

## Resurrection Sunday – “Declaration of the Promise”

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Have you ever had someone promise you something and then they never kept it? That can be a real disappointment that challenges you to ever trust that person again. Well, God’s a promise keeping God. And one of the promises He has made is to not only give His Son as a Saviour, but for Jesus to be raised from the dead.

In Acts 13 we come upon Paul’s first sermon ever recorded. He’s on his first missionary journey with Barnabas. They’ve arrived in Antioch which is in modern day Turkey and they go into the synagogue on the Sabbath. After the reading of Scriptures, the rulers of the Synagogue gave them an opportunity to exhort the people (Acts 13:15). And so, Paul gets up and he takes full advantage of this.

- Interestingly, Paul takes them through a little history lesson of the nation of Israel. It’s very similar to what Stephen did in Acts 7. Stephen spoke to the people of Israel and said to them that they always persecuted their prophets. And now they’ve become the betrayers and murderers by killing Jesus. At that the people took Stephen’s life by stoning him.
- Stephen may have thought, I thought people would have listened to me and responded. I was just getting ready for the altar call. He could have died thinking he was a failure. But there was a man named Saul there that day giving consent to Stephen’s death; and he heard the message. Later on Paul met the risen Saviour and had his life turned around.
- Now in Acts 13 he’s the one taking a page out of Stephen’s book and preaching a sermon on Israel’s history which all culminated in the resurrection of Jesus.

We’re going to look at three things in this passage that the resurrection reveals for us:

### 1. Resurrection: Prophecy Fulfilled – Acts 13:26-31

**13:26-31 - Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. <sup>27</sup> For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. <sup>28</sup> And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death.**

***29 Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. 30 But God raised Him from the dead. 31 He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people.***

The word of salvation came first to the house of Israel. They were given a great privilege, but they pushed it away. Jesus said Himself that He came for the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 15:24).

They should have known their Scriptures and recognized their Messiah that was before them. They saw He wasn't quite fulfilling the Scriptures like they thought He would.

Instead, they rejected Jesus and in so doing they began to be the ones that fulfilled their very Scriptures unknowingly.

In their condemnation of Jesus, they saw no cause of death in Him. They had sham trials with false witnesses, but even then they had no accusation against Him. So they handed Jesus over to Pilate to be put to death.

- This was interesting because we just saw that the Jews had Stephen stoned when they didn't like what he was saying? Why didn't they do this to Jesus? This was the Jewish method of capital punishment. Though this right had been taken away from them, it clearly didn't stop them before, or after.
- But this wasn't the way the Scriptures foretold these things. Look at how writers prophesied of the very way Jesus would be put to death, hundreds of years prior to His crucifixion:
  - **Deuteronomy 21:22–23**, *“If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, <sup>23</sup> his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.”*
  - **Numbers 21:8–9**, *“Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” <sup>9</sup> So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.”*  
 Jesus also alluded to this in **John 3:14–15**, *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

- **Psalm 22:16–18**, *"For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; <sup>17</sup> I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. <sup>18</sup> They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots."*
- **Isaiah 53:5**, *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."*

Scriptures spoke so powerfully and prophetically of the very way that Jesus would die, even before crucifixion was a thing. Again, you see the divine authorship of the Word of God.

But then in verse 30 you come to two of the most wonderful words in Scripture: ***But God!***

God stepped in and raised Jesus from the dead. Man tried to stop and silence the work of God, but no matter what man may try to do, God gets the final word every time.

Jesus was placed in a sealed tomb for 3 days. Guards were placed out front. These Jewish leaders trying to circumvent Jesus being seen as the Messiah did everything they could to stop this from going anywhere. They were worried someone may try to steal the body and then say He rose again. So they have their bases covered. ***But God!***

- **Matthew 28:2–6**, *"And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. <sup>4</sup> And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."*
- Jesus was raised back to life! And not only was He raised back to life, He revealed Himself to many. Jesus came to His disciples and said, *"Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup> Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have"* (Luke 24:38–39).
- This was not some secretive resurrection or hallucination by some. Jesus came and was seen by over 500 witnesses at once (1 Cor 15:6). They weren't all having the same dream or vision. Jesus came back from the

dead and the evidence was irrefutable. Many in that day tried to discount the resurrection one way or another, but the one thing that you couldn't argue against was the witness of that many people!

## 2. Resurrection: Promise Realized – Acts 13:32-37

**Acts 13:32-37 - *And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. <sup>33</sup> God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’ <sup>34</sup> And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’ <sup>35</sup> Therefore He also says in another Psalm: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’ <sup>36</sup> For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; <sup>37</sup> but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.***

Because Jesus is risen, Paul now declares glad tidings.

- This word for glad tidings is *euangelizo* (yoo·ang·ghel·id·zo) in the Greek. It's where we get our word evangelize. Paul is evangelizing these worshippers in the Synagogue to show them that the promises that God has given to His people have now been fulfilled or realized in the fact that Jesus has been raised to life.
- God always keeps His word and always fulfills His promises.

What was this promise that God made to the fathers? The promise was mentioned in Acts 13:23, that from David's offspring, God would raise up one to fill the throne of David.

- **Psalm 132:11**, *"The Lord has sworn in truth to David; He will not turn from it: "I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body."*
- **2 Samuel 7:16**, *"And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." '""*
- By Jesus rising from the grave and being alive today, the throne and kingdom of David has the rightful King now ready to step in and rule the kingdoms of this world.
- For hundreds of years leading up to this occasion, Israel was without a king, one to occupy the throne of David. But Jesus was a true descendant of David and was the fulfillment of these promises to David.

Every promise God makes, He will fulfill! His Word will always come to pass!

Again, Paul looks back in their Scripture, this time to Psalm 2:7 which says, ***You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.***

Jehovah’s Witnesses love to use this to say Jesus was a created being. But what’s the context? Jesus’ resurrection, not His incarnation. I have begotten you, not from the *womb* but from the *tomb*!

- Jesus became the firstfruits of the resurrection. Others may have been raised to life in the Gospels, but they faced death again. Jesus rose never to face death any longer.

Paul quotes from Psalm 16:10 to show the difference again between David and Jesus. David went to the grave and his body saw the natural effects of decay. But Jesus was placed in the tomb and did not see corruption. He wasn’t there long enough and never intended to be. He rose again defeating over death, decay, and corruption.

And because He has, we have an incredible hope and blessing passed on to us.

### 3. Resurrection: Peace Proclaimed – Acts 13:38-41

***Acts 13:38-41 - Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; <sup>39</sup> and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. <sup>40</sup> Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: <sup>41</sup> ‘Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.’ ”***

Because of what Jesus has accomplished in His death and in His resurrection, we can now proclaim our sins are forgiven! Hallelujah!!

Jesus died to pay the penalty of our sin, and He rose again to provide victory over sin.

That’s the centrality of the Gospel. Jesus didn’t come just to model a good life or teach a nice philosophical way, He came to cure us of our most desperate need – sin! This is what needs to be preached today! And it’s only in and through Jesus’ death and resurrection that this is possible.

Because Jesus is alive today, all who believe in Him are justified from all things! Whatever sin or wrong you have done, you can be justified from it through believing in Jesus Christ. Following the law, or a set of rules, or being a good person cannot justify you. It comes only through belief in the One who is alive and seated at the right hand of the Father providing the way to eternal life.

Paul ends his sermon with a word of warning. He quotes from Habakkuk 1:5 speaking of those that doubted God’s Word and would see the wrath of God be poured out to which they would not even believe or imagine if He were to tell them in advance. But Paul applies this to those in His day who were not receiving His Son. They were despising this great grace of God and denying His resurrection and forgiveness of sins.

There are those today that think this is too good to be true. But we need to just believe it, receive it, and not miss out on it.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not just something we celebrate once a year, it is the very foundation of our hope every single day. Because He lives, forgiveness is not a possibility – it is a promise. Because He lives, justification is not something we strive for – it is something we receive. And because He lives, peace with God is not out of reach – it is offered freely to all who believe.

But this passage reminds us that not everyone who hears will respond. Some will admire it, some will question it, and some will even reject it. And so, the question this morning is not simply, “Did Jesus rise?” – the evidence is overwhelming! The question is, what will you do with the risen Christ?