

~ACTS~

Lesson 14- Turn Away from Sin and Turn Upon Jesus

We are continuing our study through the book of Acts, and last week we began looking at Peter's second sermon in chapter 3 and we saw how after the lame man was healed, Peter began giving all the glory to Jesus. And we see that the Name of Jesus is the main topic of Peter's sermon. So, let's read the remainder of Peter's sermon, **Acts 3:17-26**...

Notice the layout of Peter's sermon. He first gives all glory to Jesus describing and proving who Jesus is, then he convicts their heart of the sin of rejecting and killing their Messiah, and now today we see him preach Grace and Mercy and Forgiveness to those who repent and turn upon Jesus. Let's begin where we left off last week on verse 17...

17 Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 17 καὶ νῦν, ἀδελφοί, οἶδα ὅτι κατὰ ἄγνοιαν ἐπράξατε, ὥσπερ καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες ὑμῶν.

Right here at verse 17, you can tell there is change in Peter's tone. He has switched from conviction to Mercy, offering them a chance to repent from the sin of rejecting their Messiah. Peter says, "**Yet now, brethren...**" Peter calls them brethren, not because they are believers, but fellow Jewish brethren in the sense of Acts 3:13, "our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

Peter continues saying, "**...I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.**" I know that you acted in accordance with **ἄγνοια**, "without knowledge." This word **ἄγνοια** or the verb **ἄγνοέω**, means "not to know," "without understanding," or "without knowledge." This is where we get the word "Agnostic." Agnostics say they don't believe in God because they claim there is no evidence to know for certain if God exists. So Satan keeps them in a state of ignorance by believing the lie and not Truth. People are ignorant simply because they are deceived.

The enemy loves doubt, even if it is just enough to keep them from the Truth, but ignorance will not excuse judgement. The sin of rejecting Jesus, with or without knowledge, ignorant or otherwise, will result in eternal damnation. But those who are acting in ignorance still have an opportunity for Mercy. It doesn't excuse their sin, but those acting in ignorance may not have hardened their heart yet. Remember what Jesus said on the cross, "**Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.**" Lk 23:34. They don't know what they are doing, they are **ἄγνοέω**, without knowledge, acting in ignorance. Paul said he was ignorant in unbelief, **1 Tim 1:13-16**. It seems there is still an opportunity for Mercy when someone is acting in ignorance, **Romans 10:1-4**. God's Mercy is always available, but it is only those who humble themselves, repent and believe on Jesus that can apprehend this Mercy. Ignorance means "without knowledge." But once a person receives knowledge of their sin and knowledge of the Truth, this is when conviction sets in, and at this moment they have a choice: humble or harden, **Heb 10:26, 29**; **Leviticus 4:22-23; 27-28; 5:3-6, 17-18; John 15:21-25**. Mercy is available to all, but if a person has seared their conscience and hardened their heart after receiving the Truth, then they can never obtain mercy while they are in that state. But evidently these Jews were not at this point yet because Peter is extending God's Mercy to them. He says you did this in ignorance, but God knew about this before the foundation of the world. Look at verse 18...

18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 18 ὁ δὲ Θεὸς ἃ προκατήγγειλε διὰ στόματος πάντων τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ, παθεῖν τὸν Χριστόν, ἐπλήρωσεν οὕτω.

The sin, denial, and the rejection of God... all this was known by God before the foundation of the world, and yet in His love for us, He sent His Son, the Christ, who would be the Lamb slain and suffer the wrath of God for our sins. This was the plan before the world began. There are many Old Testament prophecies about the suffering Christ. We looked at several last week with the Servant Songs of Isaiah, Is 50:5-6;

52:13; 53. Several of David's Psalms foretell of Christ's sufferings, Psalm 16; 22; 40; 41; 69. Then there is Moses and the Bronze serpent, Num 21:8; the Passover Lamb, Ex 12:13; Abraham offering Isaac, Gen 22:1-8; and the very first prophecy of the suffering Messiah in Gen 3:15, "*He (the Seed) shall bruise your head (the serpent), and you shall bruise His heel.*" And every one of these prophecies and many more, Jesus fulfilled perfectly in His life. The Jews hearing this are weighed down, heavy with guilt, being cut to the heart for their sin. So Peter says in verse 19...

19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

19 μετανοήσατε οὖν καὶ ἐπιστρέψατε, εἰς τὸ ἐξαλειφθῆναι ὑμῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας, ὅπως ἂν ἔλθωσι καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ Κυρίου,

"**Repent therefore and be converted...**" Just as in Peter's first sermon, he tells them to repent, μετανοέω, change your thinking, change your mind. We spoke about the importance of repentance a few weeks ago when we studied Acts 2:38. Turn away from your rebellion against Jesus and turn toward Him, trusting in Him fully for Eternal Salvation. Salvation cannot happen without repentance. And notice Peter adds the phrase "**and be converted,**" ἐπιστρέφω. This literally means "to turn oneself upon," namely upon God. Change your thinking and turn yourself upon Jesus Christ. Notice how this word is used in other places, Acts 14:15; 26:18-20; 1 Thess 1:9; James 5:20. The Prophets preached of repentance and turning toward God, Ezekiel 18:30-32; Jeremiah 4:1. The entire ministry of John the Baptist was about turning the people's focus to Jesus Christ for Salvation, Lk 1:16-17.

This leads us to the next statement of Peter... "**that your sins may be blotted out...**" Salvation through the forgiveness of sins only comes after repentance and turning upon Him through faith. And notice what happens to our sins... they are blotted out, wiped out, ἐξαλείφω. The word literally means "to be smeared out from," Col 2:13-14; Isaiah 43:25, 44:21-22. Our debt of sin was paid for by the blood of Jesus; forgiven, blotted out and wiped clean, giving us new life in Him.

Peter continues with the result of having our sins forgiven... "**so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.**" This refreshing is the word, ἀναψύξις, used only here in the Bible. It literally means a raising of the soul. This refreshing starts the minute we receive His gift of grace through faith in Him and it continues unto Everlasting Life. This is why "times" is plural. It is continual forever. I picture this as rivers of Living Water being poured out to us as Jesus fills us with His Spirit, refreshing us as we live and abide in Him, John 4:13-14; 7:37-38; 1 John 3:24; 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Tim 1:14; Romans 8:11. But notice the progression. This refreshing can only come after we turn to Him and place our faith upon Him, Matt 11:28-30; Isaiah 28:11, 16. These "times of refreshing" are leading us into the "times of restoration." This is what Peter goes on to say in verses 20-21...

20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, **21** whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

20 καὶ ἀποστείλῃ τὸν προκεκηρυγμένον ὑμῖν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. 21 ὃν δεῖ οὐρανὸν μὲν δεξασθαι ἄχρι χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως πάντων, ὃν ἐλάλησεν ὁ Θεὸς διὰ στόματος πάντων ἁγίων αὐτοῦ προφητῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος.

Verse 20 says, "**that He may send Jesus Christ.**" This is the expectation of all faithful believers. That Jesus Christ is coming back. This is our Blessed Hope, to be with Jesus forever, Titus 2:13. And Peter says, He was **preached to you beforehand** by the Prophets... and He is the same One who has been risen from the dead and is with the Father now. Peter says in verse 21, "**whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration...**" Jesus has ascended back into heaven, sat down at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest, and He is going to stay in heaven until the "times of restoration" of all things. When will these times of restoration begin? The first step in His plan of restoration is to remove the faithful believers from

the earth. This begins the restoration process, the “times of restoration.” This is the rapture, 1 Thess 4:15-18; **John 14:3**, 21-23; Rev 3:10. He is restoring the Kingdom to Himself but there are some bad tenants living in His Kingdom that He has to evict. So during the 7-year Tribulation, Jesus is restoring His Kingdom. He is saving those who begin believing in Him, and He is evicting all the bad tenants that reject Him. During the Tribulation millions of people will come to Him and be saved, even the Jews, Zech 14:3-9.* But there will be many others who reject Him and harden their hearts. But this is the process of restoring His Kingdom, Rev 19:11-16; Jude 14-15. And this restoration continues all through the Millennium until finally the entire universe is burned up and remade perfectly without sin, 2 Peter 3:10-13.

This has been the plan of Redemption since before the foundation of the world and, as Peter says in verse 21, has been “**spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.**” Now Peter continues giving two specific prophecies foretelling of Jesus. He mentions Moses and Abraham. He begins with Moses in verses 22-23...

22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. **23** And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.’

22 Μωσῆς μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας εἶπεν ὅτι Προφῆτην ὑμῖν ἀναστήσει Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς ὑμῶν ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ὑμῶν ὡς ἐμέ· αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε κατὰ πάντα ὅσα ἂν λαλήσῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς. ²³ ἔσται δέ, πᾶσα ψυχὴ, ἥτις ἂν μὴ ἀκούσῃ τοῦ προφήτου ἐκείνου, ἐξολοθρευθήσεται ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ.

Peter is quoting Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19. This is a prophecy of Moses about the Messiah to come, and the Jews knew this to be a Messianic title, **John 6:14**; 1:20-25, 45. This prophecy also shows the role the Messiah would play. “**The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren.**” Moses was a type of the Messiah to come. Moses acted as Israel’s prophet, deliverer, and mediator, Acts 7:35-38; Ex 33:7-11, and so likewise the Messiah would be the Prophet, Deliverer, and the Mediator for us. And Jesus is all these things right? He is a Prophet, Jesus is speaking the Word of God, and Jesus is the Word of God Himself, He is our Deliverer, and He is our Mediator. And He came from the brethren; He came through the loins of David; He came as a man.

Peter warns them in verse 23 of the consequence of not listening to Jesus’ Words. He says, “**every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.**” So Peter’s admonition to these Jews is to hear the Words of Jesus. Hear and understand the Words of Life that He is speaking, Jn 5:46. This was the rebuke of Isaiah, “*hearing they will hear and not understand; lest they should turn and their sins be forgiven them.*” Mark 4:12; Matt 13:14-15; Is 6:9-10. And Peter tells us anyone who will not hear and understand the Words of Jesus and put their faith on Him for Eternal Salvation will be utterly destroyed. This utter destruction will happen in the Day of the Lord beginning at His Second Coming at the Sheep and Goat Judgement and then finalized at the Great White Throne Judgement when all unbelievers are thrown into the lake of fire for all eternity, Matt 25:31-46; Daniel 12:1-2; Rev 20:11-15. Peter summarizes the purpose of the prophets in verse 24...

24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.

24 καὶ πάντες δὲ οἱ προφῆται ἀπὸ Σαμουὴλ καὶ τῶν καθεξῆς, ὅσοι ἐλάλησαν, καὶ προκατήγγειλαν τὰς ἡμέρας ταύτας.

“**foretold of these days**” These days are the days of the entire Messianic Era from the prophecies of His birth, the cross, His Resurrection which bring in the times of refreshing all the way through to the

* This is also the time when the nation of Israel will acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, Israel will be restored, and they will be gathered back together with David as their king, and Jesus will reign as King of the whole world, Matt 24:31; Is 11:12; Ezek 37:21, 24-26; 34:11-13; 36:24; 28:25. This is one of the purposes of the Great Tribulation; to awaken the Jews to the Truth, Jer 30:7-9; Zech 13:7-9; 12:9-10; Ezek 20:33-38; Luke 21:24; Rom 11:25.

restoration of all things at the end of the Millennium. The Prophets foretold of all these things and these days. The entire Bible is focused on One Person, that is the Person of Jesus Christ, Luke 24:27. Peter then refers to another prophecy given to Abraham in verse 25...

25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’

²⁵ ὑμεῖς ἐστε υἱοὶ τῶν προφητῶν, καὶ τῆς διαθήκης ἧς διέθετο ὁ Θεὸς πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν, λέγων πρὸς Ἀβραάμ, Καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου ἐνευλογηθήσονται πᾶσαι αἱ πατριαὶ τῆς γῆς.

Peter, speaking to the Jews, says that all the prophets spoke of Jesus Christ, and you are sons of the prophets and specifically sons of Abraham whom God made a covenant with him concerning the Messiah, Genesis 22:18. Peter tells the Jews; you are **of the covenant which God made with our fathers...** that **in your Seed all families of the earth shall be blessed.** The promise to Abraham was that the Messiah would come through his lineage. That Salvation would come from his Seed. Abraham had faith in the promise of the Messiah to come and it was because of his faith in the Messiah, it accounted to him as Righteousness, Rom 4:3. This promise is a universal promise to the whole world, that **all families of the earth shall be blessed.** But there is a very unique way God planned to have this promise administered to everyone. He planned it to flow through Jesus Christ. Because God doesn't do anything with us unless it is through His Son.

In Paul's letter to the Galatians, Paul quotes and expounds on this promise, and he gives us some insight into the promises made to Abraham, **Galatians 3:16**. Notice the promises weren't only made to Abraham, but to his Seed who is Jesus Christ. And notice **verse 19**, it's even more specific. The Promise of Eternal Life is in Christ and the only way to apprehend Eternal Life is by having faith in Jesus this is what Paul says in **verse 22**. This is what we spoke about last week. We connect ourself to the Vine by placing our faith on Jesus Christ, then out from Him Eternal Life is given to those who believe because we are in Him. And now, through Jesus, this promise is available to all the nations of the earth, to as many as would believe "in Christ," **Galatians 3:26-29**. Peter concludes his sermon with this blessing in verse 26...

26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.

²⁶ ὑμῖν πρῶτον ὁ Θεός, ἀναστήσας τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν, ἀπέστειλεν αὐτὸν εὐλογοῦντα ὑμᾶς, ἐν τῷ ἀποστρέφειν ἕκαστον ἀπὸ τῶν πονηριῶν ὑμῶν.

Peter makes this promise personal by focusing the attention back to his audience saying, "**To you first...**" This is what Paul constantly taught... "to the Jew first and then the Greek," Romans 1:16. This was the great commission in Acts 1:8- "Be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Peter, being specific, uses the Messianic title "Servant of God" again with the Name of Jesus. He says, "**God, having raised up His Servant Jesus...**" Peter reiterates the fact that this suffering Servant was raised from the dead by God, Acts 2:24. And God **sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.** God blessed the whole world by sending His Son to be the propitiation for the whole world, 1 John 4:9-10. When Peter says, "**turning away**," he is playing off a word he previously used in his sermon. In verse 19 he said repent and **ἐπιστρέφω**, turn upon Jesus. Now Peter says Jesus has come to bless us in **ἀποστρέφω**, turning us away from our sins. Jesus came for the purpose that everyone might turn away from their iniquities and turn upon Jesus Christ by putting their full trust and faith upon Him for Eternal Salvation.