

What is Your Hope?

Grace Bible Chapel

Outline: The Acts of the Apostles – Acts 3:20-26

May 7th, 2017

Context: Peter's second message leading to 5,000 believing (Vs. 4:4) continues. He has now not only shown from the Scripture verifying their guilt, and by their participation in the crucifixion of Christ (their promised Messiah), their horrid situation, but commanded them to repent and return (return meaning be converted).

Beginning in verse 20 he continues using the Scriptures to make his sincere appeal, but this time from the perspective of the promised future blessings when one is right with God. He has already addressed "times of refreshing" (Vs. 19) meaning immediate inner joy because of peace with God. Now, using Scripture, he will show what is yet in store for those who place their faith and hope in Jesus Christ. Peter addresses the interim time of Christ at the right hand of the Father "until the period of restoration." This restoration goes all-the-way back to the original promise of God at the time of the garden fall (Gen. 3:15). It shows that God is moving in history according to a sovereign plan to bring about a time on earth when the curse will be removed. Peter's comment in verse 20 in conjunction with Old Testament use of Scripture further shows to these Jews being addressed that our Lord will not return to the earth, as He promised, until He is universally received by Israel as their Messiah (Mat. 23:39; Rom. 11:26). His return is our blessed hope!

Broad outline of Acts (underlined is the immediate context).

- VI. The Power Needed (Acts 2:1-6:7)
 - E. Saved Living (Acts 2:43-47)
 - F. Second Message (Acts 3:1-4:12)
 - 3. Sincere appeal (Acts 3:17-26)
 - c. Supernatural change (Vs. 19)
 - d. Sublime future (Vs. 20-26)

Key Words

- Prophet (s) – 5
- announced
- appointed
- send
- blessed

Introduction:

- When I was working in a difficult & routine job years ago – I found myself almost living for the holidays / vacations. It was what I looked forward to most.
 - Yet, I soon realized – when those days came, they were not ever as glorious as I expected, & not only that they went by so quickly.
 - Everyone needs something they look forward to – something with substance!
 - Declare today! Only the Christian has something of real substance to look forward – & every true Christian, born again, lover of God has a real hope!
 - Peter will bring that hope to the forefront of these religiously lost Jews – Jews who not only denied their Messiah, but crucified Him – talk about miserable.
 - Peter charged them to "repent and return" Vs. 19 – get right with God!
- d. **Sublime future** (Acts 3:20-26)
 - Last time I spoke we addressed Vs. 19 "in order that times of refreshing..Lord."
 - This as many other text has both a near & a far application – near!
 - The blessing of the possession of God's spirit, new life, new perspective, peace with God, the joy of the Lord – makes all the difference immediately.
 - From a far application, which I believe is the context, there is a glorious future for those who turn from their sin & come to Christ seeking His forgiveness & desiring to follow Him.
 - For in Christ there is truth & substance – eternal life, glorious life – it has an immediate form of peace with God & a glorious future centered around the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Send Messiah** (Vs. 20)
- **Vs. 20** – "may send Jesus" – (1 John 3:2-3) – this is the transformed person, living for Christ, & notice what characterizes each "has this hope!" Paul calls it our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) "looking for the appearing of our great God & Savior Jesus Christ."
 - There can be no kingdom without the arrival of the King / no ultimate correction of this messy world / no end to the spiraling disaster of destruction & death – we need the promised King, the Messiah, the Lord of Life, the Redeemer!

- “Hope” – elpis – not wishful thinking but to “anticipate with confidence & pleasure.” Now, this is what “times of refreshing” includes in our context.
- This is not pipe dreams but something real by experience for those in Christ.
- “may send” – odd phrase in conjunction with “Christ appointed for you” – what is Peter’s perspective?
 - Who was Peter addressing? Jews – same one’s who cried “crucify Him” only days before. Think with me of John 1:11 “He came to His own...received Him not” – now we know this was purposeful in order for Him to die for sinners.
 - But, what was Israel expecting? A Messiah to deliver them, not from sin’s curse or slavery to sin (they skipped over or did not understand that part), but from Roman rule.
 - And indeed the OT teaches that Israel will receive such a deliverer (Ezk. 34:11-13; 23-26 see especially Vs. 26 “times of refreshing” – 30-31).
- “Appointed for you” – these are the covenant people of God – God told David that his offspring (Christ) 2 Sam. 7:11ff – would be established on the throne of Israel forever. This is a promise God has not forgotten! It is a great hope!
 - Look back (Acts 1:6) the specific wording of this question. They were expecting our Lord to take up His earthly rule right away. A question Christ did not rebuke them for, after all He had been teaching them for 40 days since His resurrection – but said it is not for you to know when.
 - What would be necessary for Christ to establish His kingship over Israel? Mat. 23:37 – Israel had rejected Him, despite His glorious teaching & miracles – what must happen before restoration? They must embrace Him. This is promised in the OT (Zech. 12:10-13:2) Paul discusses this in his Roman letter (Rom. 11:25-26).
 - The period of Gentile dominance will end – here called “fullness of the Gentiles” or God’s purpose in saving Gentiles in the interim until completed.
 - And so “all Israel will be saved” God will complete His saving plan promised for Israel.

Point: It is no wonder Paul cannot contain himself with admiration for God’s sovereign wisdom in closing out this section – Vs. 11:33-36!

Point: And you see Peter’s perspective – if you (Jews) will now repent & embrace Jesus as your Messiah – he says God may “send Jesus the Christ appointed for you.” IE: Peter knows that before Christ will return his covenant people must embrace Him.

Point: Make no mistake, we gentiles are included in this same promise – according to Romans 11:17 we gentiles who are trusting in Christ are also grafted in to this promise, this great hope! – Peter does not know of Gentile grafting in yet, but that will be revealed to him in Acts 10.

Point: Christ is at the right hand of the Father, He is patiently awaiting history to sovereignly bring an elect number to faith – Peter explains this & more...

- **Sovereign interim** (Vs. 21) – Just as Paul stated it is all His plan...
- **Vs. 21** – “whom heaven must receive” Psalm 110:1 – where is Christ? At the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:33-34), and Rom 8:34-37 – right in the middle of Paul’s snapshot of God’s revealed sovereign elective plan for those in Christ Jesus – those of us on earth fighting the fight of faith – Christ is interceding for us, we are conquerors thru Him – how long will He intercede? (back to our text)...
 - “until the period of restoration of all things” – this relates to all that was lost in Genesis 3 – key to understanding who we are as sinners, & the kind of world we live in is to understand the sin of our parents “Adam & Eve” who cast us into this situation – 1 Cor. 15:22 “in Adam all die...made alive.”
 - Much of the OT is taken up with promises & thereby hope of this restoration – look quickly at two: Isaiah 11:6-9; 55:12-13 – in a context of salvation is a promise of ultimate curse removal. It is no wonder Revelation closes with “so come Lord Jesus.”

Point: We “us” are still living in the interim, still waiting for His return, & His return is our blessed hope! His coming is the answer to all the incomprehensible problems, troubles, confusion, evil, etc.. going on in this world! So come Lord Jesus!

- **Sure promises** (Vs. 22-25) – now Peter directs these Jews back to the OT. His focus is on the promises of Messiah – all that clearly/emphatically point to Jesus!
- **Vs. 22** – prophetic statement of Moses “like me” is a reference to a deliverer. And what were they commanded to do? “you shall give heed...” they did just the opposite! They ridiculed, attempted to trip Him up, reputed His Words, hated Him.
- **Vs. 23** – What happens if you don’t heed? “utterly destroyed” – all Israel’s problems form here & ultimately this destruction means no part in God’s promised kingdom.
- **Vs. 24** – “All the prophets” – this is not unlike what Christ did on the road to Emmaus following His resurrection (Luke 24:27 “beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”

Point: what is the Bible about – it is about God promising to send a restorer – the Lord Jesus. It is all about Christ, His coming to redeem, & His coming to restore!

- **Vs. 25** – Peter doesn’t let up – “you are the sons of these same prophets” – in other words, you of all people should know & understand these glorious things.
 - You are without excuse, you are privileged, you are part of God’s promises – His covenants – so are we today who have the Word – we are privileged & also accountable for all God has revealed to us about Himself.
 - It is through Israel (Abraham’s promised seed) that the whole world is blessed with a restorer, the true redeemer, & Messiah – & so the world has the good news - the Gospel of Jesus Christ, & so blessing will be for all who trust in Him.
- **Supreme blessing** (Vs. 26)

Vs. 26 – “for you first” – what were the disciples commanded to do? Acts 1:8 – “you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” There was an order – Jew first, & then to gentiles.

- In God’s patience & grace He is still granting all who will listen the opportunity to be blessed.
- What is the necessity – how is it that God will bless anyone? – for all are deserving of His wrath - again reiterated: “by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.” This context Jews, but the same is true for anyone who will listen, today!
 - This is another way of restating Vs. 19 “repent and return so that your sins may be wiped away.”
 - Has there ever been a more gracious offer?
 - Repentance is change – a genuine change of attitude - an agreement with God as to who we are & how we have offended Him.
 - It is necessity as an instrument in the incorporation of true saving faith.
 - “return” – convert, turn about – a word used to denote the activity of the whole person (attitude followed by action) turning to God.

Closing:

- Peter showed these Jews and he shows us today:
 - Gods ancient purposes are unchanged – He will accomplish all His purposes.
 - All things in history are moving according to His perfect purpose.
 - The restoration of all things rests on the return of Jesus Christ – He is coming again to restore all things – we are much closer than back then, & what He has promised continues as unchanging truth.
 - So what is really important then & now? Do you know Jesus Christ? Have your sins been forgiven in Him?

- If they have, if He is indeed your Savior & great hope – than something very special, very different will be real in you - Col 3:1-4.
 - Vs. 3:1 – where is your bottom line hope directed? On Jesus Christ!
 - Vs. 3:2 – the world gets you down - set your mind on God’s Son & plan!
 - Why? Vs. 3 – “you have died to the world” – the world of sin, the attitude of the world without God – there is no real hope in it! But, if you are changed...
 - Vs. 4 – love this phrase “Christ, who is our life” – He is our all – He is our hope right now, & will always be for all eternity!

Do you really know Him? Are you ready for & longing for His coming? Is He your bottom line hope? If not (back to our text) “repent & be converted” – if you know Him today, be reminded of what is really important, & be refreshed in His truth & hope.