

I mentioned last week, that beginning with v14ff, we have the first recorded sermon following the gift of the Holy Spirit. The sermon basically has three parts or sections: (1) Peter explains the events of Pentecost by quoting Joel 2 (vv14-21); (2) Peter provides an exposition of the person and work of Christ largely again quoting from two OT texts, Ps.16 and Ps.110 (vv22-36); (3) Peter presses his hearers to repent and be converted (vv37-39).

Thus, having considered the first of these last weeks (Peter's explanation of the events of Pentecost), we come this week to begin to consider the second (Peter's exposition of the person and work of Christ). This exposition describes the confirmation of Christ (v22), Crucifixion of Christ (v23), Resurrection of Christ (vv24-32), and Exaltation of Christ (vv33-36). It's my intention this morning to cover but the first three of these (His confirmation, crucifixion, and resurrection), leaving His Exaltation to next week.

- I. Confirmation (v22)
- II. Crucifixion (v23)
- III. Resurrection (vv24-32)

I. Confirmation (v22)

1. V22—"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."
2. (1) They were validation of God's sending—"Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles."
3. The Greek word rendered "attested" (NKJV), "approved" literally means "to declare, prove, or make evident."
4. God the Father "declared" or "verified" the true identity of Christ as both a prophet and more than a prophet.
5. The apostles and prophets were verified by miracles that they were sent by God and spoke the word of God.
6. And this was also true of Christ—God proved He was sent by God and spoke the word of God by miracles.
7. But that's not all Christ claimed—He not only claimed to be sent by God but He also claimed to be God.
8. Thus, the fact that Christ performed miracles, proved or verified as true all that Christ said about Himself.
9. The miracles that Christ performed were the authentication that God the Father placed upon Christ's ministry.
10. Matt.10:25—"The works that I do in My father's name, they bear witness of Me"—they bear witness to who He is.
11. (2) They were evidence of God's power—"a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did through Him."
12. Notice, the miracles Jesus performed were done by God—"which God did through Him"—God Father did through Christ.
13. This doesn't deny that as God Christ could have done these miracles Himself, but notice the stress on His humanity—"Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles."
14. The Greek word rendered "miracles" (*dunamis*) literally means "power" and is translated as such 80 times.

15. Simply put, a "miracle" is the unique display or manifestation of God's power over all created things.
16. This includes demons, sickness, death, water, wind, and every other created thing—it fundamentally shows God is separate and different from creation.
17. Thus, technically speaking, a miracle refers to any action that bends or changes creation in an abnormal way.
18. For example, dead people don't normally live; water isn't normally changed to wine; the lame don't normally walk; the blind don't normally see; the deaf don't normally hear.
19. Luke describes these miracles as "signs and wonders"—they are "signs" as they point to something; they are "wonders" as they provoke wonder or awe.
20. But what do miracles point to? Well, they point to spiritual truth, and they point to the power of God.
21. (3) They were obvious for all to see—"which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know."
22. In other words, these miracles, signs, and wonders, were evident and obvious for every person to see.
23. For three years, the Jews beheld His miracles, which were undeniable, irrefutable, and beyond question.
24. Matt.9:35—"Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

II. Crucifixion (v23)

1. V23—"Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death."
2. Here we have a classic passage on the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man—both are true.
3. Peter provides two reasons behind the crucifixion of God—the purpose and foreknowledge of God and the lawless and wicked hands of man.
4. (1) The purpose and foreknowledge of God—"Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God."
5. Simply put, Christ was delivered up to be crucified, because the Father determined or purposed it from eternity.
6. (a) Determined purpose of God—this refers to God's predetermined plan commonly referred to as His decree.
7. From eternity, before God created anything, He purposed within Himself, the crucifixion of His Son.
8. Now, most of you know, that Scripture also teaches that God predetermined or purposed all things that come to pass.
9. This of course runs contrary to many Christians who believe that God only predetermined certain events.
10. But think about it—how can God predetermine certain larger events without also determining smaller related events?
11. No, Scripture teaches us, that God predetermined or purposed all things that come to pass—big and small, good and evil.
12. (b) Foreknowledge of God—this word is used a number of times in Scripture and refers to pre-knowledge.

13. But as these uses are considered more carefully, it becomes evident that "to know" means "to love"—to know in an intimate way.
14. God's foreknowledge doesn't concern facts or events as much as people—God purposed to deliver up His Son because He foreknew a people.
15. Rom.8:29—"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son."
16. Notice, the reason He predestined them to become Christians (conformed to the image of His Son), was because He fore-loved them.
17. Thus, we learn that God predetermined the death of His Son, because He foreknew or foreloved certain people.
18. Why did God predestinate certain people to salvation (but because of love), and why did God predestinate His Son to death (but because of love).
19. (2) The lawless and wicked hands of man—"you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death."
20. Here I need to remind you of a very important theological distinction between the decretive and preceptive will.
21. By God's decretive will is meant His sovereign will or decree, which is one and the same with God Himself (God and His will are not two things)
22. By God's preceptive will is meant Scripture and especially His law—this is His revealed will to man.
23. Thus, in one sense, the crucifixion of Christ was God's will—He predestined, purposed, or decreed it.
24. And yet, in another sense, it violated His will, as the sixth commandments says—"You shall not murder."
25. This is why Peter refers to "lawless hands"—you have taken by lawless hands"—this refers to the Gentiles.
26. This is what he saying—these Jews crucified Christ, as they worked in harmony to the lawless Romans.
27. Thus, the crucifixion of Christ was both in agreement to God's will and yet, it was against God's will.
28. (a) God is not the author of sin—while God predetermined sin, He determined to bring into existence through the free agency of moral creatures.
29. Brethren, surely this text teaches us that God is sovereign over sin and evil—it was a part of His eternal plan.
30. But while this is true, we must also maintain that neither sin or evil can have its fountain or source in God.
31. LBC (3:1)—"God has decreed in Himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author or sin nor has fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."
32. But someone may object—if neither sin or evil have its source in God, then how can He purpose sin or evil?
33. Well simply put—He can purpose sin and evil because He purposes them for good reasons (or ends).
34. And what are those good reasons or ends, but the glory of all His perfections (mercy, grace, justice, and holiness).
35. (b) God doesn't have two wills—while we make a distinction between His decretive and preceptive will, God doesn't have two wills.

36. God's decretive or sovereign will is nothing more than God Himself—God's will isn't other than Himself.
37. And God's preceptive will is a perfect expression of His moral character—it represents what would please Him.
38. Thus, I read in Scripture, it's God's will that I love my wife, and when I do, I please Him, and when I don't, I displease Him.
39. This revealed will of God, as it's found summarized in the TC, is a perfect reflection of God's moral character.
40. It informs me what pleases God—it pleases Him when His creation obeys that will as known in Scripture.
41. This is true both sinners and saints—what is God's revealed will for sinners? That they believe on Christ and be saved (this pleases Him); what is God's revealed will for saints? That they love and obey Him (and this too, pleases Him).
42. And so, when sinners refuse to come to Him to be saved, that's called sin (and it displeases Him); and when saints fail to love and obey Him, that's called sin (and it too displeases Him).

III. Resurrection (vv24-32)

1. Here I want to examine two things about His resurrection—how He was raised up, and why He was raised up.
2. (1) How He was raised up, v24a—"whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death"—He was raised up bodily by the power of God.
3. The Greek word rendered "pains" (NKJ) or "agony" (NASB), refers to the birth pains of child bearing.
4. It seems Peter is describing Christ's resurrection as a birth out of death (Col.1:18 – 'He is the firstborn from the dead').
5. Thus, this is talking about His actual and literal body, as it was raised from the dead and united to His human soul (remember, Christ human nature consisted of a body and soul).
6. (2) Why He was raised up—vv24b-v32, provides three closely related reasons for Jesus' resurrection.
7. (a) It was not possible that death hold Him, v24—"because it was not possible that He should be held by it."
8. Peter likens death to a prison, that was unable to hold Him—the reason being He paid the full penalty.
9. Let me remind you, that while Christ's active suffering ended when He died, His humiliation continued until His resurrection.
10. Larger Catechism (Q.50)—"*Wherein consists Christ's humiliation after His death? A. Christ's humiliation after His death consists in His being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day: which has been otherwise expressed in these words, He descended into hell.*"
11. (b) It was prophesied by David in the Psalms, v25—"For David says concerning Him"—that is, concerning Christ.
12. He then quotes from Psalm 16, in which David spoke typically of Christ, and thus foretold His resurrection.
13. Thus, I personally have no problem understanding Psalm 16 first of David, but we must understand that he spoke typically of Christ Himself.
14. V29—"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."

15. In other words, don't be foolish and think that David was ultimately referring to himself and not Christ.
16. Thus, Peter refers to David as a prophet in v30, that is to say—David spoke prophetically in the Psalms.
17. Verses 25-28 (a quotation from Ps.16:8-11), describes our Savior's confidence of certain victory over death.
18. (i) The source of His confidence (vv25-26)—simply put, the source of His confidence was His Father's presence and promise.
19. The Father promised, within that eternal covenant of redemption, to sustain and exalt Him above ever name.
20. (ii) The nature of His confidence (vv27-28)—the nature of His confidence was that He would be raised from the dead and exalted to His Father's side.
21. V27—"For You will not leave My soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption."
22. The second half of v27 explains the first part—by "soul" our simply means "life" and by "Hades" He means "grave."
23. (c) It was promised to David by covenant, v30—"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."
24. This is what's commonly called the Davidic Covenant—a covenant being, an oathbound promise or commitment.
25. When did God make this promise or covenant with David? Back in 2Samuel 7:12-17 (turn there briefly).
26. Verses 12-17 form the basis of what's called the Davidic Covenant (though the actual word covenant isn't used).
27. We know it was a covenant because all of the ingredients of a covenant are found (furthermore, Psalm 89:33-37 actually refers to this promise as a covenant).
28. Obviously, in the first place it has reference to Solomon—this is evident from vv14-15—"If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul whom I removed from before you."
29. But ultimately the promise concerns Christ, because if you remember, this is exactly how Peter interprets it.
30. V16—"And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever."
31. Lk.1:31-33—"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

IV. Three Practical Observations

1. (1) The gospel is built upon inspired prophetic texts—Peter actually quotes or alludes to four OT texts.
2. He quotes Joel 2 in vv16-21, he then quotes Psalm 16 in vv25-28, he alludes to 2Sam.7:12 in v30, and then quotes Psalm 110 in v34.
3. These OT quotations and allusions would have been intended in the first place for his Jewish audience.
4. But they have a wider purpose for all men, as Peter is showing us how to interpret the OT Scriptures.

5. You know, when it comes to interpreting the OT, there's really two options—we can follow the example of the apostles or we can follow the example of man.
6. Now, personally brethren, I suggest we would be wise to follow the apostles, and that for two reasons: first, they learned their hermeneutics from Christ Himself (that is, Christ understood the OT as foretelling Him); second, they were filled and inspired by the Spirit of Christ (who filled and inspired the OT prophets).
7. (2) The gospel is built upon historical facts (events)—the gospel is not first of all about us or our experience.
8. Don't get me wrong—we do have to address the hearer, and we have to urge the hearer to believe the gospel.
9. But in the narrow sense, the gospel is a message about the person and work of Christ—it's a message about historical events.
10. And thus, the gospel doesn't stand or fall with our belief—its historically true if we believe it or not.
11. (3) The gospel is a message that must become personal—it's not enough to tell people the historical facts.
12. Yes, we have to tell people about Christ's perfect life, substitutionary death, and victorious resurrection.
13. But notice how personal Peter is—he doesn't merely tell them Christ died, but he says—"you've killed Him."
14. Now I fully understand, there's a sense in which they actually had a hand in the crucifixion of Christ.
15. The Jews as a whole rejected Him, and many of leaders literally worked with the Romans to arrest Him.
16. But brethren, as we read through the narrative, there's no reason to believe that these men were leaders.
17. Peter is speaking more broadly—he's saying, the entire Jewish nation had a direct hand in His crucifixion.
18. There was a sense in which every Jewish person, took Him by lawless hands, and crucified the Messiah.
19. In other words, Peter wanted them to feel their part in this crime—he wanted them to feel their guilt.
20. The cross will never benefit us until we come to see our part in it—that it was our sins that crucified Him.
21. John Stott—"Before we can begin to see the cross as something done for us, we have to see it as something done by us."
22. Horatius Bonar—"Twas I that shed the sacred blood; I nailed him to the tree; I crucified the Christ of God; I joined the mockery. Around the cross the throng I see, mocking the Sufferer's groan; yet still my voice it seems to be, as if I mocked alone."