

How Do We Know?

(Acts 2:12-23)

Introduction

1. Accelerate: Jesus accelerates us by the power of the Holy Spirit to a transformative, relational, missional life in Christ.
2. As Jesus leads us into new seasons of change/uncertainty, how do we know all this stuff about Jesus is true?
3. Last week: Jesus kept the Father's promise by sending the Holy Spirit [Acts 2:1-11]
 - a. His followers are filled with the Spirit & literally speak in unlearned, foreign languages to the crowd.

See God's prophecies for today are true [Acts 2:12-18]

1. [2:12-13] The crowd's reaction
 - a. [12] All are amazed & perplexed, wondering what this portends.
 - i. Though curious & unsure, several will respond by following Jesus (cf. 2:41).
 - b. [13] Some will mock, thinking foreign languages are drunken gibberish
 - i. When God is supernaturally at work, many see, but are unable to grasp it, so they explain it away.
 - c. Application: When confronted with truth about Jesus & His work, are you amazed & trust/follow Jesus, or skeptical/critical & reject Jesus, no matter how much evidence?
2. [2:14-16] God's prophetic Word
 - a. [14-15] Peter responds to the crowd: They're not drunk; it's only 9 AM!
 - b. [16] The Spirit's empowerment to prophesy (speak truth from God) in foreign languages fulfills Joel 2:28-32.
 - i. The Holy Spirit is author of Scriptures, e.g., through King David (cf. Acts 1:16), and here, Joel.
 - c. Joel was written 600 years earlier, after the conquest & exile of Jerusalem by the Babylonian empire.
 - i. In the midst of ruin, they experience further calamity (plague of locusts), because they continue to turn away from God.
 - ii. God's goal: To get our attention, get us to turn back toward Him, and to correct & protect us from self/other-destructive ways.
 - iii. Major theme: "Day of the Lord." When God ultimately judges the nations & faithless Israel, but promises restoration & life for those who repent.
3. [2:17-18] God's Word fulfilled
 - a. [17a] "Last days": The crowd understands as the coming judgment day of the Lord.
 - b. [17b-18] Promised sign: Followers of Jesus filled with the presence of God's Spirit to prophesy about Him.
 - i. Across gender, age, socio-economic class lines.
 - c. The fulfillment: 120 men & women filled with the Spirit & proclaiming Jesus (cf. Acts 2:4,11).
 - i. Evidence of the truth about Jesus: God's promise in His Word has come true today.
4. Application: How can we trust Jesus? If things about Him & His work in the Word come true (cf. Deut 18:21-22).
 - a. How do you know if something is from the Holy Spirit? It will always line up with truth in Scriptures.
 - i. The Holy Spirit is the author of Scriptures (cf. Acts 1:16), and will not contradict Himself.

Prepare for God's prophecies about tomorrow [Acts 2:19-20]

1. [2:19-20] Early warning signs
 - a. With Jesus' prophesied life, death, resurrection, & sending of His Spirit, the Kingdom has arrived, but only the beginning (see notes on sermons: "Kingdom Come" [Luke 17] & "(re)Turn" [1 Thess 4-5]).
 - b. [19] Cosmic-scale signs so everyone everywhere will know something of God-sized magnitude is happening.

- c. [20] These are early warning signs preceding the ultimate fulfillment of the Day of the Lord.
2. If we see God's promises come true for the present, then we better pay attention to what He says about the future.
- a. God has given clear signs/evidence in the Bible about Jesus life, death, resurrection & return as Judge/King.
 - b. Application: Are you living genuinely prepared for the Day of the Lord?
 - i. How does an imminent time of accountability change how we live & what we're devoted to?

Respond by calling on Jesus [Acts 2:21-23]

1. [2:21-22] God saves those who call on Jesus as Lord & Savior
- a. [21] Only those who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved from judgment/destruction.
 - i. "The Lord" in the Jewish mindset is YHWH, Creator God & Heavenly Father.
 - ii. Who does Peter connect this saving Lord to?
 - b. [22] God the Father authenticates Jesus as Lord & Savior, in His miraculous signs (cf. John 14:11).
 - i. The disciples declare (Acts 2:11) the same mighty works of God in Jesus that the crowd previously witnessed for themselves.
 - c. Jesus is equal to the Father as Lord: Master, leader, sovereign God, who has the right to direct our lives.
 - d. Jesus is equal to the Father as One who saves: He rescues from sin, self-destruction & judgment.
 - i. He paid our bill for sin Himself.
2. [2:23] We're all guilty of sin & crucifying Jesus
- a. [23a] Jesus' arrest, suffering & execution were all part of God's sovereign plan.
 - b. [23b] But they were ultimately still responsible for His unrighteous death.
 - i. [Acts 4:24-27; cf. Psa 2] Jewish leadership & people, Gentile kings & people are all responsible.
 - ii. [Rom 3] Like them, we are all guilty of sin & guilty of crucifying Jesus to pay for our sin.
 - iii. Jesus took our place (in sin & death), and put us in His (righteousness & life).
 - c. We are still responsible for our rebellion & wickedness, but Jesus' death was God's solution all along.
3. Application: We need to examine the evidence and come to a conclusion about Jesus.
- a. If it's true & points to Jesus as Lord & Savior, it changes everything: our direction, plans; what's important, valuable, meaningful in life; how we spend our dollars & days.
 - b. We need to call upon Jesus, receive Him as Savior, obey Him as Lord.
 - i. What sin & self-destruction do you need Jesus to save you from?
 - ii. What area(s) of self-sufficiency & self-lordship do you need to surrender to Jesus as Lord today?