

ACTS 3:19-21

***IMPLICATIONS  
FOR THE  
KINGDOM***



## ***ACTS 3:19-21***

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.

# ***THE CONTEXT OF ACTS 3:19-21***

- Peter and John heal a man lame from birth, and attract a crowd at Solomon's Portico (vv. 1-11).
- Peter seizes the moment and addresses the "Men of Israel" (v. 12; cf. v. 17 – "brothers").
- "You killed the Author of Life" (but in ignorance, v. 17).
- **Side Note:** "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'" (v. 25).



# ***EXEGETICAL COMMENTS***

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# ***REPENT AND TURN***

- “Repent (μετανοέω) is popular in Luke’s writings with reference to human repentance (cf. Luke 10:13; 11:32; 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 16:30; 17:3, 4; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20).
- “Return” (ἐπιστρέφω) is a word which regularly occurs in relation to Israel’s repentance in the Old Testament (Deut 3:2; Isa 6:10; 31:6; Joel 2:12–13; Amos 4:6–11; Zech 1:3; Mal 3:7), and was also an idea linked with a Jewish understanding of the last days (Deut 4:30; Hos 3:5).
- **Key:** In light of Israel’s ignorance, they should repent.

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# ***THE 1<sup>ST</sup> PURPOSE OF REPENTING***

- Israel was to repent so their sins would be “blotted out.”
- “To blot out” (ἐξαλείφω) is not used elsewhere by Luke.
- Same verb found in Colossians 2:14 – “canceling the record of debt that stood against us...”
- Although Israel had sinned in killing their Messiah, the removal of this sin was possible through repentance and turning to Him now as their King.



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# ***THE 2<sup>ND</sup> PURPOSE OF REPENTING***

- “In order that” (ὥς ἵνα) is a common indicator of purpose in Acts (Acts 3:19–21; 8:14–16, 24; 9:1–2, 11–12, 17, 24–25; 15:15–18; 20:16; 23:15; 25:26–27).
- By using another purpose conjunction (ὥς ἵνα) instead of a καὶ + infinitive, this construction appears to be logically sequential to the forgiveness of sins.
- **Key:** The “times of refreshing” are linked with the forgiveness of sins and the presence of the Lord.

# ***“THE TIMES OF REFRESHING”***

“The context makes sense only if the ‘times of refreshing’ are the definitive age of salvation. The expression is undoubtedly apocalyptic in origin, as is the accompanying phrase ‘from the face of the Lord.’ The reference, then, is to the eschatological redemption which is promised to Israel if it repents.”

- Eduard Schweizer, “ἀνάψυξις,” *TDNT*, 9:664-65.

## ***4 EZRA 11:44-46 (NRSV)***

“The Most High has looked at his times; now they have ended, and his ages have reached completion.... so that the whole earth, freed from your violence, **may be refreshed and relieved**, and may hope for the judgment and mercy of him who made it.”

**Conclusion:** “times of refreshing” certainly eschatological.

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# ***THE 3<sup>RD</sup> PURPOSE OF REPENTING***

- The καὶ + subjunctive indicates an equal purpose, which is not to be separated in thought from the prior purpose in the latter part of verse 19.
- The sending of the Messiah and the “times of refreshing” are joined by one purpose conjunction, showing their mutual relationship.
- Just as repentance leads to the erasing of sins, so repentance will lead to the return of the Messiah.



# ***THE THREE PURPOSE CLAUSES***

Repent therefore, and turn back

- (1) **that** your sins may be blotted out
- (2) **that** times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,
- (3) and **that** he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus...

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# ***THE HEAVEN-KEPT MESSIAH***

- Heaven “must receive” the Messiah until “the time for restoring all things.”
- Where do we see that the Messiah “must” be in heaven?
- Conceptually parallel to Psalm 110:1, “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet” – Peter’s belief that the kingdom is still future?

# ***THE TIME FOR RESTORING ALL THINGS***

- Although the word here for “restoration” (ἀποκαταστάσεως) does not appear elsewhere in Scripture, the verbal cognate is used in Jer 16:15 in God’s promise to “restore” Israel to the land which was given to their fathers (cf. Jer 23:8; 24:6; Hos 11:11; Sir 48:10).
- Verbal parallel in Acts 1:6 – “Lord, is it at this time You are **restoring the kingdom to Israel?**”
- The disciples’ question demonstrates a belief that there remained a future restoration for the people of Israel, something that Jesus had apparently not corrected during the forty days of instruction.

## ***ACTS 1:6 AND 3:21***

“In view of the cognate usage in 1:6 and the text’s claim that the object of resto-ration is what all the prophets spoke about, the restoration of Israel is the likeliest interpretation. Israel’s restoration appears repeatedly in the biblical prophets (Amos 9:14; Ezek 39:25; Acts 1:6), a significant point here given that the restoration of what “the prophets” predicted (Acts 3:21).”

- Keener, *Acts*, 2:1112.

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# ***DEPENDENCE ON THE PROPHETS***

- “God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago” is a unique phrase only showing up elsewhere in Luke 1:70.
- Luke 1:70 refers to the expectation of the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises to Israel through what was promised to David and Abraham.
- **Main Point:** By his own admission, Peter is speaking in concert with what the OT prophets proclaimed.



***WHAT DID THE PROPHETS SAY?***



# ***MOSES GIVES THE FUTURE***

- Deuteronomy 4:25-30
- Deuteronomy 30:1-10

Israel will experience the following:

- (1) Sin/Rebellion
- (2) Exile
- (3) Restoration and Salvation



A photograph of a long, straight asphalt road stretching from the foreground into the distance, disappearing into a hazy, mountainous landscape. The road has a yellow dashed center line and white edge lines. The surrounding terrain is arid and desert-like, with sparse vegetation and distant mountains under a clear sky.

# ***THE PROPHETIC CONFIRMATION***

- Isaiah 2:2-4
- Ezekiel 37:21-28
- Jeremiah 30–33
- Joel 2–3
- Hosea 3:4-5
- Amos 9:11-15
- Zechariah 12–14
- Daniel 7:19-22 (cf. Dan 9:24ff)



# ***SUMMARY***

- Israel will transgress significantly and go into exile.
- Israel will undergo significant judgment (cf. Day of the Lord prophecies).
- Israel will repent and God will restore them and return to rule over a kingdom.
- The nation(s) will experience future judgment and blessing.





# ***JEWISH KINGDOM EXPECTATIONS***



## ***JUBILEES, 1:15–18 (CF. DEUT 31:1–5)***

And after this they will turn to Me from amongst the Gentiles with all their heart and with all their soul and with all their strength, and I shall gather them from amongst all the Gentiles, and they will seek Me, so that I shall be found of them, when they seek Me with all their heart and with all their soul. And I shall dis-close to them abounding peace with righteousness, and I shall remove them the plant of uprightness, with all My heart and with all My soul, and they will be for a blessing and not for a curse, and they will be the head and not the tail. And I shall build My sanctuary in their midst, and I shall dwell with them, and I shall be their God and they will be My people in truth and righteousness. And I shall not forsake them nor fail them; for I am the Lord their God.

## ***JUBILEES, 2:26–27***

And in those days the children shall begin to study the laws,

And to seek the commandments,

And to return to the path of righteousness.

And the days shall begin to grow many and increase amongst those children of men.

Till their days draw nigh to one thousand years.

And to a greater number of years than (before) was the number of the days.

## ***TESTAMENT OF ISSACHAR (6:1–4)***

I know, my children, that in the last times your sons will forsake simplicity, and will cleave unto avarice, and leaving guilelessness will draw near to malice, and forsaking the commandments of the Lord will cleave unto Beliar, and leaving husbandry will follow after their wicked devices, and shall be dispersed among the Gentiles, and shall serve their enemies. And do you therefore command these things to your children, that if they sin they may the more quickly return to the Lord; for He is merciful, and will deliver them even to bring them back into their land.

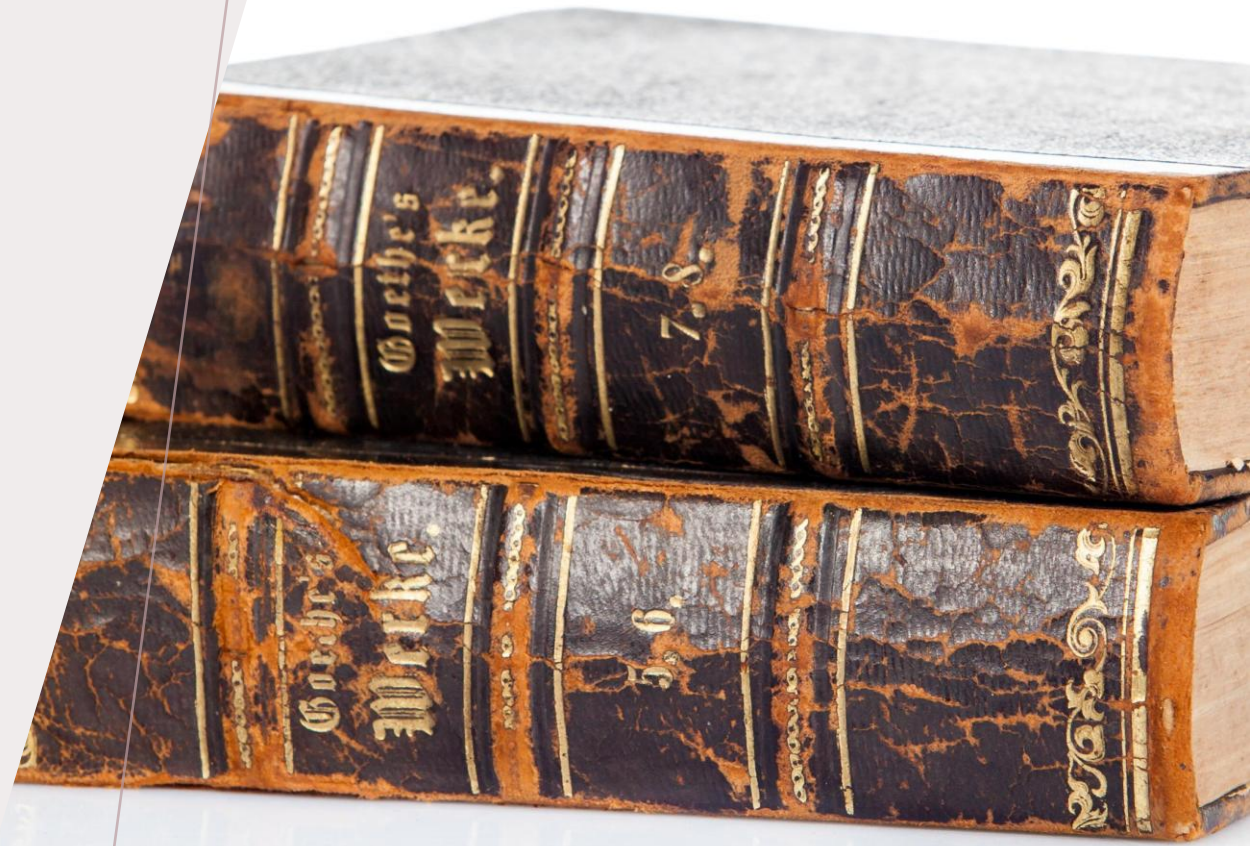
## ***TESTAMENT OF ZEBULON (9:4–8)***

I have learnt by the writing of my fathers, that in the last days ye will depart from the Lord, and be divided in Israel, and ye will follow two kings, and will work every abomination, and every idol will ye worship, and your enemies shall lead you captive, and ye shall dwell among the nations with all infirmities and tribulations and anguish of soul. And after these things ye will remember the Lord, and will repent, and He will lead you back; for He is merciful and full of compassion, not imputing evil to the sons of men, because they are flesh, and the spirits of error deceive them in all their doings. And after these things shall the Lord Himself arise to you.

# ***SUMMARY***

- *Jubilees* (170–140 BC), *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (pre-200 AD), the *Testament of Moses* (4 BC to 30 AD), and others all support the link between national repentance that would lead to a kingdom for the Jewish people.
- “Because Peter nowhere qualifies the Jewish expectation that this restoration would occur at the end of the age, it seems likely that this is what he has in mind” (Keener, *Acts*, 2:1112).

# *ACTS 3:19–21 IN THE CONTEXT OF LUKE-ACTS*





# ***THE MESSAGE OF LUKE-ACTS***

- Acts is volume 2 of an intentional work by Luke that discusses the ministry of Christ *before* and *after* His ascension.
  - “In the first book ... I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach...” (Acts 1:1).
  - Jesus’s work continues in the book of Acts.
- Luke is heavily messianic, emphasizing Jesus as the hope for the people of Israel (cf. Acts 28:20).
- Interestingly, there is a heavy emphasis on the centrality of Jerusalem in Luke-Acts.

# ***CENTRALITY OF JERUSALEM***

Passage	Focus
Luke 1–19	Focus on Israel, promoting Christ as the Son of David, the answer to all of Israel's hopes and expectations of the kingdom.
Luke 19–Acts 8	Focus on Jerusalem, the divine location which stages both the rejection of Christ by the Jews and the affirmation of Gentiles in the plan of God.
Acts 8–Acts 28	Focus on Gentiles, the spread of the gospel from its inception in Jerusalem to the center of the Gentile world, Rome.

# ***CENTRALITY OF JERUSALEM***

“From this we may safely conclude that the geography of Luke-Acts shows it is one story. The story begins in Israel, moves to Jerusalem as the heart of Israel, and from there it moves into the Gentile world. In the Gospel of Luke the story moves to Jerusalem. In Acts the story moves away from Jerusalem and on to Rome. The story moves out from Jerusalem in ever widening circles, but it al-ways returns to Jerusalem either to confirm Jerusalem’s rejection of the Gospel or to confirm the mission to the Gentiles.”

- Voorwinde, “Luke-Acts: One Story in Two Parts,” 11.

# ***ACTS 3 WITHIN LUKE'S FRAMEWORK***

- The first part of Luke focuses on the OT hope and exciting expectations for Jerusalem (cf. Luke 1:68-72).
- Jesus suffers rejection from the outset of His ministry (Luke 4:16-30).
- The rejection continues as Jesus laments over Jerusalem and her rejection of the Messiah (Luke 13:34-35; cf. 19:41-44).
- The climax of rejection is the crucifixion, where the Messiah is put to death.

# ***ACTS 3 WITHIN LUKE-ACTS***

- Luke shifts in the book of Acts to addressing the question of whether the Jewish people will repent (cf. Acts 2–3, 7).
- Peter gives a genuine offer: if the Jewish people repent, the kingdom will come.
- As Acts 7–28 makes clear, the nation of Israel continues to reject the king and kingdom, and the Gentiles receive salvation (cf. Rom 11:25).
- As the last explicit offer of the kingdom, Acts 3:19–21 is part of the pivotal swing from Jerusalem to the world.

# ***SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION***

- The Torah, Prophets, and the Second Temple Jewish literature, all taught that Israel would suffer for rebellion, repent, and receive a restored kingdom.
- In Acts 3:19–21, Peter's call to repentance so that the kingdom may come fits exactly with the OT expectation.
- We should expect that the repentance of the Jewish nation will precede the arrival of the kingdom.
- This will take place near the end of the Tribulation (cf. Zech 12–14).