

The Book of Acts: Verse-by-Verse

Acts 10:36-38

Peter has finally understood that God does not show favoritism with respect to saving humans. God does not make a distinction between the races when it comes to offering salvation to all peoples – whether Jews or non-Jews.

That said, Peter launches into his sermon in earnest:

- **“The Message God Sent To The People Of Israel” v. 36**

“You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.”

Peter’s message begins with the “kerygma”: the standard apostolic outline of the primary truths of the Gospel:

Christ’s Virgin Birth ... Sinless Life ... Atoning Sacrifice ... Resurrection ... Ascension ... Christ’s Return.

Peter is preaching to Gentiles: we cannot assume anyone else in the room has Jewish ancestry. As such, what language did Peter use?

- **What Language Did Peter Use?**

A linguistic analysis of this speech reveals a remarkable number of “Aramaisms”. This leads several scholars suggest Peter spoke Aramaic for this message. (Aramaic, one of the Semitic languages, is particularly closely related to Hebrew, and was written in a variety of alphabetic scripts.)

This strongly suggests that Luke repeated Peter’s message literally. F.F. Bruce: “The Greek of verses 36–38 in particular reads somewhat

awkwardly, as do the fairly literal renderings in the older English versions, but it is claimed that it can be turned back word for word into idiomatic and intelligible Aramaic.” – F.F. Bruce

- **The Ultimate Messenger:**

“God sent a message to Israel”. Hebrews 1:1-2: “On many past occasions and in many different ways, God spoke to our fathers through the prophets. But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe.”

For centuries God had been speaking to Israel. One of those methods was to speak through the prophets. But in “these last days” – God spoke through his Son.

The majority of Israel rejected Jesus and his message. Just the same, God chose Israel to be the conduit through which a message that he wanted to convey would be sent.

- **The Good News Of Peace:**

“You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.”

Peter is not talking about world peace. He’s talking about peace with God. Mankind has been at war with God for six millennia: See: Psalms 2:1-4; Romans 1.21-22; Romans 8:6-7; James 4:4.

Humans are at war with God. They are born into this world in a state of conflict with God. Their minds are at war with God. Their hearts and wills are at war with God – even if they don’t know it or recognize it.

The final war on God: Revelation 19:19 - “Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies assembled to wage war against the One seated on the horse, and against His army.”

Humans were and are at war with God. God sent them, “the good news of peace through Jesus Christ.”

- **“Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.”**

Peter is connecting this to what he said earlier about God not showing favoritism. “Jesus Christ is Lord of All” – that means he is the sovereign ruler of both Jews and Gentiles.

Peter didn’t say Jesus was the “Savior of All”. He’s not making a blanket statement that, by virtue of his death and resurrection, Jesus has saved all people. (That’s a false teaching that has been making the rounds in seminaries and liberal churches for years.)

Peter is saying that Christ is the One and Only Sovereign over both the Jews and Gentiles – regardless of whether they have accepted Him. Because God shows no favoritism, the gospel must be preached to both Jews and Gentiles.

An Irony: In our day, parts of the Gentile Church are reluctant to preach the gospel to Jewish people. In Peter’s day, the Jewish Church was reluctant to preach the gospel to the Gentiles!

Christ is Lord over all – both Jews and Gentiles – for all who call on His Name. See: John 17:2; Matthew 28:18-19; Ephesians 1:22

The flipside to the statement, “Lord of All”: If Jesus is “Lord Of All”, no one else can be:

- There is no other Lord.
- If there is no other Lord, there is no other path to peace with God.
- There is no way for humans to end their war with God and have peace with God other than coming to His Son.

- **“How God Anointed Jesus Of Nazareth”: vv. 37-38**

- Verse 36: “You know the message God sent to the people of Israel...”

- Verse 37: "You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached."

How would these Gentiles know this? The events Peter is about to relay happened in real time, in actual places. They were public knowledge.

Bible critics have suggested that there is no historical proof that Jesus ever lived. The truth is ... ancient secular sources locate Jesus in both time and geography.

The Gospel Story In Four Parts:

1. Jesus' Public Ministry: "... How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power..."

This is a highly Jewish statement! A parallel: Jesus' statement at the Nazareth synagogue:

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor." - Luke 4:18-19

In the original text of Isaiah 61, the prophet projects the future arrival of the Messiah. One of the singular identifiers of the Messiah is the Anointing of the Holy Spirit. This is a thread that runs through Isaiah's message. See: Isaiah 11:1-2; Isaiah 42:1

"God Anointed Him" = "God Made Him Messiah".

Luke 4:14: "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee". This return was marked by a ministry that fulfilled the prophecies of the Messiah registered in Isaiah and other Old Testament books.

Peter notes that Jesus' ministry addressed the ills of those who were "under the power" of the Devil. A better translation would be, "those being tyrannized by the Devil" – as that is what the Greek phraseology

really means. The Gospels adequately demonstrate Jesus' power over sicknesses and possessions that are attributed to the works of Satan.

2. “We Are Witnesses”: v. 39-40

“We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree...”

The phrase, “We are witnesses” had a deep meaning to Peter and the rest of the original apostles. This is borne out numerous times in their epistolary letters. See: 2 Corinthians 5:20; 2 Timothy 2:2; 2 Timothy 3:14; Jude 3.

The testimony of the apostles is both unique and verifiable. Peter wants Cornelius and the others to know that what he is telling them about Jesus is, in fact, true.

While it is true that all believers are, in a sense, called to be Christ's ambassadors, the role and task of the original apostles is unique in the history of redemption. We are to have an assurance that what the original apostles testified to was from a first-hand experience.

While we may appreciate the testimonies of others – the scriptures passed down to us have arrived by a unique process.

- **Next time: Part 3 of Peter's Story: Christ's Death**