

GOD MADE JESUS LORD AND CHRIST

Acts 2:22-47

Key Verse: 2:36

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

In the last passage we studied the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is like a mighty wind that breathes God’s life into people as he hovers over the earth. The Holy Spirit is like tongues of fire that burn in people’s hearts to sanctify them. The Holy Spirit changes ordinary people into servants of God and witnesses of Christ. When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, he enabled the apostles to speak in other tongues and declare the wonders of God to people of many nations. His coming made world evangelization possible in their generation. His coming makes world evangelization possible in our generation. The Holy Spirit enables young men to see visions. Without the Holy Spirit, young men see only the things of the world. But when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, they can see the vision of God for world salvation and become great men in the sight of God. May the Holy Spirit come upon each of us and enable us to see God’s vision.

In today’s passage the Apostle Peter delivers the first message in the age of the church. Full of the Holy Spirit, he focused his message on Jesus Christ. He proclaims Jesus’ suffering and death. He proclaims even more Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God. He explains how the coming of the Holy Spirit is related to Jesus’ exaltation. He challenges his listeners to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and Christ. Peter’s message cut the listeners to the heart. It may be the most effective message that was ever preached in history. Three thousand people repented, were baptized and joined the Christian church. Through Peter’s message we can have a right view of Jesus and see the sovereign rule of God in history. When we repent and accept this Jesus as our Lord we can receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit and God’s salvation. May God help us to do so.

First, God raised Jesus from the dead (22-24).

As we studied last time, a large crowd was drawn together by the work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles. They numbered at least three thousand. They wanted to understand what was happening. So they listened carefully. Peter quoted the prophet Joel to explain the coming of the Holy Spirit. Then he began to speak about Jesus. Look at verse 22. “Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.” Jesus of Nazareth is the historical Jesus who entered time and space as a man, in human form. He came from God and did the work of God. The miracles, wonders and signs he performed showed that he was accredited by God. For example, Jesus once saw a man born blind. Out of his divine compassion, Jesus healed him with only mud and saliva. The blind man could see. It was a miracle that revealed Jesus’ identity as the Messiah. No one could open the eyes of a blind man. But Jesus did. When Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, he said, “We know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him” (Jn 3:2). The Jewish people, including their leaders, knew that Jesus was sent by God.

Since Jesus came from God, they should have welcomed him, honored him, and treated him with respect. What did they do? Look at verse 23. “This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.” They crucified God’s chosen servant on the cross. The Jewish religious leaders hated Jesus because they

thought he threatened their political and economic interests. Though they knew Jesus was innocent, they pressured Pilate to pervert justice. They stirred up ordinary people to shout, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" It was the greatest crime in human history. They acted as enemies of God. However, in all fairness, it was not only they, but all people who are guilty of crucifying Jesus on the cross. A most thought-provoking song asks, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" Yes, we were there. Yes, I was there. It was also my sin that crucified Jesus.

When we look carefully at verse 23, we find that Jesus was handed over by God's set purpose and foreknowledge. Jesus was crucified on the cross according to God's will and God's plan for world salvation. Isaiah 53:10 says, "Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand." God used evil men to fulfill his own good purpose and offered Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement for the sin of the world. God loves the world. God sacrificed his own Son Jesus for sinners. Jesus willingly obeyed God's purpose and offered himself as the Lamb of God.

Look at verse 24. "But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." Until that time, death had reigned over men like a heavyweight champion, defeating all men one after another with no exception. Because of the inevitability of death, men had to live with a sense of defeat, many sorrows and great fear. Like all other men in history, Jesus died. But Jesus did not remain in the grave. It was impossible for the grave to hold Jesus, for Jesus is the Son of God. God raised Jesus from the dead. The almighty power of God raised Jesus to life. Jesus utterly defeated the power of death and became the everlasting champion of life.

When God raised Jesus from the dead, God revealed that he is the Sovereign Ruler and the Living God. God revealed that his good purpose will triumph in history and that ultimate victory comes with the kingdom of God. Because of Jesus' resurrection, we can have a living hope in the kingdom of God. 1 Peter 1:3,4 says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you...." Once, Peter had been under the power of death. He could not see beyond the temporal world. The power of death made him fearful and selfish. But Risen Christ freed Peter from the power of death through his resurrection. Peter became courageous and sacrificial. He became a good shepherd in the image of Jesus.

Second, David's resurrection faith (25-32).

King David was one of the greatest men in Israel's history and he is regarded as a patriarch and a prophet. After meeting the Risen Christ, Peter could understand the secret of David's victorious life. It was his resurrection faith. Peter quotes David in Psalm 16:8-11 to nail down the truth that God raised Jesus from the dead according to the Scriptures. Look at verses 25-28. "David said about him: 'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'"

David's life was not easy. From his teenage years he had to confront unbearable hardship. His boss was King Saul. After some country maidens praised David more than Saul, Saul became insanely jealous of David. He made David a political criminal and harassed him constantly and threatened his life. In many other ways as well, David suffered one hardship after another. One time, David returned with his men to

their camp at Ziklag. The camp had been raided by Amalekites who had taken captive all their women and children. David was greatly distressed because his men were talking of stoning him out of their bitterness of spirit. But David found strength in the Lord his God (1Sa 30:6b). With the strength of faith in God he pursued the raiding party, overtook them and recovered everything with nothing missing (1Sa 30:18ff.).

According to God's will, David became king after Saul. But his life did not get easier. He faced constant warfare with enemies. He risked his life again and again to protect and serve his people as a good shepherd. In all this, he saw the Lord always before him. David was not shaken by anything because he found strength in God. He could be glad and rejoice even in the times of hardship. In fact, he wrote many psalms in the middle of the night during times of trials. The real source of victory for David was his resurrection faith. He confessed that his body lived in hope. He knew that God would not abandon him to the grave.

Until this point in his psalm, David had been sharing personal testimony of God's victory in his life. But in verse 27b, David says, "...nor will you let your Holy One see decay." In this verse, "Holy One" refers to the Messiah. Peter interprets in verse 31. "Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay." David prophesied the resurrection of the Christ. David had resurrection faith. David was a king, warrior, poet, musician and shepherd. He was famous, wealthy and highly honored. He had many beautiful wives and many children. But none of this gave him real and lasting joy because these things are all part of the perishing world. None of these things could save him from death. But through the resurrection of the Christ, he found living hope in the kingdom of God. This was his source of real joy.

Jesus Christ, the Holy One, the Messiah, did not see decay. He died for the sin of the world. But God raised him from the dead. God raised his body to life again; his body did not see decay. Peter and the other apostles were witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. What David saw with spiritual foresight, Peter and the other apostles witnessed in history as fact and the fulfillment of prophecy. Peter said emphatically, "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact."

Third, the exaltation of Christ (33-36).

The resurrection of Christ was a historical fact of which Peter and the others were witnesses. But what happened after the resurrection enabled the Risen Christ to send the Holy Spirit. Look at verse 33. Peter said, "Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear." The Risen Christ ascended into heaven and Peter saw it with his own eyes. The Risen Christ went to the throne of God and was seated at his right hand. It was the position of power and glory and majesty. The Risen Christ reigns over all creation as Lord. The Risen Christ asked the Father for the Holy Spirit based on the efficacy of his own sacrifice for sinners. God granted Jesus' request and poured out the Holy Spirit upon all the believers.

Peter quoted another Psalm as the Scriptural basis for his proclamation. It was Psalm 110:1, the same Psalm that Jesus himself quoted to reveal his true identity during the passion week. Look at verses 34-35. "For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'"" In this quotation, in English, the same word "Lord" appears twice. But in Hebrew these are two different words. The first "Lord" is translated from "Jehovah" and refers to the one great God of Israel. The second "Lord" is translated from "Adonai" and refers to one greater than the speaker, in this case, David. Thus, "Adonai" refers to David's Lord, and

affirms the deity of the Christ. So in this quotation, God Almighty is welcoming the Christ to sit at his right hand to reign as Lord and promising victory over all his enemies.

Look at verse 36. "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." The same Jesus who walked on earth as a man had been raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God. Jesus is both Lord and Christ. He reigns over men and the world to bring about God's victory over all evil and unrighteousness and over sin and death. As the angel told Mary at the birth of Jesus, "The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end" (Lk 1:32b,33).

Fourth, repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (37-47).

When the people heard Peter's message, they were cut to the heart. The very Jesus whom they had crucified had been raised from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God. The testimony of Scripture and the powerful witness of the apostles was overwhelming evidence that demanded their response. They realized they were guilty of sinning against the promised Messiah and the Creator God. They said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Look at verse 38. "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Even they could receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Look at verse 39. "This promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Jesus forgives our sins. The Holy Spirit comes into our hearts to dwell. He gives us victory over sin and enables us to live a new life with the Risen Christ. Peter must have been overwhelmed by his own message as he was delivering it to those who had crucified Jesus. He went on and on warning them and pleading with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Look at verse 41. "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." Suddenly the early church increased in number 25 times, from about 120 members to 3,120 members.

The transformation that came upon these new believers was incredible. Look at verses 42-47. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Jesus, who died for their sins, rose again and is seated at the right hand of God. This Jesus was at the center of their fellowship. They had union with Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. They loved and praised Jesus as they learned about him from the apostles. Their beautiful Christian fellowship drew many new believers to Christ.

Today we learn that Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God as Lord and Christ. Now God works through the Holy Spirit to put all things under Jesus' feet, including the USA, Muslim countries and North Korea. When we repent of our sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit we can participate in this glorious work of God. May God help us to do so.