

Peter's sermon at Pentecost: Theology and Application

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Quick review

1. Two weeks ago we "observed" this passage, to see what happened and what it says. Last week we looked closer at the Old Testament passages, to try and make sense out of how and why Peter chose these passages to include in his sermon that day.

This week we're looking at the theology and individual doctrines that are in Peter's sermon.

Discussion questions

1. What is the Bible?
 - a. In the front of my Bible I've written: "This book is coherent, progressive, historical and theological revelation."
2. Why do we read the Bible?
 - a. To know God, and to know what he wants us to know about him, ourselves, and very importantly, how we can be made right with him.
 - i. Why is that important?
3. What is theology?
4. What is doctrine?

Working definitions

1. Theology
 - a. According to the *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, **theology** is defined as: "A religious belief system about God or ultimate reality. *Theology* commonly refers to the ordered, systematic study or interpretation of the Christian faith and

experience of God based on God's divine self-revelation. Theology also seeks to apply these truths to the full breadth of human experience and thought." [SLIDE]

- i. Consider:
 1. Anyone who has read the Bible, entirely or partially, has a theology.
 2. People who haven't read the Bible have a theology, if they've thought at all about God.
 3. In reality, nearly everyone has a theology, and it's either right, wrong, or partially right and wrong.
 - b. According to Webster's Dictionary, **theology** is "the study of religious faith, practice, and experience; esp: the study of God and his relation to the world." Webster goes on to give a further sense (a subsense) of theology as "a theological theory or system...[i.e.] a 'theology' of atonement."
 - c. At its simplest, we can say that **theology is the study of God**.
 - d. There are many kinds (or disciplines) of theologies: [SLIDE]
 - i. Systematic
 - ii. Historical
 - iii. Philosophical
 - iv. Old Testament
 - v. New Testament
 - vi. Biblical
 - e. Theology should ultimately result in our worship of God. We cannot truly worship what we do not know. [SLIDE]
 - i. The Athenians tried, according to Paul in **Acts 17:22-23** [SLIDE].
2. Doctrine

- a. According to Webster, **doctrine** is defined as "**1 a** *archaic* : TEACHING, INSTRUCTION **2 a** : something that is taught **b** : a principle or position or the body of principles in a branch of knowledge or system of belief : DOGMA"
- b. According to Wayne Grudem, in **systematic theology** a **doctrine** "is what the whole Bible teaches us today about some particular topic."

He goes on to say that "a 'doctrine' is simply the result of the process of doing systematic theology with regard to one particular topic. Understood in this way, doctrines can be very broad or very narrow." [SLIDE]

- c. The *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* defines **doctrine** as a "theological formulation that attempts to provide a summary statement of the teaching of Scripture on a particular theological topic. Ideally, doctrine is formed by attempting to be faithful to Scripture while giving attention to the traditions of the church and the thought patterns of the day. Thus doctrine is stated in such a way

that contemporary people can understand the teaching of the ancient Scriptures.”
[SLIDE]

Identify various doctrines in Acts 2:14-41, verse by verse

1. Before we do this, we should ask if this is even a proper thing to do? If Acts is an historical document, should we be trying to determine theology from it as we read and study it?
 - a. In his commentary on Acts, David Peterson says that Acts is a “‘theological history’ in the sense that it records God’s activity in fulfilling his promises and working out his purpose for humanity. At the same time...Luke is a reliable historian, who has not allowed his theological and apologetic agenda to distort the facts.” [SLIDE]

2. Acts 2:14-41 [SLIDES]

Doctrine of God’s sovereignty, or God’s plan

1. Acts 2:23 [SLIDE]
2. So much could be said about this, but we have to narrow it down due to time constraints.
3. Think through all that God “had” to plan and “foreknow” for the crucifixion of Jesus to take place.
 - a. You can trace this all the way back to **Genesis 3:15**, where God promised that he would send someone to fix what Adam and Eve had broken. [SLIDE]
4. God planned, before time began, the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and then worked out that plan from the beginning of recorded history until the promised events actually happened.
5. In **1 Peter 4:19** Peter writes, “Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.” [SLIDE]
 - a. Jesus suffered according to God’s sovereign plan - do we not do the same?
 - i. This should be a great comfort and not a cause of distress. Why?
6. **Romans 8:28-29** says, “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...” [SLIDE]
 - a. It does not say, “all things happen by mere chance and coincidence, and somehow or other God barely manages to make those things work together for good...”
 - b. “all things” must include both the good and the bad, at least as viewed and experienced from our human perspective.

Peter’s stunning statement in Acts 2:36

1. **Acts 2:36** [SLIDE]
2. Before we get to the doctrines of Jesus as Lord and Christ, let's look at the connection of this statement with the three OT passages he quoted (which we discussed several weeks ago):
 - a. **Joel 2:28-32** (in Acts 2:17-21)
 - i. In the context of Joel, YHWH (the LORD) is speaking (**Joel 1:1; 2:18-19, 27**)
 - ii. In **Joel 2:28** (Acts 2:17) the person who says "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh" is "YHWH [their] God"
 1. In **Acts 2:32-33** Peter says that Jesus is the one who has poured out his Spirit, and they can clearly see and hear the effects of that pouring out of his Spirit
 - iii. In **Joel 2:31-32** (Acts 2:20-21) the word (or phrase) in our English Bibles, "the LORD," is literally "YHWH"
 1. In **Joel 2:32** YHWH says that whoever calls on his name shall be saved.
 2. In **Acts 2:38** Peter declares that his listeners should "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
 - a. This is the same as saying, "Call or believe on the name of Jesus Christ to be saved," which makes it parallel or equal to the statement in **Joel 2:32**
 - iv. Do you see the connection?
 1. Peter, and the Holy Spirit speaking through him, is effectively equating Jesus with YHWH, the LORD.
 - b. **Psalms 16:8-11** (in Acts 2:25-28)
 - i. In **Acts 2:31-32** Peter explains that this Psalm is referring to the promised Christ (Messiah), and that Jesus **is that Christ** who was promised in this Psalm.
 - c. **Psalms 110:1** (in Acts 2:34-35)
 - i. In **Psalms 110:1** as quoted in **Acts 2:34-35**, the first "Lord" is YHWH, referring to God the Father, while the second "Lord" is simply "my lord" (as in master, superior, sir, etc.). The first Lord says to David's Lord (master), "Sit at my right hand," which is the highest place of honor in the

entire universe (and beyond?). Peter explains that Jesus is the Lord that YHWH is speaking to, and the one whom David refers to as “my Lord.”

Doctrine of Jesus as Lord

1. What does the word “Lord” mean, or, what’s in a name?

a. Exodus 3:13-15 [SLIDE]

- i. God tells Moses “I AM”
- ii. “[I]n ancient cultures, to know the name of someone was to know something very essential about that person.” (*ESV Study Bible*, footnote on Exodus 3:13)
- iii. “In response to Moses’ question...God reveals his name to be ‘Yahweh’ (corresponding to the four Hebrew consonants YHWH)...The divine name Yahweh has suggested to scholars a range of likely nuances of meaning: (1) that God is self-existent and therefore not dependent on anything else for his own existence; (2) that God is the creator and sustainer of all that exists; (3) that God is immutable in his being and character and thus is not in the process of becoming something different from what he is (e.g., ‘the same yesterday and today and forever,’ Heb. 13:8); and (4) that God is eternal in his existence....the personal name of God as revealed to Moses expresses something essential about the attributes and character of God.” (*ESV Study Bible*, footnote on Exodus 3:14)

iv. John 8:58-59 [SLIDE]

b. Exodus 33:17-23; 34:5-8 [SLIDES]

- i. In his commentary on Exodus 33, Walter Kaiser says this:
 1. “A further aspect of the revelation of God’s glory was the proclamation of his name. The name of God includes his nature, character, person (Ps 20:1; Luke 24:47; John 1:12), doctrine (Ps 22:22; John 17:6, 26), and standards of living (Mic 4:5). In this context his name includes his ‘mercy’ (i.e. his ‘grace’) and his ‘compassion’ (...i.e., deep-seated feelings). Romans 9:15 quotes this verse and applies it to the sovereignty of God.”
- ii. And commenting on Exodus 34, Kaiser states:
 1. “The Lord’s self-disclosure is prefaced by the repetition of his name: ‘The LORD, the LORD,’ repeated perhaps to emphasize his unchangeableness....The ‘gracious God’ bestows his unmerited favor on those who have no claim whatsoever on it. His graciousness is explicated [explained] by ‘slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.’ But his grace is balanced, for ‘he does not leave the guilty unpunished.’ The other side of our merciful and loving God is his justice and righteousness. Woe to them who reject God’s grace!”

- iii. These passages in Exodus are quoted and alluded to throughout the rest of the Bible, and are foundational to understanding and knowing God.
 - 1. For example, Psalm 86
 - iv. YHWH = the sacred name of the Lord
 - v. Known by scholars as the **tetragrammaton** (four letters)
 - vi. Some have pronounced this as “Jehovah” in the past, though the general consensus among scholars now tends toward “Yahweh” as the probable pronunciation.
 - c. The Hebrews did not think it was acceptable to speak the sacred name of the Lord (YHWH) out loud, so they would usually say “Adonai,” which is Hebrew for “Lord.”
 - i. Some OT scholars still follow this practice.
 - d. The LXX carried this tradition into its translation of the Old Testament, using the Greek word *kyrios*, which also means “Lord” or “lord.”
 - e. Most English Bibles replace YHWH with “LORD,” in small capitals, so that we can know which word is being translated. This is typically explained in the translation notes in each version’s preface.
2. How is Jesus the Lord?
- a. David Peterson writes: “It is important to note that the first occurrence of *kyrios* (‘Lord’) in Psalm 110:1 represents the sacred name of God in Hebrew, whereas the second is qualified by ‘my’ and represents the ordinary Hebrew expression ‘my lord’. The one whom David addresses as ‘my lord’ is distinguished from God (‘the Lord’). However, since Jesus has been uniquely exalted to the Father’s side through his heavenly ascension and has poured out the promised Spirit, he can be called *Lord* in the full sense that God is. The fulfillment of the psalm takes us beyond the literal meaning of the original text. God now calls people to himself through Jesus and offers them forgiveness and the Holy Spirit ‘in the name of Jesus Christ’ (2:38-39).” (152)

Doctrine of Jesus as Christ (Messiah)

- 1. Does the New Testament use the word “Messiah?”
 - a. **John 1:41** [SLIDE]
 - b. **John 4:25** [SLIDE]
- 2. What does the word “Messiah” mean?
 - a. The *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* defines **Messiah** as “A Hebrew term meaning ‘anointed one.’ The OT people of God came to anticipate a person anointed by the Spirit who would function once again as king and priest over Israel.

Hence in Jewish (OT and intertestamental) theology, the Messiah was the

person, whether supernatural or earthly, endowed with special powers and functions by God, who would appear as the divinely appointed, eschatological deliverer and ruler of Israel.

Although Jesus rarely used the title specifically for himself, the NT designation of Messiah (Greek *Christos*) belongs only to Jesus, both as a title and as a personal name. Jesus was the one who was truly anointed by the Holy Spirit, and as the bearer of the Spirit he has the prerogative to pour out the Spirit on his followers.”

- b. Anointed one, or promised one (in Hebrew)
3. What does the word “Christ” mean?
 - a. The *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* defines **Christ** as “The Greek word translated in English as ‘Christ’ is the equivalent of the Hebrew term *Messiah* and means ‘anointed one.’ Although not intrinsic to its meaning, the NT use of the term *Christ* tends to point to the deity of Jesus.”
 - b. So when we see “Christ” in our New Testament, we can mentally replace that with “Messiah” to make the connection with the promised deliverer or savior in the Old Testament.
 4. How is Jesus the Christ?
 - a. How is he not the Christ? The Gospels, Acts, and the NT epistles spend a significant amount of space showing that Jesus is the Christ as promised in the OT.
 - i. The New Bible Dictionary says this in its article on the Messiah: “[The] message [of Jesus’ followers] was not only, or even mainly, that Jesus had been the Messiah while on earth, but that now, exalted to the right hand of God, he was enthroned as the Messianic King. Ps. 110:1, which Jesus had alluded to in this connection (Mk. 14:62), is taken up by Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:34-36), and becomes perhaps the most quoted OT verse in the NT. **Jesus is not a king on David’s throne in Jerusalem**, but, as David’s lord, the ruler of an eternal and heavenly kingdom, waiting at God’s right hand until all his enemies will be placed under his feet. The Messiah whose **earthly humiliation** was in such striking contrast with the political power of popular Messianic expectation **now far transcends** that popular hope of a merely national kingdom.” (761, emphasis mine)
 - b. After his resurrection Jesus himself does this in **Luke 24:25-27** and **44-47**, showing his disciples that he is the Christ prophesied about in the OT, and that he had to suffer the things he did. [SLIDES]

The take-away for us

Resources

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, F. F. Bruce
2. *The Book of the Acts*, F. F. Bruce
3. *The Acts of the Apostles*, David G. Peterson
4. *The Message of Acts*, John Stott
5. *The Acts of the Apostles*, Ben Witherington III
6. *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki & Cherith Fee Nordling
7. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*
8. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, Wayne Grudem
9. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tetragrammaton>
10. *The New Bible Dictionary*, Third Edition, IVP
11. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 2: Exodus*, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.