

ST. PETER'S SERMON ON RESTITUTION

- JANUARY 30. - ACTS 3. -

HEALING A LAME MAN – THE APOSTLES IGNORED THEMSELVES AND ASCRIBED THE POWER AND HONOR TO JESUS – THE PEOPLE WERE IMPRESSED – ST. PETER IMPROVED THE OPPORTUNITY TO POINT OUT THE SIN COMMITTED BY THE NATION WHO CRUCIFIED JESUS, AND ALSO THE MERCY OF GOD AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO FORGIVE THEM AND BLESS THEM – THEY SHOULD REPENT IMMEDIATELY TO GET THE CHIEFEST BLESSING – AFTERWARD WOULD FOLLOW "TIMES OF RESTITUTION" – ALL THE PROPHETS SPOKE OF THOSE TIMES – THE CHURCH OFFICIALS WERE OFFENDED BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WERE TAUGHT THE TRUTH – CHRIST'S FAITHFUL MINISTERS WERE IMPRISONED.

"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." – Verses 19-21.

THE Apostles at Pentecost, in receiving the Holy Spirit, received not a spirit of fear, but a spirit of courage and of a sound mind. They had been commissioned by their Redeemer to preach the Gospel Message which was to gather from the Jews and from every nation a consecrated class of people to become the spirit-begotten sons of God and eventually to be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife and Joint-heir in His Kingdom.

Full of this courage, St. Peter and St. John, the leaders amongst the Apostles, went up to the Temple to pray – not because they any

longer thought the Temple the proper place where prayer should be offered to God, but because they knew that it would be a good place to meet the people. Probably they expected that the Lord would there bring them in contact with the most devout Jews so as to give them an opportunity of testifying the good tidings to these.

The opportunity was soon found. They beheld a poor, lame beggar and perceived him to be a man of faith and trust in God. Looking upon him, St. Peter said, "Look on us"; and he looked, expecting to get money. But St. Peter continued, "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have, that give I unto thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." (Verse 6.) The lame man, astonished at such an offer of blessing, made an effort to obey the command, because he had faith. As he struggled to obey, St. Peter took him by the hand and assisted him in the exercise of faith. God's blessing attended. His feet and his ankle bones, long withered, became strong; and he went with the Apostles through the Temple, holding on to them and shouting his praises to God and his acknowledgment that God's mercy had come to him through these men.

A NOTABLE RESTITUTION SERMON

A concourse of the holy Jews immediately gathered about. Now came St. Peter's opportunity for a great sermon – a witness to the Lord. He was not filled with pride and boastfulness, saying, "You may well look at us, for we are especially favored of God. None of your Scribes or Pharisees could have healed this man as we have done"; etc. St. Peter did nothing of this kind. In meekness and humility he said, Why should you look at us as though we had done anything of ourselves, or that any special holiness of ours had accomplished this miracle? We are merely the instruments of God, and this is a manifestation of God's mercy through Jesus. This miracle is done in Jesus' name – in the name of the Redeemer who has died for the sins of the world.

St. Peter proceeded to tell his hearers that the nation had wickedly crucified the Savior, but he assured them [R5839 : page 27] also of God's mercy, and declared that they might still repent and come back to God's favor, but only by renouncing their relationship with those who had done this evil deed and by taking their stand with and for the Lord. Very briefly and comprehensively he stated the Divine Plan as a reason why his hearers should consecrate themselves to God. (Verses 13-26.) They should repent of sins personal, as well as national, and be fully converted, or turned around – to know the Lord, to obey Him, to be followers of Jesus whom they had crucified. The result of this would be the covering of their sins by the Lord, permitting them to be accepted through Jesus as children of God; and ultimately this would mean that their sins would be blotted out completely with the glorious change of the First Resurrection – "sown in weakness, raised in power; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown an animal body, raised a spiritual body." – 1 Corinthians 15:43,44.

Following this blotting out of their sins and the giving to them the new bodies, free from sin and all its blemishes and imperfections, would come the glorious Times of Restitution of all things, which God had foretold through all the holy Prophets of the past. These would be Times, or years, of Refreshing, as well as of Restitution – a thousand years. Therein would be fulfilled all the promises of God to Abraham and to all the prophets and to Israel; namely, that in Messiah's glorious Kingdom the earth would be brought to Edenic conditions, "God's footstool would be made glorious." (Isaiah 60:13; 66:1.) The curse would be rolled away, and the blessing of the Lord rolled on to humanity instead.

Any prophet that had not mentioned these Restitution years could not have been a holy Prophet, St. Peter assures us; for Restitution is the Message of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. The Master Himself, the Redeemer of the world, declares: "Behold, I make all things new." "There shall be no more curse." Eventually

there shall be no more sighing or crying or dying. All things will be made new by Messiah's Kingdom, although it will require the entire thousand years for the full accomplishment of all these glorious things.

THE GREAT ANTITYPICAL MOSES

St. Peter pointed out how Moses had foretold the calling out of a special Messianic class. (Deuteronomy 18:17-19.) Jesus is the Head of this class; and all now received into God's family by the begetting of the Holy Spirit are counted members of the Body of Christ, the Church. Moses was a type of this great Christ, and said to the fathers, "A [greater] Prophet [than I – an antitype] shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren." (Verse 22.) God raised up Jesus first, says the Apostle; and since Pentecost He has been raising up brethren of Jesus – the Apostles first, then all the saintly characters of these past eighteen hundred years, called according to God's purpose to be the members of the Body of Christ, otherwise styled the Bride class. The full raising up of these will not be accomplished until the resurrection of the Church is completed.

When this great Antitype of Moses (Christ and the Church, His Body) shall have been lifted up, glorified, then will come the time for the blessing of the world, by the opening of the eyes of their understanding and through all the Restitution privileges of that time. During the Millennium, whoever will hear that great Prophet may come into a great blessing of perfection, of restitution [**R5839 : page 28**] – physically, mentally, morally – and thus to everlasting life. But whoever rejects that great Prophet, the glorified Messiah, will be destroyed from amongst the people – will meet the fate of the intelligently wicked. "All the wicked will God destroy." – Psalm 145:20.

The Apostle explains that the Lord's blessing was to begin with the Israelites, the natural children of Abraham. It did gather the "Israelites indeed." Then the Jewish nation was set aside from God's

favor; and the door of opportunity was thrown open to the Gentiles, who have received the Lord's blessing of opportunity for eighteen hundred years. As soon as the foreordained number of the Elect are glorified, the present Age and its objects will have ended. Then the Restitution work will begin; and Israel according to the flesh will again take first rank in Divine favor, as explained in Romans 11:25-32.

