

Acts 2:22-33

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[0 : 00] True evangelism is genuine persuasion.! You make reasonable arguments from God's Word! and ask the Holy Spirit to apply His Word to the person's heart.

! And so, He proves, by the Scriptures, and by the resurrection, and other things in this time that Jesus was the Messiah. And then at the end of this, 3,000 people are saved and added to the church.

So, we're going to pick up today in verse 22 of chapter 2. After explaining Pentecost, Peter then moves on.

Verse 22, he says, Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God, with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. You crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

[1 : 17] For David says concerning Him, now he's going back to Scripture again, I saw the Lord always before me, for He is in my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

Therefore, my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced. My flesh also will dwell in hope, for You will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let Your Holy One see corruption.

You have made known to me the path of life. You will make me full of gladness with Your presence. Brothers, I must say to you with confidence about the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and in his tomb is with us to this day.

Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God has sworn with an oath to him, that he would set one of his descendants on the throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

This Jesus God raised up, and that we all are witnesses, being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this, that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

[2 : 36] We'll stop there. So, just join me in a word of prayer before we go further. Father, we have come to worship You tonight, today, this morning, Lord, and I pray that we would do so in spirit and in truth.

We are gathered this morning, not for any other reason. We are wasting our time, Lord, if we are not here to see Jesus lifted up, and to be transformed by His presence in our lives.

I pray that we would listen to Your Word as an act of worship, that we would be ready to apply it in our lives. Lord, we love it, and we respect it.

And God, we bow to what You say this morning. So, encourage our hearts, meet each one of us where we are, those who are broken and battered and beaten down, as well as those who are full of joy and gladness now.

Lord, I pray You would be glorified in Christ's name. Amen. So, I had a hard time trimming this down.

[3 : 50] I got it down to barely over four pages, so I'm going to do my best. to move through this. But, we're going to move through our text today with four points.

And they're all about, like, who the Messiah was. Like, who is Jesus as the Messiah? Because that's what Peter's trying to do. He's trying to preach and persuade and show this gathered crowd that Jesus was the long-expected Messiah, not only for Israel, but of the whole world, of all the nations that He came to save.

And so, so, so, three or four things about the Messiah. And we'll see them very clearly in our text, but, number one is, the identity of the Messiah.

The identity of the Messiah. Verse 22, it says, men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God.

So, he uses the phrase, men of Israel. And, that is a gracious title for Peter to use with this crowd.

[5 : 02] Such incredibly kind words to address this crowd with. Why? Because, this is the most guilty people in the most guilty city on earth at this point.

God manifested Himself to the nation of Israel like no other nation. He had a whole, they had a whole history with God. They had the prophets. They had the law.

They had God revealing Himself to them by divine revelation. And at this point, they even had the scriptures of Moses and the prophets and others. They had so much given to them.

And they were to be a light for all the nations to know God. And in many ways, they failed to do so.

So, yet, though they had all this revelation, they constantly turned against God, constantly rebelled against God and worshipped idols, killed the prophets who were calling them to turn back to God, and the prophets who foretold of the Messiah to come.

And then finally, when the Messiah came, when Jesus came, they rejected Him as well. They cursed Him, they spat on Him, and eventually they crucified Him. So they killed the very Messiah that God had promised to send.

[6 : 16] That's what's going on here. And so you would think that Peter would address all the non-Jews in the crowd and say like, people of Israel, you've lost, you know, your chance is over. If you're not a Jew, listen to me.

But that's not what he says. Instead of cursing them and cutting them off from God's salvation, Peter speaks immense grace to them by calling them men of Israel.

It's as if he's saying, draw close to me, listen carefully to what I'm saying, you descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, you children of the covenant, those whom God has bound Himself to in covenant love, who constantly rebel, but God is always faithful, you guys, you descendants of Jacob, of Israel, listen to me.

And that's such amazing grace offered to this crowd that he addresses them in that way. And that should encourage us. Are you encouraged that God offers such this?

This is the very crowd that crucified the Lord. He's offering them a chance to believe and repent. Men of Israel, grace upon grace, to those people in the crowd.

[7 : 39] Then he goes on, he says, Jesus of Nazareth. This is the identity of the Messiah. He, all throughout the book of Acts, Peter loved to use the title Jesus of Nazareth.

It's used multiple times throughout the book of Acts, specifically by Peter. And you may ask, why that title when Jesus has so many other titles?

But, if you think about it, many days before this, this was the name that they hung above Jesus on the cross to scorn him and mock him and make fun of him.

And now, it's like, Peter's saying, that Jesus of Nazareth that you guys rejected and killed, he was the long-expected Messiah.

Yeah, you know, Jesus, from that no-name, dirty little town of Nazareth in Galilee. Yeah, he is God's Messiah. So, he's taking that name that they used to keep scorn upon Jesus and pushing it right back in their face in a way.

[8 : 44] And so, it goes on, he says, this was a man attested to you by God. And last week, we talked about how the word attested is implied in a lot of ways, but it means to put something on display.

To put something on exhibition. To give evidence to something and to proclaim something. That's like what this means. And Jesus, he did this.

God took Jesus and presented him like nothing, trying to hide nothing. Here he is. Look at him. He put Jesus on exhibition as the true Messiah. The true and living Messiah.

His birth, his life, his death, and his resurrection overwhelmingly prove that he is who he said he was. He was their Messiah and he is our Messiah today.

So how did God lift him up? How did God put him on exhibition? And a lot of this is the rest of the message. But it goes to the second point. Number two is, so the first one was the identity of the Messiah.

[9 : 49] Number two is the life of the Messiah. verse 22 again. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst.

You yourselves know. So, a massive amount of proof or evidence to show that Jesus was the true Messiah. God validated him.

his life was no ordinary life at all. Even compared to other great men. If you just Google at some point, like, I'm a big history nerd but like, I love studying military history, but Napoleon Bonaparte, an incredible guy but also a little crazy, who conquered a lot of Europe and set the hearts of his country men on fire, he recognizes something very unique about Jesus.

You just Google Jesus Christ, Napoleon Bonaparte and this long extended quote about how Jesus was far greater than him and any other great military leader ever.

So, something that just stands out about Jesus, no one can really escape that reality. Jesus is not ordinary at all. He's not just a prophet. He's not just a good moral teacher.

[11 : 11] Jesus made claims and said things that you just do not say unless either he was crazy or he was telling you the truth. Alright, so, Jesus claimed to be the only Son of God and that he alone had descended from the Father.

Very big deal. He also claimed to be God in human flesh and that to see him was to see the Father. And he allowed people to worship him as God.

As God is only worthy to be worshipped. Jesus also claimed to be the only Savior of the world and the only way to God. And he had the power to forgive sins.

He claimed to possess authority in heaven and on earth. Right? So many things he said. He claimed that he would, one of the most outrageous ones, was not, he predicted his own death but then he also said that death would not keep his hold on him.

That he would rise from the dead. Yet, those highly exclusive claims that he made don't subtract from his compassion, his wisdom, his mercy, his humility to a broken world.

[12 : 32] So, on your bulletin there's a quote by a historian named Philip Schaaf. If you want to look at it, it says, Jesus of Nazareth without money and arms conquered more millions than Alexander the Great, Caesar, Muhammad, and Napoleon.

Without science and learning, he shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined. He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of an orator or poet.

Without writing a single line, he set more pins in motion and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, songs of praise than the whole army of great men of the ancient and modern times.

It's true. Even people who hate Jesus, they can't escape him. He's always there haunting their memories and their minds.

His was no ordinary life. And so God held him up and put him on exhibition. We have nothing to hide as believers, okay? Jesus, when he was here, he used terms like, come, look, see, listen to me, follow me.

[13 : 59] He wasn't trying to hide anything. He was always inviting people to check out who he was. Right? So he offered them in this text for three years.

Jesus taught from the scriptures. He explained who he was from the Old Testament scriptures, displayed great acts of kindness and compassion. And so, but in our text here, as we just read, it says there were some specific things that gave insight to who the Messiah was.

He used the term mighty works. And this just means that they were miraculous in nature and appearance. Like, they were not normal. They were miraculous in their nature and appearance.

Then he used the word wonders. And this word speaks of something that's shocking, startling, that catches your attention and is completely out of the ordinary.

This is what wonders means. And then later on, so what's the intention, what's the purpose of wonders? And it's to point to signs. Okay? Signs that are pointing to a spiritual reality of who Jesus claimed to be.

[15 : 07] And all we know, like he healed the sick, he, all throughout the Old Testament Levitical laws, like it was, it made someone unclean to touch a leopard, to touch someone who had a bodily discharge.

If you touched them, you were considered unclean, and then you were kicked out of the camp. But Jesus came, and he touched the leopard, touched the people who were untouchable, and they

were healed.

Pretty incredible. He walked on the water, he calmed storms, and unlike anything else, he raised the dead. Right? All of this, Jesus did, if you notice this, a lot of people have this idea that Jesus was using his divinity, to kind of prove who he was.

Jesus was fully divine, but when he came here, he yielded that to the power of the Father. He came to show us what a life was like yielded to the Holy Spirit. That's why he was baptized, and the Holy Spirit came down.

And as John says, the Spirit rested on Jesus without measure. But do you see that in the text? It said all these things that God did through him to validate who he was.

[16:24] These miraculous manifestations of God's power, they created wonder. So just so you know, Scripture does teach that even forces of evil can perform some sorts of miracles.

But one major difference is they can't raise people from the dead. Only God has that power. And as we see, Jesus went further, and he was the one who was raised from dead.

And so all these things proclaimed, proved, and pointed to Jesus being the Messiah. And he was like, you yourselves know this happened. You guys were here. You saw this.

You saw this. You saw Jesus do these things. And you still harden your heart. Seeing is not believing. Okay? That's not what the Bible teaches. Seeing is not believing.

These people saw this, and they still denied it. Okay? So number three, the third point that he used to talk about the Messiah is the death of the Messiah.

[17:26] The death of the Messiah. Verse 23. Check this one out. This is a big one. It says, This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.

You crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. So just as Jesus of Nazareth was no ordinary man. His death was no ordinary death.

The death of the Son of God and the resurrection are the two most important events in human history. And they demand your attention. They do. To miss this is pretty dangerous to your soul. It's an event of cosmic proportions throughout all eternity. It demands your reverent attention. So Jesus came to die on the cross to honor his father, to glorify his father, but also to meet our greatest need, which was to be redeemed, to be saved, to be reconciled to God.

Okay, so our entire being before Christ, okay, BC, your entire being is enslaved to sin. Your mind, your heart, are corrupted by evil.

[18:43] This is what scripture teaches, and your will is in bondage to sin. Ever since Eden, man has been a fugitive running from the presence of God.

That's why when we commit sin, that's why we like to do it in private. That's why we don't like things like the holiness of God, because it exposes who we are. As John said, men love darkness, and they hate the light, because they don't want themselves to be seen.

Right? So we run. We are cosmic fugitives from the presence of the Lord God Almighty. But Peter's words here beg a question.

Okay? It leads us to ask this question. Did God see the disaster that was coming in the Garden of Eden? Was He totally cut off guard by our sin?

Did God begin to devise a plan after the fall? Like He created the world, and then after Eden He was like, oh no, I'm in trouble. Some people believe in the church, even some good people just misled.

[19:54] They believe that redemption was a plan that was conceived in the Garden of Eden. And that goes against everything we know about God. You know, you've got the little drama teams performing a skit of the Garden of Eden, and they're playing, you know, Total Eclipse of the Heart in the background, and God is like, the whole time like, no, don't do that.

And it portrays this idea that God was just caught off guard. What happened? So many in the church, many people will say that God does not, they believe that God is sovereign, but He does not ordain and know every single event that's going to happen.

but He leaves it open to a lot of the stuff in the future to be determined by man's will, man's choices, or Satan's, and God is reactionary to those events.

He reacts, but He didn't plan. So, this is a theological idea called open theism, and it's completely untrue and unbiblical, that it implies like God has a plan A, and if that doesn't work out, He has a plan B, and a plan C, and then that's what just goes on the whole time.

So, you should know this, guys, bad doctrine hurts people and it dishonors God. Alright, it goes against everything we know about the person of God to believe that that's true.

[21 : 29] our God is by very nature a planning God. What we know about God, Scripture teaches, He's omniscient, He literally knows all things, He has perfect knowledge set before Him.

He's omnipotent, He possesses all the power to carry out His perfect will. It's not that He has a lot of power and there's some other powers out there, like all the power that they have is delegated by God that He could take at any moment.

God is immutable, He is unchanging in His person, in His character, He does not change. He's unaffected by things we do. So, nothing sneaks up on Him or catches Him off guard.

So, in one way, the answer is no, God was not caught off guard because it goes against what we know about the very nature of God Himself. It's not there.

So, I know that as a whole, our church rejoices in and embraces the sovereignty of God over all things, but I know that with a crowd this big, it might not sit right with some of you, but I'm going to tell you, you can kick and punch and hate that truth that God literally reigns over everything, including the air you breathe and the grass that grows, or you can embrace it and let it be your biggest joy and your biggest comfort.

[22 : 57] my mom's here today, and we all have walked through some very difficult trials in our lives, most of them my fault, being sick and being in the hospital, and right now my dad is in the hospital, and she will tell you, I will tell you that this has been the number one truth that has comforted us throughout all that time, and so you can mock that or you can embrace it and experience the same reality.

So, it's no different in the language used of the death of Christ. Here it is before us. After the disaster in Eden, God did not begin devising a plan, saying darn, I messed up, oh I know what I'll do, I'll send Jesus, Jesus are you cool with that?

Okay, I'll go. That's not what happened. God has written the pages of history according to His plan, and including, this should give you chills, like including the cross of Christ.

It says in 23, Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. The word definite means predetermined, appointed, designed, decreed.

It literally means to set out boundaries for which something is going to happen. And so the word foreknowledge, I don't know why maybe some other guys here who have been seminarianed and studied Greek can explain better than me, like why our English translations really use the word foreknowledge.

[24 : 44] Because most of us think it means to look down throughout history and observe something that's going to happen. We look down and we see what's going to happen, and then we react accordingly. But it's not really how the Bible uses it at all.

It means to be foreknown or foreordained. So certainly God knows what's going to happen in the future. He certainly knows that, but that's not what this is saying.

Foreknowledge in Bible terms means that in eternity past, God looked down and decided what He was going to do. He planned it.

He executed it. It means that God planned before, but not that He observed before. So later on, you see down in where is it?

Let me find this. It just came to my mind. It says that David foresaw. See that in our text? This is a different word. It does mean that David in his finite human way could look ahead and see what was going to happen, knowing that the Christ would come.

[25 : 49] That's not the same word as foreknowledge. God had a plan before the foundation of the world. Read Ephesians 1. It says before the foundation of the world this was planned.

Before reading, Christ was foreordained to come before the foundation of the world to be the sacrifice for our sins. But wait a minute. In our text, it says that men crucified him.

Men killed him. Okay, well whose plan was it? Was it man's plan to kill Christ or was it God's plan? The answer is yes. Alright?

So here's something so chilling. Hold your hand in Acts 2, but look over two chapters to Acts 4. I'm going to show you something here. And I'm going to take a sip of water.

Alright, so Peter, he says that Christ's death was planned, it was foreordained by Almighty God. But then he adds, you crucified him and you killed him by the hands of lawless men.

[27 : 05] What? Okay, so which one is it? God or man? The answer is yes. Jesus was killed by lawless, wicked, sinful men who hated him and rejected him as the Messiah.

The very crowd that Peter is addressing are those men. At the same time though, Peter tells them that what they did was in the boundaries of what God had accomplished and preordained to bring salvation.

Here's another parallel text. This one's even more startling to me. Acts 4 verse 24. It says, and when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and everything is in them.

Alright, so he begins by saying God is sovereign. He is Lord over all. But we're trying to communicate now. He says, Who threw the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, and he quotes Psalm 2, the second Psalm, Why did the Gentiles rage in the people's plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves and their rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed. That's Jesus. For truly in this city they were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you appointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, and here it is, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

[28 : 56] Startling words. The American Standard Version says, to do whatever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass. So do you hear that?

Like, Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, the people of Israel, they all gather together. He was fulfilling this prophecy in the second psalm. They gather together to put an end to God's Messiah. Like, this is not going to happen. He is not going to rule over us. and their vile actions, literally they know, fulfilling prophecy. Right?

They were fulfilling what God had planned before creation and predestined to take place to accomplish salvation for His people. So the cross was not an emergency reactionary plan of God to save man.

That would scare you. Can you imagine walking throughout your life not knowing that God was in control? That anybody could come and do something to you and God was like, oh, I'm sorry, I was too late to fix this.

[30 : 03] It's not true. In Ephesians 1 it says God works all things after the counsel of His will. All things after the counsel of His will.

Job later on says, I know that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. This is God. So here's an insight into this event that we're talking about, the death of Christ.

One of the books that I've read in the past and facing stuff I've faced is a book by John Piper called Suffering and the Sovereignty of God. And he uses this text and the ones that we're looking at to describe the cross and what happened at the cross to give people who are reading that encouragement.

But he says, this is a quote, he says, God did not just overcome evil at the cross. He made evil serve the overcoming of evil.

He made evil commit suicide in doing its worst evil. In the death of Christ, the powers of darkness did their best to destroy the glory of the Son of God.

[31 : 16] But this is the apex of evil. evil. Instead, they found themselves quoting the script of ancient prophecy and acting their part assigned by God.

Precisely in putting Christ to death, they put his glory on display. The very glory that they aimed to destroy. The apex of evil achieved the apex of the glory of Christ, the glory of his grace.

So do you hear that? Like, I'll summarize it. Yes, Jesus was brutally killed by lawless, sinful men who hated him. And they did it freely. They acted in accordance to their own will, which was evil.

They put him to death. They designed that to destroy Christ. And there's no greater evil than crucifying the innocent Son of God.

Okay? So do you hear what he's saying, though? Man killed him, but listen to this. 700 years before this happened, God spoke to Isaiah and it says, it was the will of the Lord to crush him and to put him to grief.

[32 : 27] They were fulfilling prophecy. This was God's plan. So here it is. Listen carefully.

Scripture clearly, unashamedly, irrevocably, says that God sovereignly uses, okay, all these things.

He even uses the free and willful acts of evil men to play right into what he wants every time. Like the Psalms say, or the Proverbs, the wicked fall into their own traps. God uses their evil to accomplish good. It echoes of Genesis, right, with Joseph and his brothers. You meant this, you designed this for evil, but God designed this and meant this for good. That's the story of the Scripture. It's not God had a plan B, this was plan A, and he used these free and willful evil actions of men to commit the greatest good. That should just bring us chills. All right, in doing this, the greatest act of evil destroyed evil. That's what Piper's saying.

[33 : 36] And God uses the greatest sin ever in crucifying the Son of God as the means for overcoming sin forever. So how great is our God?

How glorious is He? Christ was delivered to death because God planned it, God ordained it, and He did it to bring salvation to His people and to display the infinite majesty and glory of Christ. God uses evil to destroy evil. And that was, this is it, this was the apex of that. The cross, preordained, predestined to take place, to bring us salvation.

All right, so the fourth thing is number four, the resurrection of the Messiah. Look at 24 through 33. It's a big text, so just for time's sake, I'm not going to read it all to you again, but it's 24 through 33. And through the death of Christ, okay, one of the greatest ways that God displayed and proved that He was the Messiah was that He raised Him from the dead.

[34 : 49] That's the greatest validation that Jesus was not just kidding around, that He wasn't just joking around and saying things, making these outrageous claims. Because if He had died and He was in the grave, then it would be no different than any other self-proclaimed Messiah.

No different than Muhammad. No different than Buddha. There's nothing good about a dead Messiah. And as Paul said later on, we're going to look at the resurrection some more next week, but as Paul said, like if Christ is not risen, then you are still dead in your sin.

It's so important. And I love, love just the looking at the resurrection of Christ and how it almost can be proven in the courtroom how Jesus actually did rise from the dead.

It's just indisputable. Right? So, it goes on and it says that Christ raised Him from the dead. It wasn't possible for Him to be held by death.

And then He uses Scripture again to prove what He's saying. He uses David again saying David was a prophet and David foretold of this event of the resurrection of the Messiah.

[36 : 06] Okay? This is Psalm 16 that he's quoting. It says, David foresaw, different than foreknowledge, about God raising Jesus from the dead. And it made it clear.

So, a lot of people may read Psalm 16 and think that David is referring to himself when he wrote that. He's not. And the reason why is right here, Peter says, oh, it wasn't about David because David's body did see corruption.

He did die. He's buried right over there. Going, look, this wasn't about David. David was prophesying about the descendant that God had promised to raise up to be ruler over all.

And he was saying this was Jesus, the Messiah. He did not see corruption. He lives. David's body is here, but Christ's body is not here. David knew what would happen.

Jesus was the direct descendant of King David. Look in the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Luke, and you see the genealogies there. Jesus was the Messiah, and one day he would be the eternal ruler, not just of Israel, but of the nations again.

[37 : 14] So God raised Christ by the power of God, and now it says he's seated at the right hand of the Father, ruling and reigning. We'll talk more about that next week as well. But then he adds, we're witness to these things.

We saw these things. We who were hiding and scared and cowering in the corner after this happened, now we're on the streets telling you that we don't care anymore.

Like, Jesus is alive, and we're going to proclaim that to you. So the greatest validation or proof of Jesus as the Messiah was he is alive.

He has risen from the dead. So, in conclusion, religion, if you're without Christ today, know that God will allow you to go on pursuing money, success, all the things of this world, like just go hard at it as you want.

But one day, this Christ whom God raised from the dead, you will have to reckon with him one day. You will have to face him one day. And if he's dead, no worry.

[38 : 19] But if he's alive, you better make sure. He's alive and he's going to come back to judge and to make war and to give life to those who have put their total trust, who have given them their lives.

Peter says, we saw these things and we know it's true. Only then that will be too late. So flee to Christ and accept the free gift of his grace. Turn away from your sins and don't look back. Follow Christ. He's worthy. He's good. He will treat you so well. The world and sin is a brutal taskmaster. Flee to Christ.

He is alive and he is here. You don't have to look him up. He's right here. And we don't need an altar call because you can deal with God sitting right where you are. And believer, brother, sister in Christ, rejoice that your sovereign father has got it.

He's got it. He's holding you. He has saved you. No one can snatch you from his hand. And he's used the greatest act of evil to destroy evil. Evil will one day be no more.

[39 : 31] And our savior is living and is here with us today. and he reigns for our good and for his glory. And so next week we'll finish this part of Peter's sermon.

But I hope that you've been encouraged. Just know that your God is in control, that he is sovereign, and that Christ has died on your behalf. Let's pray together.
here.