

Psalms, Prophets, and Bible Study – Acts 3:17-26

The Gospel Age of Hope - #10

Introduction – This Gospel Age of Hope series presents what is for many, a very different way of looking at what Scripture tells us about the future. Optimistic views of this present age are hard to find among unbelievers and Christians alike, and yet this is what we have been presenting as the teaching of the Bible. The point, however, is not to present you with an alternative view as though the Bible was relativistic on this; the point is to learn from the Scripture how we are to study the Scriptures. And when we turn to Scripture to learn how to learn Scripture, we have to do so presupposing a God who speaks, a Word spoken, and a man who hears. We then let the Scripture teach us to interpret the Scripture as it presents itself.

Students of the Apostles – Throughout the New Testament, we learn from the apostles' how to handle the Old. Allow the New Testament therefore to provide a divine commentary on what passages in the Old Testament mean. Let us look at several passages which regard our subject: the Gospel Age of Hope, or historical optimism.

A Prophet Like Moses (Acts 3:17-26, Deut 18:15-19) – Through Moses, God promised that He would bring another Prophet to the people and from the people of Israel. In the gospel preaching of Peter, we see that this was fulfilled in Jesus. But Peter makes clear that this passage is an example of what was *“preached to you before...which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began”* (Acts 3:20-21). *“Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days”* (v24). This discourse teaches us that Moses, Samuel and all the prophets had as their central subject the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, *“these days”* as Peter says. Jesus is exercising His role as Prophet at the right hand of the Father, and Peter proclaims to the Jews that they must hear Him or be utterly destroyed from among the people.

Gentile Hope (Rom 15:8-12, Isaiah 11:1-10) – In Isaiah we know well of a vision of glory and peace, culminating in v9, *“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”* The next verse tells us when this would happen, *“And in that day...”* (v10). Paul defends His ministry to the Gentiles, praising the work of God throughout the Gentile world in his day, quoting this verse (Rom 15:12). Isaiah's vision was beginning to come to fruition in his day in the mission to the Gentiles. Two thousand years ago, Isaiah 11:9 began to be fulfilled.

Christ's Ownership and Authority on Earth (Psalm 2) – Quoted multiple times in the New Testament, the first two verses of this Psalm are applied to Christ's crucifixion (Acts 4:25-26). God was not mocked in the dealings of wicked kings; in fact, He laughs at their attempts. In three places v7 is quoted and Acts 13:33 makes explicit that Christ is the begotten in the resurrection, that is, Jesus is the firstborn from the dead. As Firstborn Covenant Head of the new humanity, God offers His Son to the nations – all of the nations (v8). The next verse is quoted twice in Revelation. The first time (Rev 2:27) we find that the ones who overcome share with Christ in His authority over the nations; in Rev 19:15 it is applied to Christ alone (although, like the Deuteronomy passage quoted in Acts, this should be understood as taking place through the preaching of the gospel).

World Conquest (Psalm 110) – Jesus teaches us from v1 the necessity of the Incarnation (Matt 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42-43). We learn many other applications of this Psalm (i.e. Heb 1:13, 5:6, 7:17, 21) and the Psalm ends with Christ crushing the rulers of the whole earth (110:5-7). While these verses are not quoted directly, in Acts 2:33-35 we see the quotation of Psalm 110:1, application of the passage to the present reign of Christ while at the right hand of God the Father at Pentecost, *“the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear”* (Acts 2:33). The men are *“cut to the heart”* (v37) and ask *“what shall we do?”* Peter demands complete surrender: *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call”* (vv38-39). Pentecost was just the beginning.

The Gospel Age of Hope – What we are attempting to do is understand what the power of the doctrine of the cross entails. What happened because Jesus came? Where is the world headed? What were Moses, Samuel, David, Peter, and all the prophets, talking about? They are preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God upon this earth in this age. Their gospel is potent and promises the submission of all nations to Jesus Christ. It is promised through the Spirit-wrought work of the preaching of His gospel and the community of saints here on this earth living out what has been given to them.