

The Promised Son of David (Acts 13:13-26)^a

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Passage (Acts 13:13-26)

[13] Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. [14] But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. [15] And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, “Men *and* brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.” [16] Then Paul stood up, and motioning with *his* hand said, “Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: [17] The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. [18] Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. [19] And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. [20] After that He gave *them* judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. [21] And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. [22] And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after My *own* heart, who will do all My will.’ [23] From this man’s seed, according to *the* promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus— [24] after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. [25] And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘Who do you think I am? I am not [He]. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.’ [26] 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.¹

Paul’s evangelistic technique

1. **The Jewish OT predicts a coming Messiah, laying a foundation for belief in Jesus, the One Who fulfills the predictions.**
2. **Those familiar with the OT, namely Jews, will be found where? In the local synagogue on each Sabbath.**
3. **Tried and true evangelistic technique: reasoning from what is familiar to what is unfamiliar.**
 - A. With Jews: OT predictions (familiar) → Jesus (unfamiliar)
 - B. With “lost tribes” : creation, reality of sin (familiar) → God, redemption (unfamiliar)
4. **Two audiences**
 - A. Paul is primarily addressing his brethren, the Jews, who made up the majority of those at the Synagogue.

B. Even so, we see the universal basis of his message as he also addresses Gentiles in their midst.

I. *men of Israel, and you who fear God* (Acts 13:16)

II. *sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God* (Acts 13:26)

C. Both Jews and “God-fearers,” Gentiles who were followers of God and in attendance at the Synagogue.

History has a purpose

1. Paul reviews the *telos* of God’s working with Israel.

A. *Telos*²

I. A Greek word serves much like rebar in a concrete foundation—tying things together.

II. If you think of the Old and New Testaments as foundation of concrete, then *telos* is the rebar that ties all the concrete together.

III. Meaning

a. “end, point of time marking the end (Mat. 24:14; Rev. 1:8)”

b. “result of an event or process (Mat. 26:58; Rom. 6:21)”

c. “purpose, intent, goal (1Ti. 1:5)”

IV. It is this Greek word *telos*, and what it conveys, that “makes sense” of history — God has a purpose for creation, an intent, a goal which He is moving toward.

V. (This same *telos* is what makes sense of individual human lives as well. Without this anchor, we lose all sense of meaning and drift into self-destruction.)

2. God’s relationship with Israel

A. Paul is reminding his Jewish brothers that they were sovereignly chosen by God from among the various peoples of the world for a *purpose*.

B. God is not arbitrary: history—indeed all of creation—is subject to His intention, His will.

I. God may be at rest in relation to the six days of creation, but He is constantly at work bringing about His goal, His sovereign purpose in the events around us—even though, at times, the progress of history may appear haphazard.

- II. From our limited perspective, history often *appears* disjointed, random, lacking plan or purpose.
- III. Yet, the Bible informs us that history should be viewed more like a mighty stream directed by the hand of God, flowing from its source to a determined destination.
- IV. We are like observers on a street corner watching a parade pass by—we only see a small section of the entire progression. But, if we could fly high above—as in the Goodyear Blimp—we would see the greater design of the event.

- C. Perhaps the most important aspect of God’s purpose for Israel was to bring forth the Messiah—to be the savior of the world.
- D. As Paul would later write in his letter to the church at Rome: *For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen* (Romans 9:3-5).
- E. This then, is the great purpose, though not the only purpose, of God for Israel.

3. Much like the testimony of Stephen before the Sanhedrin in chapter 7 of Acts, Paul reviews the flow of God’s work with Israel through history:

- A. Chosen fathers (Abraham, Isaac Jacob)
- B. Multiplied in Egypt
- C. Brought out by miraculous deliverance
- D. Wilderness wandering
- E. Crossing the Jordon, given the Land of Canaan
- F. Samuel the prophet
- G. King Saul (of the tribe of Benjamin, as Paul mentions)
- H. King David (of the tribe of Judah—not mentioned by Paul, but key in relation to the promises)

4. When read carefully, one notices that Paul’s “history lesson” is intertwined with reminders of Israel’s disobedience:

- A. v. 13 - *For a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness = disobedience!*
- B. v. 21 - After God gave them Samuel, *they asked for a King = disobedience!*

I. And so we read, in first Samuel: *But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them"* (1S. 8:6-7).

C. v. 22 - Mentions that God removed Saul. Why? Because of Saul's disobedience!

D. v. 24 - John preached . . . the baptism of *repentance*. Why was repentance necessary? On account of disobedience!

5. Why is Paul including these negative aspects in his review of God's workings with Israel?

A. Because the Holy Spirit, through Paul, is attempting to soften their hearts before facing the most significant act of disobedience in the entire history of Israel—one that had taken place during their lifetimes: the rejection and murder of the promised Messiah in the line of David.

B. We won't get to Paul's "punch line" today. But rest assured, when it comes, some won't take it well—their hearts are already too hardened to allow Paul's message to find entrance.

The promised Son of David

1. Three points of emphasis.

A. Notice especially v. 23 - *From this man's [King David's] seed, according to [the] promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus*

B. This is the fulcrum of Paul's argument: the central point which links their familiar history with the unfamiliar present fulfillment found in Jesus.

C. Three important aspects mentioned in this verse:

I. From the seed of David - He would come as a physical descendant of King David.

II. According to [the] promise - His coming was promised: predicted hundreds of years in advance.

III. A Savior - His primary purpose in coming is to redeem mankind from the ravages and penalty of sin.

D. Paul's goal (the *telos* of his argument): to establish that Jesus of Nazareth fulfills the predictions and requirements of this promised One.

2. From the seed of David according to promise

A. Old Testament - according to promise

I. What did Jesus say the scribes say?

- a. *Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How [is it] that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David?" (Mark 12:35)*
- b. Jesus indicates that it is the scribes who say that *the Christ* is the Son of David.
- c. Who were the scribes?
- d. The Xerox machines before there was Xerox! They studiously copied the Old Testament and, as a result, were experts on its contents, including the predictions and promises Paul is on about.
- e. Here we see that the Christ, the Messiah, was revealed—by the Old Testament—to be a descendant of David.
- f. The question then arises, what passages in the OT were the scribes getting this from?

II. God's covenant with David

- a. My meager and incomplete personal study notes list almost 30 passages on this theme — we will touch upon just a few in our time today.
- b. 2 Samuel 7 - *When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took [it] from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever (2S. 7:12-16 cf. 1Chr. 17:11-14)*
 - i. The immediate context: David's son Solomon: who built the Temple and committed iniquity—the sin of idolatry by worshiping foreign gods.
 - ii. The ultimate context: a house and kingdom established forever—clearly eclipsing the immediate heir.
 - iii. 975 BC³, almost 1,000 years in advance of the birth of Jesus.
- c. Jeremiah 33 - *'Behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah: In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this [is the name] by which he will be called:*

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.’ For thus says the LORD: ‘David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel;’ . . . Thus says the LORD: ‘if you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, . . .’ (Jer. 33:14-21).

- i. A uniquely righteous descendant of David.
- ii. Ruling over the earth in a time when Israel will be saved and dwell safely.
- iii. The sun and moon are signs that witness to this certainty.

III. Then there is the prediction often found on Christmas cards:

- a. Isa. 9:6-7 - *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of [His] government and peace [There will be] no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9:6-7).*
- b. A child will be born—a descendant of David.
- c. He will rule on David’s throne.
- d. An eternal and uniquely just rule.
- e. Strong hints of the incarnation (His divine names, yet born as a child).

IV. These passages represent just a small sampling of the promise of a Coming One in King David’s lineage.

B. New Testament - fulfillment

I. When we get to the NT, we find the writers make a big deal about Jesus being a descendant of David, and the phrase “Son of David” is found at least seventeen times in the gospel record as a title applied to Jesus.

II. Matthew’s genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17)

- a. Matthew’s emphasis is on Jesus as the promised offspring of Abraham, the father of the Jews.
- b. Even so, his summary of the genealogy, found in the very first verse of the New Testament, emphasizes the connection with David: *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham ... (Mat. 1:1).*

- c. Not only is Jesus the means by which God will fulfill promises given to Abraham, but also promises specific to the line of David: a subset of the descendants of Abraham.

III. Luke's genealogy (Luke [3:23-38](#))

- a. The root of Luke's genealogy of Jesus is Adam — he appears to be concerned to show that Jesus is the “Son of Man” who will redeem mankind from Adam's fall into sin.
- b. Along the way, we see the line of descent pass through David: *[the son] of Melea, [the son] of Menan, [the son] of Mattathah, [the son] of Nathan, [the son] of David* (Luke [3:31](#)).
- c. Jesus is not only a descendant of Adam, but also the promised Son of David.

IV. The expectation of the Jews of Paul's day

- a. It is beyond question that the Jews of Paul's day understood these OT promises and predictions.
- b. Common knowledge among the religious leaders
 - i. They gave the right answer when Jesus gave them quizzed them concerning the Messiah: *While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “[The Son] of David.”* (Mat. [22:41-42](#) cf. Mark [12:35](#); Luke [20:41](#)).
 - ii. They understood the significance of the title, “Son of David:” *But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that [Jesus] did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” they were indignant and said to Him, “Do You hear what these are saying?” And Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise’ ?”* (Mat. [21:15-16](#))
 - iii. The crowd's pronouncement of “Hosanna to the Son of David” angered the chief priests and scribes because they understood the crowd was identifying Jesus as the promised Messiah in the line of David.
 - The crowd is citing verses from Psalm [118:25-26](#): “Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord.” (Ps. [118:25-26](#))
 - “Save now, I pray”, in the Hebrew, is הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא [hōššî‘â nā] from which the term *Hosanna* comes. The ear can hear the similarity of the first Hebrew word with *Yeshua*, the Hebrew name of Jesus— because both terms have the same root meaning: salvation or savior.

- c. Widely known by the common Jews as well

- i. *When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” (Mat. 9:27)*
- ii. *And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, “Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!” (Mat. 20:30)*
 - Although these men were physically blind, they had spiritual eyes to see. How many today think they see, but are spiritually blind!
- iii. *And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.” (Mat. 15:22)*
- iv. The Jewish people had expectations, based upon the OT predictions, of a special individual in the line of David — a Messiah — who would be able to do miraculous works.
 - *Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?” (Mat. 12:22-23)*

V. Even Jesus emphasizes His genealogical connection with David in one of His own titles, given in the last chapter of the Bible: *I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star (Rev. 22:16)*

C. A problem for those Jews who are still waiting for Messiah’s arrival . . .

- I. Paul mentions that King Saul was a Benjamite, a descendant of Benjamin, then goes on to say he was replaced by King David.
- II. Although he doesn’t emphasize this point, it is critical to the identity of Jesus because, as a descendant of David (but not Saul), Jesus meets the requirements of one of the promises found in Genesis 49:10: *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him [shall be] the obedience of the people (Gen. 49:10).*
- III. This is a conundrum for those who don’t believe the Jewish Messiah has already come. As Arnold Fruchtenbaum observes:

Messiah will have to come before the tribe of Judah loses its identity. This establishes a clear time period for the prophecy. The records by which tribal identities were maintained were kept in the Jewish Temple. All of these records were lost with the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. Within a few generations all the tribes of Israel, with the exception of Levi, had lost their identity. Immediately after 70 A.D. the rabbis passed laws which would preserve the identity of the priestly tribe of Levi, but Jews from the other tribes quickly lost their identity. In order for this prophecy to have significance to humans (God still knows the tribal identities), *Messiah had to come before 70 A.D.*⁴

3. A Savior

- A. As amazing and fascinating as all these passages concerning the promised seed of David may be, we mustn't lose sight of the *purpose* of God in these predictions and their fulfillment: the redemption of that which is lost—both mankind and the fallen creation.
- B. Yes, it is fabulously amazing how God predicted a man would be born in the line of David, and then fulfill that promise hundreds of years and many, many generations later!
- C. If that was all there was to it, then any “son of David” would do—a mere man born in that line of descent.
- D. The truly unique and divine aspect of God's plan is found in the purpose and identity of that man, as found in His titles: the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of the world.
- E. To fulfill this purpose, God needed a man who had no sin of his own—to qualify to bear the sins of others.
- F. Because there was no such man to be found among the sons of Adam, God had to bring one forth in a unique way: a virgin birth was the means He used.
- G. This unique, sinless, son of Adam in the line of David would be no other than God incarnate!

I. As Gabriel announced to Mary, . . . *behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.* (Luke 1:31-33)

II. The angel communicates God's purpose for the child in His divinely-assigned name: Jesus, Ἰησοῦς [*Iēsous*], in Greek; יהושע [*y^ehōšua*] in Hebrew — meaning “God saves.”

H. Next time, we'll see Paul get to the punch line: this man, Jesus, is the dividing figure running throughout history: between those who are lost and those who are saved; between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. He alone can save.

I. *Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.* (Acts 13:38-39)

4. The ultimate purpose of David's seed:

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator; If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist; If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist; If our

greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer; But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.⁵

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Endnotes:

1. [NKJV, Acts 13:13-26](#)
2. [Ref-0617, τέλος \[telos\]](#)
3. [Ref-1307, p. 123](#)
4. [Ref-0011, p. 22, emphasis mine](#)
5. [PSR, Sermon given at Camano Chapel, 12/9/2001](#)

Sources:

- NKJV** Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references are from the *New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- PSR** Pastor Steve Redfern
- Ref-0011** Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *Messianic Christology* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1998).
- Ref-0617** James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).
- Ref-1307** Andrew E. Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing, 2011). ISBN:[978-0-7586-2799-5^d](#).

Links Mentioned Above

- a - See http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Acts_by_Tony_Garland/41_Acts_13_13-26/index.htm.
- b - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.
- c - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org>.
- d - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/isbn.htm?978-0-7586-2799-5>.