

The Foundation of the Church

After Peter made the good confession: **"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."** Jesus praised him for the insight he and the other apostles had gleaned by a careful consideration of God's testimony. Both Peter and John made note of this in their writings. Peter said *"we did not follow cunningly devised fables—we were eyewitnesses"* 2Pet. 1:16, and John: *"the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us - we beheld his glory."* Jn. 1:14

Jesus then revealed that what Peter had confessed would become the rock upon which **"I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."** (Mt. 16:16-18).

This is an elaboration of an idea Jesus had discussed at the conclusion of his Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 7:24-27). There are two kinds of spiritual foundations. One, like rock, is stable and firm. The other, like sand has no stability and will shift. The wise build on rock and the foolish on sand. Jesus built his church upon a foundation so firm and stable it is absolutely immovable.

Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: 29 for our God is a consuming fire. Heb. 12:28-29

Because Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, his kingdom and church are immovable and firm. When the Jewish leaders tried to destroy them (Acts 4:24-31), Jesus power as the Christ gave them the strength to remain unmoved.

They had killed Jesus thinking it would put an end to his kingdom and reign. What they failed to calculate was God's ability to overrule their judgment and establish Jesus on an eternal throne at his own right hand (Ps. 2:1-12).

After Jesus resurrection, He gained the keys of death and Hades (Rev 1:18). With those keys not even the gates of Hades can prevail over His will. His power is greater than death! There is no longer any power that can triumph over Jesus (Rom. 8:35-39). He is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15). We can rest assured that our labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58) and our hope is a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3) because the church is built on the foundation that Jesus is the Christ the Son of living God.

Everything is founded on the truth of Peter's confession. If Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, then the church is the greatest and most stable thing in this creation. It all comes down to the foundation. If Jesus is the Christ, then in baptism we are *"delivered out of the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love"* (Col. 1:13; 2:11-13). If Jesus is the Christ, we will have eternal life on the last day. But if Jesus is not the Christ, then the foundation crumbles and there is nothing left.

if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. . . 19 If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable. 1 Cor. 15:14, 19

It is for this reason that the sermon in Acts 2 is so important. The Holy Spirit is laying the foundation that proves beyond a shadow of doubt that Jesus truly is the Christ, the Son of the Living God.

The Evidence Presented in Acts 2

All the events on the day of Pentecost after Jesus crucifixion were designed to prove Jesus was the Christ. The day of Pentecost and the Passover were two of the three feasts where God required all Israelite males to be in Jerusalem (Ex 23:14-16; Deut 16). Devout men from every nation under heaven were once again in Jerusalem only 50 days after the crucifixion.

According to Luke the historian and prophet who wrote Acts, it was divine intervention that interrupted the normal routines of that day. The quiet of early morning was suddenly interrupted by the sound of a mighty rushing wind, but without the wind (Acts 2:1-4)! A great curiosity led many to search for the source of it. As they drew near they found it was filling the house where the apostles were staying.

As each person arrived, they watched the twelve apostles speaking to an ever growing crowd. Added to the sound of the wind was the amazing sight of fiery tongues over their heads. As they listened to the words a more amazing thing happened. Though Greek was the common language of the Roman world, each nationality also had their own dialect they had learned as infants from their parents. This was their own special language, they heard at home among their loved ones and the apostles were using it! There were about 15 nationalities present and it was amazing to them that these unlearned Galilean apostles were using their own native languages to speak the mighty works of God.

As intelligent people living centuries later, what do we make of these things? If they did not happen, how did the church really begin and the numbers grow so rapidly? If they were “*cunningly devised fables*,” why didn’t the leaders unveil the hoax and stop the growth? Though we were not present, there is no other logical explanation to justify the results. It was the centerpiece of the sermon. If it was not happening then the power of the sermon is lost. It did happen, and it is powerful testimony that Jesus is the Christ.

Miracles, Wonders and Signs

Luke then stated they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke as He gave them the words. This is an inspired sermon. It contains the most powerful evidence that Jesus is the Christ. It began:

“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 —” Acts 2:22

The Spirit reminded them that Jesus had performed miracles among them and they knew it was true! A careful look at the gospels reveals how extensive those miracles were.

And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. 24 And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. Mt. 4:23-24

And there came unto him great multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at his feet; and he healed them: 31 insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and lame walking, and the blind seeing: and they glorified the God of Israel. Mt. 15:30-31

Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? 10 Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? Mt. 16:9-11

Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.” Jn. 6:14

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. Jn. 20:30-31

If these things had not happened in such a public way, the first point would not have been so strongly proved. Peter sought to prove they killed their own Messiah. They would not easily admit this. It would take powerful proof. But they could not deny, even the Jewish rulers were not denying it.

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Jn. 3:1-2

Remember also that while these words were being spoken, the memory of the tongues of fire, the mighty rushing winds, and the speaking in foreign languages were still fresh in their minds. A few days later it would be confirmed again when Peter healed the lame man in the temple. Even the rulers were convinced.

But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. Acts 4:15-16

Since Jesus performed miracles, He had to be a man approved of God. God would not give this power to an evil deceiver or imposter. He approved Jesus and gave him the power to perform miracles.

how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? Heb. 2:3-4

You Killed Him

Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; Acts 2:23

This next point was an historical fact that had only been done 50 days earlier. If it were not true, they would have scoffed at it. But they could not deny it because it was true. He was killed on the day of the Passover feast. Every devout Jew who was at the Pentecost would have also been at the

Passover. So they all witnessed the debacle of Jesus standing before Pilate.

When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it. 25 And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children." Mt. 27:24-25

The only objection they might have made was foreseen by the Holy Spirit and dealt with before it was made. If He was approved of God, how could we kill Him? Why would God allow us to do such a thing? The reason was that it was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

*"horizo,...(from *horos* a boundary, limit)... to define 1.to mark out the boundaries or limits (of any place of thing):... 2. to determine, appoint:... Rom 1:4 (for although Christ was the Son of God before his resurrection, yet he was openly appointed [A.V. declared] such among men by this transcendent and crowning event)..." (Thayer p 453; 3724)*

prognosis... 1. foreknowledge... 2. forethought, prearrangement... 1 Pet. 1:2; Acts 2:23..." (Thayer 4268)

Not only did God know beforehand, but he wrote it down beforehand. Peter could have used Gen 3:15; Isa 52-53. Or he may have simply waited to prove it in the midst of his proof of Jesus resurrection which was also part of God's determinate counsel and foreknowledge. God not only knew they would rebel and reject him, but he used that rebellion to fulfill his own purpose.

So far, no logical or sane objection could be made. They can't deny the sound of the wind or the fiery tongues. They couldn't deny the languages they were hearing. They knew Jesus had performed miracles and they had killed him so they could not deny historical facts so fresh on their minds.

God Raised Him from the Dead

This was not the first time the resurrection had been cited as proof of Jesus divinity and being the Messiah.

Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said. Jn. 2:19-22

But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Mt. 12:39-41

A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed. Mt. 16:4

Did they understand Jesus in these matters?

On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, 63 saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' 64 Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." 65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." 66 So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard. Mt. 27:62-66

This was not being introduced for the first time and Peter's words were not new or novel. They knew Jesus had said these words. But how can Peter prove it.

He offered two undeniable proofs. First, a prophecy of David that God would raise his Christ from the dead. The Jews understood that David spoke many things in his Psalms. He spoke of his own troubles and successes and he also gave Messianic prophecies. Peter quotes a very special prophecy of comfort and hope.

'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28 You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' Acts 2:25-28

Now the Spirit forces them to see this Psalm in a clearer light. How could David be speaking of himself? The answer now is clear. He could not be speaking of himself since he was dead, his body was in the tomb corrupted and his soul still in Hades.

“Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, 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, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. Acts 2:29-31

Therefore He also says in another Psalm: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’ 36 “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; 37 but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. Acts 13:35-38

This is clearly part of the “*determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,*” all prophecy is from God and cannot be broken. Since David could not be speaking of himself, he had to be speaking of the Christ. So the Christ would die, his body would be placed in a tomb, his soul would enter Hades. But his body would not see corruption and his soul would not stay in Hades.

Added to this was they eyewitness testimony of the 12 apostles. Yet they had even more than that.

1. The testimony of the two men in dazzling apparel Lk 24:1-9
2. What Peter and John saw. John 20:2-10 (the burial 19:38-40)
3. What Mary Magdalene saw. Jn 20:11-18
4. The initial incredulity of the apostles Mk 16:9-14
5. Thomas still with holds belief after hearing most of the above testimony. Jn. 20:24-25; 26-29
6. I Cor 15:1-8 Witnesses categorized and listed out. Over 500 at one time.
7. Why not produce the body? They made the tomb as sure as they could!! But it wasn't enough.

At the Right Hand of God Exalted

Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. Acts 2:33

How could they deny this? They heard the wind, saw the tongues, heard the languages. They could not deny what they were seeing so they had to admit it was true. Added to this was David's prophesy that the Christ would be at God's right hand.

“For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’” Acts 2:34-35

David did not ascend. His body was still in the tomb and his soul still in Hades. So again he was not speaking of himself. He was speaking of the Christ. Step by step, the power and logic of the sermon forced Israel to a single conclusion.

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

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| 1. A man approved of God. :22 | Proof: Mighty works, wonders and signs
God did in the midst of you. You yourselves know. |
| 2. You crucified and put to death; :23 | Proof: Undeniable historical fact. |
| 3. God raised Him. :24-31 | Proof: 1. David Prophesied that God would raise the Christ.
2. We are witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. |
| 4. Exalted at Right hand of God. | Proof: 1. God has poured out what you see and hear
a. The sound of the wind,
b. The fiery tongues sitting on them
c. Hearing in languages they were born.
2. David prophesied that the Christ would be exalted. |
| 5. Conclusion: | Let all the house of Israel know assuredly God has made Him both Lord and Christ. |
| 6. Results: | They were cut to the heart Said "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" |