

“This is that”

Scripture-based proclamation and prayer in Acts

Passages to focus on

- Ps 2:1-2 in Acts 4:25-26 The community’s prayer
- Ps 2:7 in Acts 13:33 Paul’s Pisidian Antioch speech
- Ps 110:1 in Acts 2:34-35 Peter’s Pentecost speech
- Paul’s Athens speech 17:16-34

Reading Psalm 2

- Acts 2:25-26; Ps 2:1-2
 - Address to God as δέσποτα and creator v 24b
 - Locates the prayer in the big story of God’s action, echoing Exod 20:1; Neh 9:6; Ps 145:6 LXX [MT 146:6]; Isa 37:16; Gen 1
 - The dual authorship of Ps 2 v 25a; cf. 2 Pet 1:21
 - ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου στόματος Δαυὶδ παιδός σου εἰπών
“the one who by means of our ancestor through the Holy Spirit by means of the mouth of David your servant spoke”
 - von Wahlde: chiasmic structure:
 - A: ὁ “you”
 - B: τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, “by our ancestor”
 - C: διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου, “through the Holy Spirit”
 - C’: στόματος Δαυὶδ, “by the mouth of David”
 - B’: παιδός σου, “your servant”
 - A’: εἰπών, “spoke”
- Psalm quotation vv 25b-26
 - Coronation psalm
 - vv 1-2 read christologically and ecclesiologically
- The Psalm interpreted 4:27-28
 - Herod, Pontius Pilate, the gentiles and the people of Israel are the opponents of YHWH and his anointed king, not the pagan gentiles of Ps 2:1-3
 - Jesus is the anointed king of Israel; the believers are his people
- *Implications*
 - Jesus and his people placed at the centre of scriptural interpretation
 - Scripture has divine and human authorship—the need to listen well to *both* voices
 - Encouragement to *pray* the Scriptures

- Acts 13:33; Ps 2:7
 - God has fulfilled his promise by raising Jesus
 - ταύτην “this” (v 33) points to τὴν...ἐπαγγελίαν “the...promise” (v 32) which points to the promise of v 23; probable scriptural source 2 Sam 7:11-16, esp. v 12
 - ἐκπεπλήρωκεν “has been fulfilled” perfect tense—Jesus has begun to rule and his rule is now effectual
 - Jesus’s rule brought about through his resurrection ἀναστήσας Ἰησοῦν “by raising Jesus” (v 33)
 - ὡς καὶ ἐν τῷ ψαλμῷ γέγραπται τῷ δευτέρῳ “as it is written in the second psalm”
 - intertwined with Ps 16:10 (v 35) and Isa 55:3 LXX (v 34)
 - messianic exegesis (Dupont)—doing biblical theology
 - Jesus is the true king of Israel on the basis of Ps 2:7 (Charlie Moule sees this in Rom 1:4 too)
 - Association with 2 Sam 7:10-14 by *gezera shewa*; cf. 4QFlor (174) 1.10-13
 - Implications
 - Do biblical theology, seeing Jesus as the golden thread running through Scripture
 - But not seeing Jesus in every verse in the OT—certain passages more pertinent

Reading Ps 110 [LXX 109]

- Ps 110:1 in synoptics
 - Jesus’s question about the Messiah Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43
 - Jesus’ answer about the Messiah Matt 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69 (echo of Dan 7:13 with Ps 110:1)
 - Cf. Hebrews: Ps 110:1 = Heb 1:13; Ps 110:4 = Heb 5:6; 7:17, 21
- Acts 2:34-35
 - Catena of scriptural quotations: Ps 15:8-11a LXX [MT 16:8-11a] vv 25-28, 29-31
 - Ps 110:1 is attributed to David, but cannot be about David
 - Most psalm quotations in Acts are from royal psalms (Jamie Grant)
 - The Psalter invites recontextualisation of the psalms
 - Eschatological hope for an ideal king
 - Reading backwards from Jesus to the Scripture (Richard Hays)
- Implications
 - Draw in other passages when preaching to show how to do biblical theological thinking

Reading the Athens speech Acts 17:22-34

- Misunderstanding the speech as how to do apologetics
 - Powers of the Areopagus (Bruce Winter)
- Their question to Paul vv 19-20—why should we allow you to introduce a cult of Jesus to Athens?

- *Paul’s answer*
 - No need for temple or altar—the altar to the unknown god vv 23-24
 - Creation as God providing a world where humans live, rather than need a temple made by humans for God to live in v 24; Gen 1; Ps 8:3; etc.
 - God does not need to be served by human hands, rather he serves humanity by giving what is needed v 25; Ps 50:10-12 [LXX 49:10-12]
 - God does not need places allocated for worship and sacrifice, rather God provides places for humans to live v 26a; Gen 1:28 “fill the earth”; Gen 10; Deut 32:8
 - God does not need specific “times” for festivals, but allocates times for humans to live v 26b; Dan 2:21
 - God is not part of the world, but people live within God’s created order v 28—connects pagan poets with scriptural themes
 - God is not like physical images in temples, but forms humanity in his image v 29; Gen 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6; Isa 40:18-20; 44:9-20
 - Humanity does not have knowledge of God, but ignorance—so repent vv 30-31; cf. God’s judgement of the world Amos 1–2; Gen 18:25; Ps 82:8; Isa 66:16; Jer 25:31 [LXX 32:31]
- *Implications*
 - A speech saturated in Scripture but without clear direct quotation
 - Scripture seen through the lens of Jesus vv 30-31, 18
 - Contrast Billy Graham and Tim Keller

Learning from Acts

- The preaching of Scripture is through a christological lens
- Variety of forms of proclaiming Jesus as fulfillment of Scripture, audience-dependent
- Engage in biblical theology
- Proclaim Scripture in ways which connect with the concerns and situations of the audience

Key references

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