

Scripture Reading:

Acts 2: “22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know-- 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. 25 For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' 29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. 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." ' 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

"The Judgment of Israel: Messiah Has Come"

There are some who argue that we can simplify the final judgment by saying that God will ask all those who have lived just one question:

- ‘What have you done with my Son Jesus?’
- It is a question that Peter challenges God’s people to answer here at Pentecost and down through history!

As we have begun our journey through the Book of Acts I have often mentioned that we will learn more and more about how to see Jesus in the Old Testament. As we have studied the coming of the promised Comforter at Pentecost, we have already seen examples:

- As we considered what happened that day, we saw it vividly pictured by the Prophet Ezekiel with the valley full of dry bones coming back to life.
- Last week we saw Peter turn to the Prophet Joel to show how he had predicted the coming of the Holy Spirit who would glorify Jesus
- This week Peter continues with his sermon to the gathered crowd by putting Jesus front & center, leaving NO doubt that the promised Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth.
- And Peter once again proves his case from the Old Testament!

Peter warns the people of God about coming judgment because of what they have done with God’s Son and then calls them to repentance as we shall see in detail next week.

- Peter begins his sermon by calling on them to “heed my words” in verse 14 and now he tells them again to HEAR these words, an admonition that is important for us today as well!

“22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know”

- Peter leaves no doubt about whom he is speaking of:
Jesus was a common name so he says, ‘Jesus of Nazareth’
- The fame of Jesus of Nazareth had gone out to all the land and Pilate had put up the sign during His crucifixion that identified Him as Jesus of Nazareth.
- But Jesus was not just a carpenter from Nazareth, He was God’s own Son and this had been confirmed with miracles, power and signs
- We could review all the events during the ministry of Jesus to see these evidences, but think of the three-fold witness even the skeptics had been given since His crucifixion that Jesus was the Son of God, their promised Messiah...

-- The curtain of the Temple had been ripped from top to bottom, the old system of sacrifices that pointed to Jesus was at an end

-- The soldiers who guarded the tomb at the time that Jesus was resurrected went to the Chief Priests to report what had happened... They heard from those who may have been the only eye-witnesses

-- And lest we forget Matthew tells us that they even had witnesses from beyond the grave...

Matthew 28:52-53: “many bodies of the Saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they went in to the holy city and appeared to many.”

- All of these events would have caused quite a buzz of conversation around Jerusalem!
- Now the Holy Spirit has gathered the crowd so Peter can confront them with the truth about what all this means...

23 “Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”

- Here again we see the sovereign working of God in history stated right next to the actions of men!
- Now some may rightly ask, “So which was it?”
- Was Jesus crucified by the determined purpose of God or the lawless actions of men?
- We must answer with Peter that it was BOTH.
- As professor John Frame has rightly pointed out, it is a serious theological error to think that talk of any human effort or responsibility compromises God’s sovereignty

Professor Frame wrote recently that “In some areas, God does all the work and we do nothing, examples being creation out of nothing and the gift of saving grace in Christ.”

“But in many other areas, God works through created means, particularly through the work of human beings. For example, it is God who will gather his elect to himself; but, according to the Great Commission, He will do this through human beings who go and make disciples of all nations. Certainly that includes translating, interpreting, applying, and communicating the gospel message. In this case, divine sovereignty and human responsibility are not a zero-sum game, in which each

detracts from the other. Salvation is God's work from first to last. But in part of that process he employs human beings to do his work. And that employment brings glory to him, rather than detracting from his glory."

We need to understand that this is true in a positive and negative sense:

- God is glorified when we preach the Gospel and one who has been called by God from eternity past responds
- God was also glorified when lawless hands took Jesus and crucified Him

As we have often said, these sinful actions came as no surprise to God. The coming of Jesus was not some Plan A where God had hoped His people would accept Him with open arms. Then when they rejected Him God was forced to go with Plan B in the church age and return to deal with Israel at the end of time.

- No, Jesus was delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God as Peter will now show from the Old Testament

25 "For David says concerning Him

[Peter clearly shows that David was speaking of Jesus, the Jesus of Nazareth they had crucified!]

"For David says concerning Him 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'"

- Peter explains how the Old Testament writers like David viewed their writing about the salvation that would come with Jesus in his first Epistle:

I Peter 1:10 "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into."

- David and the other prophets were not writing primarily for themselves or their time, but for US.
- Peter then directly confronts any then or now who might argue that David spoke of himself or any other event of his day...

29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption."

As Peter said last week, 'this is that!'

- David was speaking of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus!
- And the contrast that Peter draws between Jesus and David is relevant in our day as well.

These men saw David as the Great King of Israel, but he was dead and buried and they could go visit his tomb... Peter might even have pointed toward it.

There have been great men in history like King David or in our own country Presidents like Washington or Reagan. Or if you like bigger government, Lincoln & Roosevelt

- Despite what our political persuasions might be, ALL of these men are dead and buried!

It is the resurrected Jesus who has been crowned the King of Kings!

There have also been down through history many powerful evil men:

- The examples we know from the 20th Century would be Lenin, Hitler and Mao Zedong who were collectively responsible for the death of over one hundred million people

BUT we must remember that they too have died and are rotting in their graves awaiting the great judgment:

- It is Jesus who will come as the judge of all the earth!

And finally there have been many other great religious figures in history whose writings and teachings have impacted the lives of millions in our nation: Men like Buddha, Mohamed or Joseph Smith: They too are dead and buried.

- It is the resurrected Jesus who is Lord of Lords, the one true Savior for the entire world!

Peter then reminds these gathered Jews what has happened to Jesus who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the one who will judge them:

32 “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”

Here we see Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, bring to together the tapestry of our salvation with the resurrection of Jesus, His ascend to the Father’s right hand of power and the coming of the Holy Spirit as the comforter.

Three great events woven together by the three persons of the God-head: Father, Son & Holy Spirit

Peter then reminds his listeners that David was NOT speaking about himself, turning to the most quoted passage from the Old Testament in Psalm 110:

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.'””

- At the risk of sounding like a broken record, I must again point out that the Book of Acts is primarily about the Kingdom of Jesus filling the earth!
- If we doubt this truth, the warning Peter gives this day must still be heeded in our time...

36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Peter began by addressing the men of Israel and now he challenges the house of Israel. Peter here in verse 36 gives the answer to the question these gathered men of Israel had asked in verse 12: “Whatever could this mean?”

They had gathered into a huge crowd because all of the City heard a great noise: As they gathered they all heard the wonderful works of God being proclaimed in their own languages from around the world by a band of disciples from Galilee, and so they ask “whatever could this mean” and now Peter has given them the answer:

- Jesus, who they crucified, has been raised from the dead; ascended to the Father's right hand of power and the Holy Spirit has come to fill the earth with His Kingdom!
- Peter declares to them: "know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

As we shall see next week it is a proclamation that cuts them to the heart and brings much repentance. Sadly it is a proclamation that should also cut us to the heart today and bring much repentance. In our modern age we have often thought of sin but lightly, if at all.

We don't want to offend anyone or just want to do our own thing.

- It is so easy to forget that the price which had to be paid for ALL sin was the crucifixion of Jesus...
- It is WE who crucified the Lord of Glory!

But Jesus was not held by the bands of death, but was resurrected in power and Peter declares that God has made Him both Lord and Christ.

What we would refer to today as Lord and Savior, but again we have taken both very lightly.

Do we believe that Jesus is Lord? The Lord of Lords?

- Or do we see Him as just the Lord in heaven who wrings His hands hoping that the nations of the earth will one day allow His Gospel to be preached so folks can be saved?
- This is not the Lord of Lords that the Bible presents...

Jesus did not leave us with a Great Commission that is an impossible task or an ideal goal...

- He left us with a great commission that reflects how He is going to fill the earth with His Kingdom pictured for us in Revelation 19: A picture we are called on to believe!

11 "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

- Peter declares that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ, both Lord and Savior
- The Lord of Lords and Kings of Kings is clothed with a robe dipped in blood...

His own blood that was shed for the sins of His people on His robe as He rides forth as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords

This brings up the 2nd question:

Do we believe that God has really made Jesus THE Savior?

- Did Jesus really mean it when He said, "no one comes to the Father except by Me!"?

These are questions that we must ask and answer, but the proper answers must also be lived out in our lives and the lives of those we witness to!

Unlike many evangelical churches, we do not have alter calls at the end of our services...

- **Though I would certainly point out that we present the Gospel each and every week as we come confessing our sins and hearing from the Word of God the assurance that our sins are forgiven in Jesus!**

We firmly believe that God's people, including our covenant children are to be disciplined, called to mature in the faith through discipleship and obedience. We are not be singularly focused on a conversion experience or decision that earns us a "Get Our Of HELL Free" card that we can present to God at the end of our life no matter how we have lived.

- **With that said, we must also remember that this great sermon from Peter was preached to the CHURCH!**
- **Those who had gathered that day were circumcised members of God's Covenant**
- **It could be argued that they were the most faithful members of the covenant who traveled to Jerusalem for Pentecost**

Peter confronts them with the question that God's people down through all the ages must answer:

- **What have you done with Jesus?**

The bad news is that we have crucified Him!

Our sins took Him to the cross of Calvary and this should cut us to the heart just as much as it did those gathered there that day.

The Good News is that God still calls on us to repent and live!

- **May the Holy Spirit work in each of our hearts that we might hear and respond to such Good News.**

Communion Meditation: Joel 2:18-19:

"18 Then the Lord will be zealous for His land, And pity His people. 19 The Lord will answer and say to His people, "Behold, I will send you grain and new wine and oil, And you will be satisfied by them; I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations."