

Peter's Second Sermon

Acts 3:19-21

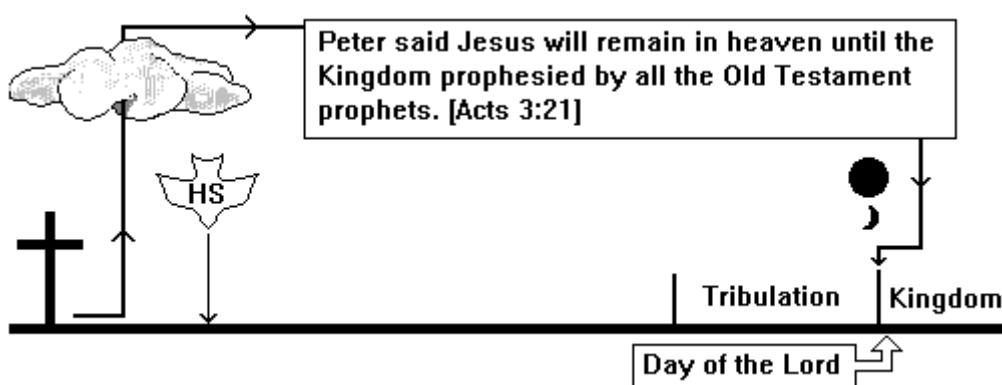
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With Peter's second sermon, we have an even clearer indication of his thinking on the timing of Christ's coming for Christians. The healing of the lame man at the Temple gate caused a stir among the crowd assembled to worship. Peter seized the opportunity to preach the gospel right on the Temple mount. In his invitation at the close of his sermon he made a prophetic promise regarding the Lord's return.

Acts 3:19-21

*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,
20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,
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.*

The coming of the Christ and His Kingdom was foretold by all the prophets. This is the major theme of most of them. This is when Jesus will restore all things and the curse will be removed from the earth, (Isaiah 2:1-4, Isaiah 35, Zech. 14:1,8-11, Rom. 8:19-23). Peter held out this coming of Christ to restore His creation as the future hope for new converts to the Church. He declared that Jesus must remain in heaven until this Kingdom, foretold by the prophets, comes.



Peter did not originate this idea. He borrowed it from Psalm 110:1. There is no doubt Peter was familiar with this Psalm because he quoted it in his previous sermon to prove that Jesus was the Messiah.

Acts 2:34-35

*34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand,
35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'"*

It is clear, both from this Psalm and from Peter's commentary on it in Acts 3:19-21, that Jesus will be seated at the Father's side until the time comes to overthrow the kingdoms of this world and restore all things predicted by the Prophets. This utterly eliminates the possibility of Jesus' coming before the tribulation to rapture the Church to heaven. He would have to leave the Father's right hand before His enemies are made His footstool, and before the "restoration of all things."

Both of Peter's sermons display a clear continuity with Jesus' teaching in the Olivet Discourse. The fact that he taught Jesus' chronology of the tribulation and second coming to believers after the day of Pentecost strongly suggests that Jesus taught "Church doctrine" in the Olivet Discourse.

We should also not fail to notice Peter's appeal to Old Testament prophecy, and its application to the promise of Jesus' coming for believers. Pretribulationists not only seek to distance Jesus' prophetic teaching from the "Church age," but they do the same with Old Testament prophecy. Both of these practices are shown to violate the practice of the New Testament writers themselves. In short, they were not "dispensationalists" if such a dichotomy is necessary to dispensationalism.