

Acts Chapter 2 Con't

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[0 : 00] Well, this is our last study for the month of April. It's hard to believe we're going to be looking at May next time we meet, but it's a happy time of year.

And I always look forward to May and the weather and Mother's Day coming up. These are a month full of a lot of good things. Today we are continuing in our text in Acts chapter 2, and I just want to remind you that this is by far and away one of the most controversial passages in all of the Word of God, and there probably isn't anything that so divides Christendom as the various interpretations that are gleaned from the book of Acts, particularly chapter 2.

And I would emphasize that every one of those interpretations, I have no doubt, is founded and based on good faith, sincerity, a desire to know and understand the truth, and to walk in it. But I must also add that sincerity is no guarantee for the accuracy or the truthfulness of the conclusions we reach.

It would be a wonderful thing if everybody could keep that in mind. Being sincere about something is no guarantee that it is a truthful position. I know because I have found that out a number of times as I have had to reverse myself regarding certain things that I previously believed.

[1 : 34] And what we are talking about today is one of them. For years and years as a new believer, I simply hewed the party line regarding the interpretation of this passage, never really questioned it, primarily because I really respected the source, the people who were teaching me this.

I knew they were good people, and I knew they loved the Lord, and I just automatically assumed that what they were teaching was true. But you ought not to make that assumption. And you ought not to make the assumption that what I am teaching is true.

You've got to be a Berean, and that means you have to search the scriptures to see whether those things are so. There is only one person from whom you can take anything, without any question at all, about it being true.

And that's the Lord. And he's the only one. So everything and anything that any man teaches you, beginning with this man, you have got to weigh it and evaluate it against the teaching of scripture. Because being a nice guy, being likable, being respected, it's all a wonderful thing. But that's no guarantee that the words that come out of his mouth are true.

[2 : 53] So keep that in mind, no matter from whom you get the information. And as we look at Acts chapter 2, we are dealing with an issue that is exclusively, and I really want to emphasize this, this is exclusively Jewish.

Here is a big assumption that is made that is terribly invalid. And that is, the Old Testament, well, that's all for the Jews.

That's about Israel. The New Testament, that's all for Christians. No, it isn't. No, it isn't. There is a continuity between the Old Testament and the New.

There is, granted, a 400-year gap between the Old and the New Testament. But, when you take up the New Testament, beginning with Matthew 1.1, you have got to understand that it is immediately plugged in to the Old Testament before it.

When Christ arrived on the scene, when that baby was born in Bethlehem, that was not the beginning of the New Testament. In fact, to just insert something here that ought to clarify that, it was the night that Jesus was betrayed.

[4 : 16] After he had lived his entire life of 30 years, 33 years, before he was to go to the cross, it was then, right before his crucifixion, that he took that cup and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

And what that means is, the New Covenant, New Testament, if you will, did not exist prior to the death of Christ. Because it was his death that inaugurated the New Covenant.

As the animal blood inaugurated the Old Covenant, when Moses took the blood of the animals, sprinkled it on the people, and on the book, on the law, the commandments, that inaugurated the Old Covenant.

And when Christ died on the cross, he inaugurated the New Covenant, not with animal blood, but with his own blood. Did you have a comment, Roger? Christ stated that on the night before his crucifixion, but nobody really did what he was talking about.

That's true. They didn't understand that. They didn't understand it. And it is obvious, it is obvious, that even though he divulged to his apostles what was going to happen to him when he got to Jerusalem, they did not mean that, they did not believe that he really meant that.

[5 : 45] They just thought he was kind of depressed, thinking negatively. That's not going to happen. And Peter said as much as, we won't let it happen. That's not going to happen.

Far be it from thee. And then, remember when Jesus corrected him and said, get thee behind me, Satan. You savor, you are favoring the things that the way men think, not the way God thinks.

And it was for that very purpose that Christ came into the world. But they didn't understand that.

They didn't understand that. When he was on that cross, dying, no one, including his own mother, no one, looked at this dying figure on the cross and said, it's a shame that this is happening.

But, it's all going to be better because three days later he'll come back to life again. And while he's there on that cross, he is being made sin for the sins of the whole world.

So, it's not really so bad in the final analysis. Do you think anybody was thinking that as he was on that cross? Of course not. They were thinking just one thing. It's all over.

[6 : 55] He's dead. The dream is gone. There isn't going to be any kingdom. The Romans have killed him. And our own leaders have helped him.

That's what they thought. They didn't understand. So, it is ridiculous to take the position, really, that so many take that prior to the cross, well, what everybody was looking forward to, you see, we look back to the cross for our salvation and what happened there.

And everybody else who lived before, like Old Testament people, etc., they all looked forward to the cross. No, they didn't. They didn't have a clue that the cross was coming.

The cross was coming. Crucifixion is described in detail in Psalm 22, a thousand years before Jesus Christ was even born. The psalmist describes dying by crucifixion.

And that mode of death didn't even exist then. And it wasn't a Jewish mode of death either.

Because the Jews executed people by stoning. It was the Romans who crucified.

[8 : 05] And a thousand years before Christ was born, the description of crucifixion is given in Psalm 22. And the death of the Messiah when he comes is spelled out in Isaiah 53, 700 years before Jesus was ever born.

But nobody thought that the description in Psalm 22 and the description in Isaiah 53 would actually befall their beloved Messiah when he came.

Didn't have a clue. Because in the Old Testament, two comings of the Messiah are clearly spelled out. One is verse, But thou, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me who shall be ruler of Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting.

Micah 5.2 is talking about where the Messiah would be born 500 years before he was born. And numerous other places in the Old Testament talk about the Messiah coming.

But fellas, never lose sight of this. The Old Testament speaks ten times more about the second coming of the Messiah than it does the first.

[9 : 32] In his first coming, he comes as a Lamb of God, as an innocent baby who will be a sacrifice for sin. But the second time he comes, he's coming as a reigning king.

He's coming as a warrior. And it's depicted in Revelation 19. And he will come with a sword. And he will smite the enemies of Israel.

This is found in the Old Testament far more than the first coming. And the idea of the second coming to every Jew was far more appealing than the obscure first coming that speaks of a death. Shame. Ignominy. As a loyal Jew, which of those comings would you latch on to? The one that has the pomp and the glory and the power and the prestige and the one that puts down Israel.

That's what they thought the Messiah would be when he came the first time. They had no clue about two comings. And when Jesus came and presented himself as the Messiah, he did not fit the qualifications that the religious establishment had in mind.

[10 : 56] Who is this guy? He's a peasant. He's from Nazareth of all places. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Nazareth is located right next door to the Gentile dogs.

This guy's probably contaminated. Why? He's not a fit Messiah. And they rejected him because he didn't meet their qualifications.

And they had no clue that in order for the Messiah to establish the glorious kingdom of God on earth, the price had to be paid to reverse Adam's sin and lift the curse on humanity and lift the curse on all the earth.

And that was to be done through the payment that Christ made for human sin. So when he came, it was against the backdrop of this kingdom actually being established.

And that's what this Acts passage is really all about. Well, let's get into it. Enough of that. We're in Acts chapter 2, and Peter has just presented Christ as their crucified Messiah, and he says in verse 36, we're on page 443 down the right-hand corner, he says, therefore, this is the end of, coming to the end of Peter's message on Pentecost, therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made that same Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

[12 : 37] Now, when they heard this, this is Peter's summation to everything he'd said before, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart. And all that means is, well, look at some of the other translations.

Moffat says it went straight to their hearts. Goodspeed says they were stung to the heart, stabbed to the heart, moved to the depths of their heart. Knox says their consciences were stung, new American standard says they were pierced.

This means Peter's message penetrated, got through to them. And these guys, 3,000 of them at least, stood there and said, we got it.

He's right. We got it. He really was the Messiah. He really was from God, and we didn't see it. We crucified him.

what can we do now? We can't undo it, Peter says. No, you can't undo what you have done, but you can do the next best thing.

[13 : 39] You can be big enough to admit what you have done. Fellas, let me tell you something. There isn't anything that warms the heart of God more than a person who takes responsibility for their actions and admits they're wrong.

And let me tell you something. For a guy especially, that's a really hard thing to do. That's probably the toughest thing we will ever do, is step up to the plate and say, I have no excuses.

It's my fault. I did it. I was wrong. I'm sorry. That is tough. It is crushing to your ego.

And let me tell you something. Nothing about you needs to be crushed more than your ego. Nothing will deliver true humility more than the crushing of your ego.

But it's painful. And we will do everything and anything to protect our ego. We just don't want to be made out to be wrong or to look wrong.

[15 : 04] Remember old Henry who one day happened by the blacksmith's shop? And this was the guy who was kind of like the town yokel and cut up.

And they were all sitting around there having a conversation and the blacksmith was banging away and putting things in the fire and forging horseshoes and whatnot. And he'd just taken a horseshoe out and laid it aside, just taken it out of the fire and the thing had just cooled off enough to lose its red glow.

And it looked like an ordinary cold horseshoe. And old Henry just strolled into the blacksmith's shop. All the guys were sitting around there talking. He didn't know he'd just taken that out of the fire.

And he grabbed that horseshoe and turned loose of it like that. And man, did it burn him. And all the guys had a great laugh. I mean, they just roared because old Henry got his comeuppance and picked up that horse.

They thought it was the funniest thing they'd ever seen. And one of the guys yelled out, what's the matter, Henry? Was it hot? No. It wasn't hot. Just don't take me long to look at a horseshoe.

[16 : 20] What was he doing? Something as humorous and as simple as that. But Henry couldn't say, boy, I really pulled a boner there, didn't I?

Wasn't that stupid of me? Pick up that hot horseshoe like, no, no. Protect that ego. No, it doesn't take me long to look at a horseshoe. What's the matter with you guys?

It doesn't take me long. Well, that's us. That's us all over. We just can't admit that we blew it. But, fellas, the only path to spiritual victory is this one.

It is an honest admission of our failures, our shortcomings, our not having it all together. It is, someone called me one time, and it was a telephone call, and they were thinking about attending grace, and they said, well, I haven't been to church for a long time, and he said, I just kind of got the feeling that our churches are just full of a bunch of smug people that just think they have it all together, and I guess I just don't fit.

And I said, no, my friend, you're wrong. A church that is worthy of the name is not made up of people who think they have it all together. It's made up of people who know they don't, and they are together to encourage and help one another along the way, because none of us have it all together.

[17:56] None of us have arrived, and there really isn't any room in a solid church for somebody who thinks they have arrived. They will be the misfit. They won't fit. We are all flawed, failed human beings in different ways at different times, and we need to keep that in mind.

That's not my text, but we're talking about their repentance and how difficult it is to come to it. And Peter said, to demonstrate the reality of your repentance, you must be baptized, verse 38, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.

This, fellas, is not anything new, and this is not Christian baptism. I know this is a real departure from the party line because virtually 99% of Christendom reads Christian baptism into this.

There isn't a hint of it. This is the same baptism with which John had been baptizing everybody during Jesus' earthly ministry, and even baptized Jesus.

This baptism was a baptism unto repentance for the remission of sins, and it was strictly Jewish for Jews, because it didn't mean anything to anybody else.

[19:18] If you were a Jew, you didn't have a frame of reference for this, and it wouldn't mean anything to you. But it meant a great deal to them, because this baptism is an act that originally was performed just on the priests, and the baptism was actually a washing.

It was a cleansing. It was a purification act, and the priest had to go through that. Anytime he went to the temple to administer anything, he had to wash himself thoroughly.

And Hebrews 6 talks about this, and it calls it washings, plural. But in the Greek, it's baptisimos, from which we get the word baptizing.

And it literally means washings. It was prescribed for the priests, and they did it many times. A priest was baptized several times.

Every time he went to perform a new function in the temple, on a new day, he would wash himself thoroughly. And in Exodus 19, God told the children of Israel through Moses, that I am going to make of you a nation of priests.

[20:35] the whole Jewish nation is going to be a nation of priests. Well, up to that time, they just had one tribe that were priests, and they were the Levites. They were the priests.

And God says, I'm going to make a whole nation of you priests. Well, when is that going to happen?

That's going to happen when the Messiah comes, and when the kingdom of heaven is established on earth, Israel, as a nation, will be the priestly nation for all the world.

Levi was the priestly tribe just for the nation of Israel. But the whole nation of Israel is going to be a priestly people for all the rest of the world.

They are going to be the priests for the Gentiles, for the nations, if you will. that is why, and fellas, this is really important, that is why, when John began preaching, repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and people came from everywhere, Jewish people, to hear this Jewish prophet delivering a Jewish message, they came from everywhere, and they were all baptized by John.

what business did he have baptizing any Jew that wasn't from the tribe of Levi? He wouldn't be qualified to be a priest. Well, that's the whole point.

[22:12] This is God's get ready message. The king is coming, the kingdom is at hand, get ready Israel, to take your role and your position as being the priestly nation to all the nations.

and these people came from all around and they were baptized of John, they believed John's message, and John introduced Jesus as the Messiah of Israel and as the Lamb of God.

Incredible passage. All of that fits into this Acts 2 thing, because these people are gathered here on this day of Pentecost, and Peter is telling them, get with the program.

Many of you rejected John's baptism, and you rejected John, and you rejected Jesus, whom John presented. Now you need to reverse yourself, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now, it is amazing how people try to transfer this from today, and you will find multitudes of people who believe that when you are water baptized, provided you do it the right way, which for the Presbyterians, and the Episcopalians, and the Catholics, it's sprinkling, except for the Baptists, it's immersion, except for the Grace Brethren, it's three times forward, except for, and nobody recognizes the legitimacy of anybody else's baptism, so who knows who's been baptized, and who hasn't, you see, you see the conflict that arises from this, and in connection with baptism, whether it is sprinkling, do you think for a moment that in a Roman Catholic family, which my wife was born into, that when that little baby is taken by the priest, and they drop a few drops of water, they baptize the baby, does that little baby receive the [24 : 22] Holy Spirit at that time, I mean, this is what the text says, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for their mission, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, does that little baby receive the Holy Spirit then, when you are baptized by immersion, or three times forward, whatever it is, is that when you receive the Holy Spirit, many believe that it is, and you know what they base it on, right here, says right here, this is the text, right there it is, in black and white, can't you believe what God says, well, is that what it means, and if not, how do we know, why is it, fellas, once you depart from the Jewishness of this, and try to Christianize it, you're in big, big trouble, because you can't make it fit, and the reason you can't make it fit, is because it doesn't fit, it's not supposed to fit, you've got to keep it in the setting where it is, and this is a

Jewish thing, entirely, for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, and this does not mean Gentiles, this does not mean other people, this means Jews, who are outside the land of Israel, they are the diaspora, they are the scattered ones, this has peculiar and specific reference to Israel, and with many other words, did he testify, and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation, that's a crooked generation, or perverse generation, the generation that existed when Christ was here, and consisted of those to whom he ministered, was really corrupt, and the head of the corruption was the priesthood, the Jewish priesthood, the ecclesiastical establishment, was so corrupt, and so shot through and through with corruption, let me give you an example, in the temple, the common description for the temple, in this day, was the bazaar of Annas, Annas was the high priest, and Annas, being the high priest, was the one who gave permission and assigned places of privilege in the temple that these people could use for the money changing, they would have their money changing tables all set up, and they were prepared to change the currency, the money, that everybody brought with them from different countries all over the world, into the Jewish shekel, and of course, they were just ripping people off right and left with the exchange rate, because these people, they couldn't even speak the language, they didn't know what their money was worth, and they would take advantage of them, and those who sold doves and animals for sacrifice in the temple, these people had kiosks set up, they had booths set up, and the one who rented the booths to them was Annas, the high priest, the whole thing was so corrupt, and that's exactly why

Jesus went in and cleansed the temple and said, my father's house is to be a house of prayer, and you have made it a den of thieves, and he chased them out, he got a whip and chased them out, and sent the money scurrying in every which direction, and animals scurrying away, people throwing up their hands and screaming, hey, this guy's crazy, somebody stop him, and he just cleaned house, because of what was going on, so, they are those who are afar off, and some of them are right there in Jerusalem, and they have come from afar off, and with many other words, did he testify and exhort, saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation, then they that gladly received his word were baptized, that means exactly what it says, it means those who believed his message, who were pierced to the heart, who honestly said, what can we do, they received his message, they were baptized, and they were baptized with the same baptism with which

John had been baptizing before, and the same day, there were added unto them about three thousand souls, and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship.

[29 : 20] Why in the apostles' doctrine? Because that represented the latest word from God that was available. The New Testament, at the time this transpired, here in the book of Acts, the New

Testament hadn't even been written.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John hadn't even been produced. None of the New Testament was a fact. All they had was the Old Testament. But, what had happened during the lifetime and the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ represented an enormous updating from the Old Testament.

because the Old Testament talks about the Messiah who is coming. But, when you get here into Acts chapter 2, he's already come, and he has been crucified.

So, they are adhering themselves and tuning in to what the apostles were saying. And what were the apostles talking about?

more than anything else, they were talking about you crucified the Messiah, God raised him from the dead. That was the hot button issue.

[30 : 42] It was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And at least 3,000 identified with that and believed it. And they were buying into the apostles' doctrine.

That is, the apostles' teaching. And of course, this they got from Christ. And in breaking of bread and in prayers and fear, a deep impression was made upon everyone.

This thing really got to these people. I mean, it is having a tremendous effect on it. It is changing lives. And Christ does that.

Weymouth says, all came upon everyone. Goodspeed says, everyone felt a sense of awe.

Williams, a sense of reverence seized everyone. every soul was struck with awe.

Reverential fear. And many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. These were just flat out miracles along the same line that Christ had produced when he was here.

[31 : 43] Because he gave Matthew 10, he called the twelve apostles, and he gave them authority. He gave them his authority to cast out demons, raise the sick, heal the sick, raise the dead, give sight to the blind, cast out demons.

That's what they were doing. Because Christ empowered them to do that. And they were simply replicating Christ's ministry in their miracles. And this must have been an incredible time. And I want you to notice what the text goes on to say.

And all that believed were together and had all things common. Goodspeed says the believers all shared everything they had with one another.

Ryu at the bottom says they lived as a community and shared everything. Why did they do that?

They did that because there was an incredible sense of supernatural unity among them that never existed before.

And what was the unifying force? it was this person whom they had crucified. He was the unifying force. And all these things that they have in common that they are sharing and they are continuing daily with one accord in the temple.

[33 : 06] All of these things fellas and this is really important. I hope you get this point. This attitude was nothing more than an anticipation of the arrival of the kingdom of heaven come to earth.

That's what these people were still looking for. And that's why they're sharing all these things in common. Now let me take you back. We won't go there for time's sake, but I'll give you the reference.

If it hasn't moved, it's Matthew 19, where Christ is confronted by the rich young ruler, and he says, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

Remember what Jesus told him? Keep the commandments? Oh, I've kept the commandments. I've done all those things. And Jesus said, all right, then sell everything you have, and give the money to the poor, and come and follow me, and you'll have treasure in heaven.

And he went away sorrowful because he had many goods. What is that all about? That's what we've got right here in Acts 2. They were doing that. They were pooling their resources and sharing everything in common.

[34 : 22] They were pooling their resources and sharing everything in common.