

What Do We Do With the Resurrection?
Acts 2
Easter Sunday, 2008
Faith Community Church – March 23, 2008

Introduction

1. Many if not most of us know the New Testament far better than the Old Testament. We know some of the Old Testament stories – Noah and the Ark, David and Goliath, Daniel in the Lion’s Den – but many of us are not sure how to relate the Old Testament to the New Testament. After all, the Old Testament is, well, “old,” and the New Testament is “new.”
2. That is one reason why in our church this year we’re going through the story-line of the Old Testament. To use the words of one author, the Old Testament is about “Promises Made” and the New Testament is about “Promises Kept.”¹

What Promises?

1. In Genesis, God makes a promise to Abraham that has three parts.
 - a. To make his family into a great nation.
 - b. To give his family the land of Canaan as an inheritance.
 - c. To bless all nations through his seed (or offspring).²
2. Many hundreds of years later, God makes a promise to David, King of Israel that we find in 2 Samuel 7:12-16. The crux of the promise is that one of David’s descendants will rule on his throne forever.
3. Many of these kind of promises in the Old Testament had a near and partial fulfillment, but anticipate a future, complete fulfillment. So when the Old Testament period closes, and the last of the Old Testament books is written, these two great promises to Abraham and David have not been fulfilled. But 450 years later, God would fulfill them through the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is what this weekend is all about.

Fast Forward to the Book of Acts

1. The New Testament book of Acts was written by a man named Luke, a doctor and traveling companion of the Apostle Paul. Luke also wrote the Gospel that bears his name, and Acts picks up where Luke left off.
2. The first chapter of Acts tells us that:

¹ Mark Dever

² Cf.: Genesis 12:1-2

- a. After the resurrection, Jesus spent time with his disciples over a 40 day period. Read Acts 1:1-3.
 - b. That the early followers of Christ were told to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Read Acts 1:4-5.
 - c. That Jesus ascended to heaven, but would someday return in the same way that he left. Read Acts 1:6-11.
3. When we come to Acts 2, it is the day of Pentecost. Pentecost was an Old Testament feast that followed 50 days after the Passover. Many people from all over the Roman world had gathered in Jerusalem to observe this holy day. And Luke tells us that about 120 of Jesus' followers were meeting together when something very unusual happened that disrupted the entire city. Read Acts 2:1-13.
 4. Beginning in Acts 2:14, Peter speaks to the crowd. Let me read what he says in Acts 2:14-36.
 5. Catch the point that Peter is making: By his death and resurrection, Jesus fulfills the great promises in the Old Testament.
 6. By this point a large crowd has gathered, likely numbering several thousand (see Acts 2:41). Peter has said that the death and resurrection of Jesus was God's proof that Jesus was both Lord (the ruling King of David) and Christ (the Messiah through whom all nations would be blessed). And the people listening are "cut to the heart," and they ask, "Brothers, what should we do?"
 7. Peter's answer is two fold, according to verse 38. He says, "Repent and be baptized . . . for the forgiveness of sins." Let me talk about those words a minute, because we need to understand them in a first century context if we are going to make sense of them.
 - a. Repent – is a word that means to turn from sin. A person who repents acknowledges the reality that he or she has in some way broken God's law. And the Bible from beginning to end tells us that sin requires judgment. So repentance means to turn from sin.
 - b. The other response is "be baptized." Now here is where we need to understand what baptism was in the New Testament world.
 - i. Baptism is never the means of forgiveness.
 - ii. Rather, baptism is an outward expression of a heart attitude to trust in Jesus as Savior (Christ) and follow him as Lord.

8. This message becomes what we call “the Gospel.” It’s the good news that spread throughout the Roman empire by the end of the first century, and it continues to spread throughout the world, bringing a forgiveness, hope, and new life.
9. The Apostle Paul summarized the Gospel in this way:
 - a. Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-6
 - b. Jesus of Nazareth died to forgive sin, was buried, and was raised again – all according to the Scriptures (those OT promises). Christ is alive!

So What Do We Do With the Resurrection of Christ?

1. The message of the Gospel is the same as it was 2000 year ago. And so is the response that God calls for. God promises forgiveness and removal of our punishment through Christ if we acknowledge and turn to him in faith (repent). And he also calls us to acknowledge his right to rule in our lives by committing ourselves to follow him.
2. So I have two simple questions on this Easter Sunday morning:
 - a. Have you turned from sin to trust in Christ for the forgiveness of your sins? If not, may I ask why?
 - b. And if you have trusted in Christ, are you following him? Not simply saying, “Jesus is my Savior,” but really following him?