

The Greatest Crime

(Acts 2:22-36)

Introduction

1. Accelerate: Jesus accelerates us by the power of the Holy Spirit to a transformative, relational, missional life in Christ.
2. Today's question: What is the worst possible crime you could ever commit?
3. Background
 - a. [Acts 2:1-13] Jesus fills His followers with the promised Spirit, & they speak in unlearned, foreign languages.
 - b. [Acts 2:14-21] Peter explains this is fulfillment of prophecy (cf. Joel 2:28-32), proving Jesus as Savior & Lord.

Jesus is the resurrected King [Acts 2:22-32]

1. [2:22-24] Peter draws a line in the sand:
 - a. [22] God endorsed Jesus; [23] you (people) killed Jesus.
 - i. These are two opposing actions/sides.
 - b. [24] But God raised Jesus up.
 - i. Jesus was raised from the agony of death, which cannot hold Him because death is the consequence & outcome of sin, of which Jesus has none (cf. Heb 4:15)
2. [2:25-28] God's prophetic Word through King David (cf. Psa 16:8-11).
 - a. Psalm of confidence: We can trust God in this life, & look forward to the joy of everlasting life with God.
 - b. [25] The king proclaims: I kept my eyes on God; He's with me, so I have nothing to fear.
 - c. [26] His response: Joy & praise; even in light of threats/harm, he lives in expectant confidence/hope.
 - d. [27] Key: God won't leave this King in the grave, or His Holy One to rot & decay in death.
 - e. [28] In living in God's ways, He's filled with lasting/everlasting (cf. Psa 16:11) joy in God's presence.
3. [2:29-32] Who is this King?
 - a. [29] It can't be referring to David himself; he's dead & buried, verifiable by his tomb today.
 - b. [30] The source of David's psalm
 - i. The Holy Spirit speaks through Him as a prophet (cf. 2 Sam 23:2)
 - ii. God promised David's descendant would rule as King (Davidic Covenant; Psa 132:11).
 - c. [31] He prophesies about another King, the resurrection of the Christ.
 - i. Christ: Greek term for Messiah (Hebrew); literally: chosen "anointed one", meaning King.
 - d. [32a] Jesus fulfills the criteria as verifiable risen King,
 - i. [32b] The 120 followers supernaturally prophesying in foreign languages testify as eyewitnesses to this truth (cf. Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8; 500 witnesses in 1 Cor 15:6).
 - ii. Old Testament Law: Only 2-3 witnesses required as legal evidence (Deut 17:6; 19:15; Matt 18:15-20).
 - iii. The resurrection of Jesus is the hinge-point of all Christianity; it proves He is able to raise us from the dead as well (cf. 1 Cor 15).
 - iv. Peter spent one verse on Jesus' life [22], one on His death [23] & focuses on His resurrection [24-32].
4. Application: Are you following the right King?
 - a. A king has 2 roles: Commander of the army, & to rule/judge; Jesus protects, leads, guides as a good King.
 - b. Who/what do you turn to for protection? Who/what do you trust as the authority to lead/guide your decisions?
 - c. Where do you place your confidence/hope, even in the face of threats or harm?
 - d. Put your trust in Him today as a good King; put your hope & future in Him as the resurrected King.

Jesus is God [Acts 2:33-36a]

1. [2:33-34a] Where is Jesus now?
 - a. [33a] Jesus is exalted to His Father's right hand.
 - i. The followers are witnesses of Jesus' ascension to Heaven (cf. Acts 1:9).
 - b. [33b] He received the promised Holy Spirit, evidenced by the Spirit's power in His life & ministry.
 - i. He fulfills the Father's promise by now pouring the Spirit on His followers, which they're witnessing.
 - c. [34a] It's not David. He didn't ascend to Heaven; he's just a man.
2. [2:34b-36a] David attests to Jesus as King & God (cf. Psa 110:1).
 - a. [34b] "The Lord (God the Father) said to my Lord." Who is this other Lord?
 - i. Someone who is a Lord like God.
 - ii. Even though David is a king, he recognizes there's another King/Lord above him.
 - b. [34c] "Sit at My right hand": A position of honor & favor, in Heaven.
 - i. Culturally, most Jewish people were right-handed; considered the hand of strength in combat; a symbol of power & favor.
 - ii. [35] And as favored Lord, God the Father will subjugate all of this ascended King's enemies (cf. Josh 10:24-25; including death itself in 1 Cor 15:24-28).
 - c. Implications
 - i. This King sits on a Heavenly throne (cf. Acts 2:30), not just King over Israel, but the Kingdom of God.
 - ii. He sits next to God the Father, co-equal/co-eternal, ruling & reigning in Heaven; He's also God.
 - d. [36a] Conclusion: It's not David, but Jesus who should be worshiped as Lord God & honored as Christ King.
3. If Jesus is God, He is worthy to be acknowledged/worshiped as God
 - a. [Rom 11:36b-12:1] Worship is about glory & sacrifice; we make sacrifices to the glory of someone/something.
 - b. We all unceasingly worship, even if misdirected to someone/something other than Jesus.
 - c. Application: Do you worship Jesus as God?
 - i. Who/what do you pour yourself out to, to the glory of that person/thing?
 - ii. What receives the first & best of your time, devotion, attention, resources & energy?

Crime: Rejecting God [Acts 2:22, 36]

1. [2:36] You are responsible for murdering the resurrected King & Lord God (cf. 2:23)
 - a. Peter tells several thousand Jewish people in Jerusalem; many had nothing directly to do with His death.
 - b. Yet, everyone in the crowd is involved in the crime that brought Jesus' death (cf. Rom 3).
 - i. We are all enemies of God to be subjugated (cf. Acts 2:35).
 - ii. We are all on the side of killing Jesus vs. raising Him (cf. 2:23-24).
 - c. But the essence of the crime is not simply ending Jesus' physical life.
2. [2:22] God the Father endorses Jesus in 5 ways:
 - a. [22] God performed miraculous works through Jesus.
 - b. [23] God's sovereign plan of Jesus' death for our sins as our Savior.
 - c. [24-32] God raised Jesus from the dead as prophesied, resurrected King.
 - d. [33a] God ascended Jesus to His right-hand throne in Heaven a God.
 - e. [33b] God gave Jesus the prophesied power & promise of the Holy Spirit.
3. Greatest Crime: Rejection of God in Jesus' life.
 - a. Jesus was handed over to be crucified on the grounds of blasphemy
 - i. He claimed God endorsed Him as Messiah-King (cf. Luke 22:67-69)
 - ii. He claimed to be Son of God (cf. Luke 22:70-71)
 - b. Jewish leaders rejected this role of God in Jesus' life, & called Him a blasphemer.
 - i. If a person rejects the true role of God in the life of Jesus (in these 5 areas), they're charging Jesus with blasphemy & rejecting God's endorsement of Jesus.
4. Application: Do you really agree with God about Jesus?
 - a. God endorsed Jesus by His miraculous works/ministry. Do you believe in them or see as symbolic myths?
 - b. God planned Jesus' death as our Savior from sin. How are you trying to "save" yourself by your effort/merit?
 - c. God raised Jesus as resurrected King. His resurrection is proof of ours. Is He functionally King over your life?
 - d. God ascended Jesus to Heaven, showing Him as God. Who/what gets my worship?
 - e. God gave Jesus the Holy Spirit, which He pours out on us. Do you accept the work of the Holy Spirit through fellow believers in your life & ministry?