification of the Servant of YHWH, and then goes to the sufferings which preceded His glorification.
- Peter, then, states, ‘...Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.’
 - In other words, the glorified Servant is Jesus Christ – the one whom **you** [the Jews of Jerusalem] delivered over to Pilate for crucifixion.
 - Not only did the Jews disown Jesus, the Messiah, before Pilate, a pagan Gentile, but they did so **even ‘when he had decided to release Him.’**
 - In Luke 23, this truth is so clearly revealed as Pilate attempts to release Jesus multiple times.
 - Note: Ironically, Jesus is declared innocent in the court of the Gentiles, but guilty by the Sanhedrin!
- Peter continues his articulation of the guilt of the Jews by saying that ‘you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead...’ [Verses 14-15]
 - Peter proclaims the guilt of the Jews in two ways:
 1. First, by contrasting the actions of the Jews with the actions of God [the Father], and
 2. Secondly, by appropriating to Jesus [the One the Jews delivered over to the Gentiles for execution] titles that reflect not only His messiahship, but His deity as well.
 - ❖ **First**, Peter contrasts the actions of the Jew with the actions of God the Father.
 - The first action Peter lists is that the Jews delivered Christ over to be crucified.
 - Secondly, they disowned Christ ‘in the presence of Pilate [a pagan Gentile]’, even though Pilate ‘had decided to release Him.’ Of all people, the Jews, who had the oracles of God, should have known, not only Jesus’ innocence, but His true identity as well, as the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament.
 - Thirdly, Peter states that the Jews ‘disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted’ to them.

- This sin was one of ‘double’ guilt, in that not only did this involve (a) the condemnation of the innocent Christ; but also (b) the acquittal of the guilty murderer Barabbas.
 - The irony here is profound as well, as the name of Barabbas [the murderer the Jews demanded be released] means ‘son of the father.’ Hence, the Jews demanded that the One True Son of the Father be condemned to die a criminal’s death, while the guilty ‘son of the father’ be acquitted and released.
- Fourthly, and finally, the Jews ‘put to death the Prince of life...’

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- ◆ Yet, despite the sin of the Jewish people, **‘God [the Father] raised [Christ] from the dead.’** [Verse 15]
 - Once again, this calls to mind the familiar two word phrase, ‘But God...’
 - Further, Christ’s resurrection was not an act of God in an attempt to ‘undo’ the actions of wicked men; rather, as Peter previously stated in his first sermon, the man Jesus Christ was ‘delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.’
 - In other words, although the Jews acted freely in accordance with their nature, God ordained these means by which His plan of redemption would be accomplished. For the Apostle Paul writes that ‘He [the Father] chose us in Him [the Son] *before the foundation of the world.*’ [Ephesians 1:4]
 - Also, it is significant that Peter mentions a four-fold rejection of Christ at the hands of the Jerusalemites, yet only one action of God which vindicates His Son.
 - It is as though the Jews secretly plotted to execute Jesus, and accomplished their short-term mission. Yet, even though they succeeded in their wicked plan, their actions were in perfect accord with God’s greater, perfect plan. After all of their scheming [which was itself a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy], God [the Father] raised Christ from the dead. (Acts 2:32; 17:31; Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:15)

- ❖ The **second** way Peter declares the guilt of the Jews is by appropriating to Jesus titles that reflect that Jesus is both the long-awaited Messiah and God [Lord and Christ].
 - The first title Peter uses in reference to Jesus is **servant**.
 - Although this is not a common title for Jesus in the New Testament, it exists as a rather clear allusion to the Suffering Servant passages of Isaiah 52:13-53:12. In this well-known passage, the Servant of YHWH suffers immensely and is ‘crushed for our iniquities’ and ‘pierced through for our transgressions.’ Yet, the great truth revealed in this passage is not only that ‘by His scourging we are healed’ but that ‘As a result of the anguish of His soul, He [the Father] will see it and be satisfied...[the Servant] will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.’ [53:11]
 - In other words, Peter references Isaiah 52-53 and, in so doing, reveals that it was the scheming of the Jews, who no doubt knew this passage, that fulfilled this Old Testament Scripture.
 - Secondly, Peter refers to Christ as the **Holy One**.
 - In the term ‘Holy One’ or ‘Holy One of Israel’ is used throughout the Book of Isaiah in reference to God as well as His Servant, the long-awaited Messiah.
 - As Isaiah 43:3, 14, 15 state, ‘For I am the LORD, your God, the **Holy One** of Israel, your Savior...This is what the LORD says— your Redeemer, the **Holy One** of Israel...I am the LORD, your **Holy One**, Israel's Creator, your King.’
 - Further, in his sermon at Pentecost, Peter applied Psalm 16:10 to the resurrection of Christ, ‘For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your **Holy One** to undergo decay.’
 - Also, in the New Testament, the term **Holy One** is clearly messianic. In John 6:69, Peter states that ‘we have believed and have come to know that You [Christ] are the **Holy One** of God.’
 - 1 John 2:20 [‘holy one’] and Revelation 3:7 [‘him who is holy’] also refer to Christ as the **Holy One**.
 - The Scriptures explicitly reveal that only God is Holy; therefore, Christ, as the Holy One [*Adonai* of Isaiah 6, when the angels cried,

‘Holy, Holy, Holy’], is indeed fully God, the Son of God, the One sent by the Father.

- Thirdly, Peter refers to Jesus as the **Righteous One**.
 - Again, only God is righteous, as the Law of God is inherent to Himself. He is the standard of righteousness.
 - The words of the prophet Isaiah also foretell of the messiah, the Righteous One, who will take away the sins of many:

As a result of the anguish of His soul,
He will see it and be satisfied;
By His knowledge the Righteous One,
My Servant, will justify the many,
As He will bear their iniquities. Isaiah 53:11

- Lastly, in a bit of irony, Peter describes Jesus as the **prince of life** [‘[you] put to death the Prince of life’].
 - Indeed, Jesus is the author of Life! He is not only fully man, but fully God; and as such, He has the authority to create *ex nihilo*, ‘out of nothing.’ Christ, Himself, powerfully demonstrated this truth by raising Lazarus from the dead in John 11.
 - John 1:3 states that ‘All things came into being through Him.’ Also, Hebrews 2:10 states, ‘...it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things...’
 - Further, Jesus Christ, as being fully God, is not only the creator of physical life, but the creator of spiritual life.
 - He is the ‘author of...salvation...’ [Hebrews 2:10] and the ‘author and perfecter of faith’ [Hebrews 12:2].
 - Indeed, Jesus is the **source of life**, as He has **life in HIMSELF!** [John 1:4; John 5:21, 26].
- Finally, Peter returns, in **Verse 16**, to the healing of the man, and the power and authority behind his healing. Peter does this in order to, once again, establish the identity and authority of Jesus of Nazareth, the One the Jews delivered up for execution.
- Peter states, in Verse 16, ‘And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know...’

- First of all, it is clear that the **faith which healed the man** had a **specific object** [Biblical faith always has a specific object] – the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter and John did not ‘have faith in themselves’ or simply ‘have faith’ – they had faith **in** the Exalted Christ!
- It also seems as though Peter is emphasizing, not the person who possesses the faith, but the faith alone.

May we never forget that faith in Christ [not physical healing] is the greatest gift, the greatest miracle we can receive!

- Secondly, it is the name, the power of the exalted Christ that healed the man.
 - This echoes the ancient understanding that a name reflects the character and nature of an individual, as most certainly, the LORD JESUS CHRIST reflects who Christ is.
 - Jesus, revealed the truth of His authority prior to His exaltation, in the Great Commission: ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’ [Matthew 28:18]
 - This authority, this power of Christ which healed the lame man is further evidence of His exaltation and glorification to the right hand of the Father.
- Through the establishment of the identity of Jesus of Nazareth and the actions of the Jews, Peter powerfully establishes the overwhelming guilt of the Jewish people.
- Yet, the primary guilt of the Jews, and the whole world [without exception] today, is the denial of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, the Incarnate Word. This is why Peter uses these titles for Christ, to reveal the true identity of the One the Jews denied as their long-awaited Messiah.
- Furthermore, Peter’s sermon, like is first, demonstrates the guilt of not only the Jews, but the Gentiles, indeed the **whole world**. The reason for this is that Pilate a Roman, a Gentile, and eventually he gave the final orders to crucify Jesus. So, the Scriptures clearly indict all humanity [including us today] in the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior.
- However, in Verses 17-18, Peter acknowledges that the sins of the Jewish people, in denying Jesus, were sins of ignorance.
 - It is certainly possible that Peter’s words echo the Old Testament distinction between intentional and unintentional sins. The Old Testament sacrificial system provided atonement for unintentional sins, but not for intentional sins, done ‘with a high hand’ (Numbers 15:27-31).
 - Yet, sins of ignorance **are still sins** and require a sacrifice and repentance.

- Often times today, Christians seek to exonerate certain individuals of sin, appealing to their ignorance. Yet, even in these cases, the individuals stand guilty.
- Peter demonstrates this truth, with respect to his audience, in Verse 18, when he appeals to the ‘things which God announced beforehand...’ The Jewish people, in other words, **should have** known better, as they had the Scriptures. Yet they did not.

II. The Whole World Must Repent and Turn To Christ

- As a result of their sin, which included their sins of ignorance, Peter states, in Verse 19, ‘repent and return...’
- This is a summary of our conversion. It involves both a negative and a positive component. We must **first** repent, that is turn **from** our wicked ways. **Secondly**, we must turn **to God**, that is put our faith **in Him, in Christ**. The Greek translated, ‘return’ or ‘turn to God’ literally means, ‘flee to God.’ In other words, we must flee to the only One who can save us from Himself!
 - Both aspects of conversion, though, are gifts from God: both **repentance** [Acts 5:31; Acts 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25] and **faith** [Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29; Ephesians 6:3; 2 Peter 1:1].
 - In other words, Peter is calling them to do something that is impossible apart from the effectual grace of God.
- As we, today, stand equally guilty with the Jews of Peter’s day, we too, are called to repent and turn to God. This is the **only way** God has provided to save His people.
- Yet, when we repent and turn to God, He promises us incredible blessings.

III. God WILL Bless ALL who Repent and Turn to Christ [Because of the work of Christ]

a. Our Sins are Wiped Away [Verse 19]
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- God not only wipes away the sin, but when the sin is gone, so is the associated guilt. Christ, as the fulfillment of the scapegoat, was our perfect sin-bearer. So often, Christians carry around unbearable guilt from previous sins; yet, it has been taken away by the work of Christ.

William Barclay once wrote of this passage: ‘Ancient writing was upon papyrus, and the ink used had no acid in it. It therefore did not bite into the papyrus as modern ink does; it simply lay upon the top of it. To erase the writing a man might take a wet sponge and simply wipe it away.’

- ❑ And so it is with Christ, who wipes our sins away.
- ❑ It is essential for us to remember, though, God does not simply wave a cosmic, divine ‘magic wand’ and say, ‘I simply forgive you.’ Rather, the wiping away of our sins occurs **only on the basis of the finished, perfect work of Christ.**

b. We Avoid the Wrath of God [Verse 23]

- ❑ Because Christ bore our sins and took them away from us [He both propitiated the wrath of God and expiated (took away) our sins], there is no longer any wrath of God towards our sin.
- ❑ However, those who do not repent and turn ‘shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’ [Verse 23]

c. Times of Refreshing will Come [Verse 19]

- ❑ Not only does repentance and faith lead to the taking away of sin, but to the **receiving of something: refreshing.**
- ❑ As I hear people describe their personal difficulties in life, Christians included, I so often hear, ‘I am just tired.’ We are all tired of the results of living in a fallen world..
- ❑ We certainly all feel this way at times. We are tired. And we often lean on others [as we certainly should]; yet, this often result in ‘draining others.’
- ❑ However, Christ is the never-ending, all-sufficient fountain. We cannot ‘drain’ Him of energy.
- ❑ In fact, in Acts 3:19 Peter states that the ‘times of refreshing’ would come **‘from the presence of the Lord...’**
 - When we are saved, we do not simply **receive** refreshing, **we are refreshed** by the **presence of God.**
 - Christ does not simply give us refreshing, He **is** our refreshing!
- ❑ This is why He says, ‘Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest’ [Matthew 11:28].
- ❑ Yet, Jesus does not simply give us rest, He refreshes us!

- As with all of the blessings of eternal life, there is an ‘already, not yet’ aspect to them. We **are** refreshed now; yet, this is but a foretaste of what is to come when we are in eternity, in the presence of the Triune God.

<p>d. He will Send Jesus</p>

- Peter boldly proclaims, ‘...and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.’ [Verse 21]
- This Verse gives the modern day believer not only present blessing but future hope.
- We have the Lord **now**. Paul states, ‘I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...’ [Galatians 2:20]. In John 15:5, Jesus states, ‘I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him...’ Also, in Matthew 28:20, Jesus states, ‘I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’
- Yet, although we have Christ know [indeed, the Triune God, for the three Persons of the One True God mutually indwell one another], we will have Him supremely and eternally ‘in the period of restoration of all things...’
- John Stott accurately states, regarding this passage, ‘[the period referred to here is a period of] ‘restoration’, which Jesus called a ‘regeneration’, when nature will be liberated from its bondage to pain and decay and God will make a new heaven and earth. This final perfection awaits the return of Christ.’

- Peter concludes his sermon by demonstrating how the blessings of salvation and universal redemption were foretold in the Old Testament.
- Peter, then, quotes from Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19 and Genesis 22:18, revealing that Jesus was the ‘prophet like’ Moses and that the work of Jesus fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament prophets.
- Peter specifically mentions Moses and Samuel, showing how each of the prophets ‘announced these days.’
 - It is significant that Peter mentions the prophet Samuel, as he anointed David as King of Israel and spoke of the Davidic kingdom that was to come which was fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ – the Davidic Messiah.
- Then, Peter proclaims, ‘It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers...’

- In other words, as the events in the life of Christ fulfilled all the prophets of Old spoke of, the Jews of Jesus' day were, indeed, 'the sons of the prophets.'
- Christ was the One to whom the prophets and the covenants pointed.
- Peter goes all the way back to Abraham [Genesis 12:3; 22:8], demonstrating who it is through Christ that the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant [indeed, all of the covenants] was secured.
- Finally, Peter states that 'for you first...' [salvation is to the Jews first (Romans 1:16), spreading **from** Jerusalem (Acts 1:8)], God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one from your wicked ways.' [Verse 26]
 - We turn from our wicked ways because Christ fulfilled the Old Testament perfectly, to include to the promises of Jeremiah 31: 'I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall by My people.' Jeremiah 31:33
 - We turn from our wicked ways because the Father sovereignly and graciously wrote His law on our hearts through the Holy Spirit on the basis of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ!
 - Notice, once again, how we turn from our wicked ways, not in our own power, but in Christ. The atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ secured for us every aspect of our salvation, to include our faith and repentance.
- In other words, because of Christ, who is the prophet like Moses (22-23), the Davidic king (24), and the seed of Abraham (25-26), the eternal blessings of the covenant are ours through faith in Christ alone!
- This truth demonstrates one of the most profound truths of our salvation. God does not simply save us from His wrath, **He blesses us on the basis of CHRIST'S work!**
- We receive blessings because of what Christ did.
- Interestingly, in the Abrahamic covenant, the focal blessing was **land**; and it was this land that was a foreshadow of the greatest dwelling place in existence: the dwelling place of God, HEAVEN.

Therefore, all who repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ inherit the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant: **We will dwell with God forever!**