

Acts 2:22-36 NIV

How many points of the Gospel can you recite?

“People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. ²³ But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. ²⁴ But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip. ²⁵ King David said this about him: ‘I see that the LORD is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. ²⁶ No wonder my heart is glad, and my tongue shouts his praises! My body rests in hope. ²⁷ For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your Holy One to rot in the grave. ²⁸ You have shown me the way of life, and you will fill me with the joy of your presence.’

²⁹“Dear brothers, think about this! You can be sure that the patriarch David wasn’t referring to himself, for he died and was buried, and his tomb is still here among us. ³⁰ But he was a prophet, and he knew God had promised with an oath that one of David’s own descendants would sit on his throne. ³¹ David was looking into the future and speaking of the Messiah’s resurrection. He was saying that God would not

leave him among the dead or allow his body to rot in the grave.

³²“God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this. ³³ Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today. ³⁴ For David himself never ascended into heaven, yet he said, ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit in the place of honor at my right hand ³⁵ until I humble your enemies, making them a footstool under your feet.”’ ³⁶ So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!”

You probably know that *Gospel* means *good news*.

But how does this *news* affect you and me?

Most of us share the same major concerns.

- **How do I fulfill my family obligations?**
- **How can I be happy and fulfilled?**
 - **How do I stay healthy in the midst of pandemics and increasing uncertainty?**
- **How can I keep those around me happy?**
 - **How do I avoid the aches and pains of growing old?**
- **How can I tell Bob how to improve his sermons without offending him?**

What concerns would you add?

Either directly or indirectly, Jesus' *good news* helps with all these concerns.

The *Book of Acts* shows that the Gospel contains seven vital points. Not all Acts sermons mention seven. Yet each one includes most of them.



Every believer should be acquainted with the seven.

If we lack any of them, we can't reach the fullness of life Jesus intended for us.

In today's text, you'll see five of the seven as Peter spoke to the crowd in Jerusalem:

“People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene¹ by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed.”

- 1. God sent Jesus and publicly endorsed him. Jesus didn't suddenly decide that he'd be the Christ and then start calling followers. He followed God's "prearranged plan."²
God sent Jesus, His Messiah.
Why do we need a Messiah or Christ?**

We're in a pickle no human can escape.

I've mentioned that I attended grades 6-8 at the newly-formed Columbia Bible School. The school started in church facilities at 7th & Hassalo near the present Lloyd Center in Portland, Oregon. In 1953, construction began on a new campus of Columbia Christian School, as it became known at 90th & Glisan in Portland. My dad, a railroad electrician, volunteered to wire one of the new buildings. Dad quit driving by that time so I took him to the job site where much of the upright framing was complete. I was to pick him up later in the day.

When I arrived, dad wasn't quite finished. A ladder was propped against some of the framework nearby and I climbed to the top. I placed my knee between two of the upright studs at the top of the frame. When I tried to remove my knee, it wouldn't budge. I strained and pulled, but I couldn't dislodge it. I called to my dad, who was clearly embarrassed by his son's foolishness.

He said, “**Bob, you'll just have to wait till I'm finished with what I'm doing right now.**” I waited sheepishly helpless. After several minutes, dad brought another ladder and a crowbar, which he used to spread the upright studs so he could free his foolish son.

¹ Nazarene refers to Jesus' hometown Nazareth, which many held in derision.

² Ephesians 1:3 tells us that God arranged it all prior to creation.

He never said another word about it; fortunately for me, none of my siblings learned of it.

You, the rest of humanity, and I are in a lot worse jam than I was that day.

Do you recall Eden plaza's special trees?

As you know, the Lord forbade them to even touch the Good and Evil Knowledge tree:

"If you do, you will die," God warned.³

People tend to forget Eden's Tree of Life from which Adam and Eve were free to eat.

Why do we always focus on the forbidden-- the behavior God doesn't permit?

Tell a kid not to do something and you might be informing the kid of something he/she hadn't even thought about before you mentioned it.

My mother made that mistake once with me.

That aside, we human beings need laws and our Creator puts limits on us.

His moral laws are as fixed as the so-called natural laws. Tried lately to defy the law of gravity?



Humanity will one day learn the cost of flippantly rejecting God and His laws.⁴

Because Adam and Eve defied God, He put them

out of the Garden, which contained the Life Tree.

Life is dangerous enough; we don't need totally evil people living forever.

Some protest that Adam and Eve didn't die that day as God warned.

I'm confident that their death process began that day.

We die in stages; every time we're riled, depressed, irate, or overwhelmed with guilt, we die a little.

Ever since Adam and Eve, our number one enemy has been death.

Not only that, sin in us destroys our relationships with others.

Sin changes us inwardly.

Recall how Adam and Eve felt naked even before God confronted them?

I've seen artists' conceptions of Adam and Eve leaving the garden ashamed with their heads down.

Those perceptions might be correct, but from what I've experienced, Adam and Eve were likely stiff-necked blaming each other on the way out:

"If you hadn't talked to that ugly snake!"

"Well you didn't have to eat that first bite of apple! The peaches and pears were just fine!"

"Eve, where did you come up with that stupid idea to make clothes out of fig leaves? I'll never stop itching from those scratchy things."

³ See Genesis 3: 2, 3.

⁴ We're already seeing it in the breakdown and unrest in our societies.

"Make your own clothes next time, Adam. I have to do everything!"



God sent Jesus to rescue us from death and hate. Cemeteries and burial sites cover the planet.

It's a rare person, who hasn't in the past 24 months mourned the loss of loved ones.

Like to hear some good news?

Long ago, God announced His thorough plan to eliminate death.

Isaiah the prophet wrote this deeply moving advance news 700 years before Jesus:

"On this mountain he (the Lord) will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; ⁸ he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. ⁹ In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his **salvation**."⁵

The "mountain" here refers to Jerusalem.

Isaiah wrote this prophecy in Hebrew; the Hebrew term *salvation* includes Jesus' name, *Yeshua*.⁶

Yeshua is underlined in the word *salvation* below.

⁵ From Isaiah 25 NIV

⁶ ישועה

In Psalm 22, 1000 years before, David wrote this stunningly accurate prophecy of Jesus' crucifixion: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?... ⁷ All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads... My mouth is dried up like a potsherd (**I thirst**)... you lay me in the dust of death.¹⁶ Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet... people stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."

So 1000 years after King David predicted many of the circumstances, on the mountain Isaiah predicted (i.e. the city of Jerusalem where Jesus died), Jesus' apostle Peter announced *good news*:

Point one, God sent Jesus the Messiah-Christ; two, you nailed him to a cross and killed him; three, God raised him; "God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip."

The people Peter addressed had witnessed many of Jesus' miracles.

The apostles boldly testified to the miracle of Jesus' resurrection.

Peter mentioned another fantastic wonder:

God coordinated imperfect people to make it all happen: "God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed."

Using people from imperfect families, our God does wondrous things.

- Jesus' family didn't believe in him.
- His mother apparently doubted him at times and his brothers mocked him.⁷
- His trusted treasurer betrayed him.
- His disciples fell asleep on watch.
- They ran away scared at the last critical moment.
- Religious leaders hated him.



God reversed the death sentence the rich and powerful pronounced on Jesus.

At least 12 witnesses to his resurrection stood ready to testify that they saw him alive on many occasions.

Peter reminded the crowd of King David's prophecy in Psalm 16, a prominent part of their Bible.

You will not "allow your Holy One to undergo decay. You will make known to me the way of life."

Not many seem to hear what Peter said so we need to carefully read this:

"Dear brothers, think about this! You can be sure that...David wasn't referring to himself, for he

died and was buried, and his tomb is still here among us... David was looking into the future and speaking of the Messiah's resurrection. He was saying that God would not leave him (Jesus) among the dead or allow his body to rot in the grave.

"God raised Jesus from the dead...we are all witnesses of this. Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today...**David... never ascended into heaven...**"

You see the good news, points four and five:

- **Jesus is now at God's right hand.**
 - **He pours out God's Holy Spirit on believers.**
- Knowing what we know about Jesus, why would we want to trust or follow anyone else?**

God willing, we'll read more good news next week concerning the savior, Jesus, whom God made both Lord and Messiah.

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⁷ See Matthew 12: 46-50, 13:53-58; Mark 3:21-35; John 7:1-5