



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Acts 2:29–36; Psalm 16

“Jesus of Nazareth: Both Lord and Christ”

TRANSCRIPT

The Scripture reading this morning is found in Psalm 16 and Acts 2:29 through 36, but turn first to Psalm 16. Since Peter makes so much of this in his great sermon on the Day of Pentecost, I thought it might be helpful for us to refresh our minds concerning this Psalm, of which Peter makes a great deal. David in the first verse writes,

“Preserve me O God, for in thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord; Thou art my Lord. My goodness extendeth not to thee. But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight. Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god. Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup. Thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places. Yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel. My reins also instruct me in the night seasons.”

Now, with verse 8 through the end of the Psalm, we have the section that Peter cites, and from which he argues in Acts chapter 2. Incidentally, Paul also refers to this particular Psalm in his sermon in Acts chapter 13, and argues similarly from it, so it must have been something to the apostolic company. Listen now from verse 8 through the end of the Psalm.

“I have set the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth. My flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

Let us turn now to Acts chapter 2, and we’ll read beginning at verse 29 through verse 36. Peter has just cited that portion at the end of Psalm 16. Now he will discuss the significance of it. verse 29 of Acts chapter 2:

“Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Messiah to sit on his throne. He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Messiah, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself; The Lord said unto my Lord; Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool.”

Now, as you’re looking at that, you should be careful to note the difference between the expression “the Lord,” and then the second “my Lord.” In the Authorized Version from which I’m reading this morning, the first “LORD” is in capital letters, signifying that this is the Hebrew expression for “Yahweh” in the Old Testament; the tetragrammaton. The second is a capital “L” and three little letters. This is a reference to a different word, *Adonai*, which may mean “master.” It may even refer to men, but often refers to God as “master.” So “Yahweh said unto my *Adonai*.” That’s

the way the Psalm in Psalm 110 is written in the Hebrew text, “Yahweh said unto my *Adonai*, or *Adonai*; Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore,” Peter reaches his climax, “let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his Word, and let’s bow together for a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Thou heavenly Father, we are indeed grateful to Thee for this magnificent discourse by the Apostle Peter. We thank Thee for the evidence that is found in it of the teaching of the Holy Spirit. We thank Thee for the encouragement that we receive when we reflect upon the fact that the apostles, just a few days before this, relatively speaking, understood so little of the Word of God, but now through the teaching of the Holy Spirit and the instruction of our Lord, they have come to understand so much of the divine testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is an encouragement to us, Lord, to realize that we, too, have the Holy Spirit to teach us the things that concern him. And in the day in which we live, O God, deliver us from any view that we may have, that there is anything more important than the relationship that we bear to Thee, and that there are any things more important than reflection upon study of and submission to the Word of God. Deliver us from putting the secondary and tertiary things into the primary place in our life. O God, deliver us from that sin and error.

We thank Thee and praise Thee for the privilege that is ours today, to gather in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give Thee thanks, express our gratitude, to worship our Triune God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. How marvelous it is Lord, to know that Thou art for us, through the saving ministry of Christ, and if God be for us, who can be against us?

We thank Thee for the Church of Jesus Christ, and today we pray for each member: the weak, the wandering, the strong, the mature, the troubled, distressed, the gifted. We pray for all of them Lord, and we ask Thy blessing upon each one. We look forward to the day when together, we shall be ‘round the throne of our great God serving Thee, loving Thee, worshiping Thee.

And we pray in the meantime, Lord, that Thou wilt use each one of us. Enable us to find our place within the body of Christ and be useful to Thee in the days which Thou hast given to us. We pray for the young in this audience, and for the elderly, and for all. O God, bless richly; build up in the faith and strengthen. And that, we pray for the whole body of Jesus Christ scattered over the face of this globe. We pray for our country. We pray Thy blessing upon it. Protect and keep our nation. We ask for wisdom and guidance for our leaders.

Lord, deliver us from anything that may hinder the accomplishment of the purposes of our God. Keep us close to Thee. Lord, we pray that we may be faithful to Thee with the task that Thou hast given to us. Be with us, Lord, through the remainder of this service.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] We have been devoting some special attention to Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost and the exposition of the Acts. In the last time in which we went through the book of Acts, about fifteen years ago in Believers Chapel, we devoted one message all alone to Peter's sermon, but this time, we're doing a little more study of what Peter has given us in this great sermon. And today we're turning to verse 29 through verse 36, and our Subject is “Jesus of Nazareth: Both Lord and Christ.” The nature of this first apotol—apostolic sermon is very instructive. It was no unusual rhetorical display. It did not use the words of man's wisdom. It was really not an oration at all. It is a heart-moving argument aimed at both the head and the heart, at the mind and the will. It was no faddist kind of sermon, like so many sermons characteristic of the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. It was no pay-day Sunday. He did not air any new theories. He went from Scripture to Scripture, from fact to fact, from plain truth to plain truth for men who understood something of the Word of God. As Mr. Spurgeon said, “He was patient at the beginning, argumentative all along.” Argumentative has come to have a negative connotation. What he means is simply, “reasoning or argumentative all along, and conclusive at the end.”

Whatever we may say about this sermon, it certainly was a very pointed one. It was a very relevant one, and a very simple one for those who understand the Scriptures and desire to know them. Of course, if a person is not interested in the Bible, then the sermon is largely a boring exposition and exegesis of Old Testament passages—which were the Scripture for Peter—from beginning to end.

I often think of the story of the blacksmith in Stonewall Jackson’s army. It seems that one day, they came to a river which they were going to have to manage to get over, and General Jackson called his engineers together, and he said to them that, “We’re going to have to ford this river, and I’d like for you to make a way for the artillery and the wagons to go over.” He also had a wagon master who was a former blacksmith before he went into the Southern Army, and he said to the blacksmith that he wanted him to be responsible for getting the wagon train across the river as fast as possible. So he had told both the engineers and the wagon—and the blacksmith that he wanted to go across the river, and the engineers went to work in their usual expert manner to devise a bridge. And later that night—in the middle of the night—in fact, along about one or two in the morning, the blacksmith came to the general, awakened him, and said that he had managed to get everything across the river. And when General Jackson was awakened and heard the blacksmith say to him that, “We’ve got all the wagons and the artillery across the river,” he was astonished, and he said, “Where are the engineers?” And the blacksmith is reported to have said, “They’re over there in a tent still drawing pictures and planning a bridge.” Well, it illustrates the fact, that the important thing is to get the job done, and while it’s nice to be able to do it in a professional way, sometimes the professional way is not necessarily the best and most forthright and direct way.

And looking at Peter’s sermon, it was a sermon that got the job done. That’s evident from the fact that thousands were converted from hearing it. Of course, we must remember this; the reason that three thousand or so responded to the invitation, that they themselves were giving incidentally, is because of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is the real source of the blessing that came on the Day of Pentecost. And of course, we should also mention the fact, that the Holy Spirit

was poured out, and there had preceded that, some very earnest believing prayer on the part of the body of believers. That’s evident from chapter 1 in verse 14. “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” And one also gets the impression from reading chapter 2 in verse 1 that, “They were all with one accord in one place on the Day of Pentecost,” that they undoubtedly were praying there, too.

So the real source of blessing in the preaching of the Word of God, is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And in Believers Chapel, if we have any blessing upon the ministry of the Word of God, it is not primarily because of the fact, that there is someone standing in the pulpit, or in our classrooms who is opening up the Bible. The ultimate source of blessing is the earnest participation—it’s the—the ultimate source is the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and success is also dependent upon the earnest participation in the ministry of every one of us. And for example, I know quite well, that I could never expect to be fruitful in the ministry of the Word of God were it not first and foremost, that the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ and makes them plain. But secondarily, that there are those of you who sit out in the audience who pray that the ministry of the Word of God, as it goes forth, may be fruitful. And if you pray and I pray for those who minister the Word of God, we will surely see the success that God intends that we should have.

Well, as we look now at Peter’s great sermon, I want you to notice today, that what Peter does is a very simple little thing, although it’s based on the exegesis of Old Testament passages. He first gives testimony to the Messiahship of our Lord, then secondly to the lordship of our Lord, and then reaches a very solemn conclusion in the 36th verse. He first of all—he gives testimony to his Messiahship in verse 29 through verse 32, by largely arguing from the passage that he has just cited, and which we read in our Scripture reading, Psalm 16.

Now, he has spoken of the life of our Lord, as characterized by miracles and wonders and signs. Those were messianic signs designed to identify our Lord as the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. He has spoken of our Lord’s death in the 23rd verse as the combination of the “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” It was pre-determined, but at the same time,

those who were the instigators of the death of our Lord, according to the pre-determined foreknowledge of God, they were guilty, and so we have the combination of the foreordination of God and human responsibility in the death of our Lord. And finally, he speaks of his resurrection in the 24th verse, “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” In other words, Peter preaches the scandal of a crucified Messiah. The Jews and the Gentiles had difficulty in understanding why the Messiah must be crucified.

All of this is ultimately related to the fact, that it is so difficult for man to realize that he is a sinner, that he is guilty, that he needs a redeemer. He needs someone to take his place, for he cannot save himself. He needs for someone to take his place and bear his penalty, that he might be free from his guilt and condemnation. That was something that the Jews had difficulty understanding. It was something that Gentiles had difficulty understanding. It’s something that human beings have difficulty in understanding, because it is a direct blow to human pride, and because of the fall in the Garden of Eden, we are characterized by pride. It’s difficult for us to understand that we need a Savior. The first step in salvation is always the knowledge of our sin and, therefore, the knowledge that we need a Savior. So Peter preaches the scandal; scandal in the sense of a stumbling block, the stumbling block of a crucified Messiah.

Now, he contends that the truth of our Lord’s resurrection is found in the Old Testament. He says, in effect, we should have known this, because in the 16th Psalm, that is what we find there. For example, in the 25th verse he says,

“For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore, did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.”

And it is clear that Peter regards this as a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ, probably taking the Psalm to be a typical Psalm. In other words, the Lord Jesus is the Living One. He’s the Holy One. He’s the one to whom God has made known the ways of life, and he is the covenant head of David’s seed.

Now, in arguing from this, I want you to notice first in the 29th verse, that he will first show that David does not fulfill that Psalm, and then he will show that David’s son does. Notice the 29th verse, “Men and brethren,” he says, “let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day.” So David has spoken about someone whose flesh will rest in hope, and who will not suffer corruption. But he said, “David, well, he’s—his sepulcher is with us unto this day.” That would have been very meaningful to the people who were listening to Peter on—in the temple area, because just to the south of the walls of the city was David’s sepulcher; the place traditionally where David was buried. So it would have been a very easy visual object lesson for him, to simply point there, and point out that David’s sepulcher is with us today. David’s flesh did see corruption. So when the Psalmist speaks about someone whose flesh shall not see corruption, it’s obvious that he’s not speaking about David. He must be speaking of someone else. That’s very simple. It seems very plain, and it’s—I’m sure—must have been very meaningful to those who were listening who understood these passages from the Old Testament.

Now of course, today so many of us do not have very much knowledge of the Word of God, and so these sermons seem very difficult for us, but they’re difficult for us because of our lack of knowledge of the Word of God. You see, if I were to say to you, “You know what Psalm 16 says.” Now, we’ve read it this morning, so you know. But if I’d said that before, would you have been able in your mind to bring up before your mental eyes Psalm 16? Well, perhaps you’d say, “Yes, I would. I remember you read that last week too.” Well, in a moment he will refer to Psalm 132. Can you bring up in your mental—in your mental mind and—and by mental image Psalm 132? Some of you are smiling. Some of you are looking, “No, I don’t think I could.” And in a moment he will argue from Psalm 110. And can you bring up before your mind Psalm 110? You see, the difficulties we face in

understanding Scripture are difficulties caused by our lack of acquaintance with the Word of God. If we understood Psalm 16 and Psalm 132 and Psalm 110, then we would understand Peter a whole lot more, because Peter is speaking with these things in mind.

Now, he said in effect, David cannot be the reference of the Psalm, because David’s flesh saw corruption. But now let us think about Christ, and so beginning at verse 30 he explains what David was really speaking about. “Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him”—that is to David—“that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Messiah to sit on his throne.” That’s an allusion to Psalm 132. Now, if you were reading Greek, you would notice that that is put in heavy print in most of the editions of the Greek New Testament, to show the reader that it is an allusion to Psalm 132 in verse 11. So he says that David was a prophet; that is, he gave revelation from God. The Psalms are a testimony to David’s prophetic gift. Furthermore, David had some knowledge of what was going to happen. David was a prophet. He knew the Davidic promises that had been given to him, and God had already told David, “David, I’m making a covenant with you, and I’m going to give into your family the rule over the nation Israel, and from your family one will sit upon the throne and rule in Jerusalem forever.” So David knew that these magnificent promises were given to him and to his seed, and so everyone who was a successor to David ideally might have been the promised seed.

You can just imagine down through the years as individuals were born who were inheritors of the throne of David. They might have been able to think, “It’s possibly I who is to be the Davidic king.” But then of course by their sin, they disqualified themselves until finally, David had one successor, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David, who fulfilled all of the expectations, not only for himself, but for all who were part of the Davidic seed and family. So the Lord Jesus is the patriarch—is the—the descendant of the patriarch David who inherits the throne. So he says that, “David was a prophet. He knew that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Messiah to sit on his throne.”

Now of course, the fact that Messiah is going to sit on his throne, is evidence of the need of a crucified Messiah, because there would not be anybody for the Messiah to rule over if there were not people who were to be ruled over. So the very fact, that there is a promise of a king to come who is going to rule on the throne of David or a—over a vast multitude of people, is evidence enough that there must come a crucified Messiah. So this was something that the apostles had such great difficulty grasping, and so many people today have difficulty grasping the necessity of a crucified Messiah. There must be someone to bear the penalty of our sin, and the Lord Jesus, of course, is that crucified Messiah.

Isn't it startling, that having been so long with the Lord Jesus, those disciples on the Emmaus Road still did not comprehend what was taking place? He said to them on the Emmaus Road, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written. Ought not Messiah to have suffered these things, and then to enter into his glory.” Beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. They just had difficulty understanding that before there can be a kingdom, there must also be a crucified Messiah.

So we read then, “Therefore being a prophet, knowing that God had sworn with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.” And then in verse 32 he adds further testimony to the Word of God. Peter says, “This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.” In other words, the Davidic promise of the Word of God is confirmed ocularly; that is, by the testimony of the eyes of individuals who have seen the risen Christ. So we have not simply the Word of God, though that should be sufficient, but we have also seen him raised from the dead. That Peter claims. Thus, he is the Messiah.

Now, further, it's not simply that he is the Messiah, but he is also Lord. Now, this is an amazing claim, because remember, to claim to be Lord is to claim the ultimate authority. One might conceive of a Messiah who was a human Messiah, but to claim that he is Messiah and Lord is to

claim the ultimate authority. So the testimony to his lordship follows. One might ask the question after verse 32, “Where is he now, if he has been raised from the dead?” I can just imagine Peter in the crowd—and those crowds were quite a bit different from ours. You’re very pleasant. You don’t raise hands, and shout out at me like they do in the parliament in London and in various other places. You don’t stomp your feet on the floor as they do in Britain when they agree or—but in Peter’s day, I can just imagine someone shouting out when he said that, “He’s been resurrected,” and he might shout out, “Well, where is he now?” And so Peter will answer that question. He will say, “He is at God’s right hand.”

Verse 33 through verse 35 is his argument, and this time varying his argument, he will talk about Lord first, and then he will show that David does not fill the bill. “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” In other words, he’s at God’s right hand, and he’s still working. Peter doesn’t really tell us that yet. He will point this out as we study the ways in which Peter ministered in those early days, but in the next chapter when the lame man is healed, in giving the healing word, Peter will say in chapter 3, verse 6, “Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.” And then in the fourth chapter and the tenth verse he will point out in another message, “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.”

In other words, all of the things that are happening in Jerusalem in those early days, were things that were done by the one who has ascended to the right hand of God on high, and from the right hand of God on high, he has shed forth this.

I tried to make the point a couple of weeks ago, that when we read in verse 12, “The people were amazed at what was happening, and they said one to another; What meaneth this?,” and Peter specifically directs his answer to “this.” And he will say in verse 16, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” Some have thought that Peter intended to say that all of Joel’s prophecy was

fulfilled then, and I argued convincingly to me—I argued that the expression “this” was a reference simply to the gift of the Spirit, and that is all that Peter is claiming. If you’ll just follow that word “this,” you will see that. “What meaneth this? This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” And then to confirm it in verse 33 he says, “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which you now see and hear.” In other words, it is the coming of the Spirit that is the significant thing for Peter here.

Now he says, “That’s what our Lord has done. He is supreme, because he’s at the right hand of the Father. He is victorious, because he has received the gift of the Spirit as the reward for his work, and he is full of mercy and grace, because he has shed forth the Holy Spirit upon the church of Jesus Christ.” Now one might say, “But could not that refer to David?” I can just imagine that in a theological classroom someone would say, “But doesn’t Psalm 16 refer to David?” In fact, if you’ll read expositions of Psalm 16, they frequently will try to show that that Psalm has only to do with David, and therefore, the apostles were incorrect in their treatment of Psalm 16 and other passages as well. I’ve always tried to argue—convincingly to me—that the apostles understood the Old Testament better than professors of Old Testament in 1984, and I think I can show that to be true. They have used the Old Testament in the New Testament in most remarkable ways, evidencing not simply, that they were gifted with imagination, but rather that they were gifted with a deep understanding of the Word of God, which so many Old Testament professors and New Testament professors do not have today, because they are not sufficiently instructed in the Scripture.

Well, now having said that, Peter will point out that text could not have referred to David. He says in verse 34, “For David is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself; The Lord said unto my Lord; Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool.” In other words, when we talk about ascending into heaven, when we talk about our flesh not seeing corruption, when we talk about the fact that, “in thy presence we shall be full of joy—someone shall be full of joy,” this cannot be a reference to David. This must be a reference to the Lord Jesus.

David is not ascended into the heavens. In fact, David in his own words in Psalm 110, pointed out that it was his Lord who was in heaven, at the right hand of the Father. So he says in effect, “Look, if you’ll read other passages of Scripture...” You see, the apostles understood Scripture by following the analogy of faith; that is, they allowed Scripture to explain Scripture. They did not take Scripture out of context. They understood Scripture. They compared Scripture with Scripture. The harmonized Scripture, just as our Lord did in his temptation account when he cites passages from the Old Testament. So like was Peter; harmonized Scripture. He said, “Look, think of what David said in Psalm 110.” I must confess, I’m rather amazed at the way the apostle is able to use the Scripture when, after all, this is the fellow of whom Luke says he, “Near the end of our Lord’s earthly ministry, the disciples or the apostles understood none of these things.” But in the meantime, he added forty days of instruction in—from our Lord himself. That forty days was worth more than forty years in any theological seminary that I know of. Forty days of instruction from our Lord.

And as a result of that, and as a result of the coming of the Holy Spirit, Peter now understands. He remembers that in the day of questions, near our Lord’s time of death, Jesus had referred to Psalm 110. In fact, in the passage in Matthew chapter 22 and verse 41 through verse 46, we have the account of the last question, this time asked by our Lord. Remember before our Lord died, there was a day in which he was quizzed. He was asked certain questions. He answered all of the questions, and finally, when the questions were over, and he had answered their question he said, “Now, I’d like to ask you a little question.” And so the question he asked was, “What think ye of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” And those who were there listening to him spoke very confidently and said, “Why, he’s the son of David.” And of course, they were right. So now our Lord further—not disagreeing with them—asks, “How then did David in spirit call him Lord, saying, the Lord said unto my Lord; Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then called him ‘Lord’, how is he his son?” Solely He said to them simply, “Whose son is the Messiah?” They replied, “He’s the son of David.” “Okay,” our Lord says, “if he’s the son of David then, how does David in spirit say; The Lord, Yahweh, said to my *Adonai*, My Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thy

foes the footstool of thy feet.” In other words, the one who is the Messiah is called by David, “my Lord.” So Yahweh said to the Messiah, calling him “my Lord,” “Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.” And so Jesus asks the simple question, “If David then called him ‘Lord,’ how is he his son?”

Now, a lot of people in 1984 would say, “That’s perfectly normal. Our children we’ve made lords in our family.” How foolish. Who’s the head of a family? The children? You know, people choose their church that way. That’s astonishing. People will say, “I want to go to a church where my children are happy.” Isn’t that astonishing? That’s one of the fundamental mistakes that people make. They should go to a church where the Word of God is proclaimed, and if their children are not happy, make them happy. That’s right. Make them happy. And if you pray about it, trust the Lord about it, those children when they grow up, they probably will be happy, but then when they get up they’ll say, “I thank God for parents who caused me to go where the Word of God was proclaimed, and now as a result, I have an understanding of the Scriptures that I never could have had otherwise.” But anyway, that’s a little off the track, isn’t it?

Peter didn’t talk about that. That’s why his sermon’s better than mine, incidentally. But anyway, our Lord said, “If he’s son of David, how does David call him Lord?” And of course, what he was trying to point out to them, was that the Messiah is both David’s son, and David’s Lord. He is David’s son, because he is the descendant of David, and possesses the Davidic nature. He’s of the seed of David, according to the flesh, but at the same time, he is the Son of God and possesses a divine nature. So the Scriptures unite in affirming that the Messiah is Son of David and Son of God, and of course, he wanted those people to whom he was speaking to see that point. Some did. The majority didn’t. Matthew says, “No one was able to answer him a word, neither dost any from that day forth ask him any more questions.” They found out, that when he started asking questions, they were unable to answer. So our Lord, according to Peter, is both David’s son and David’s lord, and David is not at the right hand of God. David himself says, “It’s his Lord who is at the right hand of

the throne of God, and hears Yahweh say to him; Sit here until I make your foes the footstool of your feet.”

So Psalm 110 marks him out then, as the exalted Lord of David and God’s Son, and the term “foes” now introduces a solemn note. “Until I make thy foes thy footstool.” “Why should the Messiah have any foes,” one might ask. How did he gain any foes? He is now at the right hand of the throne of God, and he is there until God makes his foes the footstool of his feet. How did he gain any enemies? Why, he gained enemies by being here upon the earth and carrying out his ministry here in the midst of the earth. And finally, they put him to death; both Jews and Gentiles. And so his foes are those who have rebelled against the ministry of the Messiah. That’s a glance at the hearers and all rejecters of the message of the Lord Jesus Christ, and now in verse 36, we come to the solemn conclusion—a really terrifying conclusion in one sense for those who were there, because they were the ones who had crucified the Lord. And Peter says, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, Jesus of Nazareth, both Lord and Messiah.” So the testimony of Scripture, and the testimony of history affirm the lordship and Messiahship of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Professor Bruce says in his commentary, “The first apostolic preaching leads up to the first apostolic creed. Jesus is Lord.”

Now, let’s think for a moment about that 36th verse in the remaining moments we have. Notice he says, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus both Lord and Messiah.” Jesus, as the exalted position of being not simply the Messiah but also the Lord. Now, Paul in Philippians chapter 2 will say that, “The Lord Jesus Christ, because he has suffered and died, and offered the atoning sacrifice, is also given the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that all shall confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Now, what that means, is not simply that our Lord is a lord, but that he is the LORD of the Old Testament. There is the Father who is Yahweh, the LORD. There is the Son who is Yahweh, the LORD. There is the Spirit who is Yahweh, the LORD. The great Triune God. One God who subsists

in three persons, each of which coequal in essence; all LORD. The Lord Jesus is LORD, and the apostles affirm that, and affirm that the Old Testament teaches it. They point back to Isaiah chapter 45 in verse 23 where, “Every tongue shall confess to the lordship of God.” And Paul, leaning upon that text, in Philippians chapter 2 applies it to the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, our Lord’s claim to be the Lord is vindicated.

Do you remember when he was standing before the Jewish high priests, and they ask him who he was, “Art thou the Christ, the son of the blessed?” And he said, “I am, and you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” So he claims to be the one who sits on the right hand of the throne of God, and that is confirmed and vindicated by the apostolic claims. If one goes back and looks at our Lord’s ministry, he was affirmed to be that at his baptism, when the Father from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Then at his temptation, after the temptation the angels ministered to him. At his transfiguration, it was said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him.” He is prophet. He is the priest who is offered the sacrifice. He is the king who will come to assume ultimate authority. He was also affirmed to be such at his death, when darkness fell over the face of the earth, as he was bearing the sin of the people of God. He was also affirmed to be the Son of God in power at the resurrection, and through the gift of the Holy Spirit. And so his priestly work is finished, and in heaven he lives to minister the benefits that he has won by the blood that was shed.

Amazing. Psalm 16 says that he rests in boundless joy at the present time. He’s finished his work, so he rests in boundless joy in his exalted position. There he possesses infinite majesty. He is adored by the angels. He is obeyed by the seraphs. He’s worshiped by just men—made perfect—who’ve come to heaven before us. All of heaven worships the Lamb of God at the throne of God, and down here on earth he is neglected, even by the people of God. The apostles understood thoroughly that our Lord Jesus was supreme in God’s universe. Further, he is possessed of the ultimate power. He reigns in the realm of nature. All of nature is subservient to him. He reigns in the area of providence. All of the things that happen are things that happen according to the decreative

will of the Son of God. “In him,” Paul says, “all things hold together.” My dear friends sitting in the audience, you do not draw one breath that is not by the express permission of the Son of God. You have no assurance of any breath, but that which you are drawing right now. It may be your last, and you draw that breath by virtue of the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, Daniel speaks about the God in whose hand thy breath is, and that breath is given you by the Son of God. He is supreme in nature. He is supreme in providence, and he is supreme also, in the exercise of the plenteous grace and mercy, which he pours out by virtue of his blood that was shed. And it is before this one that we shall ultimately—all of us—stand in judgment.

Now, Peter added one other thing that must have been like a sword in their heart. He said, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” You are the fools of whom David had spoken in Psalm 110. You have numbered yourselves with the enemies of the Messiah, by the way in which you have treated him, and you further are going to be overcome and defeated, the Psalm says, because it says, “Sit thou at my right hand until I make your foes the footstool of his feet.” The day is coming. If you persist in your rebellion against the Son of God, that you shall be under his feet in judgment. Ah yeah, we look back and we say, “Yes, that’s for all of those people who are on the mountain when Peter preached this great sermon, but there’s more to it than that, because you see, the rejecters include all down through the centuries who have rejected him, too. And it includes all of us who may be rejecting the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. The rejecters, of course, like those who said, “His blood be upon us and upon our children. Crucify him. Crucify him.” Oh, and upon those who blasphemed him and accused him of that great crime.

But you know, we have politer methods of committing the same crime today. We neglect him. To ignore him, is to treat him as if he were dead; dead to you. And so you can make him dead to you by simply ignoring him. At the same time God is exalting him, and God is pleased with him, and God rejoices in him, and all heaven rejoices in him, and you ignore him, you treat him as if he were dead. And then of course, you may actually be rebellious against the message concerning your

sin and the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your heart, which is flesh, is gradually turned to stone, and you're converted to eternal death, as you fail to respond to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's possible, of course, for Christians to wander from him, too. Peter wandered from him. Judas wandered from him. Peter was recovered. Judas never knew him. Both looked very much alike, didn't they? Two apostles. Two people who seemed to turn away from the Lord, but Peter was one who had backslidden and was returned. Judas was not.

I'd like to close by just noting that when Peter comes to his conclusion he says very simply—he doesn't plead sentimentally. He doesn't belabor. He doesn't say, “Now, let's sing three verses of ‘Just as I am without one plea,’” but there's no begging, no belaboring. This is a message that is to appeal to the mind and to the will, and men are to be so move by the Holy Spirit that they respond in faith, by believing the message that the apostle has given concerning ourselves and concerning him. He says, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

Do we believe assuredly? Have we really entrusted ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ? He was the Lord God always, of course, but now as God-man, both Lord and Messiah, do we feel any sense of what they felt? We read, “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart.” That word in the Greek text means something like “they were pierced in their hearts, they were stabbed in their hearts,” and so may God help us to be pricked in our hearts, pierced in our hearts, repentant, and ultimately saved. May the Holy Spirit bring us to the conviction of what we are in Christ, and may we sense our peril. May by the grace of God, we be delivered from being a foe of the Messiah, and through reconciliation, become his friend. My earnest petition to you as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ is very simple; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house if they too believe. May we stand for the benediction.

“Jesus of Nazareth, Both Lord and Christ” by S. Lewis Johnson  
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[Prayer] Father, we are grateful for this magnificent exposition of the teaching of inspired Scripture. We often claim, Lord, that we believe in the inspiration of Scripture. Many loudly affirm that they believe in the inherency of Scripture, but sometimes one would never know it from the way we respond to Scripture. O God, deliver us from neglect, and rebellion, and blasphemy, rejection in various ways, those polite ways. May by the grace of God, we rest ourselves upon the Lord Jesus for time and for eternity. If there are some here, Lord—here, who have never turned to him, may at this very moment in their hearts, they say to Thee very simply, “Lord, by Thy grace I see I’m a sinner. I need salvation. You are offering it ... [End of tape]