

# The Testimony of the 12

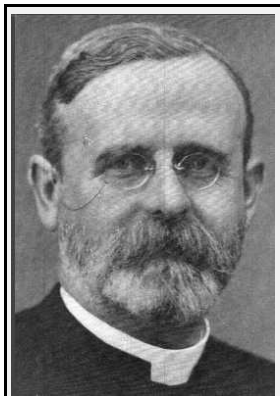
## 4a: COMMON GROUND -- Wise Witnessing (2:14-22)

... just as you yourselves know -- (v.22)

### 2:14-21 How does Peter deal with Jewish unbelief? (1 Peter 1:10-12)

Peter's method was to anchor the new faith in the O.T. He ... was quick to use his massive knowledge of the O.T. -- **E.M. Blaiklock**, *Acts: The Birth of the Church* p.26

This is the true art of preaching, whether it be in London or Bombay; whether it be in the heart of Africa or in the midst of the wealthiest civilization, matters nothing. At Athens, quote your Greek poets, make the barbarians at Lycaonia put Jupiter and Mercury into contrast with Jehovah. Begin with the things men know. The Christian preacher must always recognize that there is a light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; that God has never left humanity utterly without witness. Therefore the true preacher and the true missionary begin with the things known, and show their relationship to the Christ. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *Acts of the Apostles* p.39



**W.H. Griffith Thomas**  
"The WAY we present the message counts for much"

**2:22 Another common ground -- that which even unbelief couldn't deny (4:16 26:26; cf. Matt.12:24)**

[teras] = "wonder," a startling, amazing portent or prodigy. The pagan world also had such portents. It seems that for this reason the N.T. never uses "wonders" alone but always conjoins the word with "signs" or with "miracles." Many of God's signs are,

indeed, also portentous wonders, but they are never wonders alone, they are divine indications and thus lie on a far higher plane than pagan portents ... The sign language of God cannot be misunderstood, every startling and disquieting phenomenon proclaims that heaven and earth must pass away and all their affairs be wound up. -- **R.C.H. Lenski**, *Acts* pp.77-78

### On Peter's careful choice of designation for his chosen subject:

Peter commenced by the use of a phrase which was familiar to the men who listened, "Jesus of Nazareth." ... Peter took hold of that peculiar designation, which would appeal to his hearers, because they were perfectly familiar with it, and in view of the things he was about to declare, commenced by reference to the actual Personality with which these men were familiar, either by sight or hearing -- "Jesus of Nazareth." He thus

reminded them of the fact of His humanity. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, pp.50-51  
Peter began from "underneath." He did not begin with the incarnation, but with what was common knowledge to a great many in his audience -- the man, Jesus of Nazareth. Many of the Jerusalem Jews had seen Him personally, perhaps had seen one of His miracles or had been carried away in excitement of His triumphal entry. Those Jews from elsewhere in the Roman Empire had probably been in Jerusalem the 50 days previous for Passover when Jesus was crucified and had stayed until Pentecost, or had heard all about Him, and the recent commotion after they arrived. In any case, there was no denying His existence, or that He had been "accredited by God to you by miracles (*dunamis*), wonders (*teras*) and signs (*semeion*), which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know" (v.22). There was knowable, first-hand empirical evidence of Jesus' special relationship with God. -- **Ronald B. Mayers**, *Both/And: A Balanced Apologetic* p.151

### Does Peter credit the Divinity of Christ for His miracles?

The Man of Nazareth was a fitting and perfect instrument of God, through whom God could exercise His powers, produce His wonders, give His signs. What, then, did this prove concerning Him? It was not the demonstration of Deity; it was rather the demonstration of His perfect realization of the Divine Ideal in His human life, so that He was an instrument absolutely fitted to the use of God, one through Whom God could work ... This second movement of the apostle's interpretation of the process that led to Pentecost reveals Jesus as a Perfect Man, and a sinless Man. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op. cit.*, pp.52-53

He does not dwell on the Deity of Christ first. He tells them, "Here was a man approved of God ..." -- **Harry Ironside**, *Acts* p.55

## 4b: Controversy -- Facts, Then Theology (2:23-35)

### 2:23-32 Which fact stands at the centre of Peter's message -- and is dwelt on the longest? (cf. Paul, 17:18)

That is, not a thing to be argued about, but to be attested by competent witnesses. It was presented to the multitude on Pentecost, as it is to us, as a plain matter of fact, on which the whole fabric of Christianity is built, and which itself securely rests on the concordant testimony of those who knew Him alive, saw Him dead, and were familiar with Him risen. -- **Alex. MacLaren**, *Expositions: Acts* p.60

This paragraph is an exposition, in the apostolic preaching, of the central fact concerning Jesus of Nazareth, that, namely, of His Resurrection. The statement concerning the resurrection stands at the centre of the whole movement of this discourse. Three facts precede it -- the manhood, the perfection, and the death of Jesus; three facts follow it -- His exaltation, His reception of the Spirit, His bestowal of the Spirit upon the assembled disciples. The former three culminated in the resurrection. The later three resulted from the resurrection. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, p.56

### 2:33-36 In proclaiming Christ's exaltation, is Peter preaching full-fledged Trinitarianism?

The exalted Jesus "received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father." Here we have the Holy Trinity, for "Father" implies Jesus as the Son. -- **R.C.H. Lenski**, *op.cit.*,

p.97 [note *implies*; but is Peter proclaiming Christ *Lord* in the Trinitarian sense? See **MacLaren**]

**The wisdom of true preaching ...** Note Jesus as “man” first (v.22), with the facts known to and acknowledged by all. Then only gradually led up to Jesus as “Messiah” at the close (v.36). **The way we present the message counts for much.** -- **W.H. Griffith Thomas**, *The Apostle Peter* p.82 (emphasis added)

## 4C: Conviction of Sin, Repentance *Precede* Offer of Salvation (2:37-39)

**2:37-39 How does the Holy Spirit prepare hearts for the acceptance of the gospel?** (John 16:7-11)

Peter now went on to his main theme: the proclamation of Jesus as Lord and Messiah. The early apostolic *kerygma* regularly falls into 4 parts, which may be summarized thus: (1) the announcement that the age of fulfilment has arrived; (2) a rehearsal of the ministry, death and triumph of Jesus; (3) citation of O.T. scriptures whose fulfilment in these events prove Jesus to be the Messiah; (4) a call to repentance. These 4 elements are present in Peter’s proclamation here. -- **F.F. Bruce**, *Acts* p.69

The call to repentance had been previously sounded by John the Baptist (Mt.iii.2) and by our Lord (Mt. iv.17, etc). It was an essential element in the announcing of the Good News: cf. iii.19; viii.22; xvii.30; xx.21; xxvi.20. Repentance (*Metanoia*, ‘change of mind’) involves a turning with contrition from sin to God; the repentant sinner is in the proper condition to accept the divine forgiveness. -- **F.F. Bruce**, *Acts* [Greek], p.97

This is the beginning of repentance, this is the entrance into godliness, to be sorry for our sins, and to be wounded with the feeling of our miseries. for so long as men are careless, they cannot take such heed unto doctrine as they ought. And for this cause the word of God is compared to a sword, (Heb. iv.12,) because it doth mortify our flesh, that we may be offered to God for a sacrifice. -- **John Calvin**, *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles* p.115

**Is the ‘promise’ (v.39) of the gospel about gifts?**

This gift is bestowed upon each and every repentant and baptized soul and cannot, therefore, refer only to charismatic gifts of the Spirit, speaking with tongues, healing, etc., but denotes the gift of grace and salvation which is always present in the heart which the Spirit enters. We do not read that any of the 3,000 spoke with tongues, yet they all received the Holy Spirit. -- **R.C.H. Lenski**, *op.cit.*, p.109

announced until the very close of the address. It was distasteful to his hearers. To announce it at the start is to secure its scornful rejection at once, or at the very least to awaken prejudices that will harden the mind against the arguments in favor of it. -- **James M. Stifler**, *An Introduction to the Book of Acts* pp.18-20

... the true preacher always begins on the level of the things men know, and sets these in relation to the great facts of revelation. Any missionary will agree with me. When you go out to the heathen world, **you do not go out to abuse**, you go out to find the element that is there of knowledge, and then to bring to bear upon it the great Word of God, fulfilling the element that is true. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *The Birth of the Church* p.76

[The apostles] did not seek to occupy the people with abstruse doctrines, nor did they reason about profound theological problems; but they presented the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ in “words easy to be understood.” In this they are models for preachers all through the dispensation. -- **Harry Ironside**, *Lectures on the Book of Acts* p.82

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## ***In the Art of Apologetics, ALL Should Be Masters***

But when Peter’s address on this morning is studied, we have still more convincing proof of the Spirit’s presence. In its adroitness, in the arrangement of the arguments, in its analysis, in its **steering clear of Jewish prejudices**, in its appeal and effect, it is without peer among the products of uninspired men ... In marshaling these arguments there is great skill. The theme, The Messiahship of Jesus, which, of course, was in Peter’s mind from the first, is not

**NEXT: THE SPIRIT SPEAKS -- of the SERVANT**