

The Promise of Resurrection (Acts 13:27-37)^a

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Context

1. The “first missionary journey”
2. Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark
3. Upon reaching Antioch in Pisidia, John Mark departs (more on that later)
4. Paul and Barnabas visit the local Synagogue on the Sabbath
5. When asked if they have a “word of exhortation,” Paul begins his evangelistic message concerning Jesus
6. A review of Israel’s history, interspersed with reminders of how Israel has frequently been disobedient to God’s working in history
7. Last time: Paul’s appeal to the Old Testament to explain that Jesus is the promised offspring in the line of King David: the Son of David
8. Today’s passage: Paul continues by explaining how the death and resurrection of Jesus fulfills the predictions of the Old Testament

Passage (Acts 13:27-37)

[27] 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]. [28] 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. [32] And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. [33] 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.’ [34] 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.’ [35] Therefore He also says in another [Psalm]: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’ [36] For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; [37] but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.¹

Listening, but not hearing (Acts 13:27-29)

1. Acts 13:27-29 - *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]. And though they found no cause for death [in Him], they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took [Him] down from the tree and laid [Him] in a tomb.

2. **Paul is in a synagogue, speaking to Jews—the chosen nation of God—many of whom, as we shall see, will repeat this mistake.**
 - A. Their father's should have know better, but opposed God at almost at every turn
 - B. The fellow Jews in Israel should have known better, but opposed God's offer of the kingdom and crucified Jesus, their king
 - C. The Jews of Antioch in Pisidia should have known better, but the majority will reject God's message of reconciliation preached by Paul
3. **Paul gives two reasons they were clueless concerning the will of God**
 - A. *because they did not know Him - they were spiritually dead, they had hardened their hearts and were strangers to God*
 - B. *because they did not know . . . the voices of the Prophets . . . read every Sabbath*
 - I. They dutifully attending Synagogue each Sabbath
 - II. They listened to passages from various Old Testament prophets read aloud each week
 - III. But it was all empty ritual: lifeless religious observance, lacking in substance
 - a. As the Psalmist observed, *they flattered [God] with their mouth, And they lied to Him with their tongue; For their heart was not steadfast with Him, Nor were they faithful in His covenant (Ps. 78:36-37).*
 - b. They were going through the motions without any heart-felt connection with God.
 - C. God predicted this very thing in one of the prophet's they would have heard periodically.
 - I. God said, through Isaiah: . . . *Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed (Isa. 6:9-10).*
 - D. And so the Jews, who heard the Scriptures read every Sabbath, fulfilled the very things predicted by them—all the while clueless concerning their part.

- I. Week in and week out, they sat under preaching and teaching from the Old Testament.
- II. But . . . the ears and hearts of the people departed from God.
- III. But . . . the teaching and teachers strayed, compromised, avoided, and subverted the hard sayings of God.
- IV. But . . . it all became little more than a formality, in their ignorance they opposed God while accomplishing the predicted work of His enemies.

4. **A similar thing is happening again now . . . in our day.**

- A. Nations who formerly walked by the great light of the Bible, have now grown dull and turned away: England, Canada, the United States.
- B. God's Word has been declared irrelevant, outmoded, unreliable — stories suited for a more gullible age.
- C. Our schools, founded on the belief that all people should to be able to read the Bible for themselves, are now strongholds of secular atheism where Biblical instruction is banned.
- D. Our media celebrates and exports atheism, violence, pornography, and sexual deviance.
- E. Our experts remain puzzled why we seem plagued by broken families, food addictions, escalating suicide, violent crime, mass shootings, a dysfunctional justice system, and an increasingly ignorant and fearful population awash in conspiracy theories which is increasingly turning to drug use for imagined relief.
- F. What was once arguably the greatest nation on earth is now financially, morally, and perhaps politically bankrupt.
- G. The sun has already set on the British Empire—our turn is next.
- H. How well Isaiah's words, which applied to Israel in Paul's day now apply to us: *Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed.*
- I. Healing! How simply we could receive it! But we want none of it!

5. **Thus is “the curse of the clueless” — in the sovereignty of God, even those who shake their first at God ultimately contribute to His purposes, although they suffer for it.**²

Raised from the dead (Acts 13:30-37)

1. **Acts 13:30-37 - But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. 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.’ 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.’ Therefore He also says in another [Psalm]: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’ For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.**

2. **Fortunately, there was more to God’s plan than the crucifixion—there was the resurrection!**

A. Christians are ridiculed for believing that Jesus was raised from the dead.

I. Isn’t it reasonable to believe that God, wanting to do something truly remarkable, would raise a person from the dead?

II. As Paul will ask King Agrippa later in Acts, *Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?* (Acts 26:7-8)

III. Atheists: resurrection is too far-fetched, but life arising from non-life by pure chance “must have happened.”

3. **Paul appeals to the OT to show that the resurrection is the fulfillment of Old Testament predictions and promises.³**

A. Isaiah

I. *And He [God] will destroy on this mountain The surface of the covering cast over all people, And the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken (Isa. 25:7-8)*

II. *Your dead shall live; [Together with] my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew [is like] the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead (Isa. 26:19)*

III. In his 53rd chapter, Isaiah describes a righteous servant of God

a. *[Who] was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked . . . Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put [Him] to grief. When You make His soul [nephesh] an offering for sin, He shall see [His] seed. He shall prolong [His] days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall*

prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul [nephesh], [and] be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities (Isa. 53:8-11).

i. A prediction of death

- Cut off from the land of the living
- Stricken
- Given a grave
- Put to grief, his soul/life [nephesh] as a sin offering

ii. A prediction of resurrection

- He shall see His seed [zera], posterity, offspring — how will He do that, having been cut off?
- He shall prolong His days — how is that possible, having been put to death?

B. Daniel

I. *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame [and] everlasting contempt* (Dan. 12:2)

II. An initial hint that there are two resurrections

C. Psalm 16 - written by David

I. *I have set the LORD always before me; Because [He is] at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul [nephesh] in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption (Ps. 16:8-10)*

II. When examined closely, there are two individuals described: David and a “Holy One.”

III. Why won't the “Holy One” (חַסִּידִּים [hāsīdīka]) “see corruption” (or *the pit*, שְׁחַת [šāḥat])?

a. Because of His identity as the “Prince of Life”

i. Earlier in Acts, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter explained to his listeners, *you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses* (Acts 3:14-15)

b. As a member of the Trinity, all life originates in Jesus.

i. John tells us, *He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men* (John 1:2-4).

ii. All life is dependent, moment-by-moment, upon Jesus.

- *If He should set His heart on it, [If] He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, All flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust (Job 34:14-15)*

c. Being the source of life itself, it was not possible for death to hold Him.

- i. *As Peter also explained on the Day of Pentecost, Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it (Acts 2:23-24).*

4. We find Paul presenting this same evangelistic message years later, near the end of the book of Acts.

A. The conclusion of Paul's defense before Festus and King Agrippa in Acts 26

- I. *Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come—that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the [Jewish] people and to the Gentiles (Acts 26:22-23).*

The Resurrection of Jesus is the Central event of history

1. **What is it, or should I say, Who is it, that divides B.C. from A.D.?**
2. **Which other historical figure or event, can claim such an impact upon the world?**
3. **Why has God made the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus so central?**
 - A. Because ultimately, each individual will answer to God for how they respond to the historical testimony of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.
4. **As others have noted, we have only four options for dealing with Jesus: Jesus was either a legend, a lunatic, a liar, or Lord.**
 - A. Legend - Jesus never really existed, the gospels are just fables created by the Church for political ends.
 - I. But how does one account for the bold witness, life-long dedication, and eventual martyrdom of the Apostles?
 - II. But how does one account to the detailed predictions woven through the OT and their precise fulfillment within the NT record?
 - III. But how does one account for 66 books penned by 40 authors over hundreds of years — this is a conspiracy theory which beggars the imagination.

IV. Could the transition from A.D. to B.C. really commemorate an individual who never existed?

B. Lunatic - Jesus was self-deceived, an ascetic crazy deluded into thinking He was God.

I. But how does one account for such transcendent teaching?

II. But how does one account for a worldview which has turned the world upside down?

III. If Jesus is a lunatic, would to God that the whole world would go mad!

C. Liar - Jesus and the early church embellished and lied about what really happened.

I. But how to account for the emphasis on truth and honesty?

II. How to account for the multiple accounts and witnesses which all interweave so conclusively?

D. Lord - Or, could it be that Jesus is Who He claimed to be, the Lord of Life?

I. Here's some lunacy for you . . .

II. Arriving several days too late to save His friend Lazarus who was deathly ill, Jesus has a conversation with Lazarus' sister Martha:

a. . . . *Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:21-26)*

b. These are not the sage words of some notable rabbi, some gifted "teacher of the world" — equivalent to other pearls of wisdom thought to have been pronounced by various sages.

c. No, these are either the words of a legend, a lunatic, a liar, or . . . the Lord of the Universe, the source of all living!

III. And so, in closing, I would you the same question Jesus asked Martha: *Do you believe this?*

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Endnotes:

1. [Acts 13:27-37](#), NKJV
 2. Although God is not the author of evil, He uses it to accomplish His purposes: Jdg. [9:23](#); 1S. [18:10](#); 1K. [13:13-22](#); [16:11-12](#); [16:18-20](#); [22:22](#); 2K. [19:7](#); 2Chr. [18:21](#); Job [1:12](#); [2:6](#); Isa. [37:7](#); Mat. [4:1](#); Luke [22:31](#); John [19:11](#); 1Cor. [5:5](#); 1Ti. [1:20](#); 2Cor. [12:7](#); Rev. [2:10](#); [9:5,15](#); [16:14](#); [17:17](#); [20:3,8](#).
 3. For additional OT passages concerning the resurrection of the dead, see: Job [14:14](#); [19:25-27](#); [33:25](#); Ps. [16:9-10](#); [17:15](#); [49:9,15](#); [71:20](#); [88:10](#); Pr. [14:32](#); Jer. [30:9](#); Jonah [2:6](#); Isa. [25:8](#); Isa. [26:19](#); [53:10](#); Eze. [37:13](#); Dan. [12:2](#); and Hos. [13:14](#).
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Sources:

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Links Mentioned Above

- a - See http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Acts_by_Tony_Garland/42_Acts_13_27-37/index.htm.
b - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.
c - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org>.