Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Paul Preaches Jesus, Part 2
Scripture: Acts 13:23-37
Code: 1744

1973

Turn in your Bibles to the 13th chapter of Acts and just hold there for a moment as we look at a...an introduction to set our sights on what it is that God would say to us this morning. The Bible is the record of Jesus Christ. It is God presenting Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, the Savior of the world; and whether you're talking about the Old Testament or the New Testament, they are both equally concerned with presenting Jesus Christ. The Old Testament presents the Christ who will come. The New Testament presents the Christ who did come. Jesus Christ Himself, for example, said that He was the subject of the Old Testament when He said this, "In the volume of the Book, it is written of Me." Christ's portrait in the Old Testament looks forward. Christ's portrait in the New Testament looks backward, but it all focuses on Jesus Christ; and so both the Old Testament and the New Testament reveal the divine, sovereign hand of God as the master artist painting a portrait of Jesus Christ...

In the Old Testament, God keeps promising a Deliverer, a Savior, a King, a Messiah; and in the New Testament, Jesus of Nazareth fulfills every single prophecy that God ever made of a Messiah. The ones that are yet to be fulfilled by Him will be fulfilled in His Second Coming, which we will see tonight. You go back to the very first book in the Bible, and you find in Genesis 3:15 that God says, "Through man, I will destroy the power of Satan. There will be born One of the seed of the woman." Now, if you know anything about procreation, you know the woman has no seed. There is a prophecy of a virgin-born man, and that He would bruise the serpent's head. This virgin-born man would deal a killing blow to Satan...

That was the first Messianic prophecy so beautifully fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who was born of a virgin. Isaiah had even said in chapter 7 verse 14, "A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a child," and it was Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus fulfilled the virgin-born prophecy, and He also fulfilled the prophecy of victory over Satan as He won the victory at the cross; and the writer of Hebrews says, "He destroyed the power of the devil in His own death."

The prophet Isaiah says in chapter 9 verse 6 that, "This Messiah who comes would be God." He is called the Mighty God... In Psalm 2:7, God says, "This is My beloved Son," and Jesus claimed to be both God and the Son of God; and He substantiated both claims...The prophet Micah said, "When He comes, He will be born in Bethlehem." Jesus was born in Bethlehem...Moses told us in the writing of

the Pentateuch that the Messiah would be a son of Abraham...Matthew tells us, "Jesus was a son of Abraham."

Later, it tells us, "He would be son of Isaac, that the line would come through Isaac." Luke chapter 3 tells us Jesus came through Isaac, verse 23 and 34. In Numbers 24:17, it says, "The Messiah will be a star out of Jacob." In Luke chapter 3 verses 23 and 34 again, we find that Jesus comes through Jacob. In Genesis 49:10, the Bible says that, "Jesus will come through the tribe of Judah." The Messiah will be of that line...The Book of Revelation calls Him the lion of the tribe of Judah.

Again, in Luke 3:23 and 33, "He is from the tribe of Judah." The Bible says that, "Out of Judah, He will come from Jesse." Isaiah chapter 11 and verse 1, and in Luke 3:23 and 32, we find that Jesus came from Jesse. In Jeremiah 23:5, Jeremiah capped it off with these words, "Behold, the days are coming when I will raise up for David a righteous branch, and He will reign forever," and that's one of many prophecies, including 2 Samuel 7 and Jeremiah 33, that the Messiah would come through the line of David; and the New Testament repeatedly says that, "Jesus was the son of David." In Matthew 2:16, He fulfills that prophecy.

In Deuteronomy 18:18, the Word of God came to Moses, "I will raise up a prophet from among the...their countrymen, like you. Like you, Moses, and I will put My Words in His mouth," and God there promised a prophet like Moses; and Jesus came along, and the people in Galilee looked at Him in John chapter 6 verse 14, and said, "This is that Prophet like unto Moses."...Psalm 1:10, God said that, "Whoever the Messiah is, He will be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. A priest, not for a time, but a priest for...what?...for eternity forever."

And the Book of Hebrews from beginning to end presents conclusively that Jesus was a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Psalm chapter 2 and verse 6 tells us that He will be a King. Second Samuel 7 says He will be a King; and it's repeated myriad times; and when Jesus arrived, they asked Him if He was a king, and He said yes; and when they crucified Him, they, not knowing what they were doing, put over his cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," and so people got mad, and they said, "No, put He said He is King of the Jews," and Pilate said, "What I have written, I have written," and he was right. He was a King. In Zechariah 9:9, five centuries before it happened, the prophet said Jesus would ride into Jerusalem on an ass. Five centuries later, on what we know as Palm Sunday, a week before His execution, Jesus rode into the city, to the Hosannas of the people exactly as Zechariah had predicted. Matthew chapter 21 verses 2 to 7. In Zechariah 11:12, the prophet again predicted that the Messiah would be sold for 30 pieces of silver. In Matthew 26:15, Judas sold Him, not for 29 and not for 31, but for 30 pieces of silver. Five centuries before the prophet had said it.

In Zechariah 13:7, the prophet predicted the smiting of the shepherd and the scattering of the sheep; and in Matthew 26:56, when Jesus was taken to be crucified, the Bible says, "And all His disciples forsook Him and fled." The shepherd was smitten, and the sheep were scattered. Isaiah chapter 11

verse 2 tells us the fullness of the Holy Spirit would rest upon in the sevenfold fullness of the Spirit; and in Matthew 3:16 and 17, when Jesus was being baptized by John, the Bible says, "And the Spirit of God descended upon Him like a dove," fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah.

In Isaiah 35 verses 5 and 6, the Bible says, "When Messiah comes, He will give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and voices to the dumb." And in Matthew chapter 9 verse 35, it says that Jesus went everywhere in all the villages, and He healed all those sick and all those with diseases. And you read the record of the Gospels and, exactly as the prophet had said, He gives sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and voices to the dumb. Psalm 41:9, the prophet indicates that He would be betrayed by His own familiar friend who had eaten bread with Him; and in John 13 verses 21 to 30, Jesus sitting around the table, the last night before His death, dipped the sop and gave it to the one next to Him, who was Judas, and he ate bread with Him, and then he went out into the night and betrayed Jesus, fulfilling to the very letter Psalm 41:9. Zechariah 11:13, the Bible says that the money that was taken would be thrown down, and that it would be picked up and used for a potter's field. In Matthew 27 verses 5 to 7, Judas threw the money down. The price was taken and purchased a potter's field, exactly fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy.

Those are just a few, and all of the details of the life of Jesus Christ just fulfill prophecy after prophecy after prophecy. There's no way it could be manufactured. It's a mathematical impossibility....Powerful argument of prophecy sweeps away all doubt that Jesus of Nazareth is not the Messiah, the Deliverer of Israel. Now this becomes the secondary theme in Paul's message, and I say secondary in the order of their appearance, not in the order of their importance; and, as Paul is preaching here in the 13th chapter of Acts, he majors in this second area of his message on Jesus, the fulfillment of prophecy.

Now, lemme back up and give you a little bit of background. The Book of Acts is the record of the growth of the church. The church has exploded in Jerusalem. When it was finished there, the Lord had designed that it would go to Judea and Samaria, which were the neighboring territories; and the church went there and exploded, and people were saved and communities became converted to Christ and established congregations or assemblies of believers; and then, once that was done, a beachhead was established in the pagan world, and that beachhead was Antioch of Syria; and a group of believers were established in Antioch of Syria; and God had designed it from that little congregation in that famous city, missionaries would be sent to reach the uttermost part of the earth.

So it took a few years until that congregation was strong enough. They had five wonderful leaders. The two key leaders were men named Paul and Barnabas, and God said, "You've grown. You've established yourselves. You are the beachhead. Now you're gonna go," and He said in chapter 13 at the very beginning, the Holy Spirit said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Paul for the work unto which I have called them," and He sent Paul and Barnabas out on the first great historical event of the missionary outreach of the church as they went to the pagan world to preach Jesus Christ. And off

they went, as we've seen in our previous study in chapter 13. The first place they came was the hometown of Cyprus, the home island, I should say, of Barnabas, called Cyprus. They preached the Gospel from one end of Cyprus to the next. They won a great victory over a demon-possessed sorcerer by the name of Bar-Jesus or Elymas. They had seen Christ conquer.

Then the Spirit of God directed them north. They took a ship from Paphos north. They landed at Pamphylia in Asia Minor, the territory known as Galatia. The Spirit of God directed them to Antioch of Pisidia, not the same Antioch from which they came. They arrived in Antioch Pisidia after a treacherous journey through the Taurus Mountains, which Paul had been very sick... First thing they did according to verse 14, and we pick up the narrative there, "When they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down." There was a ready-made audience in a Jewish synagogue. People who knew the Old Testament.

Paul, being a Jew and being a rabbi and perhaps even wearing the garb of a rabbi, knew that they would recognize him as such, or assumed so. There was also the custom that after the preliminaries that made up synagogue activity, any invited guest who was of a dignitary category would be invited to speak, and so he knew he might have a tremendous opportunity; so he and Barnabas went there. There was the ready-made audience, a great place to begin; and that became their pattern all the way through their missionary journeys, didn't it? They would go to the Jewish synagogue. I think he went there, too, because his heart ached for Israel.

So they were sitting there, and the...verse 15 says, "After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, 'Ye men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.'" The Holy Spirit had set it up, and last week we looked a little bit at the Holy Spirit's public relations activity, didn't we? Now the Holy Spirit sets up publicity and gets a promotion going to start what He wants. The Spirit of God done all...had done all the preparation. Paul just stood up to preach. He begins this tremendous sermon in verse 16, with the words, "Men of Israel and ye that fear God, listen!"

There are two kinds of people in the synagogue. Israelites and those that fear God. God-fearers, and that's a really a proper term referring to converted Gentiles. So he says, "You who are of Israel and you who are God-fearers, converted Gentiles, listen to what I say." He's about to unload a...a bombshell on 'em to put it mildly, but he's very subtle, and he doesn't get to Jesus Christ until verse 23; and if this sermon is only excerpts of what he really said, it may have been a lot longer than that.

In this sermon, he presents, as he always does in all of his life, the fact that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel. Jesus of Nazareth. Now, the sermon falls into three parts. Jesus Christ is presented first as the culmination of history; secondly, as the fulfillment of prophecy; thirdly, as the justifier of sinners. Those three things.

Now, last week, we saw Paul's first point, that Jesus is the culmination of history. The question is often asked, "Where is history going?" There is the answer. It's going toward Jesus Christ. He is the fulfillment of history. He is the only one that can right the wrongs and reverse the injustices. He is the only one that can remove the curse that separates men from God. He is the only one who can give meaning to life individually and life collectively, which is history. And last week, we went into the fact that history is His story. That's history. God has been active in history. God has been designing to redeem men, and the Redeemer is Christ. If Christ does not come, men are not redeemed. If men are not redeemed, history is a mockery, going nowhere but to an eternal hell.

So in those verses 17 to 22, which we saw last week, Paul declares that history comes down to Jesus Christ. You say then, "Well, history's over. We're still going on." History is peaked out in Christ. It was uphill from there. It's downhill from there. Christ is the apex of history. They looked up to Christ as the crowning event of history. We look back to Christ as the crowning event of history, with one eye on the future, because He's coming again.

As we shall see tonight, He didn't fulfill everything the first time. He has to come again, but history resolves in Jesus Christ. That's His point. God did all this. He goes through their history. God led you out, brought you into Egypt, took care of you in the wilderness, brought you into the Promised Land, divided the nation unto you, gave you the portions that you were supposed to have. Even when you wanted a king, He gave you a king. Then He raised up His king David, and David ruled. And then you come to verse 23. Let's pick it up there.

"Of this man's seed," that is of David's seed, "hath God according to His promise, raised unto Israel a Savior." And right there, if you stop, every Jew could say, "Amen. Amen, Brother Paul, preach it." The Savior's coming through David's seed. That's God's plan. We know all of that.

Then he unloaded the wallop with one word, the last word of verse 23, what is it? Jesus. I'm quite confident they did not expect to hear that. They did expect all the rest. And, you know, Paul was wise, because the Jewish people just live for their historical place. They live for the fact that they're in the plan of God. They have based their eternal salvation for centuries on the fact that God is their God, see. And so Paul recites their history. "Yes, God is controlling your destiny. God is controlling your history. Your history is going toward a Savior, the seed of David." And they could've said, "Amen," all the way down and then, wham, Jesus...

Yes, Jesus is the culmination of history. God designed men, as we saw last week, for fellowship, right? That was their purpose, just to exist for fellowship with God, and to give Him glory. Men sinned, falling from that. God says, "I wanna recover." There's only one way He can recover them, and that's through Christ, right? And so Christ is necessary for the point of history. History was here in the beginning to create people who could worship and praise God. History is now not fulfilling its purpose.

Only those who come to Jesus Christ will feel the whole meaning of the world.

So Christ is the culmination of history. Without Him, history has lost its meaning, 'cause man can never be reconciled with God; and so, yes, history will resolve in the Savior who will bring men to God, making it possible; and that Savior, He says, is Jesus. That verse 23 is the bridge to his second point. Jesus was, you know, the seed of David, wasn't He? Through the line of Mary, He had the blood of David. Through the line of Joseph, He had the right to the throne from David. So both ways He was David's seed.

Jesus is the culmination of history, and now Paul moves into a sweeping statement, secondarily. Why? Because of this...They would say, if He stopped here, "Ahhhhh, Jesus could never be the fulfillment. He didn't even have a Kingdom, and how do we know? Why should I believe Jesus is the one?" So, secondly, he says, "Because of the fulfillment of prophecy." The reason Jesus is presented as the Messiah is because He fulfilled as the Messianic prophecy. By that, I simply mean, if in the Old Testament, God says such and such will happen, such and such will happen, such and such will happen, and Jesus comes along, and it all happens to Him, He is the fulfillment of God's prediction, right? That's exactly what you have. God's laying all these prophecies about Messiah. Every Jew knew that. Jesus comes along and fulfills every one of them.

Now, he doesn't expect those Jews to just believe that because he tells 'em, so he begins then to go down the line of the prophecies. And from verse 23 through 37, Paul outlines the fulfillments of prophecy in the life of Jesus of Nazareth that qualify Him to be the Messiah.

Let's begin in 23. "Of this man's seed...of David's seed... hath God, according to His promise, raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus." Notice the word promise. God said, "I will raise up a Savior according to the seed of David," right? Second Samuel chapter 7. Do you think God keeps His promises? I think He does. I don't think He has the capacity not to. Numbers 23:19, write it down, look it up. Isaiah 46:9 and 10, God cannot lie. God has no capacity for that, and God has promised a Savior through the line of David. Jeremiah 33:15 was...well, let's just jump down to verse 17. "For thus saith the Lord: 'David shall never lack a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.'" In other words, when the Messiah comes, it'll be through David. David's line will never peter out so that there is no descendent. David's line will never be frustrated and cease. There will always be the line of David. David will never lack a man to sit on the throne. Messiah will be of the seed of David. God said it would never be any other way. No one would ever supplant David on the throne.

Remember in 2 Samuel 7, God said to David, "You're gonna have an eternal king come out of your loins." Well, that's the first promise, and Jesus fulfilled it. He was born of the seed of David. If there had have been a king in Israel; and, of course, there wasn't because they were being ruled by outside power. If there had have been a legitimate king apart from Herod, who was a usurper, if there had a been a legitimate king, it would've been Jesus. If there had a been a legitimate king before Jesus,

technically, it could well have been Joseph who had the royal right. Of course, the Herod's had been instituted as David's kingdom had been set aside until Messiah came.

But, nevertheless, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of being of the line of David. In verse 24, Paul then moves ahead, and he is going to prove that Jesus is Messiah by the fulfillment of prophecy; and I think we have, as I say, only excerpts here, and so we'll endeavor to fill in a little bit.

Now, the first great prophecy that Paul deals with in regard to the coming of Messiah, was the prophecy that there would be a forerunner to Messiah. When Messiah was to come, there was gonna be somebody who would come before Messiah and get everything ready, right? To prepare the way. Look at verse 24. When John...and there's that somebody, John the Baptist, "When John had first preached." Incidentally, he's not called John the Baptist because he was a Baptist. There were no such things in those days. He's called John the Baptist, because he was a baptizer. The Baptists have taken their name from him.

"When John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. Even as John fulfilled his course." Stop right there. God had desired that there would be a forerunner, right? Now, notice the word fulfilled. You know, that's an important word. That indicates there was a prophecy fulfilled. You see it in verse 29? Fulfilled. In verse 22, fulfilled. In verse 33, God hath fulfilled. Now, here, you see, you're talking about prophecy. Prophecy is fulfilled. The first prophecy that Paul alludes to is that of the forerunner; and he says, "When John came, before His coming, and the His there should be a capital H. The coming of Messiah. In verse 24. John was preaching the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. You say, "Well, what was that all about?" All right, watch. Before Messiah was to arrive - here's Messiah's arrival. Before Messiah was to arrive, there was to be a people-prepared for Messiah's arrival. Right? John, then, was preaching repentance; get ready, Messiah is coming.

There's a great principle here. John's baptism was not Christian baptism. Christian baptism didn't come in till after the death and resurrection of Christ, right? Romans chapter 6 tells us that when we are saved, we are buried with Him, and by baptism into His death and resurrection; and water baptism symbolizes that - His death and resurrection for us. Right? But before His death and resurrection, what you have here is the baptism of repentance. What is it? It's ceremonial cleansing going on among the Jews. Why? Because they were really setting themselves aside to get ready for Messiah.

John would preach, "Messiah is coming. Turn from your sin and prepare your heart to receive the Messiah." And they were confessing sin, and their being baptized was like a ceremonial outward confession to the world that they were coming apart from sin to get ready for Messiah. You got that? The baptism of repentance was a ceremonial confession of an inward confession of sin as they desire to prepare their hearts for Messiah. So John was getting a whole people ready; and was it a large

group? Sure, they were flocking out there to him. John the Baptist was preparing a people so that when Messiah came, their hearts would be ready to receive Messiah.

And, you know, that brings up a good point, just as a footnote. I believe the sequence is still valid. Before anybody really comes to know Messiah, before anybody even in this age comes to know Jesus Christ, there must be repentance. There must be the turning from sin in the heart, and then the turning to Christ. I think part of the reason that we get so many shallow confer...conversions today and have a lot more abortions sometimes when we do new births, and the reason we have so many church members who don't really know Jesus Christ, is because there is either an omission or a minimizing of the concepts of repentance.

I heard a guy on television the other night, and he was talking, and he...he kept saying, "Try Jesus. Just try Jesus." He musta said it ten or fifteen times. I don't like that statement. It was a ridiculous statement. It was like Jesus was a commodity sold on a commercial. "Try Jesus." When you come to Jesus Christ, you turn from every other thing in your life. It's a repentance from all things turning totally to Christ. It's not like, "Well, I've got a lotta things, but I'll try that for a while."

I...I don't respond well to those things. Repentance is necessary to be preached, and John knew it, and God knew it, and that's why God had John do it. So John was preparing for Messiah. Well, every Jew knew that there was gonna come a man who was gonna be the preparing one. Isaiah chapter 40, and I'll just read you there, briefly, the statement of the prophet. Verse 3, "The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness: 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.'" There's going to come a prophet in Messianic times, who's gonna say, "Get ready for Messiah." That's the context here.

And then if you go further on into Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, verse 1 of chapter 3, listen to this. "Behold...says the prophet...I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple." The first place that Jesus went, wasn't it, when He began His public ministry was to the temple; but before He ever comes, there will be a messenger to prepare the way; and who was the messenger? John the Baptist, and all the Jews knew there had to be a messenger. There had to be one coming first, and so Paul says, "John fulfilled prophecy." Now, look, people, if there is a messenger saying, "Messiah's coming," what's coming? Messiah.

If you saw a messenger calling out a people to Messiah, then you better get your eyes opened. That means Messiah's coming. So Paul begins by saying, "John fulfilled his course." John is a marvelous person, and the Bible doesn't say a whole lot about him, but it just keeps hailing his humility. Continuously exalts his humility. He was a strange guy, you know, his modified Tarzan suit made outta camel's hair, and he ate grasshoppers with honey on 'em, as if that would help grasshopper's taste better.

Verse 25 indicates in all he was such a humble guy. It says in verse 25 that John fulfilled his course. He said this: "Who think ye that I am? I'm not He. You think I'm the Messiah? I'm not the Messiah...watch...But behold, there comes One after me, the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to loose." You know, the...the most demeaning task that the slave had was to take the shoes off the dirty feet of his master? And only the lowest of the lowest slaves had...had the right to do that; and John says, "Not only am I not the Messiah, but there's One coming after me who is, and I'm not even worthy to...to exalt myself to take off His dirty shoes."...That's humility, isn't it?

John was a humble guy, and you know something? Lemme tell you something about humility. In Matthew 11:11, listen to the words of Jesus. He said this, "Among them that are born of women...listen...there hath not risen one greater than John the Baptist," the greatest man that ever lived up until His time, was John the Baptist. You say, "Whooooo, Moses, Elijah, Abraham, David?" John the Baptist. You say, "Why?" Watch this one, "Because the lower a man goes in humility...the higher he goes in the exaltation of God." Right?

So, believe me, if John was the highest in the sight of God, what was he in his own sight? The lowest. That's why he was great...Well, he fulfilled his course. God's in the business of tearing down the proud and lifting up the humble, isn't He? John wasn't the Messiah. Remember in John chapter 1, "There was a man that came from God. His name was John." He was not that light, but he was what? Sent to bear witness of the light, and he prepared the way. You remember when Jesus finally came, and he was down there at the Jordan River. He looked, and he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." What was he saying? He was saying, "Don't look at me anymore. Look at Him." John 3:30, he says, "He must increase, and I must decrease."

He fulfilled his course. God said, "There's coming a messenger," and Paul says in his sermon, "There was a messenger, people," and he must've been a well-known guy, because he doesn't even tell us about him. He just says to those people, "John," and they all knew him. He was a well-known prophet. And they, plus, they probably had heard of the tremendous mass of people that moved out to respond to John. If there...if the messenger came, the Messiah must be on his heels...and he was a voice in the wilderness, wasn't he, out there in the desert fulfilling the prophecy.

He goes a step further. Verse 26, "Men and brother, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you fears God," and there, again, are the two distinctions. The children of the stock of Abraham would be Jews, and the whosoever fear God would be Gentile converts. "To us...not you, but the best manuscripts say us...To us is the word of this salvation sent." Isn't that great? The salvation that comes in Jesus as announced by John is for us.

Now, I detect Paul's outline coming out here. Verse 23, "Jesus is the Savior." Verse 26, "His salvation is for...whom?...us." Want me to give you a preview of his climax? Verse 39, "And by Him all

that...what?...believe are justified." There's his three key points that come through the text. One, Jesus is the Savior. Two, He saves us. Three, He saves us by what? By faith, by believing. And so he says, "This Savior is sent unto us...Jesus is the promised Messiah, and He's promised to us. Don't miss Him," he says.

History's going somewhere. It's going toward Jesus. Prophecy's going somewhere. It's going toward Jesus. Now, at this point, I know Paul has a logical mind. Everything he writes is that way, and I know at this point, he's got two questions that I would have. If I was a Jew, I would say, "Now, wait a minute," because this is a question Jews continually ask. "If Jesus is, as you say, the Messiah...watch...why didn't our leaders recognize Him?" Right? They esteem the leaders in Jerusalem. Why didn't they know Him? I mean our leaders, Bible scholars, Old Testament scholars, they wouldn't kill their Messiah that we've been waiting for. What...what explanation for that?

Question No. 2, if, perhaps by some unbelievable circumstance, He was the Messiah, and they did kill Him, does that wipe out God's plan? You got those two questions? Those are very important questions. One, if He is the Messiah, how come our leaders killed Him? They're the...they're the Old Testament authorities. Two, if He is the Messiah, and they did kill Him by some strange quirk, does that wipe out God's plan?...

Paul proceeds to answer those two questions, giving prophetic reasons. Powerful. Verse 27, "For they that dwell at Jerusalem...people of Jerusalem...and their rulers, because they knew Him not nor yet the voices of the Prophets which are read every day, Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him." Now, listen to the unbelievable statement in that verse. Just a powerful statement. "They that dwell at Jerusalem...are the people...and the rulers, because they knew Him not," blinded by their own sin, they didn't see Him. They didn't know Him. They killed Him because they didn't know who He was. You say, "But they're supposed to know who He is. They're the...they're the Bible scholars." Look what he says, "nor yet the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath day." Did you get that? Do you know what they did every Sabbath day? Read the Prophets, didn't they? Why, you can go back in that very synagogue, can't you? Back to verse 15. What was the first thing they did when they met? Said the Shema, and then they read the...the Law and what? Prophets. Every Sabbath day, they read the Prophets, read the Prophets, read the Prophets all the time.

Do you know what? They didn't even know what the Prophets were talking about. That's what it says. It's an indictment. "Nor yet the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath day," and this is a certain amount of disgust in the whole concept. Now before you chastise the Jews, lemme hasten to say that there are many in the church today who continually read the Scripture and absolutely have no concept of what God is saying; and I'm sure there are even some Christians who, because of sin in their life, hear the Word of God and even read it themselves without any understanding. But Israel had read the Old Testament continuously, and the prophecies over and over; and they knew the qualities and the characteristics of their prophecy. They knew that it...that the kind of prophecy it was.

They were supposed to be authorities on it. All of this and, yet, absolutely without conclusion...

Now, lemme just share with you the fact that, if you're ignorant of the written Word, you will inevitably be ignorant of the living Word; and they were. They read it without understanding. You know, Jesus indicted them for this. Remember in John 5, isn't it verse 39, where He says, "Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life," and then He said this, "and they are they which speak or testify of Me. If you really knew what you're reading, you'd see Me." He said in John 8, they said, "We of...we are the children of God. He is our Father." And He says, "No, no, you're of the child...you're the children of the devil; and because I speak the truth, you can't understand it."

Remember what He said to the Sadducees in Matthew 22:29? "You do err, not knowing the Scriptures." In Luke 24, He walked on the road to Emmaus, and He says to them, "Oh, slow of heart to believe all Scriptures have said." Then He proceeded to teach them concerning Himself out of the Scripture. Here they are spending all their life fooling around with the Old Testament, never knowing what it was talking. Do you know that's true in religion today? You know that's true in...under the name of Christianity, people reading Bibles and talking about Bibles and carrying Bibles who haven't got the faintest idea what they're talking about. There are many cults that even take Bibles all over the place and pervert 'em and twist 'em and this is common stuff.

Ignorance has become a way of life for them. They had substituted a ritualistic structure for truth, and they couldn't fit everything into the frames that they had structured. So they were ignorant. That's why they killed Him, and the reason they were ignorant was because they didn't even know the Scripture they professed to read with understanding. So that answers the first question. How could our leaders miss Him? They've missed Him because they didn't even understand what they were reading. Too much sin, too much hypocrisy.

Second question was this. If they killed Him, did that wipe out God's plan? Look at the answer to that, whammo, at the end of verse 27. "They have fulfilled them in condemning Him." Did you know that God knew what they'd do? Did you know that? God knew every single thing they'd do. All of the rejection of Christ and the condemnation of Christ was put in the plan from the very beginning.

In Isaiah 53:3, He was despised and rejected, right? God knew that...every detail was prescribed. God knew from the very beginning that He would be fully rejected, that He would be executed. In John chapter 7 verse 5, says this, "For neither did His brothers believe in Him."...Verse 48, when they were arguing about whether Jesus was Messiah, it says this, "Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him?"...They fulfilled prophecy. God said they'll reject Him, and they did. He was hated, incidentally, without a cause. Look at verse 28. "And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain." Isn't that amazing? They had absolutely no reason to kill Him, but they killed Him.

You wanna hear something startling? Listen to Psalm 69 verse 4, prophecy. "Those who hate Me without a cause are more than the hairs of My head." Prophet said that the Messiah would be hated without a cause. Look at it again in verse 28, "And though they found no cause of death, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain." They hadn't any reason. There wasn't any legitimate accusation that could hold up, and Pilate repeatedly said, "There's nothing wrong. I find no fault." Etc., etc...

Jesus Himself said in John 15:25, "This comest to...cometh to pass that the Word might be fulfilled that is written in their law. They hated Me without a cause." God knew all along. You say, "Well, if the Jewish rulers rejected Him, did that wipe out God's plan?" No, that fulfilled His plan. He knew they'd do that. He knew they'd do that. It's a pretty overwhelming argument. Jesus fulfills every prophecy. Some people say that Jesus got up there on the cross and tried to fulfill all the prophecy. He knew the Old Testament real well, so He just worked it out so that He could fulfill all of 'em. He quoted the right verses and did all that. Yeah, well, that's fine; but how do you get the Jews, the whole nation of Israel to...to condemn Him without a cause? Unless the Scripture...I mean Jesus didn't set that in motion.

How do you get soldiers to stick spears in His side? I don't hear Him giving any orders to them to do that, and that fulfills prophecy. So many things. Look at verse 29. "And when...I love this...and when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree." Isn't that amazing? You know what they were doing the whole time they were crucifying Jesus? Fulfilling what? Prophecy. One right after the other. They thought they were so wise. They were getting rid of this imposter insurrectionist, fulfilling prophecy right on schedule down the line.

And I love what Paul says, "And when they had fulfilled all the prophecy, they took Him down." God is no victim. Neither was Jesus, believe me. You say, "Well, what prophecies were they fulfilling on the cross?" Well, first of all, the fact that He was executed without a cause is mentioned in verse 28; but have you ever just analyzed the things that He fulfilled on the cross? Lemme give them to you. Don't try to write 'em down.

Psalm 109:25 says this, "I also have become a reproach to them, and when they see me, they wag their head." The prophecy is the people would wag their heads at Him...Just remember the interval of hundreds of years between the prophecy and the fulfillment. Matthew 27:39, "And those who were passing by were hurling abuse at Jesus wagging their heads."...Psalm 22:17, "They look. They stare at Me." Luke 23:35, "And the people stood by looking." Psalm 22:18, "They divided My garments among them and for My clothing they cast lots." John 19:23 to 24, the soldiers got together. They said, "Let's not part His garment. Let's cast lots." Exactly fulfilling the prophecy. The soldiers fulfilled it. They didn't even know it. They were Romans.

Psalm 69:21, "And for My thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink and gall." There you have thirsty with vinegar and gall mentioned. In Matthew 27:34, "They gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall." The

vinegar was there, too, and Jesus, on the cross said, "I thirst."...Psalm 22:1, it says, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" would be the cry of the dying Messiah. On the cross in Matthew 27:46, Jesus said, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" In Psalm 31:5, it says, "Into Thy hands I commit My Spirit," would be the statement of Messiah. In Luke 23:46, "Father, into Thy hands I commit My Spirit," said Jesus. Psalm 34:20, it says, "He keeps all His bones, not one of them is broken."...In John 19:33, it says, "But coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs," fulfilling the prophecy. In Psalm 22:14, the Messiah in prophecy says, "My heart is like wax. It melts within Me." And in John 19:34, "His side was pierced and there flowed blood and water indicating the breaking of His heart, melting within Him." Fulfilling the prophecy.

Zechariah 12:10, the prophet said, "They will look on Me whom they have pierced." In John 19:34, a soldier took a spear and pierced His side, fulfilling the prophecy. The Romans were in on the fulfillment. The Jews were in on the fulfillment. Jesus was in on the fulfillment. The crowd was in on the fulfillment. Everybody was in on the fulfillment, because God ordered it all. Jesus was Messiah every way you cut it. In John 19, I just wanna point out a couple of very interesting notes there. It says this, John 19 verse 16, "Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified, and they took Jesus and lead Him away."

Isn't it an interesting thing? Most crucified victims were driven from the rear, because of the panic and the terror, or they were dragged, tied and dragged to the cross. Jesus was what? Led. Isaiah 53:7 simply says this, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter."

Every tiny, minute detail fulfilled in...back in Genesis 22:6, Isaac is a type of Christ. As Isaac goes to be the sacrifice, and he care...Isaac carries the sticks of the offering on his own back. Says in this prophecy, "And He bearing His cross." He even fulfills the little typical picture of the sacrifice who carries its own wood. It says, "He went forth," and we know that the prophecy in the Old Testament, the picture of the type of sacrifice that Christ was to make was a sacrifice known as the sin offering that had to be taken outside the city, right? "Jesus went out the gate," says Hebrews 13. "He went forth."

Then it says, verse 18, "They crucified Him." Do you know that to a Jew, that kind of execution was absolutely an unknown thing? Jews didn't crucify anybody. What did they do to execute? They stoned people. They lifted up nobody. They dropped 'em off at least a 10-foot thing, and then they threw things down on 'em. But in Numbers chapter 24, there's a beautiful picture. Israel was infested by snakes, and God said, "You raise up a serpent," right? "And you look up at that serpent, and you'll be healed." John, in the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus, records the fact that Jesus was the one who was gonna fulfill that prophecy, remember, in John 3? And later on, Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up, shall draw men unto Me." And when they executed Him, they didn't put Him down and stone Him. They lifted Him up. How did the prophet clear back in Numbers 24 ever know that? When he painted the perfect picture. God ran it from beginning to end.

Notice what it says in...back in Acts 13, and we'll wrap up our thoughts. It says that, in verse 29, "They laid Him in a sepulcher." You know that fulfilled prophecy? The Bible says in Isaiah 53:9 that "His grave was assigned to be with wicked men." They used to throw criminals in the same big place where they buried criminals. It was assigned to be there, "but with a rich man in His death." Jesus didn't wind up where the criminals were buried. He wound up in the tomb of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, exactly fulfilling the prophesy of Isaiah 53:9.

Jesus fulfills it all, and that brings us to the great climax of this area of his sermon. Look at verse 30. I love it. This is the keynote of the apostolic preaching throughout all the Book of Acts. "But God raised Him from the dead." That shows again just what Peter showed three times in three different sermons, that God and man see Jesus differently, and God reversed the verdict of Israel, didn't He? "You killed Him. God raised Him," said Peter. Three times. Here Paul says the same thing, and it sounds like Peter from here on. They must have traded sermon notes.

God raised Him. In fact, the great proof that Jesus is Messiah, the crowning proof is His resurrection. Why? Because all of the promises God made would be unfulfilled if Jesus was dead, right? But when He raised Him, He made possible the fulfillment. Romans 1:4, "He is declared to be the Son of God with power...watch...by the resurrection from the dead." God gave His approval, raised Him from the grave. And then he gives evidence in 31. "He was seen many days of them who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses unto the people." Over 500 witnesses, according to 1 Corinthians 15, saw Jesus; and it couldn't have been a hoax for 500 people. Not, and most of whom knew Him well.

So God raised Him, and they saw, and there are witnesses to prove it. And then in 32, he says, "And we declare unto you good news. Good news, people." "What is it?" "The promise which was made to the fathers: God hath...what's the next word?... fulfilled. What was the promise? Oh, I'm gonna give you three of 'em. Paul says, "I'm gonna give you three quick promises." Watch this one. Verse 33, first promise, "In that He hath raised Jesus up again." Here comes it. First promise. "As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee.'" Do you know that God predicted that He would beget His Son? That has to do, not only with His incarnation to begin with, but has to do with His resurrection.

God prophesied through David a resurrection. God said, "I'm gonna have a Messiah...a living Messiah, begotten...in incarnation and in resurrection." That's fulfilled when Jesus rose, right? Then he goes to a second promise. You look at this one in verse 34, "And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said in this way: 'I will give you the...really...the holy and sure blessings of David.'" What does He mean?

Well, He made all these promises in David, right? That's Isaiah 55:3, incidentally that he quotes there...God had given all these promises to come in Messiah, but if you've got a dead Messiah, what happens to the promises? No good. So he says, "I raised Him so that I could grant the promises to you through Him."...

David and his posterity could never have been fulfilled if the Messiah stayed in the grave. A dead Messiah fulfills nothing. He says, "I've got sure mercies. I've got blessings for David, and I raised Him to make them possible. I will give you the sure mercies of David." Notice "I will give you." There is no condition, right?...He doesn't say, "If the Messiah can stay alive, I'll give you the mercies." "I will give you the mercies." That's why He had to raise Him from the dead, so that the mercies and the blessings could come through Him.

Then the last and great one. "Wherefore He saith also in another Psalm." That's Psalm 16 verses 8 to 10. "Thou shalt not allow Thine Holy One to see corruption." Isn't that beautiful? Clear back in Psalm 16, God promised that Jesus would rise from the dead. Some people said, "Ohhhhh, come on. That refers to David." Some people say that...that's referring to David. "Thou shalt not allow Thine Holy One to see corruption." That doesn't have any Messianic statement. That's David. So he answers in verse 36. "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep and was laid unto his fathers, and saw...what? ...corruption." You know, his body's still corrupted there. Wherever they buried David, his body'd never come outta there. It's corrupted beyond imagination at this point...

And no Jew ever believed in the resurrection of David. Verse 37, "But He...capital H...whom God raised again saw...what? ...no corruption. Oh, he's saying, "People, you've gotta believe Jesus is Messiah." Why? One, the forerunner. He announced it, true? Two, even in His execution, when it looked like everything was going wrong, there was a fulfillment of prophecy after prophecy after prophecy. Third, even in His death, God raised Him from the dead. Jesus is the Messiah, because...watch this... what happened before He came, what happened while He came, and what happened after He went, briefly. God raised Him again to life.

Jesus is the Messiah. He is not only the culmination of history, He is the fulfillment of prophecy. I close with this statement. We can only judge the future by the past, people; and in the past, God always kept every promise, didn't He? Fulfilled is the key word all through there. You wanna hear something? God has appointed a future day of judgment. The Bible says, 'That for every man who rejects Jesus Christ, there will be the judgment of eternal hell." Has God kept His promises in the past? Yes. Will He keep them in the future? Yes. God's predictions come true, for one who rejects Jesus Christ...it is a fearful thing to fall under the hands of the living God.

Our Father, we come to You with a sense of awe at how You have ruled history and prophecy. We thank You for Jesus Christ, who makes history meaningful and life meaningful, and who fulfills every

prophecy for Messiah. We thank You for the ones yet to be fulfilled in His coming again. Father, we pray, especially for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They would come to recognize Jesus as Messiah, the Savior of the world. That they would see that He fulfills the prophecies, that His forerunner fulfills them, that His resurrection, that all of the things that happened on the cross simply called to mind those things predicted of Messiah in the Old Testament. Father, don't let anybody continue in rejection, develop...a heart that is stony, a willful heart of unbelief; but while there is still the chance to respond, pray that no one would leave today who has not acknowledged Jesus Christ as Savior. Father, send us forth now equipped with this information, together with a moving of the Spirit of God to see people come to Christ. Pray in His name. Amen.

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