

Peter'S Pentecost Sermon

Christians Under Judgment and Pentecost

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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If memory serves me right, most Pentecost sermons deal with a handful of subjects: firstfruits, the Holy Spirit, giving of the law, counting Pentecost, why we should count Pentecost, and the tongues question. Unity is also a subject of Pentecost sermons, and a few others you could probably throw in there. There is nothing wrong with these subjects. They are all "meat in due season," and they should be spoken on from time to time.

As I prepared this sermon, I tried to remember if I had ever heard a sermon explaining Peter's sermon in Acts 2, and I could not think of one. I thought, "Why not? Why hasn't somebody explained what Peter said in 31 AD?" Surely someone must have thought of doing it before I did. But probably someone has, and maybe someone out there, whoever is hearing me, has heard one from some other minister, and I just never heard it. You figure there have just been thousands of Pentecost sermons preached in this modern era, and I have heard only a handful of those I have been present to hear. So I thought I would give it a try.

When I looked into it a little deeper and saw what was there, I think I found that Peter's sermon on Pentecost A.D. 31, has a message for us on Pentecost 1999. And what I found—to boil it all down and give you the gist of this sermon in one sentence—we are preaching the exact same message that Peter preached, and it fits nicely with the meaning of the Day of Pentecost.

Let us go to Acts 2 without further preamble. I have entitled this section of the sermon "The Event."

Acts 2:1-4 Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance [or as the Spirit inspired them to speak].

The details of what happened that morning—the sound of the rushing mighty wind, the

Peter's Pentecost Sermon by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

tongues of fire, the speaking in other languages—are not as important to this sermon as to recognize how they affected Peter's sermon. I have three points here about how they affected Peter's sermon.

1) They attracted attention. This is one of the reasons why God does miracles. It is not the only reason, but it is one of the reasons why God has His servants do miracles. Signs and wonders make people stop and think: What is it that just occurred? Can I believe my eyes? Can I believe my ears? Is this really happening? What does it mean? Or at least it makes them take notice, and produce a reaction of some sort. It is not always a good reaction; sometimes it is a bad reaction.

Go now to John 9 just to see one of these. This is the situation with a man who had been born blind and was healed by Jesus. It just happened to be on a Sabbath day, and for this purpose that is not too germane. But I want you to recognize the reaction of the crowd here, specifically the Pharisees.

John 9:13-15 They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

Now listen to this man's first-person testimony of what had happened to him. Listen to what these Pharisees say.

John 9:16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath."

That is one very negative reaction. They discounted the miracle because supposedly He was breaking the sabbath.

John 9:16 Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them.

The sign—the miracle, the healing—had attracted attention, and it produced a reaction. Now if we go to Acts 2 we can see the reaction that this produced—at least at first.

Acts 2:6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and

Peter's Pentecost Sermon by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)
were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.

So it did attract attention, and it attracted a crowd to what was going on, and they were confused as to how they should react.

2) These signs helped to confirm God's Word spoken by His servants.

Go now to Mark 16. This is Mark's comment after Christ had ascended to heaven.

Mark 16:19-20 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they [the apostles] went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.

The signs helped to confirm what they said. Now the signs came, in this case, before they said anything. But the words they were speaking were part of the signs as well, because it was the spirit that "gave them utterance," as it says in Acts 2:4. All of this was one huge sign to attract attention and confirm that what was going on was of God. These particular signs in Acts 2 prove that God was with the apostles, and it gave them instant creditability with at least some of the people.

Turn now to Acts 2:22. I want you to see what Peter himself says during the sermon. I want you to see that Peter was thinking this.

Acts 2:22 Men of Israel, hear these words: "Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know."

Peter had this in mind that God attested to Jesus' Messiahship by the miracles, signs, and wonders that He did, and if these things were now happening with the apostles, He was also confirming them in what they were preaching. So this is in Peter's mind as he is formulating what he is going to say in this sermon. Obviously it was inspired by the Holy Spirit, but God always uses the mind of the person. He does not just speak through them like Balaam's ass.

3) The oral (the auditory, the sound of the wind) and visual (the tongues of fire) have very pointed meanings.

On the surface, just right at the first glance, they are symbols of the Holy Spirit itself. Right? Fire and wind. Did Jesus not say in John 3 that the spirit is like the wind? You cannot see it, but you can see what it does. Peter, I think, sees that, and I think he sees a little more too. This is the crux of what I am going to be aiming at today.

What else did Peter see in those signs? I think what he saw was a clear indication of violence, of disaster, of calamity, of destruction—the kind of destruction that wind and fire can do, and really the kind of destruction that the tongue can do. Remember there were tongues of fire. In Acts 2:2 it says "the sound from heaven was as of a rushing mighty wind." Do you know what that says in the Greek? It does not say "rushing mighty wind," it says "a *violent* wind storm." The sound was like thunder booming right in their midst.

Have you ever been by a close lightning strike? Have you ever felt a lightning strike, when it goes BOOM! and your heart just jumps, and you can almost feel things shaking around you? The windows sometimes rattle because the energy in that sound causes vibrations. If it is loud enough that will move something that is not exactly stationary. So not only was there the visual, the oral, there was also a tactile sensation that they felt. These things were violent. It shook them, if not literally, certainly emotionally and spiritually.

This was not something like a little sounding wind and gentle tongues of fire. That is the impression you get from the Pentecostal church. Even some of them have these crosses with the little fire on top. It looks like a nice gentle fire that you put on the end of a matchstick. This was something that had an overtone of violence to it.

Peter, I think, sees a dichotomy here: good and evil; blessing and curse; construction or destruction. It reminds me very much of what God said through Moses in Deuteronomy 30:19. "I set before you life and death; blessing and cursing." God says, "Choose life so that you and your seed may live."

Let us go to I Kings 19. This is after Elijah had come back from his confrontation with the worshippers of Baal—the priests of Baal and Asherah—and he came back and found out that Jezebel was after him, so he ran into Sinai in fear of his life. He goes to Sinai, and he gets up to where Moses was, and he goes into the cave.

I Kings 19:11-12 Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the

Peter's Pentecost Sermon by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

LOORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LOORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

What happened in Acts 2? A rushing violent wind. Probably a shaking from the roar. Actually the wind was not there. You have to understand that. It was the roar, and it sounded like wind. And then fire sat on each one of them. And then what did they do? They spoke. They uttered their voice as the spirit inspired them.

Very interesting the similarity there between what happened with Elijah when God was trying to inspire him to get off his duff and go preach. God said, "I don't care what it looks like out there. I reserve to Myself seven thousand who have not bowed their knees to Baal. You still have work to do, Elijah." And Elijah said, "Poor pitiful me. Jezebel wants to kill me." And God says, "Well, you're pretty much through being a prophet. I want you to go anoint these guys as kings over Syria and Israel. I want you to anoint your successor."

Very interesting. There was not much left for Elijah to do after that point. He was not inspired by that enough to get rid of his self-pity. He was still used slightly after that for certain things, but the fire was gone from him. He was consumed by fear for himself. So God gave him a few things to do, and you do not hear much more after this of Elijah.

It is unfortunate, but it is very interesting that those same things came up again when the church began in 31 AD—the sound of a wind, shaking that occurs from the great sound, and the fire, and the voice. They all appear. So it is the voice really, from what we see here in I Kings 19 that God wants us to really understand. It is the voice that has the real power—the words that come out, the ideas that are preached that have the real power, because those are the things that turn the mind toward God. Those are the things that would cause repentance. Those are the things that bring salvation.

The gospel is given in words and ideas, and it is the only gospel that will lead to life. It is the words that are important. What we see here is Peter understanding that this word is so important that God decided, in His first real sign to the church, that it would go in each language represented in the crowd; that it would go to all the earth in each person's language so he could understand in his own thinking processes the wonderful words, the wonderful ideas, and the great future that God has in store for His people.

But the threat of the wind and the earthquake and the fire still remain. They're there because God's power caused those things. Even though God may not have been in them there on the slopes of Mount Sinai, He caused them. He is in the word. He may

Peter's Pentecost Sermon by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

not be in the violence, but He is sovereign and He causes them if, in His judgment, the people do not accept the word. They are always there as a threat in the background. God has this power and He will brook no enemies in the end.

Let us go to Romans 10. I want you to see that this is what happened in type with Israel. Paul is talking about Israel. Remember he said that he wished "that all Israel might be saved."

Romans 10:14-17 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? [What are we getting toward here?] And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our report? So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Romans 10:21 But to Israel he says: "All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

It is very interesting that Paul at this point picks up the example of Elijah.

Romans 11:1 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

God has called some Israelites. As a matter of fact, probably in America a majority of Israelites. Not all of them are cast off.

Romans 11:2-3 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, "LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life?"

This is what he told God, that God made him look and see all those violent things happening out there.

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Romans 11:4-5 But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Now tell me something. What happened to those people who heard the word? It says there in Hebrews 4 that they heard the gospel, but they did not have the faith to believe it. What happened to those people who heard the gospel and did not believe? What did God do? He sent fire, an earthquake, and windstorm, and the sword, and captivity, and famine, and disease, and scattering. Exile. Many He cut off.

The threat is still there, even while the word is being preached, that destruction and calamity are there for those who fall under God's judgment if they do not believe and continue in the word.

He did this in type with Israel as an object lesson to us so that we could look back in the pages of the Old Testament and see how it had all worked out. But for us the stakes are very much more real and eternal. We will not just have physical fire and earthquake and windstorm and sword and captivity, famine, disease. It becomes spiritual, and once it becomes spiritual, the stakes are for real.

Romans 11:22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell [those who did not believe] severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness.

He does not just say, "If you believe you'll get God's goodness," and stop there and put a period at the end of a sentence. He says, "If you *continue* in His goodness." It is not just sufficient to repent and be baptized, but there is also a continuation that we call sanctification that has to go on so that we remain in His goodness; otherwise, you also will be cut off. Very sobering. "Consider the goodness and severity of God."

So if we want to summarize what this event meant to Peter, if I'm understanding the way he structured his sermon right, he says that "It's time to fish, or cut bait." He was a fisherman remember. It is time to choose whether you are for Him, or against Him. Yes, it is a time that judgment begins. Which side are you going to choose? The hour of decision has come.

Now back to Acts 2. What was the response from the crowd? We saw of this a little bit.

Acts 2:5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.

I want you to notice that the crowd was made up of Jews—devout Jews. It does not mention any other type of person. They are all Jews. Think of this in terms of "spiritual Jews." God sent the message to the people under the covenant. Think of this spiritually.

Acts 2:6-7 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?"

There is a tie here with Christ, because they knew that Christ Himself was a Galilean.

Acts 2:8-11 "And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

Now we know what they were saying while they were speaking in these other languages. They were describing what God had done in time past and probably in the last few weeks. They were witnessing. They were preaching the gospel under inspiration of the spirit.

Acts 2:12 So they [the crowd] were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

They were "confused," in verse 6. Now they are "perplexed." Very similar meaning there. They could not figure out what was going on.

Acts 2:13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

"They're drunk. They're speaking in gibberish." This is interesting because the world

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thinks that is what "speaking in tongues" is, like you are under inspiration of a bottle of hooch.

We saw in John 9 that the people had the same reaction to Christ's works. Some were for Him, and some were against Him. In John 7:40-44 the same thing is said, this time at the Feast of Tabernacles at the Last Great Day.

John 7:40-44 Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ," but some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

They were confused, perplexed, divided about what was going on. I think this possibly got Peter thinking about something Christ said in this situation. Let us go to John 7. He told those people who were having such trouble understanding what was going on. He said:

John 7:24 "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

It is interesting that Peter did not think about that. The word judgment comes up again. Peter had to think about this situation where people were perplexed. He had to think, "Well, some are going to accept this, and some are not going to accept this." Now why do some accept this, and others do not? Well, some are going to use righteous judgment, and some are not going to use righteous judgment. There is a choice here. A decision has to be made. You are either for Him, or against Him. You have to choose sides. The hour of decision has arrived.

I also think Peter got a glimpse of the universality of the message, because it was done in all these different languages. They were from all over the Middle East and the Mediterranean—from Arabia to Rome. I cannot imagine that Peter did not think, "Well, if these Jews go back to their homelands and preach this also, maybe some of the natives of those lands will also hear and believe." He says something later on at the end of his message that gives you the hint that he was thinking this was open to all. Finally I think Peter saw the potential for persecution pop up, because some were mocking and calling them winebibbers and drunkards.

I think this did not affect him the way that they thought it might, because what it did was make him resolve to meet the mocking with strength and logic and truth, which he gives then in his sermon. He did not wither under the mocking diatribe of those who did not believe. He says, "Look. This is the way it is, and you either accept it, or reject it." That is the way the ministers of God must approach preaching the message. They just have to lay it out on the line with as much strength as they can muster, and with as much strength that they are inspired with by God.

Now we will get into Peter's sermon. Peter's sermon pretty much breaks down into three parts. Each one of them is introduced by an address to the crowd. First he says, "Men of Judea, and of Jerusalem" in verse 14. In verse 22 he calls them "Men of Israel," and then in verse 29 he calls them a little bit more intimately "Men and brethren."

Section I of Peter's sermon:

Acts 2:14-16 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. [It is too early to begin drinking.] But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:"

And then Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32.

Acts 2:17-18 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.
And on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;
And they shall prophesy.'

You and I would think that he would stop right there, but for some reason Peter goes on and quotes the next three verses from Joel 2, and they are very interesting verses. If you remember, when Christ stood up on the Sabbath day and announced what His mission was, He stopped before talking about the Day of the Lord and His second coming. Peter does not stop. Notice what he says:

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Acts 2:19-21 'I will show wonders in heaven above
And signs in the earth beneath:
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.
The sun shall be turned into darkness
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and notable day of the LOORD.
And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LOORD shall
be
saved.'

That to me is very significant that he did not stop after 'and they shall prophesy.' He went right on and said, 'The great and notable day of the LOORD has dawned.' Not in the sense of what we understand of as "the Day of the Lord," meaning right at the end there of the Tribulation, but what has happened here by the giving of the Holy Spirit, that God's day has begun—the time when God has intervened in the affairs of humanity by sending His Son with the gospel.

Once God did that, the door was open, and everything that would occur from that point on is more significant. It is very much like Darryl [Henson] was saying yesterday. Something happened by sending His Son to change things. A new day had dawned and it was going to end, let us say in a sense, not completely with the 'great and notable Day of the Lord.' By that point that decision would have to be made. Either you fell under the heel of God because you rejected what He said, or His servants said by Him, or you would be saved by calling on the name of the Lord. There is that choice.

Peter did not stop by saying, "This is what occurred. The Holy Spirit was given, and these people will begin to preach God's way." He went on and said, "Now the time of judgment has begun, and you either choose the one, or you choose the other. This is what has begun."

It is very interesting that Isaiah 12 and 13 have these ideas side by side. We will go to Isaiah 13 first. This is a proclamation against what was going to happen to Babylon. Babylon is symbolic of this world and all this world's systems.

Isaiah 13:6a Wail, for the day of the LOORD is at hand!

It is near. It is not saying we are on top of it, but it is near.

Peter's Pentecost Sermon by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Isaiah 13:6b-13 It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will be limp. Every man's heart will melt, and they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; they will be amazed at one another. Their faces will be like flames. Behold, the day of the LOORD comes. Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light. [Very similar to what Joel said.] The sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine. I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of the LOORD of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger.

This is what Peter was telling the crowd, that the very first inklings of it had begun; not completely, but this was the time that opened it. So Peter seems to say, "Do you want to receive that? Is that where you're headed?"

Now there is a glimmer of hope at the end of what Peter says there in Acts 2:21, "But if you call upon the name of the Lord, you shall be saved."

We will go now to Isaiah 12. Right before that proclamation against Babylon, God had given the glimmer of hope.

Isaiah 12:1 And in that day. . .

That is usually a marker talking about the Day of the Lord.

Isaiah 12:1-2 And in that day you will say: "O LOORD, I will praise You; though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation."

This is being spoken by someone who had called upon the name of the Lord.

Isaiah 12:2-6 "Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid; 'for YAH, the LOORD, is my strength and my song; He also has become my

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salvation.' " Therefore with joy you will draw water [symbol of the Holy Spirit] from the wells of salvation. And in that day you will say: "Praise the LOORD, call upon His name; declare His deeds among the peoples. Make mention that His name is exalted. Sing to the LOORD, for He has done excellent things; this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!"

That is the good part if you call upon the name of the Lord. On the other side there is the Day of the Lord which is full of fire and destruction and death.

These were devout Jews, remember. They knew their scriptures, and it did not take Peter reading much of Joel 2 to let them know what he was talking about.

Section II of Peter's sermon:

Acts 2:22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know."

He is pinning them down here. "You know Jesus. You saw all the signs and wonders. You know that these things happened. You were witness of them yourself." They would not have any excuse for what he was going to say next.

Acts 2:23 "Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God. . ."

He is saying God did these things. This is part of the "wonderful works of God." It was determined counsel and foreknowledge. God did this purposefully.

Acts 2:23-24 ". . . you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it."

And he explains that. Why? He quotes David.

Acts 2:25-26 "For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LOORD always

Peter's Pentecost Sermon by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

before my face, for He is at my right hand [in the position of honor and reverence], that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh will also rest in hope.'

Meaning rest in the grave; rest in confidence. "My flesh will rest in confidence." He did not doubt that God was going to resurrect him.

Acts 2:27 'For You will not leave my soul in Hades [in the state of the dead], nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'

In Isaiah 12:6 the Lord was called "the Holy One." "O You who dwell in Zion, you have the Holy One to praise."

Acts 2:27-28 'Because You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption, You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'

Verse 28 says that (1) you have brought me back to the land of the living, and (2) you have put me directly in your presence, in the ascension, in the glorification.

This answers the question, "How do we know that this time of decision has arrived?" It is an unspoken question by the audience. Here Peter had said, "The hour of decision has come." You could just think that somebody out there—a devout Jew—said, "How do you know? Who are you to say this?" And so Peter comes back and says, "Look, God has worked all this out by His sovereign will, with foreknowledge."

What he was doing was saying, "Look, the prophecies in the Old Testament are there for you to see, and it was God's determined counsel, it was His wisdom to do these things. Some of you were eyewitness of them. You should know, because you're devout Jews, and this man, this God, can only be Messiah, who was put in the grave, but the grave couldn't hold Him. Who is it among all men that had ever been written about that the grave could not hold? Not David. But David spoke of Him. Only God's Holy One will not be able to stay in the grave and see corruption. This Jesus of Nazareth must be Messiah, and you killed Him."

So he put an exclamation point to the first section by saying, "You are first in line for God's wrath, because you knew, and you did it anyway. Choose."

You might think that Peter would quote a more prominent psalm to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. Psalm 16 is not one of those that we would probably put to memory. He did. You might think he would quote Psalm 22 which talks very specifically about the crucifixion. But no, he did Psalm 16. I do not think he is really trying to prove specifically that Jesus is the Messiah. What he is proving is that the grave could not hold Christ. That is the Scripture he needed to prove to them the grave could not hold the Christ.

"And if He is the Christ, and the grave did not hold Him, and we saw it, the tomb was empty—everybody in Jerusalem had been buzzing about this for weeks—there's only one conclusion we can reach, devout Jews. This was the Messiah. All the facts are out there for you to see, for you to make your decision."

What he is doing is providing a biblical explanation for the empty tomb, and making them reach a conclusion about the state of the person who had been in the tomb, that He was Messiah, and He now sat on the right hand of God. And because He was there, He had given the Holy Spirit to complete His work. That is what Messiah is supposed to do, isn't it? "Out of His belly shall flow living waters." Right? So now it's time to decide whether you're going to support Messiah, or you're going to go back into the world.

Section III of Peter's sermon:

Acts 2:29 "Men and brethren [he appeals to them very personally], let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David [whom he just quoted], that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day."

What did this tell the Jews? David's tomb still contained his body, and if that is the case, and Jesus' tomb is empty, and the great stone was rolled back and no one knows how that occurred, who then did this Psalm 16 refer to? It had to refer to David's greater Son—the Messiah, who was none other than Jesus of Nazareth, though a Galilean.

Acts 2:30-31 "Therefore [David], being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he [David], foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption."

He spelled it out for them line by line—"Look. Since David prophesied this to occur to the Christ, his descendant a thousand years later, and since this occurred to Jesus of

Peter's Pentecost Sermon by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Nazareth, Jesus is the Messiah without a doubt, and He's welcome to sit on David's throne. *He is your King* [he is telling them] *and Savior!* So choose. Are you going to persist in trying to crucify Him as you did, or are you going to accept Him as your King?"

Acts 2:32 "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses."

I do not know if he meant just the apostles, or whether he included the crowd. They were all devout Jews who were living there in Jerusalem. They knew a few things. Everybody was talking about it. Did not the disciples on the road to Emmaus say to Jesus, "Haven't you heard about this? Everybody knows about it. Where have you been? Under a rock?" Everybody knew, and they were all witnesses.

This is a recurring theme with all the apostles. They all talk about this, that they are eye witnesses of these things. They saw them. They could testify that these things occurred. There was a whole jury full of them—twelve. That should convict anyone of the truth of the matter.

Acts 2:33 "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."

Finally he comes to a conclusion and definitely puts the final stamp on what had happened here—that this had occurred because Jesus had been killed, laid in the tomb, resurrected, and ascended to God's right hand, and He got right to work and did what the prophecies say. He poured out His Spirit. He is the Dispenser of the Holy Spirit.

That is a job that God has given into His hands, because He is the Head of the church. That is how the church gets its power. That is how all of us individuals get our understanding and our strength. That is His job, to make His people into the Bride. He got right to work and gave the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. That explains the signs that had occurred that morning.

Acts 2:34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens. [Right? His body is still there in the tomb.] But he says himself: [David's own witness, own testimony on the matter] 'The LOORD [meaning God] said to my Lord' [my Master, my Ruler] . . ."

Peter's Pentecost Sermon by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Now David was king. Who was David's Lord? Well, it was Yahweh. It was the One who became Jesus Christ. The One called the LORD is God the Father. So the Father said to the One who became Christ, "Sit at My right hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

Peter gets into another little point here. He is explaining that, "Yes, Jesus went to God's right hand, and there He would rule the church in the position of honor at God's right hand. He would dispense the Holy Spirit. He would do those things that the High Priest does, but "till." There is a time period here. "Until I make Your enemies Your footstool."

What did this tell Peter? That there is a period of time between the time that Christ ascended to heaven and the time that God's enemies would be put down completely. This is the age we call "the church age," that there is a time that there would be a time for us to choose which side of the battle we are going to be on. Are we going to *fight* the enemies of Christ? Or are we going to *join* the enemies of Christ? How long this battle goes on in a small way depends upon us being ready for the battle. Peter uses this theme later on in his epistles, especially II Peter. I am thinking about "hastening the day."

We have to join the fight and do our part in putting the enemies of God under His foot. We do that by preparing ourselves for His Kingdom. Not physically going out there and slaying, but by being part of the army, putting on the armor, and doing all those things that we have been taught are part of sanctification.

So what God is doing now in this time is calling His soldiers to the fray and preparing them for battle. The enemies will not be put down completely even when Christ returns. There is still death, and there is still Satan who will be released for a short while. We will be there at that time as soldiers in that fight, but right now we are in basic training, getting ready for that battle.

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

This just puts the capstone on everything. It is the *coup de grace*, as the French would say. He put his whole argument together in one verse, and it is really very masterful and very much inspired by the Holy Spirit.

(1) He calls them the House of Israel, and he says, "You are the covenant people. You are responsible. You should know."

(2) He asserts that God Himself has done these things. "Know assuredly that God has made this Jesus. It was God's doing. Jesus didn't make Himself the Messiah, God had done this." So they better make sure they are on the right side of God too, because if they are going to go against it, they are going to go against the will of God.

(3) He repeats the name "Jesus." I think this is significant. Everybody knows what the name "Jesus" means—Savior, Joshua. "You killed your Savior, guys," is what he is telling them, "and He's the One in whose name you will be saved, if you call upon Him."

(4) He accuses them once again of their guilt—crucifying Jesus. "*You* did it. Each one of you in the crowd." He makes it very personal. "Whom you crucified." Very terse. He does not allow for any argument. And then he informs them of Jesus' current state. "He is Lord." We might say "Sovereign." He is our Sovereign. He is our King. He is our Master. He hold all the cards now. He is also Messiah—our Savior, our Redeemer.

He shows them the two-edged sword again. On the one hand He is the Sovereign and the King who can throw all these calamities at us, and on the other hand He is our Savior and our Redeemer. Choose. Which side do you want? The Judge, who may give us quite a hefty sentence? Or do you want the Savior? Which side of Christ do you want to face? That is Peter's argument. The time has come to make a choice. Now his sermon had the intended effect.

Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart [That word is interestingly "pierced." Just like Jesus Himself was pierced in the side, they were pierced to the heart], and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

All this guilt had descended upon them. "How do we get out of this mess? The hole's too deep. What do we do?" This crowd, remember, was made up of devout Jews. They were the ones who were looking for the Messiah—and they missed Him! They killed Him! Now what do they do?

Peter had put the whole puzzle together, and they could see it, and they were stricken with guilt, and they just pleaded for help. These were ones that were really trying to do what was right. Their intentions were good. They had gone astray, and now they wanted to know how they could fix things. But they still had to be guided in the way. They still needed help. At least I will give them this—they had the sense to ask. So Peter tells them.

Peter's Pentecost Sermon by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent [REPENT! CHANGE! TURN! GO THE OTHER WAY!], and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ [the Messiah]. . ."

"It's a personal thing. Everyone of you repent. Everyone of you get baptized. Everyone of you acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah."

Acts 2:38-39 ". . . for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you, and to your children ["God has given you the promise that He will give you the spirit, and to your children. There is hope."] and to all who are afar off [Not just those that are here in the crowd, but to. . .] as many as the Lord our God will call."

It is up to God how many that He calls, but it is open now to as many as God thinks should have it. Did you notice all the doctrines he hit there? Oh! He gave them a real sermon in two short verses: repentance, baptism, the authority of Christ's name, the Messiahship of Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the opening of salvation to all men—God's calling. He gave them a mouthful.

Acts 2:40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

What did he end up with? "*Come out of the world.* Be separate from this vile generation—this age of man, because the age of God has just opened, and you have a chance to participate."

Does this sound familiar? It is the same message that is being preached by the church of God today: Repent. Be baptized. Acknowledge Christ as your Savior. Receive the Holy Spirit, and then come out of the world. And keep coming out of the world, because that is our job. We are being prepared as the Bride of Christ.

Look at the result of these signs in Peter's very inspiring sermon. It was a mass conversion. It says about three thousand souls were added that day. And what happened? The church was united. The apostles performed many miracles. Many people were added to them day by day. They shared their goods with those who had need. They showed brotherly love to one another. They gave God for glory in everything.

They prayed fervently for God's will, for God's help, for God's giving of the spirit so that they could continue in the Way. They had a unity of the spirit that maybe has never been seen again. In fact this may be the high-water mark of the church—just on the same day it was founded. Some have said, "It's all been down hill from there." But it does not have to be that way. We can have the same fervency for God, the same unity of the spirit if we take Peter's words to heart again—one thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight years later.

We can do it. This *is* our day of salvation. The words still apply. Which shall we choose? Be *for* Him? Or be *against* Him? We are under judgment, and we have to make this choice daily whether we are going to follow Christ, or whether we are going to go back into the world.

I think Peter carried this message through to the very end of his life because he ends this first epistle with similar words.

I Peter 4:7-10 But the end of all things is at hand [Joel 2]. Therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without grumbling [like the church did there after his sermon]. As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, [which they saw poured out to them on the day of Pentecost].

I Peter 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Judgment is on us now. We have chosen to follow the Christ, and if we then are scarcely saved, (verse 18), what is going to happen to those who become the enemies? Think of that as you try to make this choice day by day.

As Darryl said yesterday, we are the firstfruits of God's harvest. But that also means that we are the first to come under the judgment—and judgment towards salvation. It does not have to be judgment towards wrath. This is judgment towards salvation.

So we have a choice, as Peter put it in his sermon. Will we choose to face God's wrath before the coming and great notable day of the Lord? Or will we call upon the name of

Peter's Pentecost Sermon by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

the Lord and be God's firstfruits and be in that first resurrection? That *is* the choice of the Day of Pentecost. Choose to follow our Lord and Christ every day.