

Acts 2:14-28: Does Your Life Need A Resurrection?

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I. Introduction

Would you like a chance to do your life over? Think of everything that you've done wrong in your life or that's been done wrong to you, wouldn't it be nice to have a do-over? Believe it or not, God can give you that do-over. The 12 apostles in Acts 2 are proof of this and so are millions of others who have experienced the resurrection power of Jesus.

II. Acts 2:14-28: If You've Believed in Jesus, Has He Resurrected Your Life?

2:14-21, after the incredible outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the 12 apostles, which enabled them to speak languages they'd never spoken before and proclaiming the wonderful works of God to the multitude of Jews gathered at the Temple and some of them accusing the apostles of being drunk, Peter, the leader of the 12 apostles, stands up to address the crowd. Peter first addresses their accusation of drunkenness: the apostles have not been drinking, after all it's only 9:00 a.m. Next Peter quotes the prophet Joel (2:28-32). Peter's not saying that Joel's prophecy is now being fulfilled, instead, he's simply saying, "Take note of what the prophet Joel said."

How do we know that this prophecy was not being fulfilled then? None of what Joel said in his prophecy happened on the Day of Pentecost. Joel said that God's Spirit would be poured out "on all flesh," sons/daughters, young men/old men, menservants/maidservants. This means that all of Israel (i.e., every Jew—the "your" before each grouping refers to Israel) whether male/female, young/old, rich/poor would be filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams. But this didn't happen. Joel also said that there would be wonders in heaven and signs in the earth: blood and fire and vapor of smoke—none of this happened. And he said that the sun would be darkened, the moon turned into blood, meaning that no light would reach the earth, but this didn't happen either. Finally, he said that it would happen right before the great day of the Lord, i.e., before Jesus' Second Coming, which also didn't happen. In fact, it had only been 50 days since Jesus' ascension. So nothing that Joel mentioned happened, in fact, what did happen wasn't mentioned by Joel at all, i.e., people suddenly being able to speak a foreign language. Why then did Peter quote Joel? Because of a similarity in what Joel said and what actually happened on the Day of Pentecost: there was an outpouring of God's Spirit on the 12 apostles which enabled them to do something miraculous.

2:22-24, what's happening here is the fulfillment of Jesus' command in 1:8, i.e., the 12 apostles are being witnesses to Jesus in Jerusalem. The first thing Peter mentions about Jesus is His miracles, wonders, and signs, which Peter says, "God did through Him." What is God telling you about how God is supposed to work in your life? Who performed the miracles that Jesus did, Jesus or God? Both: in the Gospels it's clear that Jesus did them, but here it's also clear that God did them through Jesus. That is, Jesus and His Father were one, whatever Jesus did, God did through Him. How is life supposed to work for us who are Christians? God's Spirit, who now resides *in* us (John 14:17) is supposed to transform our life and the life of those around us, as the 12 apostles are about to do. Is this your Christian experience or is your Christianity about going to church on Sunday—Jesus is supposed to be in you and you are supposed to be in Him! (Galatians 2:20). And His power is supposed to resurrect everything that's broken in you and others.

There were many there who were not from Jerusalem, but even some of them heard of Jesus' miracles. Through these miracles God was proving to those in Jerusalem and elsewhere that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. And what did they do to their Messiah? They lawlessly arrested Him and put Him to death. Notice: God is accusing these "devout men, from every nation under heaven" (2:5) of crucifying Jesus even though they had nothing to do with it. Why? Because they're part of the nation of Israel, whose leaders put Jesus to death, therefore, the entire nation is guilty. But notice also that it was God who delivered Jesus into their hands to crucify Him. God not only knew it would happen, He planned it, down to the last brutal detail. How can this be, how can man choose to do something of his own freewill over which he has complete control and yet God ultimately controls every detail? This is a question that God says we have no right to ask (Romans 9:10-24). However, this should give tremendous comfort to those who think they've ruined their lives. There's always hope because God is always in control of your life regardless of how bad you've blown it. Think of the 12 apostles, think of the chief apostle who is now speaking to this crowd, did he blow it and did God fix it? Yes and yes! (Luke 22:54-62; 22:31-32; John 21:15-17; Acts 2).

Now why would God plan His own Son's death? It was God's plan that Jesus should die a brutal death, but not for nothing and not for long. It was part of God's plan to bring Him back to life. The wording in 2:24 literally says that God loosed the "birth pangs of death" because death could not restrain Him (Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelation 1:8). Death gave way, gave birth to Jesus' resurrection because it could not control the One who is Eternal Life (John 14:6; 1 John 1:2). Why did God do this to His Son? It wasn't just to resurrect Him, it was to resurrect us...look at the 12 apostles.

2:25-28, The mob in Jerusalem, led by Israel's leaders may have crucified Jesus, but God brought Him back to life as David so vividly testified when he wrote Psalm 16:8-11, which Peter now quotes. In this psalm Messiah Himself is speaking. Notice how He sees His life and death: He saw God always with Him, therefore, nothing fazed Him. And He had absolutely no concern that death would harm His flesh/body. Why? Because He knew that God would not leave His soul in Hades nor His body in the grave. He knew God was going to resurrect Him and bring Him before His presence where He would experience tremendous joy. This is the life that the apostles are now living. They have been resurrected from being cowards who were hiding from the authorities (John 20:19) to facing those same authorities who killed Jesus without fear. Even though their lives are on the line, just 50 days after Jesus was crucified by the leaders of Israel, Peter and the rest of the apostles are in the enemy's house, the Temple. Instead of cowering like before they are bold in telling anyone who will hear how Israel's leaders killed their own Messiah.

Have you been resurrected? What do you think the Christian life is? Is it Sunday-church, Bible studies, and worship songs? Those things are part of it, but that's not the core of it. The core is a oneness with Jesus and His Father (John 17:21-22) that resurrects your life (John 1:1-4; 5:24; 6:27; Ephesians 2:1-3 [1 John 1:1-3]) and enables you to live it differently, better. It wasn't just Jesus that was resurrected, you were too. What happened to Jesus, happened to the apostles and it can happen to you too.

III. Conclusion

"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 -- Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, 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."