

Sunday, June 1, 2025 | Filled

Week 10 | Acts 3:17-26 | “Jesus: Yahweh’s Servant, Pt. 2”

READ: Acts 3:17-26 (ESV)

¹⁷ “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. ¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

²² Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. ²³ And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.’ ²⁴ And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. ²⁵ You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ ²⁶ God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.”

Peter’s sermon addresses two issues:

i. Vs. 11-16 – Israel’s Culpability

So, what’s the takeaway? Faith in Jesus’ name fixes the flaws and failures in humanity.

A little faith in Jesus’ name can accomplish great things through Him.

ii. Vs. 17-26 – Israel’s Recovery

Vs. 17-18 – Peter calls the crowd his “brothers,” telling the Jewish people that they and their “rulers” “acted in ignorance.” Peter’s point is that they lacked a real awareness that Jesus was their Messiah and their God (cf. Lu. 23:34). Israel didn’t fully understand the implications of their actions. Interestingly, in the Mosaic law, there was provision made for those who transgressed the law in ignorance (cf. Lev. 22:14; Num. 15:22-31).¹

¹ Schnabel, Eckhard J., *Acts, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI; Zondervan Academic, 2012), p. 212.

What's remarkable is that the same could not be said for God. Peter tells the crowd, "What God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled."

Through the prophets, God "foretold" that the messiah would be a suffering servant (cf. Ps. 22; 69; Isa. 53), and he "fulfilled" those prophecies. God used Israel's ignorance to fulfill what he foretold. How remarkable that, in the sovereignty of God, he planned to reverse the mistakes of his people via the resurrection.

After Moses, Samuel was the next prophet in line. The phrase, "all of the prophets," hyperbolically refers to entirety of Scripture; it doesn't mean that, literally, every single one of the prophets, from Moses to John the Baptist, prophesied about the messianic age.² But the messianic age is found in the Torah, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah and in the minor prophets. So while it is an exaggeration to say "all," it's not that extreme.

To be clear, just because God predicted that the messiah would suffer doesn't mean those who inflicted that suffering are absolved. God's sovereignty does not negate man's culpability. Mankind is still responsible for their actions, even if those actions are foretold by God.

Likewise, just because the Jews crucified their Messiah and their God without fully comprehending what they were doing does not excuse them from the deed. In the court of law, there's a principle called *ignorantia juris non excusat*, Lat. for 'ignorance of the law is no excuse'; it holds that anyone living under a given jurisdiction is presumed to know the laws of that jurisdiction, and, as such are held liable for breaking any of the laws in that jurisdiction. Without such a principle, there would be no way to enforce the law, as any criminal could plead ignorance and go unpunished. Ignorance is not the same as innocence. However, even if ignorance were a valid defense, Peter's sermon has revealed to them the error of their ways; they can no longer plead ignorance.

QUICK ASIDE: Just as ignorance wasn't an excuse with Peter, ignorance is not a valid defense before God. Not all bear the same level of guilt, but all are guilty before God (cf. Rom. 3:23). Paul makes this clear in Romans 1:18-25 when he says,

READ: Roman 1:18-20 (ESV)

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly

perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

There will be no innocent people in hell, only those who are willfully ignorant. If someone ignores God's call to repentance, rejecting the salvation that is by faith in Jesus Christ, all they'll be left with is eternal damnation. Just as humanity exchanged the truth for a lie, they'll exchange God's love for his wrath.

Vs. 19-20 – What's remarkable here is that though the Israelites were dead to rights, the Lord was still offering them forgiveness. If they "repent" and "turn back." To incentive repentance, Peter gives them three reasons:

- (1) Amnesty – The Jews could have their "sins...blotted out." "Blotted out" means to "wipe away," "erase," or "obliterate."³ To "blot out" is used a variety of passages (cf. Psalm 51:9; 109:14; Isa. 43:25; Jer. 18:23; Col. 2:14; Rev. 2:14; 3:5; 7:17).⁴ Bock explains, "It was used of washing papyri to remove letters written in ink. In ancient times ink did not soak into the papyri but remained on the surface, so removing writing was straight forward."⁵ What a wonderful metaphor. If we repent of our sins, God erases those sins, just as if they were blotted out on a page. Colossians 2:13-14 says, "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross." Using a similar metaphor, Isaiah 1:18 puts it this way: "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool."
- (2) Tranquility – Peter says, "that times of refreshing may come." The Greek word translated as "refreshing" is ἀνάψυξις (anápsyxis), and it means "relief from distressful, burdensome circumstances—'relief, breathing space.'⁶ In fact, anápsyxis comes from the Greek word ψύχω (*soo-kho*), which means to breathe. In LXX Ex. 8:15, the same word is used to describe how the land of Egypt had a momentary reprieve from the plagues. In a way, you could say Egypt was given a little breathing room. Likewise,

³ BDAG, p. 344.

⁴ Peterson, David G., *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, (Grand Rapids, MI; Eerdmans, 2009), p. 180.

⁵ Bock, Darrell L., *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), p. 175.

⁶ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 245.

through their repentance, the children of Israel would be able to catch their breath. Notice the plural of “times,” indicated that Peter is talking both present and future events. His sermon is as much an explanation the inauguration of the Messianic Age as it is one that explains its consummation.⁷ While it will find its ultimate fulfillment in the future, spiritually speaking, this “refreshing” is for today.⁸ Psalm 23:1-3 says, “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.” Jesus told the Woman at the Well, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn. 4:13-14). This refreshment comes straight “from the presence of the Lord.” Revival comes from no other place but from God.

- (3) **Company** – Peter tells the Jews that if they repent, the Lord will “send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus.” The only thing standing in their way of receiving Jesus Christ was repentance. He had already been appointed for them. Should they repent, the Lord will come to them and make his home with them. Jesus says in John 14:18-20, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”

Vs. 21 – “Heaven” has “received” Jesus. The Lord is enthroned in heaven. But he will not stay in heaven forever. He’ll be there “until the time for restoring all things.” To “restore” something is, as the name implies, to reinstate something to a former, often better, state (e.g., home renovations). Interestingly, a similar word is used in Mark 8:25, when a man's sight was restored by Jesus, and again in Luke 6:10 when the Lord healed a man with a withered hand. Jesus is coming back! And when he does, he’ll restore the universe to its former glory; it’ll be remade as it was before the fall.

The restoration of the universe is not a new idea. Peter reminds his audience this was something “about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.” Peter could've been talking about several passages (e.g., Isa. 34:4; 35:1-10; 51:6; 65:17-25; Jer. 15:18-19; 16:15; 23:8; 24:6; Ezek. 17:23; 47:1-12; Amos 9:11-12), but one of my favorites is Isaiah 43:18-

⁷ Schnabel (2012), p. 215-216.

⁸ Peterson (2009), p. 180, “The argument in vv. 19-21 is cumulative, implying that these seasons of refreshment occur in an intervening period, before Christ’s return and the consummation of God’s plan in a renewed creation. Even now, those who turn to him for forgiveness may enjoy in advance some of the blessings associated with the coming era.”

21: "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise."

The times of refreshing is now, while the "time for restoring" is yet to come.

READ: Revelation 21:5-7 (ESV)

⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also, he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty, I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment." ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God, and he will be my son.

Vs. 22-23 – Peter quotes from Deut. 18 when he says, "Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.'" Moses foretold that another prophet, like him, would arise. And he told the Israelites to listen to that Moses-like-prophet. This wasn't a suggestion but a commandment.

But a failure to obey leads to destruction. Moses tells the Jews, "And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people." The Greek term translated as "destroyed" is ἐξολεθρεύω (*exolethreuō*), and it refers to being totally and wholly eliminated—i.e., pulverized.⁹ When the Israelites were caught bowing down to the golden calf, God told Moses, "Let me alone, that I may *destroy* [LXX, *exolethreuō*] them and blot out their name from under heaven. And I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they" (Deut. 9:14). To reject Jesus is to reject God and embrace destruction. The time of renewal is coming. But make no mistake: if that day finds you faithless, you won't be restored; you'll be destroyed.

READ: Revelation 21:8 (ESV)

⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

God's patience will not last forever.

⁹ BDAG, pg. 351.

Vs. 24 – “And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days.” Peter calls that age, the messianic age, “*these [emphasis added] days.*” They were living during unprecedented times when the messiah would rule and reign. And the most remarkable thing is that age has yet to come to an end. Christ still rules and reigns two thousand years later; those days are our days.

Vs. 25 – Though the Israelites had crucified their messiah and murdered their God, the Lord didn't disown them. They were still the descendants “of the prophets” and children “of the covenant that God made with their fathers.” If anyone should understand what is going on here, it is the very nation from whom came Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and who were the original recipients of the prophets. Quoting from Gen. 22:18, Peter reminds his countryman of what God told Abraham: “And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Blessing for all families will come through the family of Israel.

Practically speaking, Peter tied what seemed new to the OT, thereby validating the new. As Bock explains,

“The appeal to old promise is important. It shows that although this community is a seemingly new entity, it is rooted in old promises. In the ancient world, for a religion to be old was a virtue because it meant that the religion had the benefit of experience. Peter's appeal to the past is a form of legitimization for the new community.”¹⁰

Yet, do not be mistaken; the Jews were not, by default, included in this new covenant. Their pedigree was not enough. They still needed to repent. They had to consciously claim God's promise of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Vs. 26 – For a second time (vs. 15), Peter reminds the Jews that God “*raised up his servant,*” Jesus Christ; he is alive! One need only look to the lame man who was healed in Jesus' name to see the proof of that claim. And ultimately, Jesus will go to nations so that “all the families of the earth” will be “blessed.” And again, for the second time (vs. 20), Peter tells the Jews that before the Lord goes to them, God has “sent [Jesus] to [them] first, to bless [them] by turning every one of [them] from [their] wickedness.” Turning away from wickedness turns a person into God's blessedness.

So, what's the takeaway? Repentance releases refreshment and restoration from the Lord.

READ: Romans 8:18-23 (ESV)

¹⁰ Bock (2007), p. 181.

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Adoption, redemption, refreshment, and restoration all await those who turn from their sins and repent.

Video Description:**Filled | Week 10 | “Jesus: Yahweh’s Servant, Pt. 2” (Acts 3:17-26)**

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

In today's passage, we'll study the other half of Peter's sermon. The lead apostle had established Israel's culpability, and now he would discuss their recovery. Though they were dead to rights, times of refreshment and restoration would come from God if they repent. Jews were not, by default, included in this new covenant. Their pedigree was not enough. They still had to consciously claim God’s promise of salvation in Jesus Christ by turning from their wicked ways.

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