

Acts 3:21 "whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

3:22 "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.

3:23 'And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'

3:24 "Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.

3:25 "You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

3:26 "To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

4:1 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them,

4:2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

4:3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening.

4:4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

[From today's sermon]

Peter, drawing on the prophecies of Joel and David and clearly explaining the events of Pentecost, proclaimed that God had appointed Jesus as the Messiah and Savior, and that He was the One foretold in the Scriptures. This pierced the hearts of the people, and many believed.

In today's passage, he further explained to those who heard through the words of Moses and other prophets, as well as the words God spoke to Abraham, that Jesus was indeed sent from God and is the One whom the entire Scriptures testify about.

This method of testifying about Jesus through the entire Scriptures was the same method Jesus used when speaking on the road to Emmaus.

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.”

By focusing on Jesus, we can understand the true meaning of the words, "I will raise up a prophet like you from among your own people. You must listen to everything he tells you," and the words from the Old Testament, "All nations on earth will be blessed through your offspring." When we make Jesus the focus of our lives, we too come to understand the meaning of life.

Good morning, everyone. We are now in the latter half of July. It feels a little cooler, doesn't it? It feels strange that it is still hot in July, as if the seasons are out of sync, but I can't help wondering what this winter will be like. I hope you are all doing well.

Now, let's continue reading Peter's impressive sermon.

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In today's passage, he further explains to those who hear through the words of Moses and other prophets, as well as the words God spoke to Abraham, that Jesus was indeed sent from God and is the One whom the entire Bible testifies about.

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There are many passages in the Bible that speak of Jesus.

Isaiah 9:6 A child has been born for us, a son given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace, there will be righteousness, and the earth will be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the full earth has been filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

Isaiah 53:2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, like a root out of dry ground. He had

no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing we desired on earth.

53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. As one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

53:7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

53:8 He was taken away by oppression, and who among his contemporaries would have thought that he was struck down for the transgressions of my people and cut off from the land of the living?

Daniel 3:23 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace.

3:24 At that moment, King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose quickly. He said to his officials, "Did we not throw three men bound into the fire?" They answered the king, "Yes, O king."

3:25 The king replied, "But I see four men walking in the fire, unbound, and they have not been harmed. The appearance of the fourth man was like that of the Son of God."

We know that Jesus is at the center of the Bible, but we also know that even among those who lived before Jesus was born, and even among those who saw Jesus with their own eyes, witnessed His miracles, and heard His powerful words, there were those who could not believe in the Lord. I think I can understand why Paul called Jesus a mystery.

Ephesians 3:1 For this reason, I, Paul, who am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of the Gentiles—

3:2 you have surely heard about the grace of God that was given to me for you.

3:3 As I have already written briefly, I learned through a revelation the mystery that was kept secret for long ages.

3:4 When you read this, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ.

3:5 This mystery was not made known to people in former generations, but now it has been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit.

3:6 This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

3:7 I became a servant of the gospel by the working of God's power, which was given to me by the gift of God's grace.

3:8 To me, the very least of God's people, this grace was given so that in the bodies of Christ, which are his body, now in this life or in the life to come, I might win praise for God.

3:9 And to make all the people of God understand the plan of the grace that God has given to them through Christ Jesus.

3:10 This is so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God may now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places,

3:11 to the praise of the glory of God's glory.

3:12 In him we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

However, we cannot allow Jesus to remain asleep as a “mystery” hidden deep within us forever.

2 Corinthians 4:4:5 But we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

4:6 For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

4:8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.

4:9 We carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

4:10 So we live in the presence of the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal body.

4:11 We who are alive are constantly being given over to death for Jesus' sake. This is so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal bodies.

4:12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

Let us turn our attention to Peter's sermon today.

3:21 This Jesus is the one whom God has appointed as the last of the prophets, and he will fulfill all the promises made through the prophets since the beginning of time.

3:22 Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up a prophet like me from among your own people. You must listen to everything he tells you.

3:23 Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely destroyed from the land."

3:24 All the prophets who followed Samuel foretold these things.

3:25 You are the children of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors. God said to Abraham, 'All the families of the earth will be blessed through your offspring.'

Joel, following David, introduces Moses. The conversation between God and Abraham appears.

"I will raise up a prophet like you from among your own people" (Deuteronomy 18:5), this refers to Jesus.

"All nations on earth will be blessed through your offspring" (Genesis 12:22, 26, 28), this refers to Jesus.

Jesus appears throughout the Bible.

3:26 God sent his servant first to you, to turn you from your wicked ways and to give you a blessing."

Why was Jesus sent? It was for the purpose of blessing. To turn people away from evil and grant them blessing. How can we pretend not to know about someone who was sent for such a wonderful purpose?

4:1 While they were speaking to the people, the chief priests, the temple guards, and the Sadducees came up,

4:2 annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

4:3 They seized them and put them in custody until the next day, since it was already evening.

4:4 However, many who heard their words believed, and the number of men came to be about five thousand.

The Sadducees did not believe in the afterlife or the resurrection. Therefore, they were angered by Jesus' teachings and arrested the apostles, imprisoning them. However, Jesus was crucified, died, descended into hell, rose again on the third day, and died as a substitute for us, freeing us from death and destruction. If there is no death or destruction, why did Jesus need to become a substitute for us, who did not exist?

No matter how much we study and think we know, what exists simply exists. We are dismissing what truly exists based on our own convenience. We are arbitrarily deciding things based on our own preferences. However, these attitudes will eventually lead to collapse. Is it the teachings of the Bible that are flawed, or is it the value system we have believed in until now? Many people found value in what Peter said and believed it. And Christianity became a belief system trusted around the world. It may still be a minority belief in Japan, but we want to share with you the story that when we remember Peter's sermon and make Jesus the focus and center of our lives, everything becomes clear.

◇Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for today's worship. When we think that those passages in the Old Testament were also speaking about Jesus, we are amazed and moved. We know that the One who is the center of the Bible was born as a baby on this earth two thousand years ago, lived most of His life like others, and was crucified at the end of His three-year public ministry. Yet even those who met Jesus directly at that time could not believe, and we realize that the truth about Jesus is a hidden mystery. However, we believe in this Jesus as the focal point of the Bible and the focal point of our lives. Please lead all those who are suffering into God's salvation and peace. Bless our families and the people in our community. Use us. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.