

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 359
Series: The Primal Church - Acts Chapters 1-8
Verses: Acts 3:17-21
Topic: Times Of Refreshing
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Acts 3:17-21 MKJV And now, brothers, I know that you did it through ignorance, as also your rulers did. (18) But those things which God before had shown by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He fulfilled in this manner. (19) Therefore repent and convert so that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. (20) And He shall send Jesus Christ, who before was proclaimed to you, (21) whom Heaven truly needs to receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began.

There are three great blessings referred to by Peter:

- a) Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.
- b) And He shall send Jesus Christ, who before was proclaimed to you.
- c) The times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began.

Jesus does not just forgive sins; He also builds a forgiven world, and constructs a renewed humanity in a transformed Creation. Thus the gospel ends up with a radically different and much better world.

While ultimately we will only see the full “restoration of all things” after Christ’s return we can see glimpses of it here and now. The true gospel should be revealing a better world and more whole communities as it changes human lives and as Christians live out their discipleship in community.

The first two stages – times of refreshing and the manifest presence of Jesus, are possible in this Church Age. And they have some prerequisites – that we repent and convert! That is that we repent of our sin and convert our thinking and our lifestyle into that of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

The word for “convert” is *epistrepho* - which means to turn back to the right path and the true worship of God. It is a call to revert to the deep inner truth of our conscience.

The refreshing comes as we leave the tangled mess of worldliness and sin behind and find the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit. The inner eternal realm that is truth and conscience and Christ is refreshing to dwell in and does not exhaust us or harangue us. It is far from compulsive or nagging. It is gentle, gracious, kind and easy on our souls. (Matthew 11:28-30, 1 John 5:3)

If you find yourself being “driven” by your faith then you need to stop and reflect.

The driven-ness is from another source – perhaps your own desire for approval, your own need to be needed, or a desire to be liked or to feel highly productive. It can also be demonic! Luther said “Hurry is not of the Devil, it IS the Devil!” and someone said BUSY is an acronym for Bound Under Satan’s Yoke! Now there is a place for hard work in ministry – but it should not be compulsive, nagging and harassing. You should always have your sense of being free in Jesus Christ.

Times of refreshing come from the hand of the Lord! Seek His refreshing! Seek His gracious love and peace!

We find refreshment when we give up trying to live in two worlds and stop trying to serve two Masters – God and Mammon, Jesus and human approval...and so forth.

When Peter says “and He shall send Jesus Christ...who Heaven must receive..” I take it in a two-fold sense. Firstly that He will send the manifest presence of Christ into the midst of the Church in answer to prayers such as those in Acts 4:

Acts 4:29-30 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your Word, (30) by stretching forth of Your hand for healing, and miracles, and wonders may be done by the name of Your holy servant Jesus.

Secondly this means that God will send Jesus Christ a second time, for judgment and for bringing a new order to Creation which shall be redeemed and liberated from its bondage:

Romans 8:19-23 ISV For the creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his children, (20) because the creation was subjected to frustration, though not by its own choice. The one who subjected it did so in the hope (21) that the creation itself would also be set free from slavery to decay in order to share the glorious freedom of God's children. (22) For we know that all creation has been groaning with the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. (23) However, not only creation groans, but we who have the first fruits of the Spirit also groan inwardly as we eagerly wait for our adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

At this time, known as the restoration of all things, the world will be set “right way up” and the saints will be rewarded.

Matthew 19:27-30 MKJV Then answering Peter said to Him, Behold, we have forsaken all and have followed You. Therefore what shall we have? (28) And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (29) And everyone who left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. (30) But many who are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

Thus Jesus wants us to inherit refreshing, miraculous and eventually well-rewarded lives as a result of our faith in His name.

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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