

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study guide is to facilitate the study of Acts 2:22-36 as a supplement to the sermon. It is based on my (Michael's) study and meditation on the passage. This handout can be used for personal study or community group conversation. (I hope you join a group!)

ACTS 2:22-36 ESV

22 "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— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. 25 For David says concerning him, "'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; 26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. 27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'" 29 "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 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. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool.'" 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

STRUCTURE

- I. God testified about Jesus' Lordship through miracles (2:22)
 - a. Peter calls on Israel to hear (2:22a)
 - b. The miracle-worker of Nazareth is the Lord who saves (2:22b; cf. v. 21b)
- II. God planned Jesus' crucifixion through wicked people (2:23)
 - a. Jesus' crucifixion was not a detour but a divinely-paved road (2:23a)
 - b. God's plan incorporated wicked hands without staining His own (2:23b)
- III. God fulfilled His promise to raise Jesus from the dead—evidenced by the apostles (2:24-32)
 - a. God turned Jesus' tomb into a life-giving womb (2:24)
 - b. He did this to fulfill His promise in Psalm 16 (2:25-31)
 - i. Quote of Psalm 16:8-11 (2:25-28)
 - ii. Fulfillment of Psalm 16:8-11 (2:29-31)
 - c. The apostles bear witness to this fulfillment (2:32)
- IV. God fulfilled His promise to exalt Jesus to His right hand—evidenced by the Spirit (2:33-35)
 - a. The outpouring of the Spirit is a result of Christ's exaltation (2:33)
 - b. The outpouring of the Spirit fulfills Psalm 110:1 (2:34-35)
- V. God declared Jesus to be the Lord and Christ who saves you (2:36)

GENERAL COMMENTARY:

Peter continues responding to Pentecost's manifestations by quoting the Scripture. Every move of the Spirit must be shepherded in like manner.

Peter began by showing how the outpouring of the Spirit fulfills God's promise to Joel; He continues by showing how it fulfills God's promises to David. In fact, he quotes three Psalms of David: Psalms 16 and 132, to point to resurrection; Psalm 110, to point to Christ's ascension. Jesus, our greater David, is the "Lord" about whom Joel prophesied, when he said, "everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (2:21). Peter knows they cannot call on the Lord to be saved unless they know who He is.

Peter's sermon is his longest in Acts, but it is representative. Apostolic preaching is Christ-centered. Peter explains who the Lord Jesus is by expounding upon His life (2:22), His death (2:23), His resurrection (2:24-32), and His ascension (2:33-35). He presents the Gospel not as a mere transaction (raise your hand, go to heaven), but as

a story. He appeals to their experience (they knew about His miracles, 2:22; they crucified Him, 2:23, 36; they observed the work of the Spirit, 2:33), to apostolic witness (2:32), and to the Scripture (2:25-31, 34-35).

At first blush, it seems that Peter abandons talk of the Spirit to proclaim Jesus, but such an interpretation overlooks the context. The Spirit has been poured out as a testimony that they are in the last days and must call upon the name of the Lord. Calling on the Lord requires us to know who He is, which Peter explains. Near the end of his sermon, Peter returns to the theme of the Spirit by showing the unity between the first and last half of his sermon. Not only does the outpouring of the Spirit testify to salvation in the Lord (2:14-21); it also testifies to Jesus' identity as Lord (2:22-35). We know Jesus reigns because the Spirit has testified of it. To use theological terms, Christology (study of Christ) and Pneumatology (study of the Spirit) cannot be divorced.

Before his final exhortation (2:37-41), Peter summarizes the sermon with a statement so poignant it cannot be reduced: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (2:36).

VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY:

22 "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—"

—Flowing out of verse 21 about calling on the name of the Lord, Peter then expounds the life of Jesus. Joel's prophecy about a saving Lord is a prophecy about Jesus.

—Talking about Jesus, Peter will move from His life (v. 22) to His death (v. 23) to His resurrection and ascension (vv. 24-36). The relationship between Christ and the Spirit, as it is portrayed in this passage, is that Christ pours out the Spirit, and the Spirit (through Peter) testifies about Jesus (cf. John 15:26).

—Schreiner: "The Father reversed the human sentence of death and spread life. The sign of this life is the Spirit." (See 2:30-31.)

—What distinguishes Christian preaching is its emphasis on Christ. Jesus' name occurs 917 times and "Messiah," 529 times in the New Testament. In contrast, Peter's name occurs 156 times and Paul's, 158. These stats come from Schnabel's commentary.

—Schnabel: "The Pentecost speech thus focuses on two main themes: (1) the coming of the Holy Spirit and the significance of this event for Israel, and (2) the identity of Jesus of Nazareth as a result of his death, resurrection, and exaltation. In systematic theological terms, the main emphases of Peter's sermon are in the areas of pneumatology and Christology."

—"Men of Israel, hear these words": Peter now shifts from explaining the phenomenon of the Spirit's outpouring to explaining the reason for it. But he doesn't want to transition without verbally marking the significance of what he's about to say. It is less important that they understand the intricacies of Pentecost (which are confusing to this day) than that they understand the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. "Men of Israel" focuses the attention on the Christ-killers who must repent (2:36-38), and "hear these words" reminds us of the "Shema" from Deuteronomy 6:4, which a Jew would have repeated daily, "Hear, O Israel..." Now, as one of God's chief representatives, Peter delivers a message of equal importance. Yes, the Lord is "One," as the Shema states. But the Lord is also Jesus. Jesus is God, and God—the Triune God—is one.

—"Nazareth" emphasizes the historicity of the Jesus story, as does the rest of Peter's statement about miracles, which "you yourselves know." Peter's audience was not uninformed about the history; only about how to interpret it.

—"mighty works... wonders... signs": each word for miracles emphasizes a different aspect of their nature. "mighty works" highlights God's power; "wonders" highlights the awe that miracles inspire; "signs" highlights their purpose: to identify Jesus as the Christ.

—"attested to you by God":

- The miracles of Jesus served multiple purposes—to show compassion, to free people for serving God, to save the lost, to manifest the kingdom—and each of them is important. But central among them is God's testimony about the identity of Jesus. If the miracles don't open our eyes to Christ, they have impressed us without transforming us—and that's a shame.
- Some people argue that Jesus "did not do His miracles as God, but rather having laid His divinity aside, He performed them as a man, operating in the power of the Spirit." If, by this, they mean that Jesus ceased being God for 3.5 years of earthly ministry, it is heresy. If they mean that Jesus lived out His humanity like the rest of us, in dependence upon God, it is a true statement. However, I still feel like it requires qualification. As "signs" that "attested" to Jesus' identity as God. They did not merely point us to Jesus being an exemplary human; they also point us to Jesus being the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity.

—Schreiner: “Though the focus is on Jesus, the next few verses also include God the Father as the source of Jesus’s actions: (1) Jesus was attested by God; (2) God did miracles through him; (3) he was delivered up according to God’s plan; (4) raised by God; (5) exalted by God. The Spirit testifies to Jesus who did the will of his Father.”

23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

—Luke twice emphasizes God’s predestination of the Cross in the Book of Acts. The first occasion is here, and the second is in Acts 4:26 *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’— 27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.*

—In Luke’s context, the Cross appeared to be the emphatic ending of Jesus’ ministry and significance. How could the Blessed One be hung on a tree and cursed? How could the desire of the nations be cast out of the city? How could the conquering Messiah be conquered by Rome? And so the questions go. By emphasizing the predestination of the Cross, Luke shows us that this was all part of the plan. Peter and the Apostles were not responding to cognitive dissonance with a hairbrained explanation to justify their sacrifices. Nor was God hastily scrapping together a Plan B for our redemption, as if Rome and Israel had stifled Plan A. No, the Cross is Plan A. It might not appear this way in the history of redemption. Perhaps one views the Garden as Plan A. But even before the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Gethsemane was in view. Even before Adam ate from the tree of death, Jesus knew He would taste that same tree.

—Here is a list of some verses related to our redemption being decreed before the foundation of the world:

- “We impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed *before the ages* for our glory.” (1 Cor 2:7)
- “He chose us in him *before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ . . .” (Eph 1:4–5).
- “[God] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus *before the ages began*, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, . . .” (2 Tim 1:8-10)
- “in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised *before the ages began* . . .” (Titus 1:2)
- The lamb of God “was foreknown *before the foundation of the world* but was made manifest in the last times for your sake.” (1 Pet 1:20)
- “And authority was given it [the beast] over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written *before the foundation of the world* in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.” (Rev 13:7–8; cf. Rev 17:8)

—God could not have chosen us, saved us, called us, graced us, or written our names in the book of the life of the Lamb who was slain—if the Cross was not foreordained.

—Peter’s focus, however, is not on the decree of our salvation, but of the Cross. He brings it up to show us that the Cross is not an example of the triumph of man, but of God—purposed by Him from before time began.

—“you crucified by the hands of lawless men”:

- They could not wash their hands like Pilate and claim innocence, just because someone else’s hands pounded the nails into Jesus’ flesh.
- Peter’s boldness is notable. The same man who denied Christ three times and once before a young servant girl now opposes the powers-that-be with godly defiance. Given what we have seen elsewhere—the Spirit’s role in producing boldness—we must understand Peter’s courage, not merely as a byproduct of having seen the risen Christ, but as a direct fruit of the Spirit’s work.

—On one hand, Christ’s crucifixion was part of God’s plan. On the other, “lawless men” nailed Him to the tree. In one sense, God sent Jesus to the Cross. In another, people did. People in their wickedness tortured an innocent man; God in His holiness submitted His Son to be tortured. How can this be? How can God’s hands be innocent if He planned this all along? How can “lawless men” be guilty if God was behind it? This is what we call compatibilism. God is sovereign over all things, yet without getting His hands dirty. If even the most wicked deed ever committed fit within the plan of God, and yet God remained innocent in it, the same is true for lesser evils. God is sovereign. Man is responsible. To us, these seem contradictory. In Him, they are compatible.

—Schreiner: “Peter brings the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of humans together, not even attempting to explain how both can occur but assuming the reality. The most wicked act in human history

was performed by people's own choice *and* was the plan of God, without making God liable or eradicating the people's guilt."

24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

—"God raised Him up": In John 2 and 10, Jesus claims to raise Himself from the grave; in Romans 8, the Spirit raised Jesus from the dead; here in Acts 2, the Father raised Jesus from the dead. So who raised Jesus from the dead? The Father, the Son, or the Spirit? The answer is yes. The Father raised the Son; the Son raised the Son; the Spirit raised the Son. In theology, we call this, "the inseparable operations of the Trinity." None of God's works are done independently of other Persons of the Godhead. In all things, the Father, Son, and Spirit work in tandem. This does not mean they are all the same. The Father did not die for our sins, nor did the Spirit send the Father. But each Person of the Godhead operates in tandem, even if His work is appropriated on one specific Person for any given work.

—"pangs":

- Literally, "birth pains."
- The imagery communicates that for Jesus, the tomb was a womb. That which epitomized death gave birth to life.
- The imagery also communicates that the suffering that accompanied Jesus' death was a sort of messianic labor pain. Like a woman in labor, Jesus endured "for the joy set before Him" (Heb. 12:2). The miscarriage of justice would not end in miscarriage; it would end in life—for Him, His people, and the universe.

—"loosed... because it was not possible for him to be held by it":

- "loosed" seems to borrow language from the Psalms, which depict death as "cords" coiled about us. God severed the cords of death and "loosed" Jesus from their nasty grip.
- Why was it not possible for death to hold Jesus in the grave? Because He was innocent. Death was the penalty of sin, and Jesus never sinned. How, then, did He die at all? Because He bore our sin. But if He bore our sin, does this not suggest that death could hold Him down forever? I think Romans 5 helps us understand this better: *15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.* The point of this verse (and others) in Romans 5 is that grace abounds more than sin. I envision Jesus as doing the "rope-a-dope" like Muhammed Ali. Ali allowed his opponents to expend themselves, pounding away, and once they ran out of gas, he pummeled them. It was like that with Jesus. Sin ran out of gas, and Jesus' tank was still full. Death couldn't hold Jesus down because sin had been paid for and His grace runneth over. When Jesus announced, "it is finished," death pounced like a wrestler to pin Him to the mat. But as the count reached three—like every good wrestler—our Savior used the weight of Death against him. Death was pinned and our Savior stood—victorious. Death couldn't hold him because sin was paid for; death couldn't hold Him because grace abounded more.

25 For David says concerning him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; 26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. 27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence."

—"For": This word announces that an explanation is coming for why death inevitably loosed its grip of God's Son. While the above reasons still apply—death had been paid for and grace abounded more—Peter teaches that death couldn't hold him down because the Scripture had to be fulfilled. In other words, it was prophesied.

—Peter began with Joel 2, explaining the phenomenon of tongues. He continues with Psalm 16, explaining the phenomenon of resurrection. By the time he's finished, he'll quote Psalm 110, explaining the phenomenon of the ascension.

—Peter's quote of Psalm 16 begins with 16:7, where David begins to express confidence about his eternal welfare. When David reaches Psalm 16:10 (quoted in Acts 2:27), he provides the reason: because God will not abandon his soul to Hades (the place of the dead) or let His "Holy One see corruption." Peter explains in the next section that Psalm 16:10 is not about David, but about Jesus. David knew that God would keep him eternally secure, and he knew this was rooted in the Messiah not seeing corruption. He did not know how these related, but we do: because Jesus rose, we are eternally secure.

—Or, to keep the spirit of the Psalm intact, because Jesus rose, we possess eternal joy. That's how it ends in Psalm 16:11/Acts 2:28.

—Eternal security and infinite joy are both sewed into the fabric of resurrection.

—That Jesus did not experience “corruption” speaks of His resurrection on (no later than) the third day. Remember, Lazarus’ body had begun to stink because it had been four days (John 11:39). The odor of death is created by decomposition; by corruption. In Jesus’ case, He rose before these natural forces began their work. Some say this is why Paul can teach that the OT predicted a resurrection on the third day—since that was the last possible day to rise without having decomposed (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3-4).

29 “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.

—Peter explains the messianic meaning of Psalm 16:10.

—David was not just writing a Psalm that happened to have a double-meaning (about himself and also Christ); David consciously prophesied about Jesus. He “foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ” as he penned Psalm 16:10.

—Peter reasons this way based on David’s death and decay inside a tomb they could all visit (2:29). David could not have been talking about himself because his own body died and saw corruption.

—David was “a prophet”, and he also knew the Scriptures—“that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on the throne” (2:30). Both David’s prophetic gift and David’s knowledge of the Scriptures contributed to his prophetic foresight that the Christ would rise from the grave. As a prophet, God communicated to him dynamically by the Spirit; as a student of Scripture, God communicated to Him by illuminating the meaning of Scripture.

—Here’s what I said about these verses in my commentary on Psalm 16 (the part that alludes to Acts 2): Remember, Peter says that part of David’s revelation about Christ came from the “oath” of God in 2 Sam. 7:12-13. That oath stated not only that God would “raise up” an offspring to reign “forever,” but also, that David himself would “lie down” with his fathers. David’s lying down is contrasted with the Messiah’s being raised up. Thus, when David wrote Psalm 16:10, he did not mean, “I literally won’t die.” He meant that His descendant, the “holy one,” would not “see corruption.” Further, he meant that this would somehow relate to David himself experiencing pleasures at God’s right hand forevermore.

—Even though Peter alludes to God’s promise in 2 Sam. 7:12-13, he seems to quote more directly Ps. 132:11, which itself quotes 2 Samuel. Here is the verse: “The LORD swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: ‘One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne.’” This, then, would mean Peter alludes to three Psalms of David to point to Jesus’ death, resurrection, and ascension.

—“This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses”:

- Peter expositis the Scripture about Psalm 16, but then he corroborates the testimony of Scripture with that of the apostles. Both the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles testified to Christ’s resurrection. The whole of Scripture testifies to Christ. Furthermore, it was not just prophets interpreting visions, but also apostles interpreting events they saw with their eyes, heard with their ears, and touched with their hands.
- Stott: “The best way to understand Pentecost, however, is not through the Old Testament prediction, but through the New Testament fulfillment; not through Joel but through Jesus.”

33 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.

—“therefore”: Having just expositis Psalm 16 to reveal Christ’s resurrection, Peter “therefore” proceeds to the next stage of redemptive history: Christ’s ascension.

—Christ’s ascension was a surprise to Peter and the apostles, which is why the angel rebuked them for staring in the sky (1:9-11). They had expected Jesus to remain in Jerusalem, kick Rome’s butt, and consummate His kingdom (1:6). Instead, He flew to heaven. Now, Peter understands. Jesus’ ascension was not just a form of celestial transport; it was heavenly exaltation. Jesus ascended to the Father’s right hand, the seat of honor. After being crucified in dishonor, Jesus was raised in honor. After being humiliated, He is now exalted. After descending to the lowest of the low, He ascended to the highest of the high.

—Two prerequisites preceded the outpouring of the Spirit (“he has poured out”) and its manifestations (“seeing and hearing”). First, Christ had to be exalted to the Father’s right hand, and second, He had to receive the promise of the Father, who is the Spirit.

—These two go together. Christ had to be exalted to the Father’s right hand to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit; then, in turn, Christ could give the Holy Spirit.

—Why did Jesus have to suffer, rise, and ascend to receive the Spirit and pour Him out? Because in the prior context, Christ established the church as His new temple. The Spirit could not be given to an

unsanctified, unholy people. Now that Christ has entered the more perfect temple, the heavenly temple made without hands, to sprinkle us with His blood, we are now fitting vessels for the Holy Spirit.

—This explains why Jesus needed to suffer and ascend in order to GIVE the Spirit, but it doesn't explain why He needed to suffer and ascend in order to RECEIVE the Spirit (which He would ultimately give).

—In Ephesians 4:7-11, Paul alludes to Psalm 68 to show that Christ had to descend in order to ascend and pour out gifts on men—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers. Here is my commentary on Ephesians 4, quoting Psalm 68: "Just as the ark moved from Sinai to Zion (Ps. 68:16-17), where God ascended on high with his host of captives and gifts, Jesus Christ moved us from the law of Sinai to the Gospel of Zion, and—since His ascent means He also descended—from the grave to the throne. the ascension was a moment of profound victory that occasioned Christ to share in His victory. Jesus "received" and then "poured out the Spirit," in the same way that, in Ephesians 4/Psalm 68, He received and then gave gifts to the church. Ultimately, Paul is pointing to the Scripture to justify His conclusion that the distribution of spiritual gifts is rooted in the ascension of Christ. The spoils of war, enjoyed by Israel, are now spiritual gifts, enjoyed by the church. In short, spiritual gifts are evidence that Jesus won the war. —If Peter is following the same line of thought as Paul—and I have no reason to doubt their unity on this—the ascension is portrayed as a victory for Christ, *which became* a victory for us. Christ received the promise of the Spirit as a reward for His victory, which He then shared with His church, like a conquering general shares the spoils. (Of course, this image can't be pressed too far, as if the devil possessed spiritual gifts—a plunder which Christ stole and then distributed to the church. The devil did not possess spiritual gifts. Nevertheless, the image of sharing a military victory seems to be associated with the ascension in these verses and throughout the New Testament.)

—Schnabel: "Peter has moved through three stages of his argument since he started his quotation from Ps. 16:8-11 in v. 29: (1) David cannot be the person to whom God's promise of not decaying in the grave applies. (2) The promise of physical life after death that God makes in the psalm is connected with God's oath to David, which assured him of the enthronement of one of his descendants. (3) God's promise will be fulfilled through the resurrection of the Messiah. The movement from the second to the third step of the argument implies that there is a connection between enthronement and resurrection."

—Schreiner: "While readers only see the ascension from the disciples' viewpoint looking up, here Peter indicates what happened in God's throne room." Jesus was told by God the Father to sit at his right hand."

34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, 35 until I make your enemies your footstool." 36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

—"For": Just as Peter expounded Psalm 16 to prove the resurrection, he now expounds Psalm 110 to prove the ascension.

—"David did not ascend into the heavens, but...": Peter sees Psalm 110 as a prophecy about Christ's ascension, in part, on the basis that it can't be about David's ascension, which never happened.

—Jesus offers another reason for Psalm 110 being a prophecy about the ascension: because "the Lord said to my Lord" indicates an inter-trinitarian conversation; David is not "Lord"; the Father is and Jesus is. See Matt. 22:24-25, etc.

—Peter has recently referenced Christ's session at the Father's right hand in Acts 2:33. Such a seat of honor could not be usurped; the Father bestowed it when He said, "Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies your footstool." The session of Jesus at the Father's right hand meant that Christ was honored by the Father; it also meant that Christ's work of redemption was complete. He sat because His earthly ministry was finished. Today, He still works—by His Spirit, through His church. But the work of paying our debt was paid, and in that sense, Jesus could say, "It is finished."

—Schnabel: "In the original context of the psalm (110), the new king is promised the subjugation of his enemies. In the El Amarna letters, vassal kings describe themselves as the footstool of Pharaoh. The psalm implies that the king rules not in his own right but as the co-regent of Yahweh, who does the fighting and wins the victory. Applied to the risen and exalted Jesus, who is the Messiah reigning at God's right hand, Peter affirms God's victory over death (cf. v. 24) through Jesus' death, resurrection, and exaltation."

—Jesus is waiting right now for his enemies to be made His footstool. He conquered them in principle at the Cross, but His victory plays out through the Spirit-filled church.

—Why didn't Jesus just end it all at the ascension? Why didn't He vanquish His enemies entirely, not just in principle? Here are a few reasons given in the New Testament:

- The implication of Acts 1:6-11 is that He is waiting because He wants to empower us to extend His reign. This is confirmed by 2 Peter 3:9, where Christ's return tarries until more people are saved.

- A similar notion is communicated by Romans 16:20, where the God of peace crushes Satan under our feet. A promise made in Genesis 3:15 about the Messianic serpent-crusher is now extended to the church. Jesus wants to not only hand us the victory, but also through Him, to make us victors.
- This makes me think of the original commission to subdue the earth as an expression of God's dominion by those made in His image (Gen. 1:26-28). God has not abandoned the original project: for man to rule the earth. Jesus, the God-Man, came as our better Adam to re-launch the project, and we, His spiritual progeny, continue it just like Adam's progeny would have. They were told, "Be fruitful and multiply"; we are told that too, but also: "Go and make disciples." Our commission, like Adam's, is to make the earth look more like God is in charge, to bring heaven to earth, by filling the earth with obedient disciples. Jesus waits for His enemies to be made His footstool—through us!—in fulfillment of the original commission to subdue the earth. This includes the serpent; it includes sin; it includes death; it includes all that opposes God. The church has been entrusted to continue Jesus' work by the power of the Spirit. That is why He waits.

—"Let all the house of Israel know...": the restoration of Israel begins, in fulfillment of the promises made by the prophets.

—"know for certain": when we preach Christ, we should not sound wishy washy. Evangelism should be bold. A fork in the road. A stake in the ground.

—"God has made him both Lord and Christ":

- At first glance, this is strange. Jesus was called Lord before his ascension, even in this book (Acts 1:6), and many times throughout the Gospels—more than I could list. Furthermore, Jesus is called both "Lord" and "Christ" even at his birth announcement by the angels: *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."* What makes this strange is that Acts 2:36 makes it appear as though Jesus was "made" Lord and Christ, only after His ascension. So when did Jesus become Lord and Christ? At His birth? At His ascension? Or in eternity past?
- We must affirm with the Nicene Creed that Jesus is "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; begotten not made..." This is the clear teaching of Scripture. The Alpha and the Omega, Jesus Christ, is Almighty. He is God. He proceeds from God the Father—"true God from true God"—but He is also one with God the Father, and every bit as worthy of worship. Whatever answer we come to about this text, we must affirm the eternal deity of Jesus.
- We must also affirm that both Luke 2:11 and Acts 2:36 are true. On one hand, Jesus was Lord and Christ even at his birth announcement—before His feet hit the ground. On the other hand, Jesus was "made" Lord and Christ after His ascension.
- The Scriptures consistently carry this tension. After Jesus' resurrection, He declares, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me..." This is again a strange statement for GOD the Son to make—who has already possessed all authority for eternity past!
- For all eternity, Jesus has been God, but something unique happened after the resurrection, and its culmination, at the ascension. He was "made Lord and Christ", not in the sense that these titles did not formerly apply to Him, but rather in the sense that in the human sphere of time and space, He achieved what His title already declared to be true about Him. We might say that His "Lord-ness" and "Christ-ness" were made manifest.
- Part of the trouble is that we're talking about a God who is not just omnipresent, but omni-time (not a word!). We run into a similar challenge in Acts 13:33, where Jesus is declared "begotten" at the resurrection, even though He has been the Son of God since eternity past. How could He have been begotten both in time and eternity past? How could He be our Lord Jesus Christ both in time and eternity? The only reason these questions arise is that we are striving to fathom an eternal God—God the Son—who entered our sliver of time and space.
- Stott: "[This verse does not mean] that Jesus became Lord and Christ only at the time of his ascension, for he was (and claimed to be) both throughout his public ministry. It is rather that now God exalted him to be in reality and power what he already was by right."
- Schnabel (in part, quoting Marshall): "The phrase... does not mean that before his resurrection, Jesus was not the Messiah and Lord. We should note that 'the force of the statement is more probably simply to contrast the attitude of those who crucified and rejected Jesus with God's confirmation of his real status by raising him from the dead and exalting him to his right hand.' Or, Peter's statement can be understood to mean that the Messiah-designate has now become the Messiah-enthroned."

—Schnabel: "Jesus is Lord; i.e., he is exalted at God's right hand (Ps. 16:8) since his resurrection. He is Lord of David, sitting on the heavenly throne (Ps. 110:1) since his ascension to heaven. He is Lord in whose name everybody is granted salvation (Joel 2:32), as he has been given authority to pour out the Spirit of prophecy, the Holy Spirit of God's saving presence (vv. 21, 25, 33, 34)."

—Schnabel: “Jesus is the Messiah, the king who would save the people of Israel. He is the promised descendant of David (Ps. 132:11), who is superior to David as his Lord (vv. 30, 31, 34).”

—Schnabel: “Jesus, the Lord and the Messiah, is most closely related to God, sitting at his right hand on his throne (vv. 24, 25, 3, 34). Jesus, the risen and exalted Messiah, has been made the equal of Yahweh, whom Jews address as Lord.”

—“this Jesus whom you crucified”: These were the very people who only days earlier demanded the crucifixion of their Lord. Peter goes from shrinking back before a servant girl to confronting a blood-thirsty crowd of three thousand. They are saved through Peter’s Spirit-filled boldness—quite a radical change both for Peter and for them.