

This Jesus, God Raised Up!

Acts 2:32

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Pastor Francis Bezzam

³² *This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.*

My message is titled, “This Jesus, God Raised Up”

- In the year 1894, a man by the name of Nicolas Notovitch authored a book titled, “The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ”. In that book, this author claimed that Jesus traveled from Galilee to India and studied with Buddhists and Hindus before returning to Judea. This book is still on sale on Amazon.
- Years later, in 1983, a German author, his name Holger Kersten took the claims of Nicolas seriously and wrote another book titled “Jesus lived in India”. Available on Amazon too.
- In Nazi Germany, some “pastors” believed that Christ was not Jewish but Nordic. They said that the swastika succeeded the cross as a symbol of Christianity.
- No, Jesus is not from Europe and Jesus did not travel to India because if you look at our text, Peter says “this Jesus”. Peter is a first-hand eyewitness of Jesus with others. Peter is one of the first disciples of Jesus Christ. Peter was addressing a few thousand people gathered at the Jewish festival called the Pentecost.

Wouldn’t you be more inclined to hear what a first-hand eyewitness has to say about Jesus than someone who claims to have a new revelation? I do.

I want to try and attempt answering three questions this morning.

- Who is *this* Jesus?
- Why did God raise *this* Jesus from the dead?
- What does *this* Jesus offer you?

Who is *this* Jesus?

Observation#1: Jesus was a man approved by God.

Peter’s introduction about Jesus begins at verse 22. Hear what Peter says in verse 22 – “*Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God...* ”.

Jesus was a man from Nazareth. Jesus was every bit human as you and I. He grew up as a child of poor Jewish parents. Jesus was subject to the instruction of the home under Mary

and Joseph. Jesus grew up to be a man. Jesus did everything that any normal man would do. Rise up in the morning. Attend to work. Get tired. Rest. And repeat those things. Peter says Jesus was *attested* by God. What is that? It means Jesus was *verified* or *commended* by God. How was Jesus *attested* by God?

Observation#2: Jesus performed the deeds of God as God incarnate.

Verse 22. *Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know*".

This is where many people start pushing back. Jesus was a man. Jesus may have wonderful things like touching lepers, having compassion on widows, the disabled and needy people. We like this very humane Jesus but surely Jesus did not walk on water, calm the raging sea, heal the blind, or raise the dead? It's too outlandish for a mere man to do these things.

But you see Jesus does not need your approval, affirmation or consent to be who he was. In the Gospel of John, John tells us that "*Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.*" John 2:24-25

What is in man? Self-seeking. Self-will. Self-agenda. Pleasure-seeking. Vanity-seeking. Jesus said, "*from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness*" Mark 7: 21-22

Peter writes in his epistle "*For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty*" 2 Peter 1:16. Majesty!

Jesus is Royalty to Peter. You could call Jesus a liar, a charlatan or Sovereign. But Jesus' identity is not open to your opinion. Jesus himself said in his response to the chief priest "*Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*" ⁶² *And Jesus said, "I am"*. Mark 14:62. And they said "Blasphemy!"

Who is *this* Jesus?

Observation#3: Jesus was rejected by men... according to God's plan.

²³ *this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men..*

You see this Jesus was "delivered up" – meaning betrayed, conspired against, handed over and sold for thirty pieces of silver by one of his own. Even Peter denied Jesus. Jesus was appreciated and admired when he provided for the needs of others. But when Jesus

said, “follow me or deny yourself”, what did many do? They turned away. They said, “this is a hard teaching” (John 6:60).

Here is Jesus’ appraisal of the seeker sensitive crowd. “*Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves*” (John 6:26).

The self-seeking man does not want to seek the things of God. He wants to judge God. He wants to find fault with God. He would even kill God if he had the chance. As if that was possible. But that is exactly what they did with this Jesus.

They rejected Jesus. They rejected Jesus’ claims. They called Jesus a devil. They called Jesus a blasphemer. They didn’t stop with calling Jesus names.

They took Jesus to a fake trial. They yelled, screamed and rioted until they received what they wanted. They wanted his blood.

Pilate, the Roman governor, tried to reason with the crowd. He asked, “*What evil has he done?*” But they shouted all the more, “*Let him be crucified!*” Matthew 27:23.

Crucifixion was the most *humiliating* form of death. A punishment given to common criminals.

Notice, Peter does not just say Jesus was rejected by an angry mob. Peter *imputes* the people he addresses with the sin of murdering an innocent man. He charges them with the sin of killing their Messiah. Peter began his speech by saying – “*Men of Israel*”. “*You (all) crucified and killed*”. This is a *grave* sin. This kind of sin is worthy of capital punishment.

All that Jesus did was come with open arms of love and compassion, to teach the right way of God. But their heart of indifference, apathy, their heart of rebellion led to Jesus’ crucifixion and death.

However, all this was according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.

So, yes, Jesus was *approved* by God. Jesus *performed* the deeds of God. And Jesus was *rejected* by men.

Why? Because no one seeks for God. No one is good. It is only God who seeks your good.

God sent His Beloved Son – the Lord Jesus Christ to be condemned by men in order that those trust in Him alone would never be condemned.

“*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God*” 1 Peter 3:18

And yet death could not hold Jesus down.

Why did God raise *this* Jesus from the dead?

Observation#4: To destroy death, the power of sin and offer hope beyond the grave.

We don't talk about death on a regular basis unless you are a mortician. Death is not a comfortable topic for many but death is an insult or affront to life. One author described death saying that "*there is no more devastating a barrier in all of human experience than that between the living and the dead*". It hurts when a loved one passes away. Doesn't it? When we die, everything ceases to exist – the material parts of our being and the immaterial parts as well. Our bodies decay and decompose. There is no way getting around that inevitable reality. But the immaterial part of who we are - the capacity to love, laugh, be annoyed, enjoy a good coffee or a sunset, to hear a good song, to walk and feel the breeze and much more – all these wonderful capacities cease to exist at death. Death seems so unfair and illogical.

But Jesus wasn't bound by death. Peter says in verse twenty-four that it was impossible for Jesus to be held down by death. How could God die? Yet the God-Man died and rose again to give life to those who are dead in sin. Jesus died to taste death for you and rose again to defeat death and power of sin. Jesus offers hope beyond the grave – eternal life and eternal joy. The late Tim Keller said that "*Christianity does not leave you to face death on your own. Instead, it gives you a champion (Jesus) who defeated death, who pardons you and covers you with his love*". In Jesus Christ, by faith, you are released from the power and fear of death.

So, Peter concludes his speech by presenting Jesus, as approved by God, as rejected by men, as a man dying a cruel death and being raised from the dead.

How did Peter's audience receive his message?

³⁷ *Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*

A crucified Jesus makes no sense to those who never have experienced a sorrow for their sin. These people were "cut to the heart". Meaning they saw the enormity and gravity of their sin. They were grieved for their grave sin of killing an innocent man.

They could spend eternity in hell without God for such a grave sin. They knew killing an innocent man requires a just response. They knew the Law of God. Death for murder! So, in their guilt and sorrow, they ask, "*What should we do?*"

What does Peter say?

³⁸ *And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”*

How could such a grave sin be forgiven? Murderers are usually given the death penalty. But Peter says, you can be *forgiven*. You can receive *amnesty*. You can receive *pardon*. You can receive *grace*. How is that possible? It's possible because Jesus paid the price for your forgiveness.

Notice, Peter lays out the terms for receiving forgiveness.

What are terms for receiving forgiveness?
Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ..

God offers *forgiveness* sins not on your terms but God's. His terms are to *repent*. Turn from your sin. Trust in Jesus' death as payment for your sin.

You see Jesus was rejected and crucified for not just for those people. For me and for you as well.

I don't know what hidden sins you practice, what open sin you live in, what brokenness you have but this Jesus wants to touch and transform your life. The Bible says, “*And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account*”. Hebrews 4:13

The pleasures of this world are a trap, a mirage and short lived. Your soul is too precious to toy with sin and this world and lose your soul.

C.S Lewis once said, “*We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased*”

God does not offer forgiveness only but much more. God promises eternal life with Jesus, fullness of joy with Jesus, godly pleasures forever. (Verse 28, Psalm 16).

This Jesus, God raised up!

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.