

OpenTheo

Acts 2:5 - 2:39



Acts - Steve Gregg

In this insightful message, Steve Gregg explores the book of Acts and its relevance to the church's existence over the past two millennia. He delves into the pouring of the Holy Spirit upon the early believers, the gift of tongues, and the significance of Peter's sermon. Drawing from Old Testament prophecies, Gregg emphasizes Jesus' resurrection and exaltation as the key claim of the Christian faith. He distinguishes the God-centered nature of biblical evangelism from a man-centered approach, highlighting repentance and baptism as essential aspects of committing to Jesus as Lord.

Transcript

We need to begin again. And we do have exciting, exciting material. In fact, I could say that of every lecture in the book of Acts.

It's an exciting story. And it's, it's of course, made the more exciting and more interesting as we can apply it to the church and to our own lives since the time of the apostles too. And that's what we hope to do because it is the same phenomenon.

You know, one thing I don't know if I understood when I was younger. I think I told you in our introduction that when I was younger, I'd read in the book of Acts, it would seem surreal. It would seem like not more like mythology, even though I knew it was true.

It just didn't seem like real life. And I think at that time, I was picturing, you know, there's the church back then, and there's the church now. And in a sense, there's this huge gulf fixed between the two.

And as I came later to understand the body of Christ, the body of Christ is one continuous body. The kingdom of God is one continuous kingdom through history, beginning there. And up till now, it's come to where we are.

And there's never been a time when all the Christians of one generation died off and a whole new batch came. It's always overlapping. Some Christians are dying.

Some are being converted all the way through history. So it's like your body where some

cells die, but not all of them do all at once unless you're dead. But when you're alive, individual cells die, but there's new cells coming, but some cells are being replaced at different times.

It's one body from the time you're born or conceived, I should say, until the day you die. And the body of Christ is one body for the past 2,000 years. Individual cells come and go.

But there's never been a time when the body of Christ in the first century ceased to exist. And then, you know, later, another body of Christ came along, and ours is another one later on. This is one continuous body living through history, one continuous movement.

And so we're really reading about our roots as part of this global millennia-continuing phenomenon. Now, when it began, as we saw, the Holy Spirit came, and there were phenomena that people heard and saw. And especially what they heard attracted attention.

Now, we don't know. The Spirit came on these people when they were in the upper room. Before long, Peter's preaching to a crowd where 3,000 get saved.

This crowd was probably not in the upper room with the 120. And so there is the assumption that at some point, between what we've read and what we're about to read, the disciples move out into the streets or out into the courts of the temple or some public place where there's crowds who can hear Peter preach. In fact, there are crowds who hear these people speaking in tongues.

Now, if they're all confined to the upper room, it may have been loud enough that people could hear through the windows, but the response to the crowd must have taken place outside the room. Picking up at verse 5, Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together and were confused because everyone heard them speak in his own language.

Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes, Elamites, those who dwell in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus, Galatia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya and adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs, we hear them speak in our own language, our own tongues, the wonderful works of God. So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, whatever could this mean? Others mocking said, they're full of new wine. Now, we're simply told there's a quite a cosmopolitan group here from many nations.

Fifteen different nations are listed. It begins by talking of nations to the east and the

northeast of Israel, Mesopotamia and Parthia and these places. And then it talks also about Judea, which is the region they were in.

It also talks about Egypt and Libya, which is in Africa. So it's moves kind of scanning from the northeast down through the Middle East down to Africa. And then the only place really west it mentions visitors from Rome who were there.

And there are Arabs and what to say, people from Crete, Cretans from the island of Crete. Now, these were Jews of what's called the Diaspora. From the time of the Assyrian destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C., most of the tribes of Israel and their representatives were scattered throughout the Gentile world.

Many of them married Gentiles and over the generations, they basically lost their Israeli identity. They were just mixed breed. Some of them were the Samaritans of Jesus day.

This was, of course, 700 years after the mixture began. So you could tell how deeply mixed or how broadly mixed I should say, the bloodline was for these people who'd been marrying with Gentiles for 700 years. They would not have a very much distinctive Jewish identity.

And that's one reason the Samaritans were not loved by the Jews, to put it mildly, because they had not maintained their ethnic or religious purity. Because the Samaritans also had their own temple and their own law. They kept much of the law of Moses, but they had their own changes different than what the Jews had.

So there were rival religions, rival races, but there were devout Jews among them all. The devout Jews probably were more from the diaspora of 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar took the Judeans, from which the word Jew comes, from Judea, and scattered them throughout the Babylonian Empire, which included most of the nations that we read about here. Now, some years later in 539, when Cyrus came to power and conquered Babylon, the Grecian Empire conquered Babylon, Cyrus allowed Jews to go back to Israel, but most didn't.

Zerubbabel took 50,000 back with him. Later, Ezra and Nehemiah had some groups that went with them. But still, the vast majority of the Jews who'd been scattered through Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem remained in Gentile lands.

And that was 500 years before Christ. So for half a millennium, most Jews lived outside of Israel. Frankly, they always have.

Even to this day, most Jews live outside of Israel. Since the time of the diaspora back centuries before Christ, there's never been a time when most Jews lived in Israel. But some did.

Some had come back to live in Israel, and they were called Palestinian Jews. But then

there were the diaspora, the dispersed Jews from all over, and these were required under the law of Moses to make three pilgrimages a year, if possible, to Jerusalem at Passover and at Pentecost and at the Feast of Tabernacles. Now, if people came a long way, they would often come for Passover and just stay the 50 days until Pentecost.

Why make the trip twice in, you know, a couple of months' time? But for whatever reason, there were always large numbers of Jews of the dispersion in Jerusalem around festival times. And that was the case here. So when the Holy Spirit fell on the men in the upper room and the women, these people heard the speakers in tongues speaking in languages of their own home regions.

Now, their first response was, aren't these people all Galileans? You might think, well, how did they know they're Galileans? Well, Galileans, first of all, had their own distinctive accent. You might remember when Peter was warming himself by the fire while Jesus was on trial in the house of Caiaphas. And, you know, when the girl came up to Peter, she said, you're surely one of them.

And Peter denied Christ three times. One time she said, you surely were one of them because you speak like a Galilean. She could tell by his accent he was a Galilean.

But the Galileans, unlike the Judean Jews, were considered to be rustic. They were not sophisticated, not like the Pharisees and the trained and temple-oriented Jews in Judea. And because they were considered rustic and less educated, it'd be the more surprising that they would know, you know, the local dialects from places in Mesopotamia and Libya and, you know, places that were far from them where they would not, the average person would not have learned the language even if they were well educated.

But now, these guys who don't seem to be well educated seem to know these languages fluently. And so this raised eyebrows and it caused them to have curiosity. And this is what God used to give Peter a platform to preach the gospel for the first time to Jews from all over the world of the time.

Notice it says in verse 5, these devout men were from every nation under heaven. I just point that out to you because it's a hyperbole and it's not unlike other times in the Bible that uses hyperbole. You know, every nation under heaven is simply a way of exaggerating to point out how broadly these Jews had come, you know, for the festival and therefore how broadly the gospel would be spread when these people went home.

Because these people who heard Peter preach, 3,000 of them got converted on that day. Certainly, some of them went home to where they came from. In fact, this is no doubt how the Church of Rome got started.

Nobody knows how the Church of Rome got started because Paul, though he was the apostle to the Gentiles, he wrote a letter to the Roman church before he ever went to

Rome. Someone had evangelized him. No one knows who.

But it says there were visitors from Rome here. And so no doubt some of them were among those who were converted. And as they all went back to their homelands, Rome included, a church would kind of spontaneously be planted because they'd tell their friends about Christ and start a home fellowship.

And then eventually a church would grow from that. But this is how it all got started. This is how the church first broke free from the bounds of Jerusalem.

Although the first church had its—the mothership was in Jerusalem for a very long time before there were any officially recognized churches outside Jerusalem, as we shall see. But there must have been spontaneous churches arising back in the homelands of some of these people when they went home. But here they're hearing these languages.

They say, okay, there's something going on here. Who can explain this? And some are mocking and say, well, they're full of new wine. Meaning they've just, you know, they're babbling.

They're not speaking other languages that may sound to you like a language. They're just slurring their words. This is what the jokers were saying.

And this gave Peter an opportunity to speak up. Now, I want to point out to you. There are people, many, who in talking about the gift of tongues have said the reason that the gift of tongues was necessary in the first century is because all of the Christians were Jews from Palestine.

And for the gospel to be preached throughout the world, God had to give them the gift of tongues so they could preach to people of all different areas and languages. This is not a correct explanation. For one thing, everyone in the world mentioned in these verses spoke Greek.

Alexander the Great had made Greek the lingua franca of the entire Roman Empire, Greek Empire, 330 years before Christ. So there wasn't anybody really who didn't understand Greek. And when Peter got up to preach, he didn't preach in 15 different languages.

He preached in one language. And everyone understood him because he probably preached in Greek. He could have preached in Aramaic, the local Palestinian Jewish language, but not all the diaspora would understand it.

So almost certainly he preached in Greek, which is how it's recorded for us in the original Greek manuscripts. But if they could all understand Greek, why did they have to hear these different languages? You see, we don't ever read that the early church preached the gospel to foreigners in the gift of tongues. It was a sign.

They didn't preach in tongues. They declared the wonderful works of God. They were glorifying and praising God.

They were not explaining the gospel. Peter had to do that. But he didn't have to speak in tongues to do that.

He could do that in one language they all understood. The speaking in tongues was not really for the sake of communicating with people that you could not otherwise communicate with, but rather to show that there was something supernatural that God was doing, which obviously had international implications. The fact that there were languages of all these different Gentile nations that were represented.

Someone want to get that door, Tim? It at least hints at the fact that the glory of God in the gospel is going to be made known to many nations. Although at this point, they were all visitors to Jerusalem. Now, when Peter got up to speak, we have the very first recorded Christian sermon.

And it's the longest of Peter's sermons recorded. In the book of Acts, we have one very long sermon of Peter and one very long sermon of Paul recorded. Paul's is in chapter 13.

Both of them have additional sermons that are recorded in more brevity. But we have a good sample. And I'm sure that's why Luke gave us... He could have given us longer versions of the other sermons too, no doubt.

But I think Luke wanted to give us, in some detail, a sample of, you know, the full message that Peter preached. Now, even so, it only takes, what, two, three minutes to read the sermon. And so many scholars believe that we have a faithful digest of a longer sermon.

I don't care. I think preachers always want to be excused for being long-winded. He couldn't have just spoken two minutes and gotten 3,000 people saved.

No one could be expected to do that. Well, maybe he could if he was filled with the Spirit. Maybe if you were filled with the Spirit, you wouldn't have to speak for 20 minutes or an hour.

Maybe I wouldn't have to speak for an hour if I had Peter's gifts. Of course, I'm not preaching the gospel. I'm explaining Bible passages.

That takes longer. But the point is that scholars often think that the recorded sermons in Acts maybe are just what they call a faithful digest of sermons that were really longer, but sort of the reader's digest version. And that is possible.

Peter may have preached longer than this, but I have no reason to doubt that this could be the full sermon and that the Holy Spirit used it as mightily as we read. Peter, verse

14, standing up with the 11, raised his voice and said to them, not to the 11, but to the crowds, Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it's only the third hour of the day.

To the Jew, the day began at six in the morning, so the third hour would be nine in the morning. He's saying, you know, if any of you are seriously speculating that this speech you're hearing is the product of people drinking too much. Are you kidding? Nine in the morning? Who's drunk by nine in the morning? The bars aren't even open yet.

You know, this is not the right explanation. You should look, you should hold out for a better explanation than that. And I've got one for you.

He said, but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel. And here he quotes Joel chapter two, verses 28 through 32. And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your young men shall see visions. Your old men shall dream dreams.

And on my men servants and on my maid servants, I will pour out of my spirit in those days and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the coming of the great and notable day of the Lord.

And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Now that maybe could have been the end of the sermon. It wasn't, he had more to say, but that's, there's a salvation message right there.

Whoever calls on the name of the Lord should be saved. This verse, the last verse of this passage in Joel is also quoted by Paul in Romans 10, 13. That whoever shall call on the name of the Lord should be saved.

He's quoting Joel chapter two, verse 32. Now the quotation, actually we looked at the quotation, I think it was last night in Joel. And one thing interesting, there's a few changes of it.

In Joel, it doesn't say in the last days. Peter quotes him as saying in the last days I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. In Joel, it just says after this, I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

But because the Jews and the apostles recognized that this was talking about the Messianic age. And that this was therefore the last days of which the prophet spoke. Peter simply cited it that way.

And remember in Luke chapter 24, 45, Jesus had opened the apostles understanding. That they might understand the scriptures. So Peter quotes Old Testament scriptures.

And we might say, well, is he doing this right? Yeah, he is. Because Jesus opened his understanding that he might understand the scriptures. We have to say Jesus made no mistake.

And therefore Peter was seeing the scriptures properly. This is a reference to the last days. Now when we hear the term the last days, there's any number of ways we might think of it.

I think a very popular way of thinking of the term is the days just before the second coming of Christ. It's very common for people to say, are we living in the last days? Do you think this is the last generation? Do you think the tribulation is upon us? I think the most common thing in popular American evangelism. Is to associate the last days with the last days of the whole world.

When Jesus comes back. As far as I can tell, there may be no time in the Bible that the term last days is used that way. There's a possibility of it.

In 1 Peter where he says in the last days many shall depart from the faith and so forth. That's not even necessarily the same as what we typically think. All of the biblical writers identified themselves as living in the last days.

Peter did. He said this is what Joel said would happen in the last days. Let me show you a few other places where the New Testament writers speak pretty much harmoniously among themselves.

With the time they were living being the last days. In Hebrews chapter 1 verses 1 and 2. The writer says God who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets. Has in these last days spoken to us by his son.

Now he's saying that before the last days God spoke through the prophets only. But in these last days he's begun to speak through his son. So the writer of Hebrews sees the last days as beginning essentially when Jesus began to testify.

The appearance of Jesus marked the beginning of the last days. According to the writer of Hebrews. We see this also in Peter.

In 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 20. Speaking of Jesus says he indeed was for ordained before the foundation of the world. But was manifest in these last times for you.

In the last times Jesus was manifested. That is his first coming marked the last times coming. In James chapter 5 just one page back.

In rebuking the rich men. He says in James 5 verse 3. Your gold and your silver are

corroded. Their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire.

You have heaped up treasure in the last days. They're in the last days and they're heaping up treasure. Because they're in the last days James said.

In 1 John chapter 2. Another author. I'm just trying to give you samples of more than one author. Speaking the same way.

In 1 John chapter. First of all chapter 2. It says in verse 18. Little children it is the last hour.

And as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming. Even now many Antichrist have come. By which we know that it is the last hour.

So in his day many Antichrist had come. By which he knew that it was the last hour. How about Paul? How did he feel about things? Well in 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

In verse 11. After he describes the events. And the experiences of the Jews in the wilderness during the 40 years of wandering.

He says. Now all these things happen to them. 1 Corinthians 10 11.

Now all these things happen to them as examples. And they were written for our admonition. On whom the ends of the ages have come.

The ends of the ages have come upon us. He said. Now notice the New Testament author said.

They were living in the last days. The last time. The last hour.

In the last times. In the end of the ages. These are kinds of expressions we might think would refer to the end of the world.

But obviously they didn't live at the end of the world. And there's a couple of ways we might understand this. One way that many commentators have come to understand it.

Is that the entire age. From the first coming of Jesus to the second coming of Jesus is the last days. It's the final age.

There were ages before. There were the ages before Moses. There's the age of the law during the time of Moses.

And now this is the last age. The last days. The last era.

The time since the Messiah has come until he comes again at the end. That's the last days. Now that's an entirely possible interpretation.

I will not debunk it because I can't say that it's wrong. It does. It's always seemed to me that to call a period of 2,000 years.

The last days or the last hour. Just seems a little. I don't know.

A little disproportionate. If he said we're in the last age. Maybe that would make.

That would cause no problem. But the last hour. The last days.

And he's really talking about 2,000 years. I find that difficult. Not impossible.

It could be that that's how they're thinking. Another way that seems more likely to me. It may not seem more likely to you.

And it doesn't have to. You don't have to agree with me. But I think that.

I believe that they understood the Old Testament prophets. Correctly. As saying that when the new age would come.

The age of the Messiah. That the old age would have to come to an end. God would make a new covenant with the house of Israel.

But that would be the end of the old covenant. There would be a messianic community that God would create. But it would be the end of the old order.

And the old order would be destroyed. When the new one would come. Now.

I understand many passages in the Old Testament prophets that way. And you probably think I'm going to turn you to all of them. But I'm not.

I did that kind of thing last time. I want to move further forward this time. But there are a great number of passages in the Old Testament.

That talk about the Messiah coming. And then speak of a judgment coming. And that is, of course, what happened historically.

The Messiah came. He made the new covenant. And within that generation.

The Romans came and destroyed all the trappings of the old covenant. The temple. The priesthood.

Everything was destroyed in 70 AD. So God swept away the old order. Shortly after.

He instructed the new order. And I personally think that that's what the apostles understood to be the case. They see the new order inaugurated at the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

So the old order must be about ready to be swept away. And the writer of Hebrews

actually says that. In Hebrews 8.13. He said.

In speaking of a new covenant. He has made the old covenant obsolete. Then he says this.

Now that which is obsolete and growing old is about ready to vanish away. Now he wrote that just before the destruction of Jerusalem. He said when Jesus made a new covenant.

That kind of rendered the old covenant obsolete. But it's still kind of around in the sense that people are still going to the temple. The priests are still there.

The old order is still functioning. But it's obsolete. It's not of any value.

And he said that obsolete thing is about ready to be vanishing away. He knew it was going to be destroyed. Jesus said that not one stone of the temple would stand on another.

They'd all be thrown down. He said it would happen in this generation. So they knew that their generation would see the destruction of the temple.

Jesus wept over Jerusalem in Luke 19. And said how many times I would have gathered you. But he said now your enemies are going to come around you.

And they're going to throw you down and leave not one stone upon another. And they'll destroy you because you didn't know the day of your visitation. Jesus several times.

And John the Baptist too. Clearly predicted or intimated the destruction of the Jewish order that was not too far off. Was within that generation as he said.

And that being so, the apostles knew that with the coming of the new order, the old order's days were numbered. Within that generation, the old order would be swept away. Now that might not seem as important to us.

We never were Jews operating in the temple and things like that. To us we got saved and we got Jesus and who cares about what happened to Jerusalem. But these guys were people who were Jews all their lives.

Jerusalem and the temple, that was the whole worship system that God had authorized and used for 1400 years. They and their ancestors had known no other. And for Jesus to say it's going away.

Not one stone's going to be left on another. It's going to be swept gone. That was a radical change.

That was a change of the whole mentality of worship of God and all that. And they realized when the Messiah sent the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. That this was the

beginning of the end for the old order.

And I believe when they spoke of the last days or the end of the age, it was the end of the Jewish age. I believe it was the last days of the temple system. And Peter quotes, interestingly, enough of the passage in Joel to include both the outpouring of the Spirit and the destruction of the old order.

Because he says, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your old men shall dream dreams.

Your young men shall see visions. Upon my maidens and my servants I'll pour out my Spirit. They'll prophesy.

That's Pentecost. But then he goes on and Peter could have stopped the quote at that point. He didn't have to quote the rest of it.

Because he has, by quoting those two verses in Joel, he's explained what people are asking about. What's going on here? This is the outpouring of the Spirit. Joel said it.

This has happened. But he keeps quoting the rest of the passage. And in the rest of the passage, he says there will be fire and blood and pillars of smoke.

And signs in the earth and signs in the heavens. And the great and terrible day of the Lord is coming. This is a bad thing is coming.

Or not a bad, but at least a horrible thing to those who are subject to it. A horrible judgment is coming upon the city of Jerusalem for its rejection of the Messiah. And we can look historically back at it and we can read Josephus and see exactly how horrible that was.

Horrendous. It was a horrendous event. And Jews were slaughtered by the hundreds of thousands.

And the rest that weren't slaughtered were carried away into captivity and have, you know, basically became exiles in Gentile lands again. Now, what Peter says as he continues quoting here in verse 19, I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath. Now, we could say, well, that might be a reference to the signs Jesus did or even the signs the apostles are going to do in the book of Acts.

And wonders in heaven? Well, there was a darkening of the sun after all when Jesus died. Maybe that's what he's referring to. But he talks about something more violent.

Blood and fire, pillars of smoke. The sun turning to darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible, notable day of the Lord. Now, is he talking about the end of the world? Well, if so, then it doesn't seem much reason for him to have to quote that part here because he said this, we're looking at the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Well, if the first part of the prophecy is fulfilled then and the last part was 2,000 years off, he might have spared the commentary on the latter part since that wasn't being fulfilled. And yet, he, I believe, saw it as the last days of the old order. And along with the outpouring of the spirit was going to be the outpouring of judgment on the system that had killed the prophets and killed Jesus.

Remember, Jesus himself said it in Matthew 23, You Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and those who are sent to you, the blood of all who have been slain for Abel to Zechariah whom you slew between the temple and the altar is going to come on this generation, he said. And it did. The judgment of all the blood guilt of the righteous men that were killed.

In Luke 13, Jesus said to the Pharisees, it cannot be that a prophet would perish outside Jerusalem. He was being sarcastic because some prophets did die outside Jerusalem. But the point is, you know, if you're a prophet, you can take bets you'll probably die in Jerusalem because Jerusalem is the city that kills the prophets.

And of course, you don't kill God's prophets and his Messiah too and get away with it forever. And Jesus said, all that blood guilt is going to come on this generation. And it did.

So they were in the last days of that system. And it did come down with blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The city was burned.

Did the moon turn to blood? Well, I grew up in LA area. And they have cleaned up the smog pretty good compared to the 70s, 60s and 70s. Every day it burned your eyes to go outside.

But there were more than one time in my life that we, my friends and I would look at the full moon and it was blood red. We thought it was significant eschatologically. But it was, it was just smog.

You know, just the haze and the smog made the, when you got, the sky is filled with smoke. There's no smoke to darken the sky. The sunlight is diminished.

The moon looks blood red. This is because of the burning of Jerusalem. The disaster that Peter said was going to happen, that Joel said was going to happen, that Jesus said was going to happen.

And so I think what Peter is talking to the inhabitants of Jerusalem who are facing this Holocaust, this horrendous, terrible judgment from God and saying, Joel said this was going to happen. But before this judgment comes, the rescue of the remnant. Before God destroys the apostates, he rescues the faithful.

He pours out his spirit on the faithful. He creates a new community of covenant people with a new covenant. And then the old covenant is obsolete and it's about ready to

vanish away.

That is, I think, the milieu of the day of Pentecost when Peter was preaching that this is what he was seeing was not only the outpouring of the spirit, as Joel said, but the impending soon destruction of the old order, which was made up of those who rejected Christ and rejected the Holy Spirit. Now, having quoted the passage, Peter needs to, of course, talk about Jesus. Many of the people listening to him had seen Jesus because many of them were inhabitants of Jerusalem, but others were from other countries and might not have been around when Jesus was here.

So he has to familiarize them with who Jesus is. He says, Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested by God to you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did through him in your midst.

As you yourselves know, there were people there who had witnessed these things and knew this. Him being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands. The Romans were not under the law.

It was the Romans whose hands crucified Jesus. By lawless hands, you've crucified and put to death. Now, notice he says the Jews put Jesus to death when really the Romans did it.

It's sort of like saying that Judas bought the field of blood when, in fact, the high priest bought it with his money. When something is done at the behest or on behalf of somebody else, it is as if they did it. It was the Jews, the chief priests that blackmailed Pilate.

He wanted to let Jesus go. He talked to Jesus three times, all three times. He's innocent.

I'm the judge. He's the prisoner. You're making accusations.

I've talked to him. I've determined this man has done nothing wrong. Well, then he should have walked, right? He shouldn't have been in prison.

He shouldn't have even been beaten. He should have just walked. But the Jews said to Pilate, this man said he's a king.

Anyone who says he's a king is no friend of Caesar or no friend of Caesar. There's some implications there for Pilate. If he takes the side of someone who's no friend of Caesar, wouldn't that mean that Pilate may be regarded perhaps by Caesar as not a friend of Caesar? The last thing any Roman official would ever wish for.

This is blackmail. But Pilate said, okay, go ahead. And then he washed his hands.

I'm washing my hands with this innocent man's blood. You really can't get clean that way. But the truth is he declared even then that Jesus was innocent.

The Romans killed Jesus, but they didn't want to. They had nothing against him. They weren't threatened.

It was the chief priests that were threatened by him, and they blackmailed Pilate to get him to do it. And he did. So by the hands of lawless men, that is the Romans, not that the Romans had no laws, but they didn't have the Jewish law.

They were not under the law of Moses, as the Jews were. So they were lawless to the Jews. You, Jews, have crucified him, he said.

And by the way, Paul later said that about the Jews. He said that they crucified Jesus. It seems strange to say that.

And, of course, the Jews unfortunately bore an unfair stigma much later in history. Even in modern times, some people in some parts have referred to the Jews as Christ killers. Just to go on record, there's not a modern Jew on the planet who killed Christ, unless they did so in a figurative sense the way we all have.

In a sense, all of our sins killed Christ. But, you know, some Jews at one time in history were responsible for the crucifixion of Christ, and the apostles said so. This does not translate into guilt for all Jews of all times.

Modern Jews have done no more to kill Christ than any Gentile has, and they don't bear that stigma anymore. God is not a racist. He doesn't hold sins against people for what their ancestors did.

Nor does he consider people righteous because their ancestors were righteous. The soul that sins, it shall die. A son shall not be held responsible for his father's sins, Ezekiel 18 says, nor the father for his son's sins.

The soul that sins, that one will die. The person who sins dies for his own sins. So do not, even though we acknowledge that the apostles clearly said that the Jews killed Jesus, that doesn't have any bearing on the guilt of a modern Jew or any Jew other than the ones who were involved in that process.

But it is true. It was engineered by the chief priests and the Pharisees combined to get Jesus out of the way. And the Romans didn't want to get rid of him, but they got pressured.

And so the Romans killed him. But Peter says, you did it. You Jews, you did it by the hands of those lawless men.

Now, so he's gotten so far as to say that Jesus got crucified. Then verse 24, whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death because it was not possible that he should be held by it. To say it was not possible for Jesus to be held by death may be suggesting,

although he hasn't said so, that Jesus being sinless was not subject to the penalty for sin.

The wages of sin is death, but Jesus really hadn't sinned. So how could death really hold him? Jesus didn't have to die. He said, no man takes my life from me.

I lay down my life myself. If Jesus hadn't laid down his life, no one could have killed him. And when he did lay his life down, death couldn't hold him.

He did not deserve it, and therefore justice itself would not permit death to hold Jesus. So of course he was raised from the dead. And then he quotes from David in Psalm 16.

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. Therefore my heart rejoiced and my tongue was glad. Moreover, my flesh will also rest in hope, because you will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will you allow your Holy One to see corruption.

You have made known to me the ways of life. You will make me full of joy in your presence. This is a quotation from Psalm 16, verses 8 through 11, taken to be messianic.

David is speaking about himself, but Peter takes it as if the Messiah is speaking. And we might as well get used to the way the apostles do this. They often quote the Psalms where you would think it was David talking only about himself, but the apostles take it for granted.

This is Jesus speaking. Well, how do they justify that? Remember, Jesus opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. And what they did understand is that there are certain persons in the Old Testament, David being remarkably an example, who were a type and a shadow of Christ.

The Messiah was to be a new David, a second David, descended from the old David, but he'd be a new David who'd bring the kingdom as David had it. And it'd be a glorious kingdom like David had it. This was understood by the Jews.

It is a very important article of Jewish faith that the Messiah had to be a son of David, because David was a type and a shadow of the Messiah. Therefore, as a type and a shadow Messiah, David sometimes spoke about himself, but what was true of him was also a type of what was true of the Messiah. And the apostles apparently had the ability through the Holy Spirit to know when those times were.

And there's two different passages from David that are quoted by Peter here. One is also Psalm 110, further on in the sermon. And in both cases, Peter says this is the Messiah speaking.

So David speaks in the person of the Messiah. And the main point from this long quote, verses 8 through 11 from Psalm 16, is simply what is the contents of verse 27 here. Now,

what David's apparently saying is, I will not be abandoned to Hades.

Now, what is Hades? Well, it's a word used in the Old Testament. Sheol is the Old Testament word in Hebrew. Hades is the Greek version of it.

Actually, in Psalm 16, it says, you will not leave my soul in Sheol, because Sheol is the Hebrew version of Hades. Peter's preaching in Greek, so he uses Hades. Hades and Sheol simply mean the place of the dead.

Sadly, in some old versions, like the King James Version, which I love, but is not all perfect. The King James Version often quoted or translated Hades and Sheol as hell. Now, the same word, Hades and Sheol, is sometimes translated in the King James Version as the grave.

And sometimes as the pit. And therefore, the same word is translated by a variety of English words, even in the old versions. In modern versions, like I'm looking at the New King James, it doesn't even translate at all.

It just gives the Greek word Hades. You will not leave my soul in Hades. Well, why did it abandon the word hell or grave or whatever? Because Bible scholars, language scholars now know that Sheol in the Hebrew and Hades in the Greek, which are equivalent, does not refer to something very specific that we have an English word for.

If you look at any lexicon, it'll say that this word means the place of the dead. So it might be the grave where the dead body is. It might be a place beyond the grave.

It's just the place of the dead and it's undifferentiated. It's not just the bad dead. That's why it's translated as hell, such a mistake.

Because only the wicked will go to hell. But in the Bible, Sheol and Hades are a place where everybody goes. When you're dead, you're in Hades.

David expected to go to Sheol, but he didn't expect to be abandoned there. You will not abandon my soul in Hades. You won't let me see corruption.

I won't decay there. Now, the way David meant that probably meant this. Because there's several times in the Psalms David talks about how God is going to rescue him from Hades.

Usually what that means is you're not going to let me die. My life is threatened at the moment. I've got enemies pursuing me.

They want to kill me, but you won't let them get me. You're not going to dump me in Hades. I've got more life to live.

You've got more purpose for me than that. I'm not going to be abandoned to Hades.

You're not going to let me just rot in hell right now or in the grave.

But seen as a type of Christ, Peter says, oh, this is more literal. David may be thinking only in terms of at this point in time, God, you're not going to have me die and go to Hades. But the literal wording is you will not leave me in Hades.

You will not let me see corruption as decay. And Peter's going to say, that's literally true of Jesus. He wasn't in Hades long enough to decay.

He was only there three days and he came out. God didn't leave him there. That's the point that Peter's going to make here.

He says in verse 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. In other words, if you go check, he is in Hades.

His body is decayed. So this statement can't just apply to him. It must apply to someone else.

He says, therefore, being a prophet. So we have it on record from Peter that David was 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 Messiah, the Christ, to sit on his throne.

He, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of Christ, the Christ, the Messiah, that his soul was not left in Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. He didn't decay there because he rose from the dead instead. Most people decay in the grave.

Jesus never had opportunity to do so because he rose too soon. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses, 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 we now see and hear. For David did not ascend into heaven.

You notice his body is still in the grave if you want to check. He hasn't resurrected. But he says himself, and now he quotes Psalm 110, verse 1. The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool.

Psalm 110 is the most frequently quoted chapter of the Old Testament in the New Testament. New Testament writers Paul, Peter, Jesus himself quoted from this psalm about himself. Jesus quoted this very verse, talking to the Pharisees, and whose son is the Messiah? They said he's David's son.

He said, then why did David say, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand? If the Lord is the Messiah, is David, why did he speak of the Messiah as his Lord? Anyway, we won't go into that now, but it shows that the Jews themselves recognized Psalm 110 as a

messianic song. Jesus did too. Peter did too.

Paul did too. Mark did too. Many, many times, this verse or another verse in the same chapter of Psalm 110, that's verse 4, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, which is quoted like four or five times in Hebrews.

Take those two verses together, and that chapter, Psalm 110, is quoted more often in the New Testament than any other Old Testament chapter is. This is a very key verse about the resurrection of Christ. Notice it's not a statement about the resurrection so much as the enthronement of Christ.

God said to my Messiah, my Lord. You see, in Psalm 110, there's two different words for Lord. When it says, the Lord said to my Lord, the first Lord is Yahweh in the Hebrew.

The second word is Adonai, which means master. So you could translate Psalm 110, Yahweh said to my master, and my master is the Messiah. David's calling the Messiah his master.

Yahweh says to the Messiah, sit at my right hand until I make your image your footstool. Now, there's no specific reference to the resurrection there, but obviously if the Messiah was crucified, he's going to have to be resurrected if he's going to sit on a chair, if he's going to sit on a throne, and if he's going to be exalted. And so, in the early Christian preaching, it was very common, of course, they always mention the resurrection of Christ, but it's very common to associate his resurrection with his immediately or shortly after his enthronement.

The fact that Jesus was enthroned in heaven at the right hand of God was the key claim. That's what Jesus is Lord means. The key claim of the early church was Jesus is Lord.

That's why they got killed by Caesar, because Caesar thought he was the Lord. Jesus was not the same as Caesar. And by saying Jesus is Lord, they were recognized as saying something that was somewhat subversive against Caesar.

But that was the universal declaration of the church. Paul said, if you declare with your mouth, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised you from the dead, you'll be saved, in Romans 5.9, 10.9. So, Jesus is Lord is the primary declaration of the church, of the gospel. But he's the Lord because, though crucified, God vindicated him in resurrection and elevated him to his right hand and made him king of kings and Lord of lords.

As Jesus said after his resurrection, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. He's the ultimate Lord, ruler, master of the universe. And that is the claim of the Christian church.

And yes, in the sermons, they mentioned Jesus dying. Notice it doesn't talk about

anything about the atonement here. He passes over the death of Jesus very quickly.

You killed him, but God raised him. And he's at the right hand of God now. It's like, we would always feel the necessity of talking about, you know, he died for your sins and, you know, atoned for your sins.

These things are true. It's just interesting that we don't find the apostles mentioning that in their evangelism. You'd think they would.

Notice also they don't mention anything about the afterlife. There's no mention in this sermon that if you don't accept Jesus, you won't go to heaven. There's no mention of heaven or hell in any of the evangelistic sermons in the New Testament.

And you can read them for yourself to see that. You don't have to trust me about it. I've done it, but I encourage you to do it too.

And we're going to go through them here. We're not going to find the apostles ever speaking to unbelievers about going to heaven or going to hell. They never had a carrot on a stick to induce people to get saved now or regret it later.

What they emphasized was that Jesus is Lord, period. That is the declaration. It's an announcement.

The word preach in the Greek means to proclaim. It doesn't mean to plead. It doesn't mean to bargain.

It doesn't mean to beg. It means to proclaim something. There's a message that we have.

It's good news. That's what the word gospel is. The good news is there's another king, one Jesus, that there is a Lord.

That God has taken this Jesus whom you crucified, raised him from the dead, seated him in his right hand, and he is now the Lord. And we see that that's how Peter concludes his sermon. Verse 36.

Now, that's the end of his sermon. He didn't give an altar call. He didn't say now while every head is bowed, every eye is closed, nobody will see if you acknowledge Jesus.

Just raise your hand. I won't tell anyone until, of course, all the eyes are opening and then I'm going to make you come forward and everyone will see you. But, of course, I fooled you.

This is how we fool people into making decisions for Christ who are otherwise sheepish about it. No, there was never any of that. The apostles never encouraged anyone to come to Christ who wasn't willing to stand up for Christ and even die for Christ.

That's the commitment. There's no less commitment owed to a Lord. Lords don't negotiate.

Lords give commands. When Paul was preaching in Acts 17 on Mars Hill, he said, God commands all men everywhere to repent. Well, isn't he standing at the door with the hat and cap in hand, knocking, saying, Won't you please come in? Please don't leave me out here in the cold.

No, he's not a beggar. He's the king. He doesn't make requests.

He gives ultimatums. I am Lord. You repent.

That's the message. We like to induce people by all kinds of rosy promises or threats, appeal to their self-interest. There's no appeal to self-interest here.

Notice, Peter did not say, It'll be really good for you if you repent. You'll be a happier person. Your marriage will get better.

You'll have peace, love, and joy. You'll be a really happy person, a well-adjusted person. Nothing's going to fill that God-shaped hole in your heart like Jesus will.

You've been looking for it. You've been feeling unfulfilled. You just need Jesus.

He'll make you feel happy. You'll be amazed how much your life will change. Well, there's no sales pitch here.

The apostles were not soap salesmen. They were messengers of a king with a message from the king. The message, Jesus is the king.

You deal with that. I'm done. I've told you what you're supposed to know.

Now, what's interesting is that without giving an altar call, he got a response. It says, 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? Wow. He didn't even use any kind of chicanery to get them to take him seriously.

Instead, he just told them the message is there's a king. Let all the house of Israel know God has taken this Jesus that you killed. He's put him in his right hand.

He's made the king. He's made the Lord. He's got a kingdom now, and you're not in it yet.

In fact, you're the people who killed him, as I recall. End of announcements. Well, they were cut to their heart.

Because if you preach the kingdom of God, which is what the apostles and Jesus himself preached, you're preaching that Jesus is a king, and you let the Holy Spirit deal with the

conscience. If I'm not a believer and I'm hearing there's another king, Jesus, then I'm thinking, wait a minute. If God made him the king, what condition am I in? Because I'm not following him.

I've lived my whole life without reference to him. I've lived my whole life not obeying him. You've got a king.

You're supposed to obey kings. I can maybe imagine what may befall me on the day of judgment if I reject the king. I don't need anyone to read a laundry list of benefits that will come to me if I receive him.

It's not a question of me looking out for myself. It's a matter of me giving God what he deserves. It's a matter of God having his way.

You see, the biblical evangelism in the book of Acts was God-centered, not man-centered. They didn't try to induce people to believe who wouldn't believe without rosy promises. There's no rosy promises here.

It's just a matter of letting them know who's in charge and who they're going to have to deal with. Now you know that. It's up to you to do what you want to do.

There's a king. You have not been obedient to him up to this point, quite obviously. You might want to think about it.

That's what I'm here to tell you. God has made Jesus the Lord. He's made him the Messiah.

End of sermon. And they say, whoa, we need to do something. We want to respond to this message.

What must we do? What does God require us to do in response to this? He says, oh, okay. He said to them, well, repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now there's a promise. Not a promise of heaven in this particular case, but a promise of receiving the same Holy Spirit that Peter had started talking about. He said, you see these people? Why are they different? Because God has poured out his Spirit like Joel said he would.

Now you can receive the Holy Spirit. You can be part of this community. You can be part of this outpouring of God's life into the life of people.

God's movement on earth. God's kingdom. The Holy Spirit's community and dwelling place.

You can be there. You can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, too. But you have to repent

and be baptized in the name of Jesus.

A couple things here. Peter didn't say anything about believing. Now does that mean that people don't have to believe? No, of course.

Of course people have to believe. That's very clear. We're saved by faith.

The Bible's clear on that. But these people are later referred to as those who believe. The number of those who believed were 3,000 people.

They did believe. But he didn't have to say believe because they already did. That's why they were saying, what must we do? They believed what he said.

They believed when he said Jesus is the Lord that he is. Now what do we have to do? Well, you need to obviously turn around. You need to repent.

You did the wrong thing. You responded wrongly to Jesus. You crucified him.

Or even if you were a stranger from town, not local and didn't even see Jesus, you have lived your life without reference to him. That's something that's got to change. Repent means change your mind.

Metanoia in the Greek means to change the mind. Your mind has been until this time that Jesus is not a factor. You're living for yourself.

You've got nothing higher to live for. Now you realize you need to live for God. That's a change of mind.

When people have this change of mind, it makes a change in their life. They get baptized. Now, those who believe you have to be baptized to be saved would use this verse a lot.

Because it says be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. So the idea sounds like you're saying you get baptized, that will remit your sins. And there's the Church of Christ, for example, are a good example of people who feel.

And there are others that unless you've been baptized, your sins have not been remitted. Now, the early church always baptized converts without delay. It was mandatory to be baptized.

But I don't believe that Peter is trying to tell us that justification is through baptism. I think what he's saying is you need to get right with God for the remission of your sins. For you to be justified, you need to come over on the other side of the aisle here.

You've been against the Messiah, you need to come over to him. What's that? Oh, well,

you believe, you repent, you get baptized. In other words, you become a Christian.

You take the steps to become part of the Christian community, receive the Spirit. And all these things together result in the remission of sins. Which, by the way, is not even something he promised them in the earlier part of his sermon.

It's only when they asked, what must we do? He said, oh, and by the way, you can be forgiven for that. The king against whom you have been rebelling, he'll grant amnesty if you change your course and follow him. But you need to repent.

You need to be baptized. You're baptized into the kingdom, into the body of Christ, really. Now, I believe that a person is saved as soon as they believe savingly, like the thief on the cross.

He believed savingly. And Jesus said, today you'll be with me in prayer. If the guy was not baptized, no opportunity.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are in heaven and they weren't baptized. But the Christian movement is characterized by baptism as an entry right. The churches don't always practice this as diligently as they should.

But I don't think we have any business changing it. In the early church, it was understood if you're a believer, you get baptized. And they got baptized the same day without exception.

There was no such thing as an unbaptized Christian in most of the centuries of Christianity, including the first. So baptism, I don't think getting baptized really, you know, promotes your relationship with God per se. I think it initiates your relationship with the community of Christians.

You're baptized into the church, into the body of Christ. And that's necessary. I mean, it's important.

But I think that baptism is sort of like a wedding ring. What makes a couple married is not that they're wearing rings, but that they made vows. That they've changed their lives.

They've forsaken all others and made themselves committed for life to each other. That's what you do to Christ. That's what saves you.

You get baptized to simply demonstrate that. Like you put on a ring to demonstrate you've made that commitment. If you lose the ring, if the ring doesn't show up because the kid carrying it dropped it in the grate in the street.

You know, you can still be married without the ring, but you ought to get a ring. This is your public declaration that you made those vows. And baptism is the same thing, I

think.

That's how I understand it. Anyway, we need to take a break here.