

ACTS 3:17-21

A. Acts 3:17-18 - And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers.

Acts 3:18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

1. When Jesus hung on the cross (Israel's crucified Messiah), He prayed for Israel to be forgiven for their ignorance in not knowing He was Messiah. They **could** have known Him - **should** have known Him. They knew they were murdering their victim, but most did not realize Who He really was. Their minds had been darkened in unbelief, and even by **God**, so they would crucify Him.
2. John 4:48 - Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

John 12:37-40 - But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: John 12:38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? John 12:39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, John 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

- a. In verse 37, they would not believe. So in verse 39, the result was that they could **not** believe. God, knowing this, then blinded their understanding to **fulfill** Isaiah's prophecy. This was God's divine **judgment** on His people who had deliberately closed their eyes to the truth. God fixed them so they could **not** believe.
- b. God had repeatedly, over and over, **sent** Israel His messengers and messages. Yet, Israel would not hear or believe. So God's judgment **fell** on them and they could not believe it.

*Why parables?

Matthew 13:10-11, 13-15 - And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? Matt. 13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. Matt. 13:13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. Matt. 13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: Matt. 13:15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

- c. Christ's power had just healed a man, which is what He wanted to do to the **nation!** Now, He wants Israel to be converted (3:19a).

*After **using** Israel (He is not responsible for it) to have Christ crucified, God the Father moves in **mercy** and love to Israel because of His Son's prayer on the cross and their ignorance.

- d. In our judgment, the Jews were not ignorant of Who Jesus was. But God saw that their minds **were** blinded in unbelief. But since the Holy Spirit was poured out, His convicting power

(John

16:8) now left them without **excuse** when Christ was presented.

e. Prior to their crucifixion of Christ, they were ignorant as to who Christ truly was in **God's** sight. But now they will know. They had nailed their **king** to the cross and now they know this. But, we will see they are still too proud to acknowledge it.

3. Also, what is going on here is **in**comprehensible to Israel. So much is at **stake** and it all rests upon their shoulders. Will they **believe** that Jesus is the Christ-Messiah, or remain in **un**belief?

a. *If Israel continues in her rebellious sin of **un**belief, **that** generation will have committed the unpardonable **sin** (and they did). Christ had warned them while He was on earth.

Matthew 12:31-32 - Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. Matt. 12:32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

b. Israel did not believe John the Baptist's Kingdom message. John was sent by the **Father** - so John represented the Father Whom Israel rejected. Then Israel rejected Christ - the **Son** of God. Now here in early Acts, it is God the Holy **Spirit** Who is making the Kingdom offer clear to Israel. If Israel does not believe in Christ Messiah, that is rejection of the Holy Spirit's Kingdom message-**offer**. For Israel, that would be a rejection of the Godhead - which would be **unforgivable-unpardonable**.

Spirit's
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Note **Only** Israel could commit this sin! If the people of Israel would **resist** the Holy working and **reject** Christ, they would be wholly without **excuse**. But if they would believe, what a blessing lay before them.

John 8:28a - [Then.....that I am he,]

B.

Acts 3:19-21 - Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; Acts 3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

1. [Repent ye therefore] because Christ had fulfilled all those prophecies of His **death** and **suffering** that the prophets told about. The next thing that could be fulfilled was the Kingdom glory. Now they could offer the **literal** Kingdom on earth, with Christ reigning, if Israel would repent of her rejection of Christ and embrace Him as her **Messiah**.
2. Prior to this, we **never** find **one** specific **offer of the kingdom** to Israel **until** we reach **these** verses. Before the cross, the Kingdom was only [at hand]. At Pentecost, Israel was notified that Christ had risen from the dead and He, no doubt, would occupy David's **throne**. It was at this time, Peter **offered** the Kingdom to Israel - and only to Israel. It was conditioned upon believing - but also Peter is calling for their **national** repentance. Only on that condition would Christ return to deliver Israel and then set up the glory kingdom.

Luke 24:25-26 - Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Luke 24:26 Ought not Christ to have **suffered** these things, and to enter into **his glory**?

I Peter 1:11 - Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

3. Peter's message-words refer to Christ's 2nd coming, when He will return to earth at the **end** of the Tribulation. Also, if they repented, that did not mean He would return immediately. First, they would have to go through the Tribulation - the **Day** of the Lord.

Matthew 24:29-30 - Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: Matt. 24:30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

4. [that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;]

- a. Peter is talking about when the nation's sins will be taken away.

*Individually, if one believed in Jesus as Messiah, he was **saved**.

*He became a part of the Little Flock - remnant.

- b. Here he is talking about when Israel's national sins will be removed.

Jeremiah 31:31, 33-34 - Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Jer. 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. Jer. 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Romans 11:25-27 - For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Rom. 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: Rom. 11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

- c. [times of refreshing.....times of restitution of all things,] This refers to the many wonderful **changes** that will take place for the kingdom, as the prophets predicted.

- (1) This unimaginable kingdom rule will be on **earth**.

Deuteronomy 11:21 - That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

Matthew 6:10 - Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

- (2) It will be a **theo**cracy - God reigning in Christ.

Isaiah 9:6 - For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given / and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Zechariah 14:9 - And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

- (3) The center of earth will be **Jerusalem**.

Isaiah 2:3 - And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Matthew 19:28 - And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

- (4) The Kingdom will extend to **all** the earth.

Daniel 7:14 - And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

Zechariah 8:22 - Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.

- (5) The **curse** on earth will be removed.

Isaiah 35:1-2, 6 - The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. Isa. 35:2 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, they shall see the glory of the LORD, *and* the excellency of our God. Isa. 35:6 Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

Isaiah 11:6-9 - The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. Isa. 11:7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. Isa. 11:8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. Isa. 11:9 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.

- (6) Health and **long** life will be restored to mankind.

Isaiah 35:5-6 - Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Isa. 35:6 Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

Isaiah 65:20 - There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner *being* an hundred years old shall be accursed.

- (7) Christ will be lifted up and His government **pure**.

Isaiah 9:6-7 - For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isa. 9:7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 2:11 - The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

5. Can we imagine a world **like** this? These blessings (and many more) were offered to Israel by Peter's sermon. If only they would repent, be converted by accepting Jesus as their Christ-Messiah. This is **why** Peter asked Christ in Chapter one: Acts 1:6 - [When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?]
- a. Christ's reign - His Kingdom, **free** of the devil and evil spirits, will be an amazing utopia on earth for **1000** years. Yes there will be **sin**, but it will be immediately dealt with by Christ's justice system that is in place.

- b. Isn't it ridiculous when we see the governments of the world (America especially) and their politicians making **crazy** laws to try and curb crime, stop **climate** change, set the standards of morality, promises of prosperity and health care - and all without God!?

*The psalmist said in Psalm 2:4 - [He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.]

6. This kingdom hope is specifically dealing with Israel, the nation, but not with the **Body** of Christ.

- a. When Peter preached here, remember that the prophets of the O.T. had told these things. So in the Jewish mind, Peter's sermon was about the promise of **their** future kingdom.

- b. But also in God's overall purpose, it is His restoring of the **earth** from Adam's curse to its **original** condition. Don't forget the **damage** that had been done and will be done to the earth and to the heavens from the Tribulation's **wrath** of judgments!

- c. No question that Peter and the other believers **expected** the Lord's return **soon**. But he also knew the Tribulation would be **prior** to Christ's return. Peter knew this from Daniel's 70th week, Psalm 2, and Jesus' explanation of the Tribulation and His return at its end to defeat Anti-Christ in Matthew **24**.

7. For our encouragement, just remember we will be caught **up** to meet Christ in the air and taken to **heaven** before/**prior** to the Tribulation. We, in the Body of Christ, have **not** been appointed to wrath (Tribulation).

1 Thessalonians 1:10 - And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 - For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 1Thess. 5:10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. 1Thess. 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.