

Crossroads Baptist Church
December 18, 2005 10:00
Romans 1: 2-4
Romans #2

“Either Put Up or Shut Up”

Have you ever experienced a bully who would threaten you and you finally just said, “Either put up or shut up.” Or may be someone was making you promises but never would carry through and you said, “Either put up or shut up.”

That might have been the way you would have felt about all the promises made of the coming Messiah.

I. He was promised beforehand.

A. Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament promises.

1. Jesus was promised in the Old Testament

Paul wanted to make sure that we knew that Jesus was not just a recent thought of God but that indeed the gospel was planned long before it happened. It isn't a novelty. It isn't a new idea.

There are at least 332 prophecies in the Old Testament referring to Christ most of which were fulfilled in His first coming.

The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New Testament. What he was preparing and promising then, he fulfilled in the coming of Jesus.

2. God keeps His promises.

Even though there are hundreds of promises given over hundreds of years, God will keep His promises. Time has no bearing on the faithfulness of God to do what He said He would do.

God keeps His promises through suffering, exiles and tortures. And because of this we know that God can be trusted.

3. This gives us trust that the Scriptures are Holy.

In verse two, there is a tremendous statement about the doctrine of scripture.

Paul says that God spoke these promises “through” the prophets. It does not say “by whom” but “through whom.” In other words, the word that God spoke to them came through them and what we have in the Bible from the prophets is the Word of God.

Also, Paul in verse one refers to himself as an apostle who is speaking and writing with authority on Christ's behalf as a founder of the church. In other words, what Paul is saying is under the authority of Christ.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:13, "We speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit." In other words, Paul claims a special inspiration for his teaching.

Peter thought Paul's writing were inspired for in II Peter 3:1 Peter says that some “people distort Paul's writings, as they do the other Scriptures.” So Paul's writings were in the same category with other Scriptures.

That's why the Bible we hold is called the “Holy Bible.” The words contained in the Book are holy – they are God's.

B. Jesus is God in the Flesh

1. Jesus existed before he came in the flesh.

Look at Romans 8:3, "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." God sent him to take on human flesh. So the Son existed as the Son of God before he became a man.

2. Jesus is God's son.

Colossians 2:9 Paul says, "In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." Jesus, the man, was the fullness of God. He came from outside in the person of his Son who is the perfect image of the Father and is himself God.

3. Jesus is also the Son of David in the flesh

One of the precious promises about the Messiah was that he would rule as king in the line of David and conquer the enemies of God's people.

Jeremiah 23:5, "'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.'" Or Isaiah 11:10, "In that day the Root of Jesse [i.e., the Son of David, Jesse's offspring] will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious."

He was of the seed of David. It wasn't just any family, it was the right family, it was the royal family, the only family that had a right to rule in the land, a right to establish the throne on Mount Zion in that holy hill in Jerusalem, the holy city and from there to rule the world. He was the right man in the right family. If He hadn't been the son of David, He couldn't have been the Messiah. He would have contradicted 2 Samuel chapter 7, Psalm 89, Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 23, Jeremiah 33, Ezekiel 33, Ezekiel 37. All of them would have been contradicted if He had not been the son of the family of David. So He was a man and He was the right man.

And repeatedly at His birth, in Luke 1 I think at least five times in that chapter it says He's the Son of David...Son of David...Son of David...Son of David...Son of David.

This Jesus is God who came in the flesh and as the authority to take the lawful seat on David's throne and rule as King of Kings.

But notice in verse four,

II. He was pronounced boldly.

When it was time to either Put up or shut up, God really did put up. Here Paul says that he was "declared with power." How powerfully?

In this verse he mentions the "resurrection from the dead." That implies that the Messiah died.

Most of the Jews expected their Messiah to come in power and defeat their enemies. Their Messiah dying was not in their understanding.

But Jesus did die and was buried, but was raised from the dead "according to the Spirit of holiness."

What does this mean?

1. That God raised Jesus from the dead by His Spirit.

Romans 8:11 where Paul says, "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." This teaches that we will be raised by the Spirit of God who dwells in us, in the way that Christ was raised. So the Spirit was involved in raising Jesus from the dead.

2. That God raised Jesus with the Holy Spirit.

But why does Paul use this unusual expression, "Spirit of holiness" (found nowhere else in the New Testament)?

Dealing with the dead was dirty business. When King Saul wanted to commune with the dead he went to the Witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28:7ff), and it was a secretive and illicit business. Mediums and diviners and sorcerers were an abomination in Israel. When the dead are dead, you leave them alone and don't have dealings with them. Seances were and are unlawful for believers. Dealing with the dead has been a kind of black magic, not a beautiful, clean, holy thing.

Anything but. Talk of an executed dead man being raised from the dead must have sounded to many ears absolutely horrible and gross and dirty and unclean, like dark sorcery and black magic.

Over against this Paul lays stress on the exact opposite: Christ was raised from the dead in accord with the Spirit of holiness, not a dark spirit or an evil spirit or a defiled spirit, but the very Spirit of God himself who is marked above all by holiness. He was not defiled in raising Jesus. It was a holy thing to do. It was right and good and clean and beautiful and God- honoring, not God-belittling. It was holy.

This resurrection boldly proclaims who Jesus is!!

If there was ever any question in anybody's mind about whether He was the Son of God, the resurrection should have ended it. He had to be man to reach us, but He had to be God to lift us.

When God raised Jesus from the dead, irrefutable evidence marked out and distinguished the Son of God from all other human beings as clearly as the horizon distinguishes the sky from the earth.

That is the good news that we proclaim.