

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 12: ACTS 3:18-21

ACTS 3:12-26 | PETER'S SECOND SERMON

- Verses 12-17 included on session 11
- Verse 18 –
 - The prophets were clear that the Messiah was going to be rejected, killed, and would rise again. How would this take place among a people who were looking for the Messiah? How would a nation eager for her King put her King to death?
 - The key is in verse 17, **he hath so fulfilled**. The Greek contains an adverb (modifying the verb translated **he hath fulfilled**).
 - Remember that adverbs tell *how* something has been fulfilled.
 - The only option in verses 17-18 is that **through ignorance ye did it** (v. 17) is the manner in which the prophecy was fulfilled.
- Verse 19 –
 - It is often said that *ignorance of the law is no excuse*. Likewise, ignorance of the identity of the one they were putting to death is no excuse, thus Peter says **Repent ye therefore**.
 - The **therefore** says, "Your actions (based on ignorance) require you to **repent**."
 - The Greek means to *change your mind*, and both the word **ignorance** (v. 17) and **repent** (v. 19) are based on the Greek root *nous*, a "thinking" word.
 - In time, the word came to mean "change your behavior" rather than the more immediate instruction to "change your mind."
 - It is likely the Latin version by Jerome that introduced the "change your behavior" definition which has become the default understanding of **repent**, because the Latin used a form of the word *penance*, as can be seen in the word itself.
 - Bullinger says that the Latin should have been *resipisco*, which means "to come to the senses" and is much closer to "change your mind."
 - Not only were they to **repent** but also **be converted**.
 - Though the English has been translated in the passive, the Greek is an active command to *turn back*.
 - The Greek does not carry the modern Christian sense of being converted, but does carry the Hebrew sense of *turn back* as found in Jeremiah 3:7, 14, 22.
 - These two activities were to be done (actively, by the Israelites themselves) **that your sins may be blotted out** (wiped away or erased, as used in Colossians 2:14).
 - Though the KJV says **when the times of refreshing shall come** the Greek word ὅπως [hopos] is used 56 times and almost always translated *that* and only here as **when**.
 - It is a conjunction that always has a sense of purpose. Young's literal says "that..." and Darby says "so that..."
 - The clear implication is that when Israel repents and turns back to the Lord, their sins will be wiped away and this will usher in the **times of refreshing** and the **presence of the Lord**, both a clear reference to the Messianic age.
 - If this instruction was given in this present dispensation, then we would need to build a post-millennial theology.
 - Only when we rightly divide this instruction, thus keeping it with its right audience and dispensation to we avoid postmillennialism.

- A sampling of commentaries (both good and bad):
 - The advent of the new age is conditioned by the repentance of Israel. H. T. Andrews, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Westminster New Testament (London: Andrew Melrose, 1908), 63.
 - The meaning of the promise I take to be primarily, seasons, to the individual, of spiritual revival Lyman Abbott, *The Acts of the Apostles with Notes, Comments, Maps, and Illustrations* (New York; Chicago; New Orleans: A. S. Barnes & Company, 1876), 54.
 - ...if they would repent and reform, they would be pardoned, and would enjoy, nationally, that happy state of peace and joy belonging to the Messiah's kingdom. "The times of refreshing"—literally, "of breathing again"—were conditional, and depended upon the fulfilment of duty on their part....The Golden age of their untiring hopes would open upon the world. The kingdom of God would come. Abiel Abbot Livermore, *The Acts of the Apostles: With a Commentary* (Boston; Cambridge; London: James Munroe and Company; Sampson Low, Son and Co., 1853), 58.
 - ...it refers to a literal reign of Christ upon the earth at the close of the present dispensation, in which all the prophecies, referring to the future glory and happiness of the church, shall be fully and literally fulfilled—a glorious, universal, and *peaceful* rule, over the earth. Bradford K. Peirce, *Notes on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. D. P. Kidder (New York: Carlton & Phillips, 1854), 67.
- Verse 20 - If any question remains as to what **the times of refreshing** (v. 19) are, this verse solidifies the interpretation that they come
 - After the conversion of Israel and
 - At the Second Coming.
- Verse 21 - The **times of restitution of all things** is a period of time (**times**, not *time*). It begins with the Second Coming and ends when the last enemy, death, is **swallowed up in victory** (1 Cor. 15:54). It was first predicted in Genesis 3:15 and this restoration has been the hope of mankind since that time.