

The Prophesied Death of the Prince of Life (Acts 3:17-26)^a

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Context

1. **Feast of Pentecost, Jews from surrounding countries visiting Jerusalem**
2. **Hear the wonders of God proclaimed in their native languages by untaught Galileans**
3. **Peter explains the miracle and its relationship to the identity and work of Jesus**
4. **Three thousand saved and baptized that first day, many more afterwards**
5. **The formation of the “body of Christ”, the birth of the Church (Col. [1:24](#); cf. 1Cor. [12:12-13](#); Eph. [5:23](#))**
6. **Last time: Acts [3:1-16](#)**
 - A. **Peter and John heal a man, born lame, after more than 40 years of being unable to walk**
 - B. **First recorded miracle done *within the Temple* after the departure of Jesus**
 - C. **Peter explains the significance of the miracle: God’s purpose for performing the miracle, what it attested to.**
 - I. **The God of their fathers had performed the healing in response to faith in Jesus (Acts [3:16](#))**
 - II. **They had asked for Barabbas, a murder, to be released and condemned Jesus, “the Prince of life,” to crucifixion (Acts [3:14-15](#))**
 - III. **Even so, Jesus lives, having been raised from the dead (Acts [3:15](#))**

Today’s Passage¹

1. **Peter continues his gospel message to the Jews within the Temple**
 - Acts [3:17](#), *Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.*
 - Acts [3:18](#), *But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.*

- Acts 3:19, *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,*
- Acts 3:20, *and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,*
- Acts 3:21, *whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*
- Acts 3:22, *For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.'*
- Acts 3:23, *And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'*
- Acts 3:24, *Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.⁴*
- Acts 3:25, *You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'*
- Acts 3:26, *To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.*

Messiah's suffering and redeeming death foretold

1. **Acts 3:17-18, *Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.***
2. **Their ignorance included a biased or incomplete understanding of their own Old Testament.**
 - A. **They focused on the victory passages rather than the suffering passages concerning the predicted Messiah**
 - I. **As one famous rabbi (Nachmanides, 1194-1270) related, "Jews do not believe that Jesus was the Messiah because . . . he did not usher in an age of universal peace as Isaiah had prophesied . . . (Isa. 2:4)."⁵**
 - II. **This unbalanced reading of the OT still prevails among Jews—mainly due to a stubborn refusal to consider Jesus as the promised Jewish Messiah.**
 - III. **The great irony: those that haven't given up on the Messianic hope completely still await a victorious king, but deny Jesus, perhaps the most well-known person of all history—the prophesied Suffering Servant Who has already come and gone!**

- IV. **Their refusal to accept Jesus as Messiah coupled with their ongoing expectation of a victorious Messiah on their own terms sets them up for deception by the coming Antichrist, the pseudo-Christ who will gain a world-wide following, including among the Jews (Dan. 9:27; John 5:43).**
- B. **Even so, it can readily be seen that numerous OT passages predict a suffering Messiah. Some even revealed that He would die (e.g., Gen. 3:15; Ps. 22:15; Isa. 53:8; 49:5-7; Dan. 9:26)**
3. **Isaiah 53 - The “holy of holies” of prophetic passages concerning the atoning work of Messiah**
- A. ***A bona fide* prophecy - It is beyond question that this passage was written and in circulation prior to the birth of Christ.**
- I. **Cited numerous times within the NT.**
 - II. **The Ethiopian eunuch, who comes to faith in chapter 8 of Acts was reading this very passage (Acts 8:30-35).**
 - III. **Evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls**
 - a. **Conservative scholars believe Isaiah to have been written no later than 680 B.C. However, prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the earliest copy of Isaiah’s book was from around 900 A.D. - some 1600 years later. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, all this changed. The scrolls were found to contain much earlier copies of biblical texts including a complete copy of Isaiah’s writings known as the “Great Isaiah Scroll.” This scroll has been dated by experts using both radiocarbon and analysis of the writing.**
 - b. **Pieces of the Isaiah Scroll have been carbon-14 dated at least four times, giving calibrated date ranges between 335-324 BC and 202-107 BC; there have also been numerous paleographic and scribal dating studies placing the scroll around 150-100 BC.**
- B. **What did Isaiah predict?**
- *Isa. 53:1, Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*
 - *Isa. 53:2, For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.*

- Isa. 53:3, *He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*
- Isa. 53:4, *Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.*
- Isa. 53:5, *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.*
- Isa. 53:6, *All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*
- Isa. 53:7, *He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.*
- Isa. 53:8, *He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.*
- Isa. 53:9, *And they made His grave with the wicked-But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.*
- Isa. 53:10, *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.*
- Isa. 53:11, *He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.*
- Isa. 53:12, *Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.*

I. To summarize:

1. The individual was considered a criminal by many and was despised by the religious leaders. Many even today consider Jesus' death on the cross to be the failure of his movement—although this passage reveals it has quite another purpose.
2. The individual is punished for the transgressions of others yet in his punishment those who transgressed are healed.
3. The iniquity (sinful errors) of all men were to be laid upon this individual.
4. The individual did not attempt to defend himself from the accusations brought against him.
5. The individual was put to death. His death was associated with the sins of the people.
6. The individual's death and burial is associated with both the wicked and the

rich. History records that Jesus was crucified between two common criminals and buried in a rich religious leader's personal tomb.

7. The individual's soul (life) was made an offering for sin. His death was required in order to atone for the sins of others. This is how their sins are "blotted out," as Peter mentions in verse 19.
8. By his death, the individual will make many righteous. This is what many Christians call "the great exchange," when the sins of mankind are placed upon Jesus and his perfect righteousness is then accounted to those who accept his work on their behalf. The sins of man lay upon God incarnate and the righteousness of God cover/clothe the sinful ones.
9. The "intercession" described here relates to the reconciliation of humans, who are sinful by nature and by practice, with a holy God who will not abide with sin.

II. Can you think of a Jewish individual, known to history, who . . .

- . . . was truly righteous, without sin?
- . . . was rejected by the people, even His own people, Israel?
- . . . died a cruel death?
- . . . bore the sins of others, reconciling them to God?

A Prophet like Moses

1. Peter appeals to Moses, whom the Jews revere

- A. **Acts 3:22-23**, *For Moses truly said to the fathers, The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'*
- B. Referring primarily to Deu. **18:18-19**, wherein God says to Moses, *I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.*⁶
- C. Peter is making the connection: Jesus, Whom you crucified, was this Prophet predicted by God through Moses—whom you say you revere.

2. *I will require it of him*: require what?

- A. MT,⁸ "require it" is אֲדַרֵּשׁ [edrōš], meaning to "give a responsible presentation of an action or wrong done, reporting to a superior"⁷

- B. **LXX, ἐκδικήσω [ekdikēsō] from ἐκδίκησις [ekdikēsis]** “(1) as an act of retributive justice vengeance, punishment, revenge . . . ; (2) **ἐδικησιν ποιεῖν [edikēsīn poiein]** . . . give justice, see to it that justice is done.”⁹
- C. **NET:** “I will personally hold responsible anyone who then pays no attention to the words that prophet speaks in my name.”¹⁰
- D. **JSB:** “If anyone fails to heed the words he speaks in My name, I myself will call him into account.”¹¹
- E. **Peter interpreted this to mean utter destruction because everyone is guilty of sin before a Holy God. When His justice is served, those without Christ will perish in hell!**
3. **What are some of the remarkable words this “Prophet like Moses” said which can only be ignored at great peril?**
- John 8:24, *Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*
 - John 14:6, *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*
 - Mat. 10:32, *whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.*
 - Luke 10:16, *He who hears [the Father] hears Me, he who rejects [the Father] rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects [the Father] who sent Me.*
 - John 3:36, *He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*
 - John 6:47, *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.*
 - John 5:22-23, . . . *the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*

Times of refreshing and restoration

1. **Acts 3:19-21, 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, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.**

A. “times **καιροὶ [kairoi]** of refreshing”

I. “refreshing” is **ἀναψύξεως [anapsyxeōs]** from **ἀναχωρέω**

[*anachōreō*], can be translated as “relief, refreshment, relaxation from burdensome circumstance”¹² or even as “encouragement, a state of cheer, after a difficult time”¹³.

- II. A time when burdensome conditions or difficult times would come to an end for the Jews

B. “times *χρόνων* [*chronōn*] of restoration”

- I. “restoration” is *ἀποκαταστάσεως* [*apokatastaseōs*] from *ἀποκατάστασις* [*apokatastasis*], to restore things to their former good state
- II. Has in view, “the restoration not only of the true theocracy but also of that more perfect state of (even physical) things which existed before the fall”¹⁴
- III. Includes the answer to the question asked by the Apostles prior to Jesus’ ascension in Acts, chapter 1: “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6)
 - a. Jesus answer refers to both “times” *χρόνους* [*chronous*] and “seasons” *καιρῶν* [*kairous*] — the two words which Peter uses here for the times of refreshing and restoration.¹⁵
- IV. This seems to refer to the conditions which prevail during the millennial kingdom, immediately following Jesus’ return at the second coming—when the world is revitalized and many aspects of the curse are lifted.
- V. Jesus referred to this period in Mat. 19:28, *Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*
- VI. This is the period described in the 20th chapter of the book of Revelation and many other passages in the Old Testament.¹⁶

2. Jewish conversion as a precondition for the second coming

- A. “be converted . . . so that . . . He may send Jesus . . . whom heaven must receive until”

B. Acts **3:26**, *to you first*

C. OT basis

- I. Lev. **26:38-42**, *You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away. But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt, then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land.*
- II. Hos. **5:14-15**, *For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, And like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear them and go away; I will take them away, and no one shall rescue. I will return again to My place Till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.¹⁷*

D. NT basis

- I. Luke **13:35**, *See! Your house is left to you desolate; and assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'*
- II. Mat. **23:39**, *for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'*
- III. Rom. **11:26-27**, *And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."*
 - a. turn away ungodliness from Jacob (who is Israel)
 - b. My covenant
 - c. When I take away their sins

The Abrahamic Covenant

1. Acts **3:25-26** *You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made*

with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.

2. In Abraham's seed all the families of earth (whether Jewish or non-Jewish) shall be blessed
3. Gospel of Matthew opens with the Genealogy of Christ: Mat. **1:1**, *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham . . .*
 - A. Abraham → Isaac → Jacob (who is Israel) → Judah → . . . David → Solomon → . . . Joseph, the husband of Mary (Mat. **1:1-16**)
4. Those who are born again, trust in Christ, and are said to be "in Christ" (e.g., 1Cor. **1:21**; **15:22**; 2Cor. **5:17**; Col. **1:2**; 1Th. **4:16**)
5. Through our identification with Christ, we become Abraham's seed and beneficiaries of promises to Abraham
 - A. Gal. **3:29**, *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Summary: Peter's explanation of the atoning work of Christ is summarized by Paul

1. Rom. **3:19-24**, *Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*

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Endnotes:

1. [NKJV](#), Acts [3:17-26](#)
2. [Ref-0038](#), Acts [3:24-25](#)
3. [Ref-1297](#), 298
4. "Peter's mention of Samuel as the next prophet after Moses (cf. 13:20) clearly implies that Joshua did not fulfill Deuteronomy [18:15](#)."² "Now it is certainly difficult to find any prophecy of Samuel that could be applied to Jesus as explicitly as the words of Moses just quoted. But Samuel was the prophet who anointed David to be king and spoke of the establishment of his kingdom (cf. 1 Sam [16:13](#); see also 13:14; 15:28; 28:17)."³
5. [Ref-1357](#), 193
6. "A quotation from Deut [18:19](#), also Lev [23:29](#). The OT context of Lev [23:29](#) discusses what happened when one failed to honor atonement. One ignored the required sacrifice of God at one's peril." [Ref-0014](#), Acts [3:23](#)
7. [Ref-0618](#), #2011
8. *Masoretic Text*
9. [Ref-0380](#), 136
10. [Ref-0014](#), Deu. [18:19](#)
11. [Ref-0934](#), Deu. [18:19](#)
12. [Ref-0617](#), #433
13. [Ref-0617](#), #433
14. [Ref-1343](#), 63
15. "if Israel as a whole would repent, a second more remote goal, the coming of the kingdom (times of refreshing at the second coming of Christ) would be fulfilled." [Ref-0038](#), Acts [3:19-21](#)
16. Representative OT passages concerning the millennium include: Isa. [2:1-4](#); Isa. [9:6](#); Isa. [11:1-16](#); Isa. [42:4](#); Isa. [60:1](#); Isa. [65:17-25](#); Jer. [23:3-8](#); [31:31-40](#); Eze. [40-44](#).
17. "He will remain in His place (the prophecy spanning the centuries until the second advent of Christ) until the remnant of of Israel (Zec. [12:10-13:1](#); Rom. [11:26](#); Rev. [7:1-8](#)) will acknowledge their offense . . . through faith in their future incarnate Messiah-Savior (Isa. [53:1-10](#))." [Ref-1274](#), 1720

Sources:

- NKJV** Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references are from the *New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Ref-0014** *New English Bible*, electronic edition (Dallas, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 1998). [www.bible.org].
- Ref-0038** John Walvoord and Roy. B. Zuck. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, 1983).
- Ref-0380** Friberg, T., Friberg, B., & Miller, N. F. *Vol. 4: Analytical lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. Baker's Greek New Testament library. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000).
- Ref-0617** James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).
- Ref-0618** James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).
- Ref-0934** Adele Berlin, Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004). ISBN:[0-19-0934](#)

[529751-2^d](#).

- Ref-1274** Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002). ISBN:[0-89957-415-7^e](#).
- Ref-1297** Frank E. Gaebelein, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996).
- Ref-1343** Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wile's Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1889).
- Ref-1357** Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2001). ISBN:[0-688-08506-7^f](#).
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Links Mentioned Above

- a** - See http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Acts_by_Tony_Garland/14_Acts_3_17-26/index.htm.
- b** - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.
- c** - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org>.
- d** - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/isbn.htm?0-19-529751-2>.
- e** - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/isbn.htm?0-89957-415-7>.
- f** - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/isbn.htm?0-688-08506-7>.