

The Necessity of Repentance

Acts 3:19-26

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Father, we're so thankful that indeed it is true that You are our Shepherd, that You lead us gently, that You lead us to refreshing water, even the Word, You lead us to green pastures to feed. Father, we pray that we might indeed feast this morning upon Your truth. We pray in Christ name. Amen.

Turn in your Bibles to the third chapter of Acts. We're going to be looking at verses 19 to 26 continuing our study of the book of Acts going verse by verse as we always do in all of our book studies we find ourselves at the conclusion of Peter's sermon. His second recorded sermon in the book of Acts not too many days after the day of Pentecost. It is preached in Jerusalem in the temple courtyard in front of a multitude of people who have been gathered by a miracle of the healing of the lame man. And Peter is preaching and exalting Jesus Christ and indicting Israel for the execution of their Messiah. And then he concludes his message with the words in verse 19, "Repent therefore and be converted". Now that's really the climax of his message. That's the great point to which he has come but it is not the end it is the conclusion in the sense of its appeal but there is more yet running clear through verse 26. Before we get to it, however, let's consider just a little background so we understand what's happening.

The Jews have crucified by the use of the Romans their own Messiah. And it would have been a very obvious thing for us to assume at that point God would have brought judgment upon Israel. Swift, terrible and final.

For, after all, had they not had prophet after prophet throughout their history and had not God now at this point sent His own Son, the very Messiah Himself and had they not rejected the Messiah as they had all the other prophets and would it not be fair and would it not have been justice indeed if God at this point had called a halt to all His responsibility to Israel and in tremendous judgment come down upon them. But that is not how God operates because God is a God of mercy and God is a God of great grace.

And even though they have earned the wrath of God and they have deserved the judgment of God He calls on them in grace in verse 19 to repent and God will forgive them blotting out their sins. A tremendous insight into the grace of God. Now Peter's message is very clear, it is very powerful but beyond all of the qualities of power and clarity that come in the first 18 verses the salient feature of this chapter is the statement at the beginning of verse 19, for that is God's grace in action. God is lovingly patient and God is forgiving and Peter says, "He is not willing that any should", what? "Perish" And He tenderly calls men to Himself even men who have been their whole lifetime long and nations who have been historically against Him He calls to Himself.

Now as I said, it would have been a very fair thing in some sense for God to have judged Israel at this moment finally but He did not. And it reminds me of the occasion in the life of Jeremiah, there

were forty years of Jeremiah's ministry. And Jeremiah's ministry was a ministry of judgment He was announcing the destruction of Jerusalem and God kept delaying it for all these forty years in grace. And interesting that is a parallel of what we have here for Jesus being crucified judgment could have come but judgment didn't come for forty years later. It was not until 70 AD that Jerusalem was sacked and destroyed and Judaism as such was wiped out. And God gave the same period of grace that He gave in Jeremiah's day a period of forty years.

Now as we approach the book of Acts in this particular historical interval God is in that grace period of forty years in connection with Israel.

God has always operated by grace before and after that forty year period but in terms of His relationship to Israel He has not brought down judgment He has postponed it forty years and during that forty years He leaves open the option to Israel to come to Messiah. The book of Acts, then, not only because it covers those forty years or a good portion of it, the book of Acts not only then has much to say about the church but it also has much to say about Israel. And it has much to say about the kingdom promise to Israel. Even though the church has been born and it's begun to grow in Acts chapter 2, even though the church has already been formed its unique identity God is still dealing with Israel. There is an overlap of forty years and Jerusalem has not yet been destroyed and Judaism has not yet been halted. And God is really through Jesus Christ, through the mouth of His early apostles holding out the same offer He held directly through the mouth of Christ when He first arrived, when Jesus first came preaching, "Repent for the kingdom is at hand"--a kingdom for Israel. John the Baptist came saying, "Repent for the kingdom is at hand", and in effect Peter in Acts 3 is saying the same thing, "Repent your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come". That's the kingdom. The message really hasn't changed. Even though the Messiah had been rejected and executed God's grace is extended to Israel and the continued offer of the kingdom is still given here in Acts chapter 3. Now we say Peter's introduction to his sermon in verse 12 as he just kind of jumps off the miracle of the lame man. We saw the theme in verses 13 to 18 as he presents Christ and indicts Israel. And now in verse 19 we see his conclusion. And he calls upon them basically to just do two things: repent and be converted. One is active; one is passive. If they will turn around, God will change them. If they will reverse their verdict about Jesus. If they instead of determining that Jesus is a blasphemer, a mocker and no Messiah at all will reverse their decision see Him as Lord, God and their Messiah God will change them, God will convert them. So Peter cries to Israel from the bottom of his heart and from the depths of the heart of God, repent.

Change your mind about Jesus. God is still gracious even though you've executed His Son, change your mind and repent and be converted. Now Peter doesn't leave it at that because in the remaining verses he gives them five reasons why they ought to repent. Five reasons for repentance. Why should Israel repent? There are five good reasons and these are exciting and I think you're going to learn some things this morning that perhaps you weren't familiar with, exciting truths.

All right, number one he says repent; and you have an outline there in your bulletin that you can use to follow along and take some notes if you desire. There are five things that will happen if Israel repents. Number one, their sin will be forgiven. Their sin will be forgiven. Now we saw that last time so I only want to review. Verse 19 says, "Repent therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out". Now we studied the word blot out last week and we found that it meant totally removed, totally erased.

The only way you'll ever have your sins erased and totally removed is when you repent. When you

turn around and God changes you. David in the Old Testament prayed, "Blot out all mine iniquity" but it couldn't happen because there was no sacrifice provided that could blot out. Sacrifices in the Old Testament never blotted out anything it only covered them up. They only shoved it under the rug. Isaiah had said God can blot out and then Isaiah said in the next chapter 44, God will blot out and here we find in the coming of Jesus Christ God provides for that blotting out. And Peter says, if you'll only change your minds about Jesus you can have your sins blotted out, forgotten by God, I'll remember them no more. What a promise, total forgiveness. In Col. 2:13 the Bible says He has forgiven us all our trespasses. Total forgiveness--something the Old Testament believer never knew. They never had a freedom from guilt. They never had a freedom from the besieging problem of sin, because as soon as they offered a sacrifice they'd go out and sin again and they'd be in the same boat again. There was no liberty. There was none of that great freedom that we have without the burden of bearing the guilt of sin. So he says you can have your sins forgiven if you'll turn to Jesus. That's the first thing. That's the first reason.

Second reason. Not only will your sins be forgiven but the kingdom will come. Oh, what a promise this is. Look at verse 19, "Repent therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." Note when this is *hoposon* in the Greek it's what we call a purpose particle and it really cannot mean when it has to mean in order that. Let me read it that way. "Repent therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out in order that times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." The times of refreshing cannot come unless you repent and be converted. Now what are the times of refreshing? I believe that is a reference to the kingdom, the earthly millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ. Now you know that the Bible both Old and New Testament indicates to us that Jesus will reign on earth for a period of a thousand years. Now in Revelation it clearly tells us it's a thousand years Christ reigns on earth. In the Old Testament it describes it in great detail we'll see that in a moment. Second Samuel 7 David was promised that he would have one of his own seed who would sit on His throne in Jerusalem and reign in a kingdom. So there is promised on the earth a thousand year reign of Jesus Christ right here on this earth. Now this is that for which the Jews dreamed and hoped and waited all the long history of Israel.

They've always waited for when is Messiah going to come and when is He going to set up His kingdom? And they had waited and waited and waited and it never, never, never came. And then finally their Messiah came and they rejected Him and God said, That forfeits it, you cannot have the kingdom if you will not have the king. And so Peter says repent in order that the kingdom might come. You see, that's the point. They had to repent before the kingdom could come. And I want to take the term 'times of refreshing' for just a moment and show you what significance it has.

Look at the word "times" in verse 19. The word "times" is *kairos*; this has to do with a fixed, set or predetermined time. So whatever this phrase, times of refreshing, is it's not just some looseygoosey era it's a fixed, set, predetermined time. That's very important. In fact it's used in Acts you remember they said, When are you going to restore the kingdom? And Jesus said, It's not for you to know what? The times, or the seasons, the predetermined times that God has placed in His own economy. You see, it's a predetermined time. All right, so there's a predetermined time. It's interesting, isn't it, that God has predetermined the time and yet it depends upon Israel's repentance. That's the same paradox between sovereignty and human will that you find everywhere in Scripture. Now it's called the times of refreshing. Now the word refreshing just means that. Refreshing, rest, respite. Now to the Jew that was so important. The Jew has been hassled throughout all its history. The Jew has been moved. Israel has been pushed and shoved all over the world mercilessly persecuted and abused, tragically treated. And even today, one of the most despicable things in existence is

anti-Semitism. The Jews have been mistreated all through the years partly due to the fact of their own failure to recognize God and so God has chastised them in this way. Which gives no right to any man ever to be abusive to Israel but rather to love Israel like the apostle Paul said, "My heart's desire and prayer is for Israel". But Israel has been under the judgment of God because of sin and they have been pushed and shoved and abused throughout all the years. And Israel is longing for the time when they can go somewhere and rest. They're in their land right now for the first time in over two thousand years possessing their own land but are they at rest? No, they are not at rest. There is such unrest in Israel.

The times of refreshing haven't come yet but they're longing for them.

Every Jew dreams of this. So what does this phrase mean then? It means there's coming a fixed time when Israel rests. What else could that be but the millennial kingdom, the earthly kingdom, the promise when Messiah comes and makes things right in the world and reigns and Israel has its kingdom? You say, What's that kingdom all about? Well let me just show you a couple of passages that are just really fascinating. The kingdom is the time when everything is changed. You'll notice that in verse 21 it says "the restitution of all things", it's the time when everything reverts back to what God meant it to be in the beginning. You know, God never meant this earth to be cursed? God never meant the whole thing to be so fouled up as it is. That's what happened when Satan took over. But someday God's taking over again and that's going to be the kingdom. Now listen to what the kingdom's going to be like, Isaiah chapter 11 describes a little of it. It's a wonderful description, I can't wait. You say, Well, is it only for Israel or are we going to be there? No, we'll be there too, all believers will be there. It's for Israel primarily in terms of their rest and in their land, all the special blessings of God but we'll all be a part of it for we'll be blessed in Israel. Listen to what happens in the kingdom, the reverse of the curse verse 6; The wolf shall dwell with the lamb. Imagine that? Then it says this; "The leopard shall lie down with the goat, the small goat the kid "The calf and the young lion and the fatling together and a little child shall lead them." The whole menagerie will be lead around by a little child. You see, the whole animal curse is reversed and natural enemies cease to be. "The cow and the bear shall feed their young ones shall lie down together and the lion shall eat straw like the ox and the nursing child shall play on the hole of the asp and the weaned child shall put his hand in the snake's pit." And I always say my wife says kingdom or no kingdom my kids aren't playing in the snake pits, anyway verse 9 says, verse 9 says, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse." Who's the root of Jesse? Jesus Christ. "Who shall stand for an ensign of the people, to Him shall the nations seek and His", what's the next word? "Rest shall be glorious", that's the kingdom it's called rest. That's why I say I think it's the times of refreshing is a direct reference to the kingdom.

Now in Isaiah 35, oh what wonderful things we read there, you want to know what the kingdom's going to be like? Verse 1 of Isaiah 35, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose". Can you imagine that? You know, the reason the desert is the desert is because it's cursed. "It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it the excellency of Carmel and Sharon." All those places are tremendously fertile places and the desert's going to become fertile like the most fertile places in Israel. And then he says, verse 5: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped".

Everyone's going to be healed instantaneously at the beginning of the kingdom.

Then he says, "The lame man shall leap as an hart", that's a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing for in the wilderness shall the waters break out and streams in the desert." The whole curse is reversed. Deserts will no longer exist. "Parched ground shall become a pool and the thirsty land springs of water in the habitation of jackals where each lay shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And the highway shall be there and a way and it shall be called The Way of Holiness." He goes on to talk about that in verse 10, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads and they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." That's the kingdom and it's on earth. It's right here on earth. And it's what Israel's waited for and waited for and waited for. They're going to be regathered, restored and regenerated and exalted.

They're waiting for it. And Peter says it can't come until you repent. You can't have the kingdom unless you love the King. That's the point. And here is God and grace extending the same offer to Israel even after they've executed the Messiah.

Now notice verse 21 for a minute because there's a phrase there we want to pull out of that, "the times of restitution of all things". The times of restitution of all things has again to do with the kingdom. It has to do with the coming kingdom of Christ when all things are reverted back to their original owner. It is the very same word in the noun form that is used in Acts 1:6 when the disciple said, "When will Thou restore the kingdom to Israel?" When are You going to give back what is ours? Here there is the time when things are given back. Not some things but what? All things are going to be given back to the God who rightfully owns them. That's the kingdom. And in the kingdom the curse is removed and all these things are placed back in the control of God. Now, that's the kingdom and he says it can't come until you repent. Now, one other statement about the kingdom in verse 21, the end it says, "That it shall come from the presence of the Lord." The kingdom is not political. It is not drummed up. It is not brought off by a cue. The kingdom comes from God. The presence is literally the face.

It comes from the face of the Lord God. God sends the kingdom. God sends His promised blessing. He will bring it to pass. But even though it is a sovereign thing from God's viewpoint, from Israel's viewpoint it depends on their conversion. Now when it says all things it means just that. There are so many things going to be changed in this kingdom. I just jotted down about thirteen of them, maybe fifteen, I don't know, I don't count too well, but anyway let me just tell you what's going to be in the kingdom. Everything' going to be restored to what it was, everything. The Bible says, and all or this is taken from Scripture, the Bible says there will be peace and no war.

Now, that is something. The Bible says there will be joy, fullness of joy.

Holiness manifests everywhere, glory fully revealed, comfort. And the King will personally minister comfort to everybody. There will be justice, perfect justice for everybody and no injustice at any time to anybody. There will be full knowledge. There will be instruction and the King will be the personal tutor of everybody. There will be no curse in the animal kingdom and no curse in nature. There will be no sickness for the King will heal everybody. There will be healing of all the deformed as we read. There will be preservation of life and protection by the King Himself. There will be freedom from oppression, nobody will oppress anybody else. There will be prosperity so that nobody in the entire world wants for anything and so forth.

That's the kingdom. That is all clearly spelled out in the Old Testament.

That's what Israel's been dreaming of. That's what Israel's been waiting for. That's what they've been crying for and when they tried to get Jesus and force Him to be a King that's what they wanted. Peter says, Well, I know you want the kingdom but you can't have it until you love the King. You've got to change your verdict about Jesus Christ.

Now it's all going to come back to God. Now if you want to read the story of how God's going to get it back read from Revelation 5 on. Remember the Father sitting on the throne in Revelation 5 and in His right hand He's got a scroll with seven seals and that scroll is the title deed to the earth. And he says the angel looks around to find somebody worthy and there's nobody worthy to unwind the scroll and John begins to weep because there's nobody there to unroll it and see what it says. All of a sudden one of the elders stands up and says the Lion of the tribe of Judah He is worthy, the Lamb of God to unroll the scroll and Jesus steps up and takes the scroll out of the Father's hands and step by step He unrolls the scroll and step by step He takes back the earth. And the unrolling of that scroll is the record of the rest of the book of Revelation through chapter 19, all the events by which Jesus takes back the earth. And that, when you get up to 19 He's got it back and bang in chapter 20 the kingdom comes. So you see Christ is going to take it back, it's going to be restored to God. Now God knows when this is going to happen. It's all predetermined in His design and His will and morally it is conditioned upon Israel's repentance. It can't come until Israel believes. And isn't it sad that many, many, many times Israel had the opportunity to determine the immediate course of world history and they blew it.

They could have brought the kingdom when Jesus arrived the first time. They could have brought the kingdom right here in Acts chapter 3. They didn't.

They had nobody to blame but themselves. Jesus came announcing, Repent for the kingdom is at hand. Peter's still announcing it. They could have changed the course of the history of the world, they didn't. They forfeited it.

Now the first time they forfeited it by their rejection and their rejection still remains when Peter preaches. In Matthew chapters 1 to 12 Jesus is carefully announcing the kingdom to Israel. He's offering Himself as Israel's Messiah. But in chapter 12 everything starts to shift because we read about Israel's rejection. In chapter 12 verse 14, listen to this, tragic words, "Then the Pharisees", leaders of Israel, "went out and held a council against Him how they might", what? "Destroy Him." That was their conclusion. And then you read tragic, tragic words; listen to this: "But when Jesus knew it", listen to this, "He withdrew Himself from there". Isn't that sad? It's the beginning of the end of Jesus' call to Israel, His first call. And then in the next statement He makes in chapter 12 later on in verses 46 to 50, the next one we want to look at He denies any natural connection to Israel. Listen to it, "While He was talking to the people, behold His mother and brothers stood outside desiring to speak to Him. And one said unto Him, Behold Your mother and brothers stand outside desiring to speak with You, but He answered and said unto them that told Him, Who is My mother and who are My brethren?" You see, He's denying any kind of a natural connection. "And He stretched forth His hands toward His disciples and said Behold My mother and My brethren for whosoever", whosoever not a Jew, not anybody particular, "whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven the same is My brother and sister and mother". And Jesus said, all of a sudden, It isn't natural anymore it's just for anybody who obeys the will of God. And when Israel turned from Messiah, Messiah

turned from them at that point. It's a sad thing. God is still gracious and even later on here in the book of Acts He comes back for a second invitation to Israel.

It's not a new offer. It's not a reoffer; it's just the same standing offer, Repent and you can still have the kingdom even though you executed the King. He took the execution of the King and turned it to glory anyway. Tragic thing that they forfeited. In Luke 19 there's an interesting thing that I just want to share with you quickly, Luke 19:42 it says: "If thou hadst known even thou at least this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace but now they're hidden from thine eyes". Oh that is sad. He says, Israel, if you only knew; He's crying over Jerusalem. Verse 41 says He's sitting above Jerusalem crying, Jesus is. And He says, Oh, if you knew, if you knew the things that belonged to your peace but now they are hidden from your eyes.

"For the day shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee around and keep thee on every side and shall lay thee even with the ground", flatten, "and thy children within thee and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation". See. Israel, you if you only knew and because you didn't, judgment. Verse 24 of Luke 21, "And they shall fall by the edge of sword and shall be led away captive into all nations and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

In other words, Jesus said, If you only knew but since you rejected this thing, since you turned your Messiah away judgment is coming. But even with the promise of judgment He still extends grace. He still extends grace. I don't know how the will of man in a gracious situation squares with the sovereignty of God in a prophetic utterance but that's not my problem. All I know is that He's gracious and even after all those statements about judgment here comes Peter and Peter simply says if you just repent God's still extends grace and you can have the kingdom. You can have the kingdom. You see, the kingdom cannot come until Israel repents. It cannot. If they would repent their sins would not only be forgiven but the kingdom would come. It is clear in prophecy that there are three steps involved prior to the kingdom.

Step one is the restoration of Israel back to the land. True? It's in the Old Testament in Ezekiel several places, 36, 38. It's in the New Testament in Luke 21, Mark 13 and Matthew 24 and 25. First of all Israel is brought back to the land. Secondly they are repentive in their hearts.

Thirdly the kingdom. Three steps. Beloved, do you realize that we've already seen step one? Is Israel being brought back to the land? Indeed they are at a rate which is unbelievable. All that God has left to do is redeem them. That happens during the tribulation and we go before that happens.

The church is taken away before that happens. We don't have much time. Israel is being brought into the land. And after Israel's repentance comes the kingdom.

But you see, the kingdom cannot come; it cannot happen apart from repentance. Now, let's take it a step further. Peter says not only should you repent because your sins will be forgiven and the kingdom will come but thirdly, the Messiah will return. Look at verse 20. "And He shall send Jesus Messiah which before was", not preached but appointed is probably better, either one is true. "He will send Jesus who was appointed unto you", here's the next thing. They were always looking for their

Messiah. It was an Old Testament principle, equally true in the New Testament, that the Millennial kingdom cannot come apart from the Messiah. There is never in Old Testament prophecy a kingdom without a Messiah. An earthly kingdom cannot be without an earthly King. And so the Messiah's coming was always connected with the kingdom and the kingdom was always connected with Israel's salvation. So it all has to happen. You believe the kingdom comes Messiah returns. It's all in one thing. That's why he says in verse 20, "And He shall send Jesus Christ who was before appointed or preached unto you." But He can't send Him until you believe. God is so forgiving. I mean, why in the world would God even think of sending Jesus back after they did what they did to Him the first time? What gives them the right to believe they even deserved Him to come back? But God says I'll send Him back. How, I mean, you blew it but I'll send Him back if you'll believe. If you'll change your mind about Jesus you'll have the King, He'll return. So the whole house of Israel is called on to reverse the verdict of Passover evening and acknowledge Jesus as Messiah then Jesus will return. The King and the kingdom always come together and they always await the conversion of Israel. Matthew 23:39 might help you to see this it says this, Jesus said to Jerusalem; "For I say unto you ye shall not see Me", listen, He says, "You'll not see Me again until you say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord". That is an important statement. That is a Messianic destination. He says, You won't see Me again until you claim Me as Messiah. Now, that's the point. That's what Peter means when he says, If you believe in Jesus, acknowledging Him as Messiah, He'll come back. Jesus said to Jerusalem, I'm going and you won't see Me again until you acknowledge Me as your Messiah. He cannot return until then. That's one of the reasons I don't believe anybody in the world will see Jesus at the rapture except believers. And He never really gets to the earth in the rapture.

Where do we meet Him? In the air. And Israel will never see Him until after their repentance. And then after they say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. And so that's exactly what Peter is saying. You can't have the kingdom and you can't have the King until you change your mind about Jesus. You say, Well, will they do it? Sure. Now I'm not going to give you a long chronology but just to kind of help you understand, some of you might not be familiar with prophetic things but this period we're living in is the church age. It will end when the church is taken away. When the church is taken away there is a seven-year period called the tribulation.

Seventieth week of Daniel, Daniel 9:24 to 27 explains it. During that seven-week, seventieth week, that last seven-year period God redeems Israel. The church just *Whissh*, we go; the world goes on as usual, not quite as usual with all of us gone but the world goes on, they make do. Israel is redeemed. Israel is redeemed during that seven-year period, that seven-year period is immediately followed by what? By the kingdom. Because once Israel is redeemed the kingdom can come. You see? And so God is a forgiving God. He willingly forgives those who come to Him. He says, Come now, come now. And they didn't come. And they didn't come. Someday they will. Praise God.

Paul said in Romans 11:26, he said, "So all Israel shall be saved". It's future, they will be but Oh, I wish they were now.

Then verse 21, "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things". That just means He's got to stay in heaven 'til the kingdom starts. Because the Jew in his mind he says this, Now wait a minute, if He's the Messiah why doesn't He stick around and set up His kingdom?

And Peter says, He's got to stay in heaven until you acknowledge Him as King until the kingdom comes He's got to be up there and the kingdom can't come until you acknowledge Him as King, and

you can't acknowledge Him as King until you change your mind about Him. That's the point. They had rejected Him; therefore He must remain in heaven until they believe. He cannot come until they say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. He cannot return until the time of restitution. He cannot come back until they acknowledge Him as King and He can take back the earth that rightfully is His. Now this sequence is not just something I dreamed up in my brain. I want you to see that this isn't even a New Testament sequence it's clearly an Old Testament one, Zechariah chapter 12 that's the next to the last book in the Old Testament, next to Malachi. And if you'll look at 12 you'll find the general sequence of what's going to happen in the final days. Now I'm going to read some things to you. 12:10, Zechariah's prophesying, he says, "I'll pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace", oh great, that's just what they need. They're going to get the Holy Spirit some day, uh hmm, that's good you only get the Holy Spirit when you're converted so that means they're going to get converted. Right?

Now watch this, "And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced". Isn't that interesting because you know who's talking here? God. Now some people don't want to argue whether Jesus is God. It's a little tough to argue when here it's God speaking and God says they pierced Me. All right, "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for Him". Isn't that interesting? They pierced Me and shall mourn for Him. There's a Trinitarian designation right there. You see Him as God in the first statement and as the Son of God in the second statement. You know what's going to convert Israel? When they look upon the One they pierced and they acknowledge Him. That's conversion isn't it? Now you say, You mean Israel's going to get converted? Oh is it going to be a great day? There's going to be first of all bitterness because they're going to be so sad as to what they did "there's going to be great mourning in Jerusalem and mourning in Hadad Rimmon in the Valley of Megiddo. The land's going to mourn", a lot of crying going on in those days when that comes. But look at verse 1 of chapter 13; "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness".

You see, when they look on Jesus and they say, Oh, we pierced our Messiah we change our minds we repent". *Whoosh*—the fountain of cleansing and they clean. And you know what follows their cleaning immediately? The battle of Armageddon, and that's in the next few verses in chapter 13 and if you go down there it says: "And it shall come to pass", in verse 2 that God's going to bring judgment and all this death and all these things and the day of the Lord, 14:1, gathering the nations and the great battle is going to be fought. Huh, that battle's not going to last too long it's going to end like this; verse 4, "And His feet shall stand that day on the Mount of Olives", that's Jesus returning. Why can He return then? Because Israel's what? They've been converted. And so He comes back and He hits that mountain and, oh I love this, skipping down to verse 9, "And the Lord shall be", what's the next word? "King." But, you see, He cannot be King until Israel believes. Zechariah 12:10 has to happen before 14:9 can happen. That's the point. That's the point. So Peter says, Listen, you can't have the kingdom until you believe the King and He's going to stay in heaven until you do.

And then I like this, he says, Boys, don't think this is anything new, verse 21, "which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the age began". Where have you been? They always accuse the Christians, you know, of announcing a new heresy and so they always connect it to the Christian preachers, always connected it to the Old Testament. I mean, all your prophets have been telling you this all along. Have you read Zechariah lately? You can't have a kingdom till you have a King, you reject the King, you forfeit the kingdom. The Jews had lived in the hope of the Messiah.

They had dreamed that He would come. They had dreamed that the kingdom would come. Peter's

not preaching any new message he's just saying why don't you listen to your own prophets? They told you it couldn't come without you accepting the King. You execute the King you can't have the kingdom.

Now there's a classic footnote here that I want to just draw very quickly in verse 21 which is a definition of biblical inspiration. You want to know how the Bible was written well here it is. Middle of the verse, "Which God hath spoken". Who spoke? God. What did He use? The mouth of all His holy prophets. You want to know how the Bible was written?

God said it through the mouth of His prophets. The Bible, every word is inspired by God. It's not theological speculation. No prophet was a speculative theologian, prophets were messengers who delivered a message direct from God. When I pick up my Bible and read every word in its original autographs every word was that word which God designed to be there. And if you don't believe that then who sits in judgment as to which words are right and which ones are wrong? If you take anything less than the absolute total inspiration of the Bible by God then somebody else has got to play God to determine which is in and which is out. In fact, three thousand, eight hundred and eighty times in the Bible it says, And God said or the word of God came or something similar, three thousand eight hundred and eighty times at least. I Peter says, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit". Now that's a footnote, that's free.

Now in the text before us he says, Your own prophets have told you this where have you been? You know you've got to repent and receive your Messiah before you have your kingdom. He says let me give you a classic illustration of what your own prophet said, and he pulls the number one prophet in Israel the first prophet they ever had, Moshe, Moses. And he talks about Moses in 22 and 24 and he uses Moses as an illustration of what their own prophets told them. And he uses Moses for two reasons, the greatness of Moses and the fact that Moses was the oldest prophet Israel had. So this was the oldest message Israel had, nothing new. So Peter has said repent and be converted for three reasons, your sins will be forgiven, your kingdom will come, Messiah will return and now he gives a fourth one the prophecy of Moses, judgment will be avoided, judgment will be avoided. Watch it; this is something, verse 22: "For Moses", here's an illustration of one of your holy prophets who told you this you can't have the King without the, you can't have the kingdom without repenting and receiving the King, "Moses said unto the fathers," the oldest prophet you've got. This is right smack out of Deuteronomy 18 verses 15 and 19 directly Moses said this, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me". You know who that prophet was to be? The Messiah. You know, that every Jew knew that was the Messiah? You know the very term 'that prophet' referred to Messiah? Remember in John's gospel when Jesus was up in Galilee that He was doing those wonderful miracles and they said, "He must be that prophet". And they tried to make Him a King? That's a Messianic title. They knew that Deuteronomy 18, that prophecy was the prophecy of Messiah they knew that. And so Peter simply says Moses told you look for your Messiah He will be like me, a Messiah like Moses. That is a redeemer.

And there are many other similarities. Then he says, watch this, "Him shall ye hear in a few things", no, "in all things whatever He shall say unto you and it shall come to pass", verse 23, "that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people". If the Messiah come and you don't hear Him you forfeit every blessing the covenant relationship ever bought. You can't have any blessing let alone the kingdom if you don't accept the King. What a powerful statement. And so Peter uses Moses to show them they need to repent in order to avoid judgment. Moses said, There is coming one like me and when He arrives you better believe Him or you'll be destroyed. Now the

phrase 'like unto me' was one that was familiar to the Jews in fact the Jews knew their Messiah would be like Moses. They knew what Deuteronomy 18 meant. They knew it was talking about their Messiah.

There was no argument, they all know that. And in the Midrash Rabbah which is some of the rabbinical writings I pulled out one quote that was interesting, I'll just read it to you. "As was the former redeemer so shall the latter redeemer be", now this written by old ancient rabbis, they knew He'd be like Moses, "As the former redeemer so shall the latter redeemer be", and they were basing it on Deuteronomy 18, "while of the former it is said, quote" "And Moses took his wife and his sons and set them upon an ass," so of the latter for it says (Zechariah 9:9) "He is lowly and riding on an ass."

So they said, one thing we'll know about our Messiah we can tell Him because He'll be riding on an ass. How did Jesus enter Jerusalem? Riding on an ass. Not only that, it says in Midrash Rabbah, "And while the former redeemer brought down manna so the latter shall bring down manna". Moses brought manna from heaven, Jesus said in John 6, Remember what Moses did? Well I have brought you true bread from heaven. And there are more comparisons in that same volume and every comparison they make is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. They knew what to expect. Jesus did everything to fulfill that expectation and they believed Him not and therefore Moses said unto them, If you don't you'll be destroyed, cut off from all the covenant promise of your people.

Every soul, look at that, every soul. Did you get it? "Who will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." A man who lives in this world without Jesus Christ will be destroyed and cut off from all covenant blessing in Israel and through Israel to the Gentiles. There is no salvation in any other than Jesus Christ. You may be religious, you may believe in a whole system of religion that does only damn you if it prevents you from coming to Jesus Christ. There is no salvation in any other, that's in another chapter, that's the next couple of messages. And you know one of the great heartbreaking things that I feel in my own heart is the terrible heartbreak of the Jews who are missing out on all the things they've dreamed for all their lifetime because they reject Jesus. You know it's sad. It's absolutely tragic to see those people of Israel who long and long and long for rest and refreshment and the times of refreshing and the kingdom and the Messiah and what happens? They die and they spend an eternity in hell and they never know one of the blessings that God intended for them because they will not accept the King. That is a heartbreaker. Oh how that ought to compel us to take the message of Jesus Christ to the Jews who are in Judaism for they're dreaming and longing for Messiah. Even the ones who are reformed a longing for a Messianic era that they'll never know anything but torment for eternity unless they know their own Messiah. And so Moses himself says, you expose yourself to the severest punishment God has at His hands when you reject your Messiah. My how we should be concerned with bringing those people to Jesus that they might know the fulfillment of all the things they've dreamed. So he says, Listen to your own prophets.

Then in verse 24 he takes it a step further and the next prophet in the sequence of the history of Israel, he's dealing with the ancients so they know it's not new stuff, he says; "Yea and all the prophets from Samuel", remember Samuel was a prophet, he ran the school of the prophets, he says, "From Samuel on and those who followed after, as many as have spoken have likewise foretold of these days". Everybody told about the Messiah the details are explicit. Do you know that you can draw such an absolutely detailed profile of Jesus Christ from the Old Testament that it's impossible to conclude anything else but that He was the Messiah and that God had to write the Old Testament? You can find every detail about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Any man who studies the Old Testament can see nothing but Christ over and over and over. And Jesus on the road to

Emmaus said to those two disciples, If only you had understood the Scripture you'd have known all these things. He even said to the Jews, Why don't you study the Scriptures they speak of Me. They had enough evidence. All their prophets from beginning to end of the prophets had said the same thing.

This is who He is and this is what He requires. Watch for Him and when He gets here don't miss Him or you'll be destroyed. So throughout the history of the Jews they didn't not only didn't believe Jesus but they didn't believe their prophets either did they? They never believed their prophets?

You say, What makes you say that? The Bible makes me say that and I say it only because Jesus said it in Matthew 23, listen to the pensive, sad words of Jesus Matthew 23:37; "O Jerusalem. Jerusalem", as He weeps, "Thou that killeth the prophets and stonest them who are sent unto thee". See, they did it to the prophets. Nothing new. Remember the parable of the man in the vineyard, he sent his sons they killed he sent his servants, they killed his servants. He said, Ah, I'll send my son. He sent his son. What did they do to his son? Killed the son. That's Israel. You didn't listen to the prophets you just killed them. He said, "How often, how many times would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings and you would not". And then this horrible statement, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate". Desolate and then, of course, He makes the statement, "You'll never see Me again until you say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord". It's desolate until then. You know, even today the house is desolate. They haven't changed their verdict about Jesus. Did you read in the papers recently, I read it in the Jerusalem Post which comes to me from Jerusalem, that there was a man who approached the Jewish Knesset which is the Parliament and the Courts and he asked if they could please reverse the verdict that was made on Jesus in order to get all the world off their backs? And you know that the Jewish Knesset turned him down, turned the man's plea down and would not reverse the verdict and there was some explanation for it. It's not it doesn't prove anything supernatural or explosive or dynamic but it simply shows that the attitude is still the same, basically nothing has changed. They still do not recognize Jesus Christ. So Peter calls for repentance in order that their sins may be forgiven, the kingdom may come, Messiah may return and judgment may be avoided. It could all happen if Israel believed.

Then the last reason, we'll close. Promised blessing will be realized. Verse 25--and I'm just going to read this and make a couple of comments. And notice the word you and ye and you're here and let me emphasis this. "Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our fathers saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed, unto you first God having raised up His Son (or servant) Jesus sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

And what he is saying is this, I can't believe it it's for you He did it all and you're the ones who won't believe it. See? He did it all for you, you're the sons of the prophets and the covenant in the truest way because all the prophesies and all the covenants came to pass in their lifetime in Christ.

Here you're the truest sons of the covenant that ever were, you are alive in the covenant day in the day of the offer of the kingdom and under you the promise came for blessing and under you God brought the Messiah and under you He said I'll turn you away from your sins and I'll bless you and you won't believe it. Paul said in Romans 1:16, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it's the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew"--what?--"first." It was to them. Luke 24:47--He started to preach the gospel and He says, You go out and preach the gospel

beginning at--what?--Jerusalem. It was for them. It was all for you, Peter says, it's all yours; you didn't believe it. So he closes his sermon. Ah, he probably said a lot of other things.

What is their reaction? Look at verse 1, I'm just going to read this; we'll study it next time, "As they spoke unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead they laid hands on them and put them in custody". That was their reaction. Verse 4, "But many of them which heard the word"--what?--"believed."

There's always a remnant, five thousand. That's probably the total believers--men believers--to this point. They believed. What a tremendous thing. There were some, but the nation rejected it.

Now I want to close with a simple illustration. From this time on, listen to this very important, from this time on there is no more offer of the kingdom to Israel. No more. God only made two formal statements to Israel. Jesus came saying, Repent for the kingdom is at hand; Peter came saying the same thing. Both times they reacted in hostility and God withdrew it. And right now they are confirmed in a situation where they could not see the kingdom. They had their two chances. To prove to you that they had only two I read you Matthew 22 the words of our Lord and we'll close with that reading. Matthew 22 beginning at verse 1, here Jesus in a parable tell us He would offer the kingdom twice to Israel; "And Jesus answered and spoke again by parables and said, The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who made a marriage for his son", now here's the kingdom and the king, being God made a marriage for His Son the Son being Christ, "And he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden". Isn't that interesting?

He called people who had already received an invitation. Who were the chosen people? Israel. So when Jesus came offering the kingdom, whom did He speak to? Israel. He invited those who were already chosen, but they wouldn't come. That's the first time. It just says they wouldn't come--no hostility. It doesn't say they killed all the disciples not at all it just says that. Then again verse 4, "He sent forth other servants", here's the second offer, "and said, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, things are ready, come to the marriage. But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his farm another to his merchandise and the remnant took his servants and treated them shamefully and slew them". No disciple died during the first offer. What happen to all the disciples after the resurrection of Jesus?

Jesus offered the kingdom to Israel again and they began immediately to slay them, didn't they? Only two offers. Do you read about a third offer? No; verse 7 says this: "When the king heard it he was angry and he sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city".

Did you ever have a clear description of the destruction of Jerusalem? Two offers then judgment. And I love this; oh is this good; "Then he said to his servants, The wedding is ready but they which were bidden weren't worthy", Israel's set aside, "you go into the highways and as many as you shall find bid them to the marriage. So they went out into the highways and gathered everybody, good and bad and the wedding was furnished with guests". Guess who they are? Guess who came to dinner? The church, the church, only two offers, only two offers. You say, Well I'm not a Jew what does this say to me? It says the very same thing. It says you better change your mind about Jesus and then you can receive all the blessing of God because every blessing promised to Israel is passed on to us in Christ. I trust and pray no one will leave this morning who doesn't know Jesus Christ. Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank You that You've provided for us in Christ all of those things which You promised in the covenants to Israel and that indeed it is through Israel that we, all the nations of the earth, are blessed.

God, our hearts are constantly reminded that there are people in our midst who do not know Christ. God, maybe in some of Israel who need to change their mind about Jesus in order that their sins might be forgiven, they might avoid judgment and all the wonders of the kingdom might be theirs.

God, our hearts are grieved for Israel. O how our hearts are broken for those Jews who shall miss it all because they missed the Messiah. God, may no one leave this place this morning who's not turned to Jesus Christ, the only Savior, the only One who can forgive sin. As we close, Father, we ask Your blessing upon even that which becomes our benediction in Christ's name.

Amen.

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