

SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER ISA. 55: 10 FOR THE EATER
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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EXAMINATION OF ACTS 3:19-21

My years of study concerning the order of things to come have brought forth the positive conviction that a period of divine government is the next great event that will take place upon this earth. This precedes the second coming of Christ and the millennium of His **parousia** or personal presence. This period is called the kingdom of God. I believe that "kingdom" means "government," and that it is the government of God that men are asking for when they say 'thy kingdom come.' This concept of the future has been happily embraced by many and bitterly rejected by quite a few.

Numerous arguments have been brought forth as to why there can be no period of divine government before the second coming of Jesus Christ, however, I am able to say that most of the objections brought forth were duly considered and cleared away long before I began to make this teaching public.

One of the regularly repeated arguments against my position is based upon a misinterpretation of a passage in Acts 3: 19-21. This portion, in the King James Version reads as follows:

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

Those who use this passage as an argument against my position insist that in these words there is a promise that if Israel will repent God will at once send back the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, there can be nothing that must precede His return except the repentance of Israel. One correspondent declares: "If Israel had repented at the preaching of Peter, the Lord would have descended at once. If then, there is predicted in Scripture a period of blessing which is to precede the Lord's second coming, this prediction would not have been fulfilled and God's Word would be broken."

In answer to this I would say that neither would many other things, positively predicted in Scripture which must precede His second advent. In fact if Israel had repented and Christ had descended, as many think that God had promised, then Christ would have been here ahead of the Antichrist. He would also have been here ahead of Elijah of whom Christ said: "**who must come first and restore all things**" (Matt. 17:11).

There is no promise in Acts 3:19-21 that if Israel will repent, God will immediately send back Jesus Christ. This conclusion is arrived at by cutting out the very heart of this passage, as one writer boldly declares: "Repent ye therefore. . . and He will send Jesus Christ. . . This is the heart of the message of Peter in Acts 3: 12-26." Thus, by taking out the true heart of Peter's message and putting in three dots to replace it he is able to transplant another heart. When one examines this message carefully he will see what has been omitted. We will now do this:

Repent ye therefore, and be converted. These words are addressed to "Israelites" (v .12). They are called to submit, which is what the word "repent" means. (See Seed and Bread No. **SB107**). They had been unusually stubborn in regard to the fact that the man Jesus was in truth Israel's long promised Messiah. To be converted means to be turned toward God.

That your sins may be blotted out. This does not say either in the Greek or in English that if they submit or be turned about that their sins will be erased. They are to submit and be turned toward God with this end in view. Submission and conversion could not erase even the least of their sins, let alone erase the greater sin of killing the Prince of Life. Since without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins, these hearers of Peter needed to come into identification with the crucified Christ. This call of Peter to Israel is even as if a mother should call her boy to come into the house that his hands might be washed before dinner. Coming into the house will not cleanse his hands, but it will put him in the proper place to get it done. These hearers of Peter need the blood of Christ. Their guilt is great in the sight of God. But His blood can be of no value to them as long as they continue in their opposition and stubbornness, with their faces turned away from God. "Submit and be turned toward God, with a view to the blotting out of your sins," is God's message through Peter to them.

When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. This is a very poor translation. Connecting it with the previous statement it should read: "**So that the seasons of coolness should be coming from the face of the Lord.**" These words declare the outcome of their submission, and the blotting out of their sins. These things must be realized before there can ever be "seasons of coolness from the face of the Lord" (Yahweh).

Even as Peter later declares that "**the face of the Lord is against them that do evil**" (1 Peter 3:12). "From the face" means direct from the Lord. "Seasons of coolness" have to do with the blessings that will be for Israel before the second-coming of Christ. And if Israel is blessed, the nations will also be blessed. "Coolness" has to do with a familiar climatic condition along the Mediterranean coast, where after the searing heat *of* the day the circulation *of* the air suddenly changes at sundown bringing in the cool air from *off* the sea. Peter uses this phenomenon to set forth in part the blessings promised to Israel after their long season *of* feeling the searing breath *of* persecution.

And He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you. The word "send" here is **apostello** which means "to commission," in the sense *of* authorizing and instructing someone to perform a definite task. See Issue No. **SB005**. Connecting this with the previous statement it should read: "And that He may commission the one selected before you, Christ Jesus." This passage has nothing to do with the second coming *of* the Lord Jesus. It tells us that God will make active a commission which had been already established, but has been suspended due to the sin *of* Israel. This activation *of* the commission is dependent upon Israel doing what God demands *of* them.

Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things. This statement alone proves that there was no promise that Christ would return if Israel repented. We are told in Mark 16: 19 that the Lord was received up into the heaven where He sits *on* the rights *of* God. And here we are told that heaven must indeed receive Him until the times *of* the restoration *of* all things. If it is necessary *for* heaven to receive Him until a certain condition of things is realized, then He will not come back until that condition *of* things is realized. This condition is not the repentance of Israel, it is the times *of* the restoration *of* all that God has predicted through His holy prophets. This does not mean that when it comes time to restore all things that He will leave heaven and come to earth and do the work *of* restoration. The "times *of* restoration" must be an accomplished fact before the Lord Jesus leaves His place in heaven. Elijah will indeed come first and restore all things (Matt. 17:10).

In at least seven places in the Bible we are told that Jesus Christ will sit *on* the rights of God until His foes become His footstool. In one *of* these (1 Cor. 15:25) we are told that He must reign (govern) till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The world is not yet ready *for* the personal presence *of* Christ. Elijah has not yet done his great work. The times of restoration have not yet come to pass. His foes are not yet in subjection to Him.

It is my assertion that Acts 3: 19-21 is positive confirmation of my teaching that there is to be a long period of divine blessing *for* Israel and *for* the world under the divine government before the second coming and the millennium *of* His personal presence. Those who contend *for* the "any moment" theory *of* the second coming overlook the fact that the Spirit *of* God places the "times *of* refreshing" ahead *of* the commissioning *of* Jesus *for* the time of His personal presence. They ignore the fact that the Lord will never leave His present place in the heavens until His foes have been brought into complete subjection to Him.

The Prophet Isaiah declared: "**Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool**" (Isa. 66: 1). David declares: "**The LORD hath prepared His throne in the heavens**" (Psalm 103: 19).

It is entirely reasonable to say that when God governs this earth, when the kingdom of God is a reality, His government will be from the throne and not from the footstool.

My translation of the Greek of Acts 3:19-21 is as follows:

Submit ye therefore and turn about with a view to the erasure of your sins, so that the seasons of coolness may be coming from the face of the Lord, and He may commission the one selected before for you, Christ Jesus. Whom heaven must indeed receive until the times of the restoration of all which God speaks through the mouth of His holy prophets out of the eon.

End Issue No. SB191

