

Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism³⁵ but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.³⁷ You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. (NIV84)

Theme: Jesus is Lord of all.

1. He was baptized for all
2. He brings peace to all

Throughout the history of the world, people have tried to rule over it all. People, such as, Hitler, Napoleon, Julius Caesar and the Roman Emperors that followed him, and Alexander the Great—have all tried to take away the world. They used violence and warfare to do so—killing countless individuals and destroying many countries. Some of them did quite well—They ruled over much of the known world. But in the end all of them failed. Try as they might, no one has ever ruled the entire world.

All except one. Today we see that Jesus is Lord of all. And not because he defeated the whole world and made them submit to him. His rule wasn't one of violence or warfare. Rather we see that he is Lord of all because he was baptized for all and he brings peace to all.

Our first lesson for today contains a prophecy about Jesus. It was given through the prophet Isaiah about 700 years before he was born. In it Jesus is called God's servant. And God promises, **I will put my Spirit on him.** We find out by looking at the rest of this prophecy, that this servant would be called in righteous—that is perfect or holy. He would take care of and help those in need. He would bring the gospel to the Gentiles. And he would free those held captive by sin. For years God's children waited to see who would fulfill these words. It was several years after Jesus' death and resurrection when Peter found himself praying to God on the top of a roof in Joppa. In a

vision God showed Peter a sheet full of unclean animals that he told Peter to eat. When Peter objected God replied, **Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.** When Peter was trying to figure out what this vision meant, men from Cornelius, a Roman Centurion, came to visit Peter. The Lord had also visited him in a dream and told him to contact Peter. Peter traveled the 30 miles to Caesarea where the Centurion lived and heard his story. And he understood the meaning of his vision. Nothing is unclean any longer. They were free from Old Testament laws and regulations. They could associate with Gentiles and spread the gospel to them. Before he heard Cornelius' story Peter said to him, **You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.** And afterward Peter replied in the first two verses of our text, **I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.**

Then Peter began to remind Cornelius and those who were with him, of Jesus' life and ministry. And Peter connected all three of our lessons together. Remember that in our first lesson God said he would put his Spirit on Jesus. Peter said, **You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power.** It was at Jesus' baptism that God fulfilled the words of our first lesson. As Jesus and John the Baptist were walking out of the water, The Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, landed on Jesus. And the Father spoke words of approval from heaven, **This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.** Now, Jesus was already the Christ, or Messiah—the chosen one whom God anointed to save the world from their sins. When he was born the angels announced, **A Savior has been born to you, he is Christ, the Lord.** And as God, he already had power. But it was here at his baptism that God publically anointed Jesus as the Messiah. It was the beginning of Jesus' ministry. It was the beginning of Jesus actively serving as our substitute.

And remember that in our first lesson Isaiah said that God's servant would be a light to the Gentiles. Jesus was doing this through Peter. By sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with Cornelius, a Gentile, Peter

was giving light to the blind. While some Gentiles heard the gospel previously, by and large it remained hidden to them. First and foremost the gospel was for the Jews. But now with Christ's death and resurrection for the whole world, the sweet message of the gospel was for us Gentiles too. And we needed the light of the gospel.

For we were born in the blindness of our sin and unbelief. Conceived by two sinful parents, we too are sinful. We were sinful from birth—from the times our mothers conceived us. We were born as children of the devil and enemies of God. We hated him. We didn't know God. We wanted nothing to do with him. The original sin that we were born with, the sin inherited from our parents, leads us to commit sins day after day. Constantly we fail to obey God's commands perfectly. Because of who we are and what we have done we deserve God's wrath and punishment. We ought to suffer forever for our sins—that's the price we ought to pay. And because of our sins, we can't save ourselves. We can't earn God's favor or convince him to save us. But through baptism God saves us. As Peter says, **Baptism...now saves you.** Or Paul to Timothy, **He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.** At our baptisms, our sins are forgiven. As Peter said on the Day of Pentecost, **Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.** Through baptism God brings us to faith or strengthens faith. Peter continued to say that through baptism we will **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**, which is a reference to faith. At our baptisms our sinful nature was washed clean and we were clothed with the righteous robes of Christ.

We need baptism in order to be saved. But what about Christ? He wasn't born sinful like the rest of us. He never went against God's Word. He didn't need to be saved from his sins. So he didn't need baptism for himself.

When he told John the Baptist to baptize him Jesus said, **it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.** But what righteousness, or holiness did Christ need to fulfill? He didn't need forgiveness for his own sake. He didn't need baptism to wash his own sins away. But ours. For he would take all our sins upon himself. For on the cross Christ became a sinner for us—becoming guilty of all the sins we have done wrong. The Lord laid on Christ all our iniquities. And so Christ

had to be baptized. Not for his sins, but for ours that he took upon himself.

Jesus needed to be baptized in order to fulfill righteous requirements for us. At his baptism Jesus actively started his service as our substitute. So it was as our substitute that Jesus was baptized. He had to become like us in every way. Even to the point of being baptized for the sins that we committed. And so Jesus was baptized not for himself, but for us. So that we might be connected to him through our baptisms. He was baptized for all. To wash away the sins of all people. He was baptized for all—for Jews and Gentiles, men and women, young and old. And so he is the Lord of all.

But he is also the Lord of all because he brings peace to all.

It was at his baptism that Jesus officially began his ministry. After starting with his baptism, Peter gives a short summary of Jesus' ministry to Cornelius. **He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.** During his ministry Jesus had the power to perform many miracles. He healed diseases. He cast out demons. He even raised people from the dead. In other words, instead of breaking a bruised reed or snuffing out smoldering wicks, he helped out those in need—and those being oppressed by the devil. He showed his power as God. He proved he was more powerful than the devil and his demons. Of course that wasn't the only way Christ used his divine power. He also brought people to faith. He spread the gospel about himself. And through his words many were brought to faith. They believed in him as the promised Messiah and the fulfillment of our first lesson. And these believers shared God's Word with others. And not just their fellow Jews—but Gentiles as well. That is how Cornelius, a Gentile, knew about Christ's ministry.

But the most important thing Jesus did was at the end of his ministry. He would suffer and die on the cross. He would take away our sins and give us his perfect life. But three days after his death he rose from the dead. Not only did he give us his perfect life, he also gave us eternal life. For all who believe in him will not die an eternal death that they deserve. Rather, all believers will live with him in heaven forever.

And so we have peace. This is the same peace proclaimed at Jesus birth. The peace for forgiveness. That they won't be counted against us. That the guilt of all our sins has been removed. They won't come back to haunt us or condemn us. For our sins have been paid for and removed by the suffering and death of Christ. He served as our substitute in every way. And so we have peace knowing that we don't have to do anything to be saved—it's all been done for us already. We have peace knowing that eternal life is awaiting us when we die.

It's the peace of reconciliation. We were once God's children. Created in his own image and likeness. But we lost that image when Adam and Eve doubted God's love for them and ate the forbidden fruit. So we became sinners. And sins separate us from God. No longer his children—but his enemies. But Christ, through his suffering and death, has reconciled us back to God. He has restored our relationship with God. We are now at one with him again. We once again enjoy a right relationship with him.

That is the kind of peace we know have. The peace of forgiveness. And the peace of reconciliation with our God. This is a peace that only the God-man is able to give us. This is a peace that only our substitute can give us. This is the peace of the gospel that Peter told Cornelius about. **You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.**

Jesus truly is the Lord over all. Not because he defeated all. But because he was baptized to all and brings peace to all. But it is only through faith that we receive all what Christ has done for us. So like Peter, let us spread the word to all people—regardless of who they are. For Christ died to save them. Christ was baptized for them. So let us share the message of the peace of Christ. So that they too may know, believe, and confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord of all. Amen.