

ACTS 3:22-26

A.

Acts 3:22-24 - For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. Acts 3:23 And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Acts 3:24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

1. We know that this begins the end of Peter's Kingdom offer sermon. We now know that Jesus had not offered the Kingdom during His earthly ministry. The Kingdom was "at hand" (near-close-not far away in time). But, it could not have actually been offered until after the prophecies concerning Christ's suffering and death had been fulfilled.

*That is why Peter begins in verse 19 to ask for Israel to "repent", since now the prophecies concerning their Messiah's suffering had been fulfilled. Next on their prophetic program (just after the Tribulation) was the glory of Christ's coming back to earth. It was dependent upon whether Israel would, as a nation, repent.

2. God's omniscience foreknew that Israel would not repent and that Jesus would not return at that time (Acts). God also foreknew that He had secretly planned, before the world began, to bring in an entirely new dispensation of His grace through the Apostle Paul as a consequence of Israel's rejection of Christ.

*Knowing this in no way minimizes the legitimacy of Peter's Kingdom offer.

- a. Do you remember what Jesus said about John the Baptist?

Matthew 11:12-13 - And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Matt. 11:13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

Matthew 17:10-12 - And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? Matt. 17:11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. Matt. 17:12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

- b. If the rulers of Israel had received John the Baptist's ministry, he would have been the promised Elijah. Likewise, had Israel's leaders repented and received Jesus as their Christ-Messiah in Acts 3, Jesus would have returned after the 7 year Tribulation to restore the Kingdom to Israel (1:6).
- c. But Israel did not accept John the Baptist or Jesus. Since Jesus said that Elijah must come before He returns, another Elijah (not John) apparently must come before Christ returns.

Malachi 3:1, 4:5 - Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. Mal. 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

- d. As we understand prophecy, the Scriptures, it does not appear that Christ will return in the future as a result of Israel's acceptance of Him, as was offered here in Acts 3. There will be a remnant who will believe in the Tribulation.

*Jesus will not return because of Israel's national repentance, but most of Israel's converts will happen when He returns.

3. Also important to understand is that the religious rulers (theocracy) were responsible for the nation of Israel. Their actions and decisions affected the whole nation (somewhat like Iran today).
- a. There were many Israelites who accepted John the Baptist and Jesus, but the rulers did not. Therefore, Israel as a nation did not.

*Notice the emphasis placed upon the chief priests and rulers in the following verses:

Luke 24:19-20 - And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:
Luke 24:20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

John 7:26, 48 - But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? John 7:48 Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

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

Acts 4:5-8, 26 - And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, Acts 4:6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. Acts 4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Acts 4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, Acts 4:26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

- b. So though there were many who believed, the chief priests and rulers did not believe, thus preventing the nation believing.

Acts 5:14-17 - And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Acts 5:15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. Acts 5:16 There came also a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one. Acts 5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

- c. Later, God's judgment fell on unbelieving Israel because of Israel's rulers' rejection of Christ. In 70 A.D., judgment fell upon believing and unbelieving Jews when Jerusalem was destroyed.

*Actually, we can thank Saul of Tarsus' persecution of followers of Christ that caused many Jews to run from Jerusalem before 70 A.D.

Acts 8:1-4, 9:1 - And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. Acts 8:2 And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him. Acts 8:3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison. Acts 8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Acts 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

4. Question? What would have **happened** had the rulers of Israel received John the Baptist as the Elijah who was to come?

*And what would have happened if some of the rulers would have repented here in Acts 3 and believed Jesus was the Christ-Messiah?

- a. We can only speculate, but we **do** know that God **knew**, just as Christ knew, Tyre and Sidon would have repented if His mighty miracles had been done in them.

Matthew 11:21 - Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

- b. God foreknows **all** events of human history and it is possible that if Israel had repented, as did Nineveh, God could have repented of His anger with Israel and showed His **mercy** instead. That would be for a short time because prophesied prophecies had to be fulfilled!

*But we also know that God knew Israel would **not** repent.

- c. In the midst of everything we have said thus far, the fact that the Kingdom is being offered in Acts 3 **proves** that God has not **yet** cast Israel aside.

5. In verses 22-24, Peter uses Moses as an **example** by quoting Deuteronomy 18:15-19 to make his message simple and clear. They were to repent or **perish**. Israel could have forgiveness and blessings if they would acknowledge Christ whom they had rejected.

- a. *Moses had warned of the consequences of Israel rejecting Messiah, and Peter was **repeating the same truth**.

Deuteronomy 18:18-19 - I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. Deut. 18:19 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

- b. Likewise, Peter's message is not an optional matter. Moses was a type of Christ with the same consequences.

Hebrews 10:28 - He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

*Israel's continued unbelief and rebellion against Messiah would not be tolerated. If they would **refuse** Him **now**, that would cause utter destruction to be poured out upon them! So much is at stake for the nation!

- c. This was not only Moses, but all of the prophets that prophesied those days. Peter is warning them not to be like their ancestors, who had rejected the message of the prophets and even killed many of them. Israel lacked repentance, not information!

Matthew 23:37 - O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

B.

Acts 3:25-26 - Ye are the children 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. Acts 3:26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

1. Peter concludes his sermon by reminding them (Israel) of their special position among the nations on earth.

- a. As a nation, Israel was the heir of the promised Abrahamic Covenant blessings. This was true especially of the Jews here, and more so, since Jesus their Messiah had come in their lifetime.

Romans 9:4-5 - Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Rom. 9:5 Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

- b. Abraham's seed found its ultimate fulfillment in Christ. He is the seed in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Peter's point here is that it is through Abraham's multiple seed that these Jews could be a blessing to the nations. But it begins "first" with them, then they were to go to the Gentiles (Gen. 22:17-18, 26:4, 28:3-4).

- c. Note: Today God is blessing Gentiles through Abraham's seed, Christ - "but now" it is not through Israel's multiple seed (Israel).

*Today, through Abraham's one seed, Christ only, man finds salvation and blessings!

Galatians 3:16 - Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

- d. In Israel's future Kingdom on earth, God will again bless through Israel (multiple seed) and Israel, in turn, will be blessed by the one seed - Christ.

2. These Jewish leaders-rulers-nation could have had the Tribulation, then their promised Kingdom and King. They could have been the ones to evangelize the Gentile world as the O.T. prophesied.

Zechariah 8:22-23 - Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Zech. 8:23 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard *that God is with you*.

- a. We can easily see here in Acts 3 that Peter is still preaching based upon the covenant promises to Israel.
- b. As Scripture was being completed and history finished, we know that Israel said no to repenting of her sins and no to Jesus as their reigning Messiah.

*Later, Paul would say this about Israel's tragic decision:

Acts 13:46 - Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Romans 1:16 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.