

## Peter's Second Sermon / Peter and John Arrested and Threatened

As the lame man stood by, Peter's inspired words swept over the crowd.

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| 1. God glorified His Servant Jesus,   | you delivered up & denied in the presence of Pilate,   |
| 2. But you denied the Holy One and the Just,  | You asked for a murderer to be granted to you,   |
| 3. You killed the Prince of life,   | God raised from the dead, we are witnesses.  |
| 4 Faith in His name, has made this man strong,  | whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. |
| 6 I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.   |  |
| 7 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.                |  |
| 8 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, |  |

There is no indication of the response of the crowd at this point. We only learn at the end of it all after their arrest that the number of men(males) came to be about 5,000. We do get some insight into the many other words Peter might have spoken in the previous chapter(2:40). He speaks of the great role that is now open to them. God has been speaking of these days since Gen. 3:15. Those living in that time have the opportunity to build upon those promises and be a part of their fulfillment.

Peter speaks "*the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*" This is a huge statement.

When we compare what the prophecies that were ministered to us with the things preached by the apostles and prophets, we are going to see some amazing things. We need to begin with the book of Deuteronomy. The 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> chapters of this book offer some of the most graphic descriptions anywhere to the terrible things God would allow to happen to them if they refused to listen and broke his covenant with them. It clearly describes the terrible desolation of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. After he completes them he offers this amazing prophecy to comfort them.

*And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither Jehovah thy God hath driven thee, 2 and shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; 3 that then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the peoples, whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee. 4 If (any of) thine outcasts be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will Jehovah thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee; 5 and Jehovah thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. 6 And Jehovah thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that you may live. Dt 30:1-6*

We know what happened because it is history to us. God destroyed the 10 tribes with Assyria and never allowed them to return to the land. Later God used Babylon to take Judah and Benjamin, and though they were allowed to come back, not everyone did. Yet God promised above that when God sees true repentance in their hearts, he will turn their captivity, have compassion on them and return and gather them from where they have been scattered. Even those who have been scattered to the furthest parts of heaven will be seen by God and gathered by him! When would God fulfill this promise? Let's ponder another prophecy.

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that stands for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious. 11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, that shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 And he will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Isa 11:10-12*

*"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name," Says the Lord who does this thing. Amos 9:11-12*

There is going to be a second gathering! God is going to find a means to gather all those who had been scattered and bring them back to him. This will occur when he sets up an ensign for the nations. This ensign will be the root of Jesse (Jesus Christ)! When he comes, this will occur.

*Then shalt thou say in thy heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have been bereaved of my children, and am solitary, an exile, and wandering to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where were they? 22 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and set up my ensign to the peoples; and they shall bring thy sons in their bosom, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. Isa 49:21-22*

When this day arises, amazing things are going to happen as God gathers people, those who thought they were alone are going to find out that there are multitudes of people that will be children of God who are gathered in at the same time they are. How the prophets must have sought and searched and wondered about this one, yet once again, with NT revelation, it is so clear and easy to see today.

*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and they shall become one flock, one shepherd. John 10:16*

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. Gal 4:28

This second gathering is recorded in the book of Acts, the evangelistic efforts of the apostles were the means God used to bring it about, and the new birth through baptism into the family of Abraham is the means by which the new brothers and sisters were created and introduced to each other. It is through the efforts of Peter and the eleven, Philip, Stephen, Saul of Tarsus and other Christians that God himself sought and searched out the sheep even those who were in the farthest reaches of heaven.

*thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I myself, even I, will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep; and I will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them with good pasture; and upon the mountains of the height of Israel shall their fold be; there shall they lie down in a good fold; and on fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. 15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Jehovah. 16 I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but the fat and the strong I will destroy; I will feed them in justice. Ezek 34:11-16*

God even describes the exact moment when he will search and seek for his sheep as a shepherd. The day he will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered and will be brought out from the peoples.

*And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. 24 And I, Jehovah, will be their God, and my servant David prince among them; I, Jehovah, have spoken it. Ezek 34:23-25*

With the opening words of the book of Acts, it is clear that all of the above is being fulfilled.

*But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8*

*Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. Acts 2:5*

In God's providence, it all started on the day of Pentecost when the devout from every nation under heaven were present in Jerusalem. The efforts of the 12 on that day were minuscule compared to what God did to bring it about.

## The Prophets in God's Eternal Purpose

The Bible opens with the simple fact of creation. God doing exactly as he planned and each day ending: "it was good." Everything in this creation began with flawless perfection, precisely as God desired. But when man exercised his free will and ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it was like breaking a priceless object of china. All was shattered, ruined and vanity (Ecc 1:1-11; 13-15).

From the perspective of Adam and Eve there was nothing left but to sweep up the pieces, throw them into the trash and begin again. They had no answers. There was no wisdom or power within them to fix what they had done. But God's "ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts" (Isa 55:8-9). Often man has no answer and is ready to give up. "When the vessel that he made of the clay was marred ... he made it again another vessel." (Jer 18:4). Surely God could simply send Adam and Eve to chains of darkness and begin again with another man and another woman. His flawless creation uncursed and prepared for others more worthy than they. God had done this with angels, for "God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment, kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6)

But he did not! He chose instead to begin the plan he had already devised long before. At the moment, when all was lost and broken, God began to reveal the "manifold wisdom" of his "eternal purpose" "which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph 3:10-11). He told the serpent (Satan) that the woman's seed would "bruise your head." Later he gave more insight to Abraham promising, "in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen 22:18). Scripture was designed to reveal, prepare, and complete this eternal purpose.

God knew that "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned," and "through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners." But he had already prepared the solution: "through one man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life." and "through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous." (Rom 5:12, 18-19).

No wonder Paul was so moved with amazement as he ended his theme of justification and righteousness through faith in Christ.

***"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!" Rom 11:33***

THINK OF IT! It was not after Adam and Eve ate of the tree. It was **before** Adam and Eve were even created and placed in the garden, and **before** they were even warned about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God's eternal purpose and plan for the salvation of all sinners was made before he ever said "Let their be light!" He loved us before we were created and planned to pay the cost of our forgiveness before we sinned!

This sounds hard to believe and if we have never seen this or thought of it before it certainly needs more

proof than what has been cited up to now. But God has supplied us with abundant proof. He wants us to know this so we will understand the depth of his love and the power of his forgiveness.

Paul told the Romans that his preaching the gospel was *"according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested."* (Rom 16:25-26). God's eternal purpose was not hurriedly devised after they sinned. It was before times eternal (i.e. even before the creation). In speaking of the parables he was teaching, Jesus described what he was doing by quoting one of the prophets. *"I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world"* (Mt 13:35). All that Jesus revealed in his parables were hidden from the foundation of the world and clearly a part of God's eternal purpose. Peter also spoke of this eternal purpose when he said *"him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,"* (Acts 2:23). All the prophecies about Jesus and God's future plans for saving man were only glimpses into God's eternal purpose. Many of these were revealed hundreds of years before they occurred (Isaiah 53).

Paul told Timothy that God *"saved us, and called us with a holy calling, ... according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal"* (2 Tim 1:8-10). Again, the gift of salvation in Jesus was not devised after Adam sinned. It was given to us *"in Christ before times eternal"* (i.e. before the foundation of the world).

He told Titus that our *"hope of eternal life"* was *"promised before times eternal"* (Titus 1:1-2). Think about that. God's promise of eternal life to those of us who had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God had already been promised before times eternal (i.e. before the foundation of the world).

All God's plans and purposes were *"kept in silence," "hidden," "given,"* and *"promised,"* before times eternal.

So what period of time is *"times eternal?"* Though it is impossible to understand how far back into eternity these plans go, Paul revealed that *"He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world"* (Eph 1:3-5). Thus the plans for the eternal purpose were already complete before the creation. So the plan clearly precedes the events in the first chapter of Genesis.

So though Adam and Eve had no plans beyond the moment they made the wrong choice, God had already thought out and prepared for it. The prophets and the gospel are simply the revelation of these plans.

*Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever! Rev 5:13*

## The Role of the Prophets

When we think about the prophets God sent to Israel, we see them in two different lights. First, we see them as men sent by God to condemn evil, seek repentance, and warn of judgment. Many who never wrote a book (Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha), still did this great work for God by seeking to turn those in Israel from their sins. The writings of the Major (*Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel*) and Minor Prophets (*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*) are primarily filled with warnings/exhortations, and threats/promises coming directly from God to those living at that time.

But there is another light in which we see the prophets. We see them as men sent by God to reveal the secret things of God's eternal purpose. *"God, spoke to the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners"* (Heb 1:1). Some (Malachi, Joel) have only a few of these prophecies and others (Elijah, Elisha) speak nothing of them. Only a few (Isaiah, David, Ezekiel) wrote many. Though the things foretold of the Messiah and his kingdom are only a tiny portion of their work many who hear the term prophecy equate it with predictions of future events.

Peter explained why there was no reason these prophecies be given by every prophet. The prophecies that opened the veil of God's eternal purpose were not primarily written for them. Though these *"prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you," "it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things."* Though these prophecies *"testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them"* they were given to *"minister"* to us (1 Pet 10-12). For this reason these are more closely linked to the new testament than the old covenant.

Consider then the facts as they have now been revealed. God's eternal purpose was fully developed and completed before the foundation of the world (Rom 16:25-26; 2 Tim 1:8-10; Titus 1:1-2; Eph 1:3-5; 3:10-11). Knowing the end from the beginning, God gave the glimpses necessary to allow Paul to say that everything he preached was *"saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come"* (Acts 26:22). God revealed enough to give the shadow and outline of all Paul preached and wrote. These prophets, selected by God, laid the foundation to give those preaching the gospel what they needed to validate their preaching. God revealed enough of his eternal purpose that the apostles only needed to complete the details. Thus the revelation of God's eternal purpose was seamless.

These prophecies gave the scriptural proof needed to convince Israel and save souls. They also revealed enough information for the apostles to make a pithy doctrinal points using the prophecies to give the extra information to make it clear. Even today we use these prophecies to gain a clearer perspective and clarify things in the NT. The 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Isaiah is still read today as one of the most comprehensive summations of the life and death of the Messiah. Jeremiah 23:1-6 and Ezekiel 34 offer additional insight about elders working as shepherds. Jesus ascension and reign are seen more clearly after reading Psalm 2 and Daniel 9:7-14. Finally, prophecy is often the foundation for important NT revelation. For

example the Hebrew writer used the order of Melchizedek to help us better see our Messiah as a priest on his throne(Ps 110:4; Heb 5-7).

We are greatly indebted to these prophets. They give us admonition(1 Cor 10), make us wise unto salvation, and help us be complete unto every good work(2 Tim 3:15-18).

## **How the Prophets were used in Acts**

When Paul summed up his preaching as *“saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come”* (Acts 25:22-23), he made it clear that their inspired preaching was simply building upon what God had already revealed to the prophets.

**In Peter’s first sermon**, he stated that the tongues of fire and the speaking in the languages in which they were born, *“is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel,”* and the death of Jesus was *“by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.”* He then used David’s *“thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption”* to prove the resurrection and *“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.”* to prove Jesus’ ascension and absolute rule as both Lord and Christ(Acts 2:14-36).

**In Peter’s second sermon**, he revealed the events of Jesus death as *“things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets,”* and the remaining time until the second coming are *“the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old.”* He quoted Moses and revealed it was Jesus who was *“A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you.”* All who refuse obedience would be *“utterly destroyed from the people.”* Finally, *“all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days”* (Acts 3:12-26).

**After Peter and John were arrested and threatened**, they comforted the disciples, reminding them that David(Ps 2) had spoken about the very events they were then experiencing. *“The kings of the earth set themselves in array, And the rulers were gathered together, Against the Lord, and against his Anointed: for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council foreordained to come to pass.”* (Acts 4:23-31).

**Phillip joined the Eunuch** using the words of Isaiah 53 and *“beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus.”* (Acts 8:35).

**Peter preached to Cornelius** saying *“to him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins”* (10:43).

**In Paul’s first recorded sermon** he said that God raised David to be king of Israel and *“of this man’s seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.”* All who lived in Jerusalem *“because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him.”* His crucifixion had been foretold by the prophets, *“when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb.”* Through the gospel the apostles *“bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers,”* for *“in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure (blessings) of David. Because he saith also in another (psalm), Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption.”* Finally as he concluded the sermon he said, *“Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets.”* (Acts 13:23-41)

**When the church gathered in Jerusalem to discuss the Gentiles**, James said the prophets had already revealed God’s will. *“Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written...”* It was the prophets who were used by *“the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old”* (Acts 15:14-18).

**In his defence before Turtullus and Agrippa** Paul summed up his service to God with *“so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets”* (Acts 24:14), and *“I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come,”* (Acts 26:22).

**In his discussion with the Jews in Rome**, he was *“testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening.”*

Although they preached to Israel hundreds of years before the birth of the Messiah, all Christians should praise and thank God for the blessings these prophets who ministered to us bring today. In the gospels, Acts, and the epistles their words give the foundation and structure of our faith. The things they foreshadowed and revealed were simply placed in their proper context.

As Peter summed it up, *“And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.”* (2 Pet 1:19-21).

*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him (be) the glory for ever. Amen. Rom 11:33-36*