

The Church of the Servant King

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Survey of the Bible Series – The Book of Acts

(SB_Acts3_A Second Message from Peter)

Introduction

Events Leading Up to Peter's Second Message (3:1-11)

- As we have seen, the disciples continued to meet daily in the Temple.
- On one of those days, Peter and John came to the Temple at the hour of prayer – 3:00 pm
- As they came to the “Beautiful Gate,” they passed a beggar who had been lame from birth
- The beggar asked for a handout
- Peter didn't have anything to give, but Peter commanded him to rise up and walk in the name of Jesus
- The man's rejoicing aroused the attention of the crowds which began to gather around Peter and John on Solomon's porch of the Temple
- This gave Peter an opportunity to preach
- The miracle has “typical” significance.
 - The man who was lame from birth represents the nation Israel
 - Throughout Israel's fifteen centuries of history, Israel failed to measure up to God's standards
 - Just as the man needed a miraculous restoration, so the nation needed to be made whole – the topic of Peter's sermon, i.e. “the times of restoration of all things.”
 - The condition of mankind after the Fall in the Garden is depicted in Scripture in several ways: as being sick, powerless, in darkness, spiritually dead in sin

Peter's Second Sermon (3:12-26)

- Peter begins his message with the phrase – “Men of Israel” – just as he addressed his Pentecostal sermon (v. 12 cf. 2:14, 22, 36).
- Peter also indicated that the message of salvation through Jesus Christ was being sent to the nation of Israel first of all (3:26).
- This provokes some questions:
 - Why, if the nation had rejected Christ and turned him over to the Romans to be crucified, would God choose to send salvation first to Israel?
 - Why, if Pentecost marked the beginning of the new “joint-Body” of Jews and Gentiles, did God restrict the message (or at least direct the message) to Jews only for a number of years?
- Peter answers these questions in verse 17 – it was through ignorance that they did what they did.
- By allowing the Gospel of salvation to be preached to Israel first, God honored the prayer of Jesus as he hung on the Cross – “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they are doing” (Lk 23:34).
- Thus, the nation of Israel was experiencing yet another opportunity to hear the Gospel first.
- Whenever we find the message directed to the Jew first, we can safely conclude that the message concerns Israel's earthly Kingdom program.
- Paul reflects upon this historical fact in his epistle to the Romans (Rom 1:16) where he states that the gospel was “the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
- Under the Kingdom program, the Jews were indeed first, then the message went to the Gentiles (Mk 7:27)

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- No such rule applies in the present dispensation.
- Peter makes a point of noting that it was not through any power or holiness on their part that this man had been healed, rather it was through the power of Jesus, Whom they had killed.
- The logic: no miracle could have been performed by a dead man, thus the healing of the lame man was proof that Jesus was alive and that God had raised Him from the dead.
- Even though Israel was ignorant of their sin, ignorance was no excuse.
- Sins of ignorance must be acknowledged by the guilty before true repentance can occur (cf. Lev 4:13, 22; 5:1-5).
- This principle has important ramifications:
 - Phase 1 – Christ died for the sins of the whole world (the so-called “unlimited atonement” doctrine); however, everyone is not saved just because of that truth.
 - Phase 2 – Ignorance of a sin pattern in our life does not relieve us of the consequences and God will use the self-induced misery that is the result of a sin pattern in an attempt to get our attention and bring about repentance. Examples abound: abuse of alcohol or drugs; mental sin patterns (e.g. selfishness and self-centeredness, anger, impatience, rejection of God-appointed authority, rebellion against principles in God’s Word, bitterness, pettiness, jealousies, approbation); over indulgence in food or improper nutrition; etc.
- Peter notes that everything which the prophets of old had predicted concerning the sufferings of the Messiah had been fulfilled in Jesus.
- In Peter’s understanding, which had been reinforced by his forty day session with the resurrected Lord, the next item on the agenda of God’s program was the “glories” that should follow (Lk 24:25, 26) – the establishment of the Kingdom. In his first epistle, Peter also develops this two-fold theme (1 Pet 1:11).
- This understanding is clear in Peter’s message (see verses 19-21) where Peter offers the kingdom.
- I interpret this offer by Peter as a fulfillment of Jesus’ words to Peter in Matthew 16:17-19.
- If they repented, it did not mean that Jesus would immediately return since other prophetic Scripture had to be fulfilled (Dan 9:24ff cf. Matt 24:1-31).
- Thus, it seems clear that God is here offering through Peter to send Jesus back to restore Israel’s kingdom conditioned upon their national repentance.
- Many dispensationalists teach that Jesus offered the kingdom to Israel during His earthly ministry; however, there is a slight difference between the kingdom being “at hand” (Matt 4:17; 10:7) as Christ proclaimed and an offer of the kingdom immediately if repentance and acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah occurred.
- The kingdom could not really be offered until after the prophecies concerning Christ’s death had been fulfilled.
- This is why Peter begins verse 19 with the word “therefore.”
- The omniscience of God did not invalidate the offer presented by Peter just as the omniscience of God did not invalidate John the baptizer’s message as Jesus indicates in Matthew 11:14 and 17:11-12.
 - In these verses, Jesus indicates that John the baptizer would have been the prophetic Elijah who preceded the Messiah and the kingdom.
 - Since Jesus said that Elijah must come before He returns, another Elijah apparently must come before Christ returns.
- An important principle to remember when studying God’s dealings with Israel – God deals with Israel as a nation and the rulers of the nation are responsible for actions and decisions which affect the whole nation. Even though multitudes accepted John the Baptizer and Jesus, the leaders did not; therefore, Israel did not. The judgment of A.D. 70 that fell upon the nation fell upon believers and unbelievers alike. The same is true of the U.S. – the judgment that falls upon the U.S. will fall upon believers and unbelievers alike.