

Acts 3:11-26, The Fulfillment of God's Covenant  
through the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and its Significance  
in Ahmadi Muslim Context

사도행전 3:11-26, 메시아를 통한 하나님의 언약성취를 아흐마디  
무슬림들에게 상황화하는 중요성에 대하여

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**초록(Abstract)**

사람들은 고유의 문화 안에서 자라고 길러지면서 가치관이나 사고 방식, 삶의 행동 양식들이 결정된다. 이러한 과정을 문화화라 부르는데, 선교사들이 새로운 종교나 문화권으로 복음을 전하러 갔을 때 복음이 어떻게 전해질 것인가에 대한 깊은 고려함 없이 복음의 메시지만 가지고 효과적으로 의사소통하려고 한다면 장벽을 만나게 되는 이유도 이러한 문화와 그들만의 고유한 세계관에 대한 이해가 충분히 없기 때문이다. 본 논문에서 다루려고 하는 사도행전 3장에 의하면 사도 베드로는 솔로몬 성전에서 유대인들을 향하여 복음을 전할 때에 ‘예수가 그리스도이시며, 약속된 메시아이다’ 하는 메시지에 집중하고 있다. 이러한 그의 설교 메시지는 시대적 배경과 청중의 차이를 고려하더라도, 21세기 아흐마디야 무슬림들을 향하여 복음을 전할 때 중요성을 가진다. 그것은 이슬람 내부에 다양한 종파들이 있지만 아흐마디야들은 그중에서도 종말론이 무척 강하며, ‘예수가 메시아이다(Isa Al-masih)’ 라는 꾸란 구절에 근거하여 예수에대한 왜곡되지만 부분적인 이해를 가지고 있기 때문에 유대인 청중과의 공통점을

가지고 있으며, 또한 성경의 여러 선지자들과 언약에대한 배경 지식들을 가지고 있기 때문이다. 그러한 점에서 이 논문은 신약 성경 가운데 사도행전 안에서 베드로의 한 설교 본문에 근거하여 이 메시지를 특정한 문화 가운데 상황화 하는 과정, 특별히 아흐마디야 무슬림들을 청중으로 정하여 메시지가 해석되고 이해될 수 있는 가능성을 고려하였기 때문에 다른 청중들에게 적용되는 것에는 한계점을 가지고 있다.

People are born into and reared in a culture by the process in which they acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and behaviors that enable them to become the members of their society. Scholars refer to this process as ‘enculturation’<sup>1</sup>. Missionaries learn a new culture through a similar process in order to effectively communicate the message of the Gospel to the people of a given culture to the extent that they understand.<sup>1</sup> However, if a missionary does not critically evaluate the culture, the biblical message can be forced to fit into a given culture’s categories and be distorted its meaning.<sup>2</sup> Thus, “there are definite limits beyond which the missionary may not go and regarding which he may not compromise”.<sup>3</sup>

In the book of Acts, chapter 3, Peter gave a message to the Jews in Solomon’s Portico after the miracle of the healing of the lame man, containing the compelling message that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah. This

<sup>1</sup> Stephen A. Grunlan and Marvin K. Mayers, eds., *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 85; Louis J. Luzebetak, *The Church and Cultures: An Applied Anthropology for the Religious Worker* (Pasadena, Cali.: Willam Carey Library, 1989), 82.

<sup>2</sup> Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1985), 88-90.

<sup>3</sup> Luzebetak, *The Church and Cultures: An Applied Anthropology for the Religious Worker*, 96.

didactic(kerygmatic) sermon can be critically applied to Christians today with a supra-cultural meaning and significance despite their different cultural settings. The first century Jewish community was apparently different from the twenty-first century Ahmadi Muslims living in North America. However, Christians can contextualize the biblical message of Acts 3 among Ahmadi Muslims with a critical view of contextualization.

This paper will first explore the biblical context and the historical background behind the text of Acts 3, and will disclose the significance of the message in Peter’s sermon in the paralleled context of the twenty-first century Ahmadi Muslim by analyzing the belief system in the Ahmadi Muslim culture. In order to examine the relevance of Peter’s message among the contemporary Ahmadi Muslim context, the contextualized message of Peter will be addressed, as well as the implication of his message to Ahmadi Muslims. Presumably, the contextualization of Peter’s sermon among Ahmadi Muslims will not be an easy task, but it is an inevitable issue for missionaries to deliver the biblical Messiahship of Jesus in the Ahmadi Muslim context.

주제어 : 상황화, 종말사상, 메시아 사상, 사도행전, 아흐마디야 무슬림, 마흐디

**Key words:** Contextualization, Eschatology, Messianic Belief, Book of Acts, Ahmadi Muslims, Mahdi

## 1. Culture and the Context of Acts 3: The Jewish Audience

Regarding the book of Acts, Flemming mentions that it is the story of missionaries whose task was to spread the good news about Jesus in multiple settings and among new groups of people.<sup>4</sup> When the missionary

apostolate was engaged in missions among different cultural groups, they had been geared most closely to the needs of the Jewish or Greek cultural contexts with a deep appreciation of the diversity of cultures for there is no other way of transforming the people other than through their cultures.<sup>5</sup> The apostle Peter was called as God's agent and herald of the good news among the Jews and presented the message in a way that was appropriate to the particular settings and occasions by contextualizing the message, 'Jesus is the promised Messiah,' among the first century Jewish groups. To ask how Peter presented the message of the Gospel in Acts 3:11-27, it is inevitable that we raise the questions about the audience and the setting of Peter's sermon.

Two apostles, Peter and John, attended the services of worship in the Jerusalem temple and lived with Jewish neighbors. There were two principal morning and evening prayers offered daily at the temple, and the apostles went up to the inner court from the outer court in order to be present in the court of Israel for the service of prayer, which accompanied the evening sacrifice.<sup>6</sup> At three in the afternoon, a man crippled from birth was begging at the Beautiful Gate.<sup>7</sup> Peter and John paid attention

<sup>4</sup> Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 25.

<sup>5</sup> Luzebetak, *The Church and Cultures: An Applied Anthropology for the Religious Worker*, 5-6.

<sup>6</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles; the Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952), 76-77.

<sup>7</sup> Commentators mostly identify this as the Nicanor Gate, which was the main eastern entrance to the temple precincts from the Court of the Gentiles. see Bruce, 77; Charles Kingsley Barrett, *The International Critical Commentary, Acts: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 195; John B. Polhill, *Acts: The New American Commentary* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 130.

to this lame man and called out, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" took him by the right hand. Then the lame beggar jumped to his feet and began to walk.

This sight was watched by the Jews who knew the beggar had been born lame and lay usually at the Beautiful Gate. They were astonished by the marvelous sight and rushed to see the apostles. When the service of prayer and worship was over, Peter and John, together with the beggar, were surrounded by a crowd. When the two apostles reached Solomon's Colonnade, Peter had a large audience. Reflecting on this sight, the listening audiences of Peter's sermon in Solomon's Portico were primarily the Jews who gathered around the temple after the daily prayer, and were ready to listen to anything Peter might say.

It appears that at the time of Peter's sermon, people still remembered Elijah's deeds and the idea of his eschatological return as believed by the teachers of the law on the basis of prophecies of Malachi (Mt 17:10; 27:47-49; Mk 8:15; 9:11).<sup>8</sup> The Jews believed God would send the Messiah as the seed of Abraham.

## 2. The Message of Peter's Sermon and the Jewish Response

### 2.1. The fulfillment of God's plan in Israel's history

In speaking of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of their fathers, Peter made a common ground with his Jewish audience by

<sup>8</sup> "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes; he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse" (Mal 4:5).

reminding them of the God of the patriarchs.<sup>9</sup> Peter and the Jews were fellow Israelites and children of Abraham, so Peter used the Jewish Scriptures and their background knowledge to find a contact point.

Throughout history, the Abrahamic covenant continues “as the framework within which relationships between God and his people are presented.”<sup>10</sup> The promise of the Messiah was passed down from generation to generation, and the covenant with Abraham and Jacob was reestablished with the shoot of the stump of Jesse, the Davidic Kingdom (Is 11:1-3).<sup>11</sup> God renewed the covenant with the King David, the representative of the descendants of Abraham, and this Davidic king was promised to sincerely fulfill the covenant with God and bring God's victory and His everlasting sovereignty.

Yet, Israel was disobedient to God and His kingship was rejected, and this rebellious history of Israel has been continuously repeated. Judah and Israel had failed to mirror the covenantal idea<sup>12</sup> and the people of Israel were exiled because of their sins.<sup>13</sup> During the post-exile, the Messianic hopes were very prominent among Israelites. When Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by Babylon, the Israelites questioned

whether Yahweh had abandoned his people or was still caring for them. Under the Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenistic empires, the Israelites remembered the prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, and Isaiah, and expected the evidence of an eschatological prophet.

Up to the time of Jesus, many Jews still had hope of the restoration of Zion/Jerusalem and expected Yahweh to deliver his people from foreign nations, and thereby they awaited the prophet like Moses and would be Yahweh's agent of judgment and restoration. Out of this Messianic hope in this period, scholars see there were largely two kinds of Messiahs who came to be expected. One was a national Messiah, who would rule over the nations with his Kingship and deliver his people from the oppressors. The other one was a suffering servant Messiah who would bear the sins of the world as the servant of Yahweh.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2 Jewish denial of Jesus' Messiahship

The Jews, however, neither acknowledge Jesus as their divinely appointed King and Savior, nor as the suffering servant foretold by the prophets. Rather, they asked that Jesus be crucified on the cross when Pilate offered to release him. The Jews thought Jesus was a mere man and they did not have a full understanding of Christ's true identity, as the promised Messiah. The Jewish misunderstanding of Jesus was also recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “What are people saying about who the Son of Man is?” The disciples replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and

<sup>9</sup> Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission*, 59.

<sup>10</sup> Andreas J. Köstenberger and T. O'Brien Peter, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 32.

<sup>11</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, *The Christian and the Old Testament* (Pasadena, Cali.: William Carey Library, 1998), 160; C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007), 194.

<sup>12</sup> Willem A. VanGemeren, *Interpreting the Prophetic Word: An Introduction to the Prophetic Literature of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1996), 303-310.

<sup>13</sup> O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Prophets* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Pub., 2004), 224.

<sup>14</sup> Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson, *Bandits Prophets and Messiahs* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), 147-149.

still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” Except for Simon Peter, no one answered “Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God (Mt 16:16; Mk 8:29; Lk 9:20).” Peter’s sermon thus, revealed the true meaning of the words of the prophets, “Jesus is a greater and newer prophet than Moses as a reference to His resurrection and exaltation.”<sup>15</sup>

Peter targeted the Jewish audience with the message of the Messiah’s suffering. He explained Jesus’ death and resurrection as the fulfillment of God’s plan for salvation for His people which is traced through the prophets (Is 53; Jer 11:19; Dan 9:26; Zech 13:7). Peter particularly emphasized the Messianic title of ‘servant of God’ (παῖς in Greek), which was foretold by Isaiah in order to explain Jesus’ death and suffering, describing the servant of God as the glorified one (Isa 52:13), the righteous one (53:11), who is handed over (53:12).<sup>16</sup> This specific title, the servant of God, showed ultimate conviction of God’s divine authority and his work in relation to Jesus, explaining the atonement for the finite people of Israel and for the salvation of his people.<sup>17</sup> Peter also wove the prophecies foretold by Moses, Samuel, and all the later prophets as a “united testimony” and ascribed this fulfillment to Jesus explicitly, in showing His covenant with David and Abraham.<sup>18</sup> By doing so, Peter proved Jesus’ finality and his Messiahship in his sermon and emphasized Jesus

as the fulfiller of the first prophecy, Abraham’s blessing and the successor of the kingdom of David.

Peter knew the servant of God who was prophesized by the prophets would redeem the Jews from the spiritual darkness and accomplish his mission as the Messiah (Is 60:2).<sup>19</sup> Thus, Peter testified to the first century Jews to the existence and strength of the hope of the Messiah who had already come and will come again at the end of time. Peter called them to change their ideas of the Messiah and abandon the exclusivism and rather accept Jesus as their promised Messiah.

Furthermore, he corrected a false impression of Jesus’ death by interpreting the history and the meaning of Jesus’ death and resurrection to the Jews, Peter made the Jews understand that all things that happened to Jesus were the fulfillment of the words of the prophets, who foretold that the Messiah had to suffer. This sermon was “the call to reshape Israel’s interpretation of its history and Scriptures in light of the resurrection.”<sup>20</sup> Peter appealed to the Jews to repent of their sins, which are forgivable, and distinguished from deliberate, intentional sins (Num 15:27-31; Heb 6:4-6). Peter gave them a second chance to repent and be forgiven by Jesus just as the priest made atonement for the Israelites’ unintentional sins.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. The Parallel Context of Ahmadi Muslims in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

In the previous section, the historical situation depicted in the text and the original intended meaning behind Peter’s sermon was explained. The

<sup>15</sup> Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles; the Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 86.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 81; John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: To the Ends of the Earth* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 92; Willem A. VanGemeren, *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: An Introductory Articles from the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 358; Barrett, *The International Critical Commentary, Acts: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 195-196; Polhill, *Acts: The New American Commentary*, 131.

<sup>17</sup> Kaiser, *The Christian and the Old Testament*, 51.

<sup>18</sup> Stott, *The Message of Acts: To the Ends of the Earth*, 94.

<sup>19</sup> Kaiser, *The Christian and the Old Testament*, 5.

<sup>20</sup> Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission*, 88.

<sup>21</sup> Polhill, *Acts: The New American Commentary*, 131-132.

message of Jesus' Messiahship in accordance with his resurrection and vicarious death should be contextualized in the context of Ahmadi Muslims for the reasons listed below. Imagine that there are people who still ask the question, "who is Jesus?" Unfortunately, there are millions of Ahmadi Muslims who do not think Jesus is their savior, the Son of God. Yet, God wants every person to know Jesus. For that reason, it is necessary that Christians who have received the Good News of Jesus to speak out the truth boldly to Muslims, just as the apostles preached the Gospel to the Jews and the Gentiles in the book of Acts. Then, in what ways does the message of Peter's sermon give significant meaning to the twenty-first century Ahmadi Muslims?

Compared to the audience of Peter's sermon, although Ahmadi Muslims are not Jews, we can find some parallel situations among this Muslim group. First, they affirm the message of God's prophets like Abraham, Isaac, and Jesus and value the promise of God that is foretold by his servants in the Scriptures. The Qur'an 2:136 and 3:84 state,

We believe in Allah, and the Tribes, and that given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to all Prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: and we bow to Allah in Islam.

Muslims regard the prophets, who brought the word of Allah, as being the purest and most righteous of men, the messengers of Allah. In addition, there are about twenty-five prophets recorded by name in the Qur'an including John the Baptist and Zechariah from the New Testament.<sup>22</sup>

Second, Ahmadi Muslims have their own messianic expectations. The

<sup>22</sup> George W. Braswell, *What You Need to Know about Islam and Muslims* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 22.

Ahmadi Muslims' belief in the Mahdi, similar to the Israelites, is the belief that the Messiah would come and restore the nation at the last day. The general messianic expectation of Muslims can be traced back throughout their history. Scholars think the Muslim figure of the Mahdi, the "rightly guided one" or the "righteous one" played an important role in the history of Islam as in the Jewish and Christian Messianic faiths. The Islamic myths of Mahdi cannot be fully understood or resolved in the structure of Christian eschatology, but it gave important meaning for the leaders of Muslim sects to reform and to revive their community again.<sup>23</sup>

Mahdi is believed to appear at the end of the age, and he will intercede at the judgment of Allah in the last day. McCurry comments that this idea possibly grew out of the interaction between Islam and Christian doctrine on the return of Christ. Depending on the sects of Islam, Muslims have their own ideas of who the Mahdi will be.<sup>24</sup> The Ahmadiyya community, in particular, believes that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad replaces the second advent of the Messiah. Although Ahmadi Muslims knew Jesus as "Al-Masih" messiah, they do not think Jesus is their savior, nor the Son of God who came to redeem sinners.

Third, Ahmadi Muslims have not known the identity of Jesus and have misunderstood Christ just as the Jews disowned Jesus in ignorance. Ahmadi Muslims also know Jesus is the son of Mary, and a prophet like Moses, but they do not accept Jesus as the Son of God, the promised Messiah who came to the earth for the sins of human beings. Ahmadi

<sup>23</sup> Mircea Eliade and Charles J Adams, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 477.

<sup>24</sup> Don M McCurry, *Healing the Broken Family of Abraham: New Life for Muslims* (Colorado Springs, CO: Ministries to Muslims, 2001), 88.



Muslims believe Jesus did not die on the cross but was buried in Srinagar, Kashmir on Khanyar Street after his mission.<sup>25</sup> Based on Deuteronomy 21:22-23, “the one who hangs on the cross is under the curse of God”. Islamic scholars point out that the righteous prophet Jesus cannot be accursed by God.<sup>26</sup> Ahmadi scholars have knowledge of the Bible and do not strongly deny Jesus’ prophethood, but in common they study and borrow the Scriptures to denounce Jesus’ vicarious death and the supremacy of his authority.

Lastly, at the centre of the Messianic dogma among the Jews and the Muslims is the rejection of Jesus Christ’s divine nature based on their monotheistic understanding of God.

Muslims, in general, know Jesus as messiah, the word of God, the spirit of God, and the speech of truth because the Qur’an lists Jesus’ names ninety-seven times.<sup>27</sup> Though the title ‘messiah’ is given to Jesus eleven times in the Qur’an, mostly, they refer to Jesus’ personal birth and name. For example, in the Qur’an 3:45; 5:75; 57:27, Jesus is described as “Messiah, son of Mary” (Al-Masih Isa’ Ibn-i-Maryam). Jesus is nothing different from other prophets such as Abraham, Moses, and David in the Islamic community.<sup>28</sup>

Islam denies the need of Christ as the Mediator, Jesus’ Kingship and his priesthood as the Messiah neither understood nor accepted.<sup>29</sup> The

reason why Muslims avoid describing Jesus as the Son of God has a deep relationship with the Islamic belief system. Islam denies the need of Christ as Mediator, only to substitute Muhammad as a mediator, without incarnation or atonement.

#### 4. Implications of the Contextualized Message of Peter’s Sermon to Ahmadi Muslims

Reflecting on Peter’s sermon, how does a missionary communicator contextualize the message at the specific level of the Ahmadi Muslims’ worldview? There are four applications of Peter’s preaching to contextualize the Messiah among Ahmadi Muslims.

First, as Peter interpreted the resurrection and the death of Christ as the fulfillment of God’s salvation through Jesus, the communicators must define the concept of Muslims’ Al-Masih, the concept of Messiah in the light of Jesus’ Messiahship. It is a compelling example how Peter introduced Jesus to the Jews using the titles with which the Jews were familiar. Communicators can use the Islamic cultural knowledge of Messiah, in which the language and terms with which Ahmadi Muslims are familiar. However, it is necessary that the divinity of Jesus Christ and his vicarious death and resurrection as the savior must be included in the introduction of Jesus’ Messiahship.

Ahmadi Muslims believe Jesus is a Messiah, and Jesus is called “Al-Masih Isa,” but the concept of Al-Masih is derived from “Nazul” which means “to descend, sending down from Allah.”<sup>30</sup> Compared to the Biblical meaning of Christ, ‘the anointed one’, Islamic tradition has no

<sup>25</sup> Tahir Ijaz and Roza Bal, “The Tomb of Jesus,” *The Muslim Sunrise* 89, no. 2 Summer (2009): 36-37.

<sup>26</sup> A London Mosques Publication, “Jesus in Kashmir,” 3, accessed May 25, 2010, <http://www.alislam.org/library/jesusinkashmir.html>.

<sup>27</sup> Braswell, *What You Need to Know about Islam and Muslims*, 22.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 109-110.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel Marinus Zwemer and Roger S Greenway, *Islam and the Cross: Selections from “the Apostle to Islam”* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Pub., 2002), 23-25.

<sup>30</sup> Ahmadiyya community library, “Meaning of Nazul (descent),” accessed April 6, 2010, <http://www.alislam.org/library/nazul.html>.

other divine meaning of Messiah other than descended from Allah. Although the title 'messiah' is given to Jesus eleven times in the Qur'an, they mostly refer to Jesus' personal birth and name.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the Qur'an lists the name of Jesus, 'Isa', twenty five times without the biblical derivation as God's salvation or the savior. Thus, missionaries carefully add the supplementary vocabulary such as the servant of God, the prophet like Moses, and the righteous one as the initial point of contact with Ahmadi Muslims for the purpose of introducing Jesus' Messiahship.

Second, as Peter gave a second chance to the Jews to repent of their sins, missionary communicators must not condemn the sins of Ahmadi Muslims' rejection of Christ, but rather encourage them to change their hearts in the light of God's grace. Muslims have been taught that accepting Jesus' death on the cross is insulting the character of merciful Allah and his nature, so they deny Jesus' atonement as well.<sup>32</sup>

Most Muslims believe when they accept Jesus died for their sins, it is blasphemy, shirk, the worst and unforgivable sin associating Allah with another reality, Allah's co-existents or partners.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Muslims have no concept of original sin, and thereby every person is responsible for one's own actions.<sup>34</sup> Thus, they do not know Jesus as the intercessor or mediator.

If the missionary communicators want to change the Muslims' attitudes toward Jesus, it is inevitable to explain why disowning Jesus can be sin

before God. If Muslims cannot understand why the rejection of Jesus can be sin, Peter's evangelistic appeal cannot be a good example. Muslims value and honor the prophets and the messengers sent from Allah, so their denial of God's prophet, the righteous one, Jesus, can also be regarded as considerable sins, and they must pay the cost of sins. Thus, Peter continued to call the Jew's repentance and recalled their killing of the Christ by disowning and rejecting him. Peter knew Jewish guilt lay in their rejection and denial of God's chosen servant, the anointed servant of God, the son of the covenant.

Third, Peter preached that Jesus' coming was a blessing to the Jews, based on the fulfillment of prophecies in the Scripture. Peter proclaimed to the Jews who were gathered around Solomon's Portico "You are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers," and he reminded his audience of the covenant given to Abraham by saying "Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed" (Acts 3:25).

Muslims must hear that the reason for Jesus' coming was not to judgment but to save men according to God's design. Muslims totally repudiate Jesus' passion on the cross and only accept his second coming. To Muslims, it is understandable that Allah raised and exalted his prophets because they are righteous and honorable men. But, if a Muslim accepts Allah cursed and abandoned one of his prophets this could be regarded as *shirk*. Thus, one must be careful task to make Muslims understand Jesus' death is not a curse but a blessing to those who believe him as their Savior.

Unfortunately, the good news of redemption through Jesus is contaminated by the doctrine of Islam. In order to help the Jews understand the blessings from Jesus, Peter provided his faithful interpretation of God's covenant and promise to his prophets like Moses, Abraham, and

<sup>31</sup> Braswell, *What You Need to Know about Islam and Muslims*, 109.

<sup>32</sup> David W. Shenk, "Candid Confrontation: The Muslim Umma, the Christian Church," ed. Keith E. Swartley, *Waynesboro, GA.: Authentic Media*, Encountering the world of Islam, 2005, 140-141.

<sup>33</sup> Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1956), 32.

<sup>34</sup> George W. Jr. Braswell, *Islam* (Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Academic, 1996), 57.



other prophets. In order for Muslims to understand the ramification of Jesus' death and his resurrection, it is necessary for communicators to help them see that Jesus' death on the cross was not a contradiction to God's character or his will, but the sign of God's blessing and grace to his heirs.

The descendants of Abraham who are promised to be blessed do not refer to the ethnic Israel or the Jews at the first century, God promised all families on earth will come and join this blessing through the seed of Abraham.<sup>35</sup> The descendants of Ishmael (Gn 25:12-18) as well as the descendants of Abraham's concubine Keturah (Gn 25:1-5), and the descendants of Esau (Gn 36:1-19, 31-43) will be blessed and made to be the new Israel. Thus, Muslims who identify themselves as the descendants of Abraham and Ishmael must be taught they are not excluded from the blessings of Abraham.

Fourth, as Peter points to Jesus' second coming and the judgment of the last day, it is important to change the audience's concept of salvation, namely, their eschatology. Muslims commonly think their salvation is determined on the last day of judgment by Allah; they have no idea of the present salvation. But, they affirm "there is an end to the world, a day of resurrection and a time of judgment, and the distribution of rewards."<sup>36</sup>

But, as it is written in the Bible, "repentance and remission of sins will be preached in His name unto all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Lk 24:47).<sup>37</sup> By Jesus' suffering and his resurrection, as Isaiah prophesized

"the Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him." In Islam, the Islamic doctrine of eschatology is as important as its monotheism is. But, salvation is promised at a future date, and everything is unsure to Muslims until they have a conviction of being forgiven by Allah at the time of judgment. They only put their hope in Mahdi, who will reveal the truth of salvation and intercede their sins before Allah. But, the messianic expectation, which is vital to Muslim faith, must be their hope only in Christ, not in idols or other gods.

To the Ahmadi Muslims, Jesus' coming has an ambiguous meaning because Ghulam Ahmad already took Jesus' place and he will save them from the wrath of Allah; therefore the followers of Ahmad believe Ahmad's coming will be in the future. Ironically, Ahmadi Muslims have been officially declared as one of the heretic groups among Muslims and criticized because of their own Mahdi belief. Instead of using the Qur'an, they borrowed many verses from the Bible and are familiar with the biblical teaching. Thus, it is very important for the missionary communicator not only to announce Jesus' consummation but to point out Ghulam Ahmad's coming is not promised either in the Qur'an or in the Bible.<sup>38</sup> Peter preached that Jesus will come again, and God will restore everything on the day of Jesus' coming. He not only mentioned that Jesus had already come to save his people, but also spoke that Jesus would come as the king of everything with his authority from God. It seems that the last task of contextualizing the message of Jesus' second advent will bring a radical change in Ahmadi Muslims' core belief and value system.

This is the communicator's mission because the Christian's hope in Christ aims at the ultimate goal of our resurrection at the time of the

<sup>35</sup> Winter, "Seeing the Big Picture," 41.

<sup>36</sup> Braswell, *What You Need to Know about Islam and Muslims*, 27.

<sup>37</sup> J. H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co, 1960), 34.

<sup>38</sup> McCurry, *Healing the Broken Family of Abraham*, 223.

last day. There will be no fear and no more crying, and we will live with the Lamb of God and dwell with God forever. How can Christians not witness this great pleasure and hope in Christ! Jesus has already risen from the dead and become the first-fruit of those who have fallen asleep (1 Cor 15:20). If God's kingdom is to be our eternal nation, this must come true. This is our hope and strength Christians acknowledge that the salvation of our body was already inaugurated at the first advent of Jesus, but also that it will continue to the day of Christ's second advent, which has not yet come. Thus, Peter's message of Jesus' Messiahship with his authority and kingship on the time of the last day must be shared with Ahmadi Muslims as being the highlight of the Gospel.

## 5. Conclusion

Osborne notes, "a culturally based command is still applicable today in any culture that parallels the first century setting."<sup>39</sup> As we have explored, the study of cultural and historical background in Acts 3 helps us uncover what Peter intended to say to the receptors the Jews, and it gives the foundation for discovering its relevance in the twenty-first century Ahmadi Muslim contexts. Peter's message of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection can also target the Ahmadi Muslims today who have the Messianic expectation but reject Christ as their Messiah.

The majority of Ahmadi Muslims still believe Jesus is one of the prophets like Moses, Elijah, or Jeremiah. They have never confessed Jesus as their Christ, the Messiah who died for their sins. This is a great

sadness to God, who looks for these lost people and longs for his sons and daughters to turn to the Father's arms. Christians are obligated to deliver the good news to Muslims and to reveal the real meaning of the Messiah in order to open the blind eyes of Ahmadi Muslims in a similar way to Peter with the Jews in Solomon's Portico. Since the presentation of the Gospel depends so decisively on the Holy Spirit, who empowers and gives his wisdom to the people of God, he will accompany them and fulfill this work of God. Thus, Christians who are called as witnesses of Jesus should address Jesus' Messiahship boldly and encounter the Ahmadi Muslims with compassion.

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<sup>39</sup> Grant R Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 332.

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## 『시드니신학이야기』 논문 목록(1-2호)

### [통권 제1호, 2013년]

1. 스바냐의 '옴 아훼'의 언약적 구조 연구 / 김호남
2. 하나님을 만났던 장소가 갖는 선교적 의미 / 배진태
3. 요한계시록 2, 3장에서 '이기는 자'가 받을 '상'이 보여주는 역설적 아이러니 / 장영
4. 에큐메니칼 입장에서 바라 본 호주 복음주의의 장점과 문제 / 주경식
5. '이신칭의' 구원관과 한국교회 / 이상진
6. 공공신학이 한국교회에 미치는 영향 / 인용태
7. 이민자 이브라함 연구 / 홍길복
8. Effect of the Martin Exiles on the Elizabethan Settlement to the End of Elizabeth's Reign / 정기옥
9. Religious Pluralism and the Finality of Christ / 안성민
10. The Relationship Between Moral Development and Spirituality / 강호경
11. 목회사역의 방법론으로서의 코칭 연구 / 천용석

### [통권 제2호, 2016년]

1. 시 1편: 주석과 문화기법에 관한 연구 / 김호남
2. 생태 위기에 대한 기독교 책임론과 창조중심적 성서 읽기 / 이상진
3. 요한계시록 13장과 17장에 나오는 짐승의 정체와 속성에 대한 접근 / 장영
4. '말씀으로 하나되는 교회 - 아우구스티누스, 칼빈, 개혁주의 관점에서 본 교회론 소고 / 김진홍
5. 다문화 사회 속에서 효율적인 다문화 교회 정착과 복음전도를 위한 연구 / 히도균
6. 칼빈의 경건의 본질과 특징 / 주경식
7. 통합 모델들의 성경적 평가 / 유재인
8. 지혜 시인가? 지혜 시집인가? / 삼형권
9. 호주 한인 2세 청소년들의 정체성형성에 미치는 호주 한인교회의 영향 / 박중수
10. 사도행전 3:11-26, 메시아를 통한 하나님의 언약성취를 아흐마디 무슬림들에게 상황화하는 중요성에 대하여 / 현한나

