

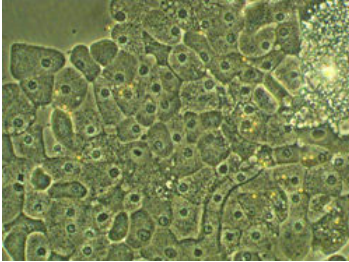
Sermon: "... He Will Come Again..."

Text: Acts 3:17-23.

Sermon Outline.

1

Introduction ~ Restoration, renewal, renovation, recovery, reclamation, resurrection transformation, – Peter says that's what happens when Jesus returns.



These days, we're learning more and more about restoration and renewal and just how difficult that really is. I have a couple of photographs up there for all of us to see.

The first photo is an image of liver cells. As you know, you cannot live without a properly functioning liver. It's the biochemical plant of your body. When it goes bad, you are in deep trouble. ... These days at our house, discussion of things medical can break out at any moment... In 2006, scientists in Great Britain actually grew a brand new liver in the laboratory, using adult liver stem cells. That's astonishing! This second photo actually shows the liver they grew in the lab. Isn't that remarkable? They are seeking to adapt the techniques they used to grow nerves, kidneys and every other body organ. There are applications to fighting cancer as well.



But there is so much more to restoring a human life, to transforming the human race, than just an unlimited supply of replacement body organs. The Bible says that when Jesus returns, God will renew not just human beings but the entire created order – Peter says, "all things, everything..." when Jesus returns to earth.

We're continuing our exploration of the Apostles' Creed. Today, we're considering the phrase, "From thence He shall come..."

At this point, the Apostles' Creed shifts into the future tense. Before this phrase, the Creed retells and affirms all the saving acts God has already done through Jesus Christ in the recent past; but now, the Creed shifts our attention to the future, the "What comes next?" in the saving actions of God.

The Apostles' Creed compresses a huge amount of basic teaching into a few brief affirmations. Because of that, if you are not careful and thoughtful, you can draw a hasty conclusion here and there. This assertion about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is a case in point.

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Two (2) basic teachings are joined together here: Jesus' Second Coming and the apostolic teaching on Final Judgment. The Apostles' Creed affirms the reality of both. So does the Bible, of course, except that the Bible indicates the two events do not occur at exactly the same time. Final Judgment will take place after Jesus returns, but not immediately after.

What I am saying is this: Judgment, especially final judgment, scares lots of people. I guess maybe some people have good reason to be scared. But the Bible's teaching about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is overwhelmingly positive, even encouraging. What we want to do together today is allow the Apostle Peter to correct and clarify what the Apostles' Creed teaches about Jesus' Return.

Our text in the Book of Acts is striking because it is the first time Peter proclaims to a group of people the return of Jesus Messiah from heaven.

Luke the physician uses all his source materials like the brilliant historian, theologian and evangelist he is. I would argue that here Luke accurately captures *the early teaching* of Peter on the Second Coming. In fact, I would label this teaching, "the Second Coming of Jesus for Beginners." The second Coming of Jesus Christ -- it's there in verse twenty-one:

"¹⁹ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ²⁰ and that He may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you — even Jesus. ²¹ He [the risen Jesus] must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through His holy prophets."

The clear implication is that when God says it's time to restore everything, He will send Messiah Jesus back to do the job, renewing, healing and restoring "all things."

The key idea about Jesus' Return is this:

■ Jesus' Second Coming launches the rebirth, renewal and restoration of all things.

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In fact, I would label this teaching, the Second Coming of Jesus for Beginners.

■ Jesus' Second Coming launches the rebirth, renewal and restoration of all things. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the working model, the pilot project, for what God will do for the entire universe. And Jesus has a place for you in the renewal of all things. Jesus' Second Coming begins the transformation and renewal of everything. How positive is that?

★ In our text, Peter proclaims and lifts up three major factors in the renewal transformation when Jesus returns to earth.

I. The first major factor in restoration when Jesus returns is the fulfillment of the plan of God, the plan announced and predicted by all the prophets of God.

When Jesus returns, the long-promised kingdom of God will be completely established on earth as it is in heaven.

A. At the end of vs. 21, Peter links up Jesus' return with the in breaking of the final kingdom of God.

The prophets of Israel throughout ancient times predicted the breaking in of the kingdom or rule or reign of God. The kingdom of God is characterized by three (3) realities:

1. God will come – to judge and to deliver;
2. God Himself will be with His people personally; and
3. Third, God will rule His people and all the nations of the earth.
 - His rule will be utterly right and true and righteous; there will be no tyranny, no injustice, no corruption or evil.
 - God's rule will be peaceful.
 - God's rule will be permanent. "Of the increase of His government and peace, there shall be no end." Isaiah 9:7.
 - God's rule will be universal, worldwide and global.
 - God's rule will actually be on this earth.
 - God's rule will be a cause for global worship and rejoicing.

I grew up in Chicago. The kingdom of God is not anything like Chicago... especially the part about no tyranny, no injustice, no

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corruption or evil... The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the working model, the pilot project, of what God will do for the entire universe... including Chicago... including Pittsburgh!

Before we wade into this any further, we need to, I need to, define some basic terms.

⑩ The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is the public, physical return of the resurrected Jesus from heaven to earth to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. The return of Jesus is a central element in Apostolic Christianity, Basic Christianity 101.

In our text, Peter joins the Second Coming to another central Bible teaching, the Kingdom of God's Messiah that ultimately leads on into New Heaven and the New Earth.

⑩ The New Heaven and the New Earth, the final kingdom of God, describes the ultimate future of the redeemed human race with God. That future reality is so good, the Bible strains and stretches language to just give us hints of what it will be like. God gave us a major hint, a sneak preview, of it all when He raised Jesus from the dead.

B. The prophets in the Old Testament sketched out a cluster of ideas related to the invasion of God, the in breaking of God's kingdom, into human history.

1. It will be an event of vindication. The victimized people of God will be vindicated publicly and permanently.
2. It will be an event of visitation when God Himself shows up.
3. It will be an event, a decisive moment, of judgment, especially for those who hate God.
4. It will be a time of deliverance when God delivers His people from evil, tribulation and global turmoil.
5. And it will be a climactic event, a turning point, a hinge of human history after which nothing will be the same.

C. The reality Peter sketches out for us all in our text is the basis of it all. It's the foundation that supports all the rest of the Bible's teaching about Jesus' return. God has promised to heal and transform all things. What God has promised, he will make good through the risen Jesus.

II. The second major factor in the renewal at Jesus' Return is the resurrection of all those who belong to the risen Jesus.

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A. You've heard me say it, but not nearly often enough... The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a photograph of your future if you belong to Jesus. What God did for Jesus, Jesus will do for you... and for all those who believe in Him.

B. My wife, Linda, had one of those experiences in Shop 'N Save. She went in to get some high-end vanilla extract for that Biscotti recipe. She paid for it, and took it back to the house.

But when she opened the box, she discovered, not the good stuff, the high-end stuff, but the two-dollar bottle of cheap stuff. Someone had switched the contents of two boxes, placing the cheap stuff in the high-end box and the good stuff in a lower-priced box.

Linda and I agree it's little things like that that show just how sick our nation has become. Hear me clearly. You cannot have real renewal and transformation until individual human beings are made new from the inside out. When the Bible says you need a new heart, God is not talking about replacement body organs... God wants to fill His new Heaven and New Earth with redeemed human beings, persons who do the will of God from the heart. When you begin a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ, that starts the process to prepare you for the fabulous future God has in store for all who belong to Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the working model, the pilot project, of what God will do for all believers in Jesus Christ. Can you imagine the earth filled and populated with people like you and me who have been raised from the dead and transformed forever? Each city and town, every region, each nation filled with persons of faith, love and obedience whom God has raised from the dead?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the working model, the pilot project, of what God will do for all those who believe in Jesus. And Jesus has a place for you in the renewal of all things.

III. The third major factor in the renewal of all things is the transformation of the created order.

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be

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liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God." Romans 8:18-21

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the working model, the pilot project, of what God will do for the entire universe... when Jesus returns.

Conclusion ~ Think about it... In everything Peter shares about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, he uses a balanced approach – promise and warning in equal parts – to motivate people. These days, you can encounter at least five (5) different attitudes about the Second Coming, Jesus' Return.

1. One attitude is ignorance. In post-Christian America, there are a growing number of people who have never even heard of the Second Coming.
2. Another attitude is aggressive hostility. A few people ridicule any idea of hope from God because it distracts people from pursuing their progressive political agenda. The playwright Arthur Miller was one example. All the New Atheists are another.
3. Another attitude – it may be the majority attitude in America – is apathy. Jesus is coming back? Whatever!
4. A fourth attitude is fearful apprehension. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ scares the daylights out of some people. Peter does warn people to repent. Refusing to repent brings serious consequences.
5. But the one attitude Peter holds up for all of us is love and positive expectancy... because Jesus has a place for you in the renewal of all things.

Whenever we share the Lord's Supper together, whenever we eat the bread and drink the cup in Jesus' Name, we anticipate the resurrection transformation that will be ours because we have placed our faith and trust in the risen Jesus.

▣ Jesus' Second Coming launches the rebirth, renewal and restoration of all things. And Jesus has a place for you in the renewal of all things. That's why I have no hesitation inviting you to make a serious commitment of your life to Him.

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🔒 If you have yet to invite Jesus personally to come into your life and you wish to do exactly that today, I'd be honored to help you with that.

🔒 If you belong to Jesus but you have never gone public with that decision, I encourage you to do so.

🔒 If you already have a relationship with Jesus and you wish to become a member of this group of disciples, today is a great day to go public with that decision. Join this group of disciples. The person who belongs to Jesus is an already approved candidate for resurrection. It's a good thing to belong to the risen Jesus. So decide. Make your decision.