

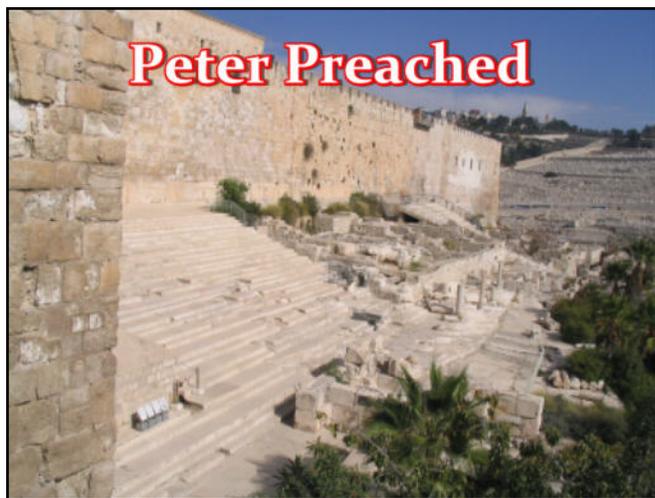
PETER'S KERUGMA

[Acts 2:22-24](#)



In our study of the book of Acts we are looking at the day of [Pentecost](#). Can you explain the significance of the day of Pentecost? It was a Jewish Feast day. It was on this day about 1600 years previously that a very notable historical event happened; that was the giving of the [Ten Commandments](#). On this day the Old Covenant law was given to the nation of Israel. And on this very same day of the [Lunar calendar](#) the promise of Joel is being fulfilled, the Spirit is being poured out, the New Covenant just like the old arrived on Pentecost.

The Church was born on Israel's feast day. Christianity is the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, because we are true Israel. Every single piece of the Christian Bible falls right into the framework of the Hebrew world. Believers, our roots are Hebrew. The dominant theme of the book of Acts is the fulfillment of God's promises made to Israel—new Israel, true Israel, the Church.



On the day of [Pentecost](#) the Spirit fell on the 120 disciples in the temple with the sound of wind and [tongues of fire](#) which got the attention of those worshipers in the temple. Because of the audiovisual effect of Pentecost, a crowd gathered around, giving Peter the opportunity to preach. And preach he did. This is the first sermon ever preached in the Church.

The word "Preach" which is *not* used in our text, but is used many other places in the book of Acts comes from the Greek verb [kerusso](#). Which is from the noun *kerux*, which means: "*a herald for a king.*" In fact the official *kerux* or herald would stand in the market place and blow a trumpet, calling the attention of the crowd to the edict of the Emperor, and his proclamation was as a command. He declares the policy of the king.

So, *kerusso* means *to declare the policy of the king*. That is what Peter is doing. He is declaring the policy of the King, he is preaching. Preaching has some very different connotations today. A husband may say to his wife, "Stop preaching at me." That is not preaching that he is talking about, but nagging. We often think of preaching as loud, bombastic speech. This word has *nothing to do with the manner* in which you say something. It has to do with *declaring a policy*, God's policy.

What is meant by scholars when they speak of the *Kerugma* is: "*the essential message that was preached by the Apostles in the early church.*" This *Kerugma* always contained certain things; it always pointed out that in the person and work of Jesus was the fulfillment of Prophecy. Also essential to the *Kerugma* was a recap of the life and ministry of Christ. This is what we see Peter doing in the first sermon of the Church.

Peter cites the prophecy of Joel and makes three points:

A. In the last days, God will pour forth of His Spirit on all flesh ([Acts 2:17-18](#)). The "[last days](#)" refer to national Israel's last days that ended in [A.D. 70](#). In the Jewish mind "[last days](#)" would mean that the messianic age has arrived. This was a major announcement. Every Jew since the first one has been waiting for that. Since the Abrahamic covenant in which God promised to bless all nations through [the seed of Abraham](#).

B. This outpouring of the Spirit will be followed by a time of terrible judgment ([Acts 2:19-20](#)). The Jews understood that before the kingdom would be consummated, God's judgment would fall on unbelievers, who would be rooted

out of the kingdom as the Messiah established His rule and reign.

C. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved:

'AND IT SHALL BE, THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.' (Acts 2:21 NASB)

Saved from what? The wrath of God both temporally and eternally. The way you will be saved, Peter says, is to call upon the name of the Lord. Having said that, he is now ready to drop a bomb upon these people. For the Lord upon which men must call, is none other than the prophet who was crucified 53 days ago here in the city of Jerusalem—Jesus of Nazareth.

"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know (Acts 2:22 NASB)

"Men of Israel"—we are 53 days away from the cross. Peter is speaking to the same Jewish people that 53 days earlier were in Jerusalem for Passover and had cried out for the execution of Jesus:

But Pilate was saying to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify Him!" (Mark 15:14 NASB)

Back to Acts, notice what Peter calls Jesus. ***"Jesus the Nazarene"***— what is significant about this name? It was prophesied that He would be called a Nazarene:

and came and resided in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene." (Matthew 2:23 NASB)

In discussions with Christians on the validity and authenticity of the Scriptures, Muslims often raise questions about this verse. They state that there is no such specific prophecy in the bible. They infer from this that therefore that the New Testament is unreliable. Does anyone know what this quote comes from? Turn with me to:

Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. (Isaiah 11:1 NASB)

[Isaiah 11](#) is a Messianic prophecy. Now you might be thinking how does this verse relate to the prophecy about Nazareth? Good question. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia helps answers that question:

"BRANCH ... nayster [translated Branch in Isaiah 11:1] ... [is] of the same Hebrew root, according to many commentators, as Nazareth [in Matthew 2:23]." "NAZARENE ... A derivative of Nazareth.... According to an overwhelming array of testimony ... the name Nazareth is derived from the same nayster, found in the text quoted from Isaiah [11:1]."

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament states, *"Gundry sees for Matthew's use a double reason: the phonetic correspondence of this title in Isaiah 11:1 with the town of Nazareth as a play on words and the lowliness motif of Isaiah 11:1."*

Depending on how it is actually spelled in Hebrew, Nazareth it could take these forms: *netzer*, *nazir* or *nosri*. *Netzer* means: *"branch or offshoot"*, which may signify a belief in Jesus' messianic descent from David (Isaiah 11:1). *Nazir* means: "a holy man of God". *Nosri* can mean "one who guards or watches over."

It would probably come as a shock to most Christians today that the original followers of Jesus were never called

Christians. The term Nazarene was likely the one first used for followers of Jesus, as evidenced by [Acts 24:5](#) where Paul is called *“the ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.”* The Nazarenes were the *“Branchites,”* or followers of the one they believed to be the Branch. The term *“Christian,”* first used in Greek speaking areas for the movement, actually is an attempt to translate the term Nazarene, and basically means a *“Messianist.”*

The inscription on the cross of Christ bore this name:

And Pilate wrote an inscription also, and put it on the cross. And it was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS." (John 19:19 NASB)

Jesus used this name of Himself:

"And I answered, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.'" (Acts 22:8NASB)

In the Palestine of Jesus' time, the whole region of Galilee and its inhabitants, and in particular Nazareth, were looked upon in a very negative way by other Israelites (perhaps because Galilee had often been occupied by pagan nations during Israel's history (e.g. [Tiglath-Pileser](#) the king of Assyria, [Hiram king of Tyre](#)). There is ample scriptural evidence to support the conclusion that Galilee and Nazareth were looked down on, even despised. Peter uses the same name for Jesus in [Chapter 3, verse 6](#), but this time he puts the word Messiah in there. I think Peter is saying, Jesus, the man who was despised by you was exalted by God. He is the promised Messiah.

"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— (Acts 2:22 NASB)

Peter says that Jesus was *“attested”* by God. Now what does it mean to be attested? The Greek word used here is [apodeiknumi](#), [ap-od-ike'-noo-mee] It has many shades of meaning. Let me give you a couple and pull it together. First of all, the word is used in [1 Corinthians 4:9](#) for exhibiting. For putting something on display. And so we could translate it that way. Jesus of Nazareth, a man put on display by God. It also means to bring evidence to prove your point. It's used that way in [Acts 25:7](#), the idea of proof. We could read it that way. Jesus of Nazareth, a man proven by God.

Thirdly, it's used in [2 Thessalonians 2:4](#) proclaiming someone to a high office. So just in that little word approved, you have the whole thing. You have God in human flesh on display. God in human flesh proven to be who He claims to be. And proclaimed to be the Messiah. Everything in that word is true of Jesus. God exhibited Him. God proved by infallible evidence that He was who claimed to be. And then God declared that He had the right to the highest office.

Do you think that these Israelites that Peter is preaching to in the Temple at Jerusalem had heard about Jesus from Nazareth? Let me remind you of something that we studied in Mark:

And Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and also from Judea, 8 and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude heard of all that He was doing and came to Him. (Mark 3:7-8 NASB)

As Jesus left Galilee the text tells us, *“a great multitude...followed”* They had heard that Jesus was doing great things. Such news could not be kept quiet. The sick were healed; demons cried out and were cast out; and the news spread like wildfire.

Whereas the ministry of Jesus had originally been confined to the localized areas around Galilee, now He was drawing people from as far away as Jerusalem and the [Transjordan](#) area and from the Phoenician coast lands.

Let me try to give you an idea of the size of this crowd. This was not just a few people or a few thousand. There were literally tens of thousands of people, undoubtedly, in this crowd. They came from all over this country: from Galilee; from Judea, which began fifty miles to the South; from Jerusalem, the capital of Judea some seventy miles south of the Sea of Galilee; and beyond that from the land of Idumea, or Edom, way down in the Southern desert; from the region east of the Jordan River stretching out into the Arabian Desert; and from the West clear to the Mediterranean coast and up the coast to Tyre and Sidon, the area now in the country of Lebanon – from throughout this entire area they came. They flocked out from all the cities to hear this amazing prophet who had risen in Galilee and was saying such startling things.



Why were so many coming such a long way in order to see Jesus? It was because they had heard of the miracles that He was performing. They had heard the wonderful stories of this Jewish Rabbi who could heal the sick, who could cast out demons with a word and restore the paralyzed. With all these people coming from such great distances, there is no doubt in my mind that these Israelites, standing in the Temple on the day of Pentecost had heard of Jesus. The miracles that Jesus had performed were not done in secret everyone knew of them. Jesus appealed to these miracles as authenticating who He was:

And it came about that when Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities.² Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples,³ and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" (Matthew 11:1-3 NASB)

Notice what John asks, *"Are you the Expected One"* or the *"Coming One"* [NKJV]. Why does John ask this? Why does he call Him the "Coming One"? This is from:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9 NASB)

Jesus was the One who Zechariah called the "Coming One?" He was the Messiah and as proof of this he says:

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: 5 the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM. 6 "And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me." (Matthew 11:4-6 NASB)

What is the proof that Jesus is the Messiah? It is the miracles that He is doing:

"But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. (John 5:36 NASB)

Jesus went on to say:

"He who hates Me hates My Father also. 24 "If I had not done among them the works which no one

else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.
(John 15:23-24 NASB)

Jesus is saying the miracles I do make it clear that God is with me and to reject this is sin. He had cast out evil spirits. He had healed the sick in large numbers. He had raised the dead. One day He stood by the tomb of Lazarus and simply said "Lazarus come out." And a man who had been dead four days got up and walked out of the tomb. By this it could be seen that God was active on earth. But these were also wonders. They had revealed His extraordinary power, especially when amalgamated with his miraculous feeding of the crowds and His control over wind and waves. None could explain them away; they were signs of God's presence:

this man came to Him by night, and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." (John 3:2NASB)

The primary purpose of Jesus miracles was not to alleviate distress and suffering, but to prove that He was from God. These miracles were signs of the presence of the Messiah, for, they fulfilled all that the prophets had promised ([Isaiah 32.1-4](#); [35.5-6](#); [61.1-2](#)).

And so the life of Jesus Christ was an exhibit. It was a proof and it was a proclamation by God the Father that this was in fact the Messiah. The evidence was in and it was too clear to miss. Peter said to them, ***"just as you yourselves know."*** They knew about Christ and all that He had done.

Messiah is the one of whom it was said the scepter shall not depart from Judah. Messiah is the one promised to David in [2 Samuel Chapter 7](#) when he said, ***"there will come a king who will be an everlasting king, who will rule in peace and righteousness over Israel."*** Messiah was the great anointed king who would come and set everything right and give Israel its kingdom and reign in Israel and restore everything that had been lost. Messiah was the greatest figure in the Jewish heart and mind. And for Peter to announce that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah to the Jew was the absolute height of blasphemy. Peter goes on to say:

this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. (Acts 2:23 NASB)

Did you catch what Peter said to this crowd? Peter sticks his finger in their faces and says, "You crucified this Man who was sent by God." His first concern was not to please his audience, but to tell them the truth. What a difference from the man who, a few months before, denied even knowing Jesus! ([Matthew 26:69-75](#)).

Peter is no Joel Osteen. He doesn't say, Hey all you Israelites, God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. God wants you healthy and wealthy. No he says, ***"This man....you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."*** Catch the power of this, Peter is telling this great crowd of Israelites, "You killed the Messiah!" Peter is filled with power and courage. Just 53 days earlier this same crowd were calling out for Christ's crucifixion:

And answering again, Pilate was saying to them, "Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?" 13 And they shouted back, "Crucify Him!" 14 But Pilate was saying to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify Him!" (Mark 15:12-14 NASB)

This is the same group that just 53 days earlier killed Jesus and He calls them "Christ killers." Peter said, ***"You nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."*** The word "godless" here is the Greek word [anomos](#), [an'-om-os] which means: "lawless." It can simply refer to those who transgress the Law, or it can refer to those who are "without the Law" ([1 Corinthians 9.21](#)). Thus here it may refer to the Jews as behaving as if they had no Law, or it may be referring to the Romans as behaving in the same way because they do not have the Law of God. But either way, and both may be included, it indicates rebellion against God and His laws.

Notice what Peter says in the beginning of this verse:

this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. (Acts 2:23 NASB)

The word “delivered” here is a word used commonly of those who are surrendered over to their enemies. God delivered over Jesus to death. It says He was delivered not by the will of men, not because they plotted it out and God looked way ahead and saw what they were going to do and said, I better work that into my plan. No, He was delivered by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.

Let's look at the term “predetermined plan”. Plan means: “will or design”. Predetermined is from the Greek word [horizo](#), [hor-id'-zo] which means “*decreed, determined, appointed*”; it comes from a word that means to mark out with a boundary. God set it down in order, marked it out, said that's my will, Jesus will die on the Passover by crucifixion.

When did God make those plans? Paul tells us:

who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, (2 Timothy 1:9 NASB)

The NKJV says, “*which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.*”

The NIV says, “*This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.*”

The death of Messiah was all mapped out by God before there ever was a world? It was all part of God's predetermined will.

Jesus death was no accident. Do not miss this! The cross was no accident. It had been foretold hundreds of years before the coming of Jesus. This was central to God's grand design for the human race. And it took place exactly according to plan. This point will be made again and again throughout the book of Acts. God was in everything that was happening, and it was happening in accordance with His own counsel as He had foretold ([Isaiah 52:13](#) - [53:4-12](#)).

Peter now truly understood God's foreordained purpose. Jesus had constantly emphasized that as the Servant of God He must die ([Mark 10.45](#)), and while at the time the disciples had avoided the subject, they had now come to see that it was true, just as Jesus had said. For all that He had spoken of had happened, the suffering, the vicious treatment, the trial by the Jews, and the cruel execution followed by the resurrection ([Luke 9.22](#); [18.31](#); [Mark 8.31](#); [9.31](#); [10.33-34](#), [45](#)). Thus to a Spirit enlightened mind the conclusion was clear. This was all in God's plan and purpose. It resulted from His own counsel and predetermination.

The cross was planned by God. As was the betrayal by Judas. As was the complicity of the high priest. As was the role played by the Roman government. These things did not happen by chance. They were part of a grand design. God both [FOREKNEW](#) and also [PREDETERMINED](#) this plan.

Don't miss the implications of this! It means that God's plan includes the sinful acts of men. That does not mean that God is a sinner. He is absolutely righteous. Neither does it alleviate men from their responsibility in sinning. Men are responsible for both their actions and their attitudes. But those attitudes and actions are not outside of the realm of God's plan. It is important for you to know this for several reasons: Unless this is true, the doctrine of divine sovereignty cannot stand. If God is only in control of some things, He is not absolutely in control. But God IS in control of all things. This includes all things that come into your life. And therefore, He can guarantee that the promises He makes on your behalf will be fulfilled. When we come to realize God's sovereignty, we will also come

to a higher view of God.

The Bible teaches that the sovereignty of the God is absolute, irresistible and infinite. God does as He pleases, only as He pleases, always as He pleases; so that whatever takes place in time is but the outworking of that which He decreed from eternity.

The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; And His sovereignty rules over all. (Psalms 103:19 NASB)

But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. (Psalms 115:3 NASB)

For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own possession. ⁵ For I know that the LORD is great, And that our Lord is above all gods. ⁶ Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. (Psalms 135:4-6 NASB)

God demonstrates His absolute power and He does what ever He chooses to do. Let's go to Isaiah and look at some of the divine decrees. The divine decrees are what God has chosen to do in eternity past, and providence is simply the working out of what God has decreed.

The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, "Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand, (Isaiah 14:24 NASB)

God says, "Whatever I have purposed will come to pass."

"For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?" (Isaiah 14:27 NASB)

Who can stop God from carrying out His purposes? Nobody can!

"Even from eternity I am He; and there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?" (Isaiah 43:13 NASB)

Who can hinder God's work? Nobody!

"Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me ¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; (Isaiah 46:9-10 NASB)

It is God who declares the end from the beginning. God plans and He carries out His plans.

"And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?' (Daniel 4:35 NASB)

also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, (Ephesians 1:11 NASB)

also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,
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God's plan is exhaustive,
it includes the germ as well as the galaxies;
the fly as well as the Pharaoh;
the mosquito as well the monarch.
Nothing happens outside of God's will.

God's plan is exhaustive, it includes the germ as well as the galaxies; the fly as well as the Pharaoh; the mosquito as well as the monarch. **Nothing happens outside of God's will.**

Some may then ask, "Since God planned this are the perpetrators then guilty?" Scripture always answers this question with a resounding "Yes". When men sin, God had decreed that they should perform the acts they did, but in the carrying out of these deeds, they were guilty because their own purposes in the doing of them was evil only. Men are responsible for their sins.

Augustine said, *"That men sin proceeds from themselves; that in sinning they perform this or that action, is from the power of God."*

Let's go back to Acts:

"And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. (Acts 2:24 NASB)

What is Peter talking about here? The resurrection! Later in this sermon Peter says,

"This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. (Acts 2:32 NASB)

We all saw Him. And the remarkable thing is that not one voice is lifted in protest in this whole crowd of people. To me, one of the greatest proofs of the resurrection of Jesus is right here—that this man could stand up in the city where these events had taken place, a little more than a month earlier, and tell these people that Jesus had risen from the dead, and not one voice challenges him! They knew that Jesus' body was not there. They could go out to the tomb and see that it was empty. They knew that the authorities could not produce the body of Jesus, though they would have given a king's ransom to have done so. They had heard all the wild rumors that spread through the city that Jesus was alive and that he was appearing to his own disciples from time to time. And there is not one voice who challenges what the apostle says. Instead they stand there in mute and stricken silence as the apostle drives home with powerful blows the sword of the Spirit, convicting them of the truth of his claim.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This is the main theme of Peter's sermon. It is the main theme of nearly every sermon preached in the book of Acts. After spending one verse each on Jesus' life and death, Peter spends nine verses on His resurrection, which is the main theme of the apostolic preaching in Acts. Note the implicit contrast between "you put Him to death. **But God** raised Him up again" ([Acts 2:23-24](#)). In other words, they were guilty of opposing God!

In a moment so horrible one cannot even imagine, they came to the realization that they had actually hated, rejected and executed God in the flesh. They had executed their long-awaited Messiah. And in the horror of that moment, they screamed out, *"What shall we do?"*

It is impossible, at this distance of space and time, to realize, even in a faint degree, the effect upon the minds produced by the announcement made by Peter. All their lives they had waited Messiah and now to hear that they had killed Him.

J. W. McGarvey writes, *"Never did mortal lips pronounce, in so brief a space, so many thoughts of so terrific import to the hearers. We might challenge the world to find a parallel to it in the speeches of all her orators, or the songs of all her poets. There is not, indeed, such a thunderbolt in the burdens of all the prophets of Israel, nor among the mighty voices which echo through the pages of the Apocalypse. It is the first announcement to the world of a risen and glorified Redeemer."*

So as Peter begins to preach to this crowd he tells them that the last days had arrived, Messiah had come as was clearly seen by the miraculous works and you killed Him. You put Him to death but God raised Him up. Jesus of

Nazareth is alive and he is the Messiah of Israel.

Believers, the message is still the same, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. The Lord is Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He died as a [substitutionary atonement](#) for our sins. He was raised from the dead for our justification. Trust Him! Proclaim Him—by your life and your lips.

This message was preached by [David B. Curtis](#) on June 8, 2008. Media #418.



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