

TITLE: REPENT THEREFORE AND TURN TO GOD
TEXT: ACTS 3:17-26

In Acts Chapter 3 Peter and John heal a lame man at the gate of the temple in Jerusalem.

He follows them into the temple walking and leaping and praising God, and the people are filled with wonder and amazement.
So Peter seizes the opportunity to preach the gospel.

"Don't think we did this by our own power.

The Jesus that you put to death was the Author of Life and God raised Him from the dead;

and it is by faith in His name that this man was healed."

Tonight we move on in the text Acts 3:17-26

What we will see tonight is that God is present and active working alongside us day by day bringing to pass that which he has said he would do

Acts 3:17-26

"Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. [18] But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. [19] Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, [20] and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. [21] He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. [22] For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. [23] Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.'

[24] "Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. [25] And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' [26] When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

THREE IMPORTANT TRUTHS

God is the maker of History
 Where we are in History
 How we should respond to History

PRAYER

1. GOD IS THE MAKER OF HISTORY

The first thing I see in this text is that Not only is God revealed in History

But History is

His Story

In other words “God is active in History bringing it to pass”

Acts 3:18

BUT THIS IS HOW GOD FULFILLED WHAT HE HAD FORETOLD through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.

From the beginning of History God has been active working his redemptive plan upon the earth

A plan that he revealed **First of all** through his prophets to us

HERE IS A QUESTION....

How can a man proclaim what will take place in the future?

A mere man can't.

But man moved by the Spirit of God can.

2 Peter 1:20-21

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. [21] For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

These men were inspired

2 Tim. 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

In other words the writings of the Bible are not the mere voices of men but the very words of God.

our text describes how this inspiration works in the clearest fashion

Acts 3:21

He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, **as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.**

In other words

The word of God

The promises of God

The plans of God

The purposes of God

Are revealed through his prophets

OR revealed through human agency

Isaiah 46:9-10

Remember the former things, those of long ago;

I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is none like me.

[10] I make known the end from the beginning,
from ancient times, what is still to come.

I say: My purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please.

God would not be God if He could not declare from ancient times things not yet done.

Therefore, if God inspires a prophet, that prophet can proclaim what will take place centuries later.

BUT THAT IS ONLY HALF THE STORY

If we stopped there and merely said that the reason prophets of old could write the Bible is because they were inspired by God who can foresee what will happen,

We would be left with a misleading view of God

and only half the Biblical teaching.

God does not merely know history in advance,

He makes history;
He creates history.

If we didn't say this,

We might be tempted to think of God as one who created the world, established certain laws and then withdrew to watch -He knows and predicts but does not rule or control or move history.

But that would be very wrong.

Isaiah 46:10 explains how God can predict the future: it's because he says, "**My counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all my purpose.**"

God knows what will happen because **HE ACCOMPLISHES** what will happen.

He does not merely watch the world;

HE SHAPES THE WORLD.

Acts 3:17-18

"Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. [18] But this is how **GOD FULFILLED WHAT HE HAD FORETOLD** through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.

HE SAID AND HE MADE IT HAPPEN

Peter uses these very words in Acts 2:23

This man was handed over to you bY GOD'S SET PURPOSE AND FOREKNOWLEDGE; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Prophets did not really tell the future they were inspired by God to proclaim what God Himself intended to do.

And did do

And will do

For God is the maker of History

So as we look at events in the world around us today

And we look at prophecy in the Bible that remains unfulfilled

What we need to realize is that God is the one who is going to bring these things to pass.

Recently I received several e-mail messages informing me that a red heifer has been born in Israel

How many of you know what that apparently means?

Numbers 19:2

"This is a requirement of the law that the Lord has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red heifer without defect or blemish and that has never been under a yoke.

Israel was restored as a nation in
Isaiah 11:12

He will raise a banner for the nations
and gather the exiles of Israel;
he will assemble the scattered people of Judah
from the four quarters of the earth.

Secondly

Our text reveals WHERE WE ARE CHRONOLOGICALLY in God's redemptive plan

2. HE REVEALS WHERE WE ARE IN HISTORY

Acts 3:19-23 reveals three distinct periods of time

THE FIRST is seen in Acts 3:22

And it is a quote from Deuteronomy 18:15

Where Moses prophesied the coming of Jesus

Deut. 18:15

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea

The word of Moses began its fulfillment.

God raised up a new prophet whose word had all the authority of God.

And so this first period of time extends from Jesus' birth to his ascension to the Father's right hand.

WE know this because In verse 26 Peter looks on the fulfillment of Moses' prophecy as something that is past and over:

Acts 3:26

When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

The advent of the great Prophet proclaimed by Moses. Was The earthly life and ministry of Jesus

NOW WE ARE LIVING IN THE SECOND PERIOD OF TIME

Acts 3:19

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that **TIMES** of refreshing may come from the Lord,

The Prophet has come and gone

But he has commissioned his apostles to preach the good news of the forgiveness he purchased.

And He has promised to give his Spirit for the refreshment of all who believe.

The "**times of refreshing**," are the era beginning with Pentecost,

The period of the church,

The period in which forgiveness of sins is preached on the basis of Jesus' death and resurrection

And the period in which the refreshing

OR a time of the Holy Spirit is come to all who believe in Christ.

How do I know that times of Refreshing

in verse 19 refer to the outpouring of God's Spirit

3:19 says, "Repent and turn again that your sins may be blotted out and that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

2:38 says, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

In the one Peter says, "Repent, be forgiven and receive the gift of the Spirit."

In the other he says, "Repent, be forgiven and experience times of refreshing."

Therefore, I conclude that the "times of refreshing" are the age of the Spirit when the gospel is preached and men and women receive the gift of the Holy Spirit by turning from sin and trusting in Jesus.

This era extends from Pentecost to the return of Christ in glory.

WHICH IS THE THIRD PERIOD OF TIME PETER REFERS TO

IT is mentioned in verses 20 and 21.

Acts 3:20-21

and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. [21] He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

HERE IS A PERIOD OF TIME WHICH IS YET FUTURE.

It will have its beginning when God sends Christ to earth the **SECOND TIME**.

This will be the time for establishing, or bringing to final consummation all that God spoke through his prophets.

Christ will reign as King supreme on earth

and of his Kingdom there will be no end

This period includes the rapture of the church,
it includes the tribulation
and the millennium
and extends forever into the future.

When Peter said Acts 3:24

"Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days.

He meant **THESE THREE PERIODS OF TIME,**

**THE EARTHLY MINISTRY OF CHRIST,
THE TIMES OF REFRESHING,
THE FINAL CONSUMMATION WITH CHRIST'S RETURN.**

It is a great privilege to live in the last days,

All the prophets looked forward to the day when the Messiah,
the Son of David,
the King of Israel would come,

for that would be a day of great blessing for God's people.

And now He has come,

his Kingdom has been inaugurated,

we live in an age of fulfillment.

And what we anticipate in the future at Christ's second coming is not
something completely new,

but rather the consummation of the blessings we already enjoy

because the promises have begun to be fulfilled in our lives.

FINALLY,

**3. HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO HISTORY AS IT IS LAID OUT
BEFORE US**

We should respond as Peter proclaimed

Acts 3:19

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that
times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

To Repent means stop banking your hope for happiness on your own achievements and the pleasures of sin and turn to Christ and bank your hope on his promises.

Stop following all the **recommendations** of the world and turn and start following the **commandments** of Christ.

There are two grand incentives for this kind of response

One is that we live in the days of fulfillment.

The Messiah has come.
He has died for our sins
and purchased our redemption
so that times of refreshing might come to all who trust Him.

He will give the Holy Spirit to all who turn from their sin and ask Him.

there is one other incentive to repent in this text.

The God who is calling us to repent is a God of awesome power.

He is the Lord of History:

his counsel stands,

it cannot be thwarted.

He proclaims the future because he makes the future.

And this power should cause us to turn from our sins and flee to Christ

If we don't turn, we remain in our sins and God's infinite power is against us, and there will be no escape from destruction.

Acts 3:23

Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.'

But if we do repent and turn to Christ then all the divine power that governs every detail of history will not be against us but for us.

And if God is for us who can be against us!