

Times of Refreshing and the Restoration of All Things

by John Piper

God fulfills His hope-giving promises in spite of and even through the opposition of ignorant people, wipes away all the sins of people who repent, and will establish the kingdom of Christ on this earth.

Duration: 13:11

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 24:44, John 3:16, Acts 3:17-18, Acts 3:21, Romans 8:28, Revelation 21:4

Topics: "Book Of Acts"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor John Piper emphasizes the importance of listening with all our might to the preaching of the word of God. He highlights three key truths that should lead us to praise and worship God. Firstly, God fulfills his promises despite the opposition of ignorant people. Secondly, God forgives and wipes away the sins of those who repent, offering them a fresh start. Lastly, God will establish a kingdom of refreshment and restoration, where there will be no more pain, sadness, or frustration. These truths are supported by biblical references, particularly Acts chapter 3 verses 17 to 21.

Transcript

The following message is by Pastor John Piper. More information from *Desiring God* is available at www.DesiringGod.org You'll notice that on the next page in your worship folder is a piece of music called *Gloria* by John Rutter, which the choir is going to sing in about ten minutes. My job right now is to lay before you three biblically based reasons for why your heart should leap up in praise to God when they sing, and why when you're given an occasion to sing just before and after they sing, you should do it with all your might and all your mind and all your heart.

To do that, I want to open before you a text from the book of Acts. It happens to be the very next text. And I invite you to turn to Acts chapter 3. If you have a Bible or want to reach for one, in the pew pocket in front of you, and turn to Acts chapter 3, verses 17 to 21.

My desire is that your mind might not click off when the music begins, but rather that it might be full of matter, biblical, God-exalting, Christ-saturated matter. Truth. And so I want to give you three truths, and then point to the place in the text where they come from, and hope that they'll be lodged in your mind, seeping down into your heart, releasing praise for the rest of this service when I'm done.

Reason number one. You ought to say glory to God in the highest with all your might, because God fulfills his good purposes in spite of, and even through, the opposition of ignorant people. Verse 17 and 18.

He has just indicted the listeners with killing Jesus, and now he says, Now therefore, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Notice that word, thus.

How? He thus fulfilled, namely, through the ignorance of rebellious people. The highlight of the glory of God in those two verses is that the people who were handing Jesus over, mocking him, scourging him, nailing him, killing him, were not in sync with God. They weren't intentionally obeying God and blessing the human race.

They were against Jesus and against God. But the glory is that it says God was all the while fulfilling what had been prophesied about the suffering of the Messiah precisely in spite of and through the ignorance of these people. Now, this is a glorious thought because as I look around America today, my heart wants to sink again and again and again at the godlessness of our land.

God is banished from school. He's banished from the marketplace. He's banished from educational institutions at the higher levels.

He's banished from the media. He's gone. There is intense rebellion and rage against God today, seething underneath the relativism and materialism of America.

And I turn and say, how on earth could God ever bring a glorious, good, hopeful purpose to pass when there's so much opposition, so much ignorance? And I come back to this verse and I say, it's no worse than the killing of Jesus. And if God was fulfilling everything He promised and planned precisely through the opposition of ignorant people when they killed Jesus, He can fulfill His purpose today no matter what kind of opposition and ignorance anybody has. And therefore, let us rejoice and take heart.

God reigns. Number two. God wipes away all the sins of people who repent and turn to Jesus.

Verse 19. Repent, therefore, and turn again that your sins may be blotted out. That is why, by the way, he fulfilled all those promises about the suffering of the Messiah so that that suffering could become our suffering, bear our sin, take our guilt, so that the very next verse could say, everybody and anybody in this room who turns to God and trusts in Jesus, that's what repentance is, turning from sin, focusing on God, receiving the gift of salvation through the cross, and honoring Jesus Christ with your life, if a person will turn to God and Jesus, every evil they have ever done or ever will do will be wiped away.

That word, wipe away, is a real precious and beautiful word in the New Testament. It's used, for example, in Revelation 21, where it says God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. So God is in the business of wiping away sin to prepare people for the wiping away of tears in the age to come.

And that leads us to the third reason that we should exalt with the choir. God will one day establish the kingdom of Jesus Christ on this earth. God will one day establish the kingdom of Christ on this earth.

I want to read the second half of verse 19 through verse 21. You look for three features of this glorious coming kingdom that would give your heart hope. He has said, repent that your sins might be blotted out.

Now he continues, that times of refreshing might come from the presence of the Lord and that God may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old. Let me translate more literally that last verse, that last phrase. Whom heaven must receive until the times for the restoration of all things.

That's the literal rendering. The restoration of all things. Now, let me tell you what the three things are about the coming kingdom that is going to happen as surely as God is God, no matter what opposition or ignorance there is.

That kingdom will be, first of all, a kingdom of refreshment, everlasting refreshment. We need refreshing in this life again and again. We need to lay our heads down and go unconscious for seven, eight hours a night or we get real grabby and real depressed.

In the age to come, it may be that we'll sleep, I don't know, but whether we wake or sleep, whether there's the rhythm like that or not, it's going to be perfect refreshment every time you need it. We will mount up with wings like eagles. We will run and not grow weary.

We will walk and not think perfectly. The second characteristic of this kingdom is that Jesus is going to be there as the king. He will send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, and he will establish his kingdom on the earth and erect his throne and rule his kingdom.

And I believe that my own refreshment and yours will come from looking into the face of Jesus again and again and again and again. And the third characteristic of this kingdom is that it will mean a restoration of all things. As you look at the world today, they are not what they should be.

And we often want to ask, what is God up to? Where is God in a world with so much agony and so much tragedy and so much futility and so much frustration and so much immorality and so much corruption? Where is God? And the answer is he reigns and he's coming. And when he comes, it will all be restored to Eden. And I believe even better than Eden.

No more guilt, no more pain, no more suffering, no more frustration, no more corruption, no more decay, no more futility. It will be as it was in the beginning before the fall, only better with no possibility for the fall. As I draw this to a close, let me remind you again that either through what I've said or through what you hear from the musicians now, let God do something to you.

Don't resist God. Let God speak and minister to your need. Everybody in this room has a different need right now, many different needs.

And at the end of the service, we are going to have some prayer teams who will just make themselves available here at the front. They have little badges on. And it could be a little teeny thing.

And it could be a big, big thing. And God may just touch you and say, why don't you go up there and when we're all done and dismissed, just ask one of those teams to pray with you. Tell them what it was.

Let them pray for a minute or two. And you may go out of here healed, well, restored, stronger. I want you to know that they're here and they're full of eagerness.

I was praying with them before the service, in fact, to pray with you. Let me sum it up. There are three reasons now that we should sing with all our might.

As you can see here, we're going to sing, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, and then we'll go into the Gloria. Three reasons why your heart should just leap up in this hymn, why you should listen with all your might to what they sing. Namely, God fulfills his hope-giving promises in spite of and even through the opposition of ignorant people.

Number two, God wipes away all the sins of people who repent and nobody needs to go out of this room carrying sin in your life. God, in the twinkling of an eye, takes it away when we turn to him. And third, he will establish the kingdom of Christ on this earth and it will be a kingdom of refreshment and the presence of the Lord and a restored creation where there is no futility, no frustration, no sickness, no pain, no tears, no sadness anymore.

So let's lift our voices and sing now and welcome the Gloria by John Rutter. Thank you for listening to this message by John Piper, pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Feel free to make copies of this message to give to others, but please do not charge for those copies or alter the content in any way without permission.

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