

Exegetical Notes, Acts 2:14-36

“Peter’s First Sermon”

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(Peter preaches five sermons in the Book of Acts. This is the first of the five. Each sermon proclaims the basic Gospel truths, the Kerygma. There are five basic Gospel truths: 1. Jesus came and lived among us fully God and fully man. 2. Jesus lived a sinless life but died to pay for our sins. 3. Jesus rose from the dead. 4. Jesus ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father. 5. Jesus will come to earth again.)

Acts 2:14-36

Verses 14-21

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

“Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ *“In the last days, God says,*

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your young men will see visions,

your old men will dream dreams.

¹⁸ *Even on my servants, both men and women,*

I will pour out my Spirit in those days,

and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ *I will show wonders in the heavens above*

and signs on the earth below,

blood and fire and billows of smoke.

²⁰ *The sun will be turned to darkness*

and the moon to blood

before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

²¹ *And everyone who calls*

on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

- Now, filled with the Holy Spirit of God, Peter is emboldened to speak to a somewhat hostile crowd. Since he is in Jerusalem, at the time of the feast

of Pentecost, the crowd is mostly Jews. Peter acknowledges this as he begins his sermon.

- He calls to them to pay careful attention to his words.
- He explains that the persons are not drunk as some in the crowd assume because it is only nine in the morning. (See Acts 2:13)
- He takes a text from Joel 2:28-32. Explaining that this is the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit which was prophesied centuries before.

Verses 22-24

“Fellow Israelites, 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. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 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.

- He then established the first point of the kerygma. Jesus was sent to live among us by God. That Jesus came from God was established by the miracles, signs, and wonders he did while here among us.
- He moves on to the second point of the Kerygma. Jesus died. He makes it clear that this was God's plan and that the Jewish nation played a part in it, for they handed Jesus over to Gentiles, wicked men, to be crucified.
- He moves to the third point of the kerygma, Jesus rose from the dead. This is the disputed point. The Jews to whom Peter spoke knew well that Jesus had lived among them and that he had been crucified. About this there was no argument. However, his resurrection is a matter of faith. Many of those who heard Peter that day, and many more today, would doubt that the third point of the kerygma was true.

Verses 25-36

²⁵ David said about him:

“I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand,

I will not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

my body also will rest in hope,

**²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
you will not let your holy one see decay.**

**²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.'**

²⁹ "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

³³ 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. ³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

"The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand

**³⁵ until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet."**

³⁶ "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

- Because the third point of the kerygma is hard for the Jews to accept, Peter calls out two passages from the Old Testament to resolve the difficulty. He turns to Psalm 16:8-11. In that Psalm, David says that God is with him and that God will not, "abandon him to the grave" nor "allow his body to decay." Peter argues that since David is dead. He could not have been speaking of himself when he wrote these words. He argues that David was speaking prophetically about his descendant, the Messiah. He explains that Jesus is the Messiah. Stating the third point of the kerygma again, "God has raised this Jesus from the dead."
- He then moves to the fourth point of the kerygma, Jesus ascended to the Father. He explains that what they are seeing on the day of Pentecost is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as promised by Joel.
- Peter then quotes Psalm 110:1. He uses this verse to establish the fifth point of the kerygma. Jesus will rule over the kingdom of God because God will subdue every enemy which opposes him. Jesus will come again in power to reign. All Israel will acknowledge Jesus as Lord and Messiah.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Peter's First Sermon*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)