

Acts 075  
Gospel Fulfillment  
Acts 13:23-33  
May 7, 2025  
Dr. Andy Woods

Jesus in Acts 1:8 said,

*"...and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

The witness of the church in Jerusalem is Acts 1-7. The witness of the church in Judea and Samaria is Acts 8-12. All of that material we have covered. Now we are watching the church's witness to the remotest parts of the earth. That starts in Acts 13 and goes through the end of the book.

Structure of the Book of Acts (Acts 1:8)

- Jerusalem (Acts 1-7)
- Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12)
- Remotest part of the earth (Acts 13-28)
  - 1st missionary journey (Acts 13-14)
  - Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1-35)
  - 2nd missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22)
  - 3rd missionary journey (Acts 18:23-21:17)
  - Trip to Rome (Acts 21:18-28:31)

The first part of that last section is the first missionary journey into southern Galatia. That is what is described in Acts 13-14. We have seen the appointment of the Holy Spirit upon Paul and Barnabas to be involved in that first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3). They have stopped at an island off the coast of Israel in the Mediterranean named Cyprus, and won the proconsul of the whole island to the Lord through great spiritual warfare. That is a huge victory for the church (Acts 13:4-12).

The last time I was with you, we saw them leave Cyprus and travel by boat from Cyprus to what we would call modern-day Turkey, to a place called Pisidian Antioch. As is Paul's custom, he goes to the synagogue there in Pisidian Antioch, and they are reading the Prophets and the Law, which point towards Christ. They say to Paul, "Do you have anything to say?" He, I would assume, stands up in this synagogue and starts to use Hebrew Bible to point towards Jesus.

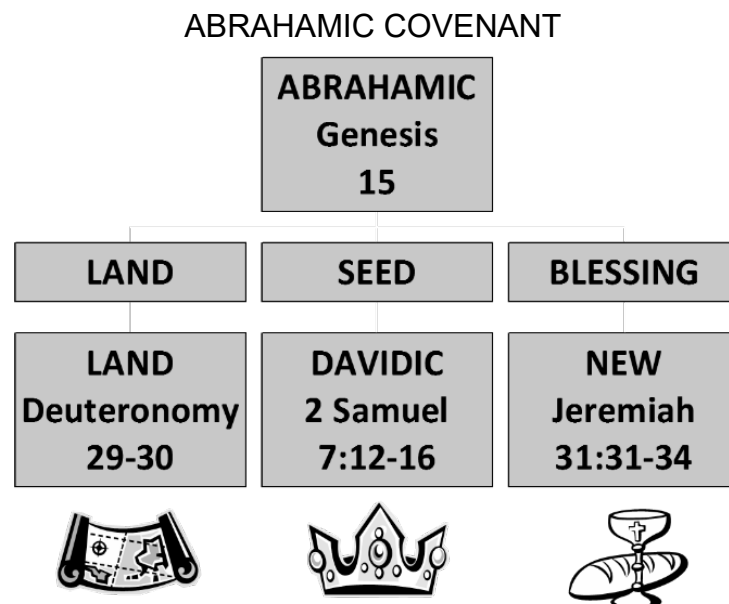
The message that Paul gives in this synagogue (Acts 13:16-41) is actually a really big deal because this is the first teaching that we have of Paul. What is coming in the New

Testament are Paul's 13 letters. Here we are before those 13 letters were even written. We have the very first teaching of Paul in this synagogue in Pisidian Antioch.

- I. Pisidian Antioch Ministry (Acts 13:13-52)
  - A. Journey to Pisidian Antioch (13-15)
  - B. Paul's message (16-41)
    - 1. Introduction (16)
    - 2. Historical background (17-22)
    - 3. Messiah (23-25)
    - 4. Gospel (26-29)
    - 5. Resurrection (30-37)
    - 6. Application to Paul's audience (38-39)
    - 7. Warning (40-41)
  - C. Results of Paul's message (42-52)

He gives an introduction (Acts 13:16) and then he goes into Israel's history (Acts 13:17-22); he talks about the Exodus (Acts 13:17); the wilderness wanderings (Acts 13:18); the conquest in the days of Joshua (Acts 13:19); the debacle of the Judges era and the Saul era (Acts 13:20-21). Then he says, "Finally a man came to the throne, who was a man after God's own heart over the united Kingdom of Israel—a man named David."

David, of course, is a big deal, because David was given the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant fleshes out the seed component of the Abrahamic Covenant. All the way back in Genesis 15 God made a unilateral covenant with Abram, and He promised him three things: land, seed, and blessing.



*Unconditional* covenant with a conditional blessing (Deut. 28; Lev. 26). The Davidic Covenant that God gave to David fleshes out the seed promises. David said to the Lord in 2 Samuel 7, "I want to build a house to God," which God did not accept, because David was a man of war; he had blood on his hands. The privilege of

building God a house would go to David's son Solomon; but in the process of all of that, God says, "I am going to build you a house instead." He took the word "house" and filled it with a different meaning.

David used it as the Hebrew word "bayit" meaning a physical temple; but God turned it around and said, "I am going to build you a house, meaning not a physical temple, but an eternal dynasty." This is what God said to David; this is why David is such a pivotal character in the Bible:

*""When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, 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 a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men.""* (2 Samuel 7:12-14).

This is speaking of the various Davidic kings that would come forth from David's lineage. Eventually the focus would be a very special king, of course, named Yeshua, or Jesus. It says,

*""but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever""* (2 Samuel 7:15-16).

A lot of people today are trying to put David's throne in heaven, which is an idea that is foreign to the Bible since all the Davidic kings had earthly terrestrial thrones.

*""Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever [olam]."" In accordance with all these words and all this vision, so Nathan [that is the prophet that God is using to speak to David] spoke to David"* (2 Samuel 7:16-17).

By the time we finish 2 Samuel 7, we understand that there is an eternal dynasty coming from David's seed. Of course, all of that points towards Jesus who will be the Davidic heir of all of these things. That is why Paul, as he is standing in the synagogue and talking through Israel's history, camps on this character named David (Acts 13:22), because he is trying to show that all of Israel's history points towards the Messiah, which the nation of Israel in the first century rejected.

We pick it up there with Acts 13:23. It says, *"From the descendants of this man [David], according to promise..."* What promise? We just read it: 2 Samuel 7:12-16.

*"From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus."* (Acts 13:23)

You are dealing with people in the synagogue that probably do not even know the name Jesus. They do not have any New Testament teaching—the New Testament had not even been written yet. So, Paul, when he gets the opportunity in Pisidian Antioch to speak in this synagogue, says the whole history of Israel points towards Jesus beginning with all of Israel's history, quite frankly, but culminating in these Davidic promises.

Paul is now focusing on this Messiah; he focuses on the Davidic Covenant. This is why Matthew 1:1-18, which is a genealogy, traces Christ's lineage back to David. Matthew traces 14 generations from Jesus to the Babylonian captivity; 14 additional generations from the Babylonian captivity to David; and 14 additional generations from David back to Abraham. Why in the world is Matthew doing this? He is trying to show that Jesus is the rightful heir to Israel's promises.

All of Israel's promises point towards Jesus. This is the point that Paul is trying to get across in this Jewish synagogue. You might be interested as to why Matthew would pick 14 generations, because he obviously skipped a lot of generations as he is doing this tracing. Praise the Lord he did, because if he did not, then Matthew 1 would be as long as the 1 and 2 Chronicles!

Jesus Genealogy According to Matthew		
1. Abraham	15. Solomon	29. Shealtiel
2. Isaac	16. Rehoboam	30. Zerubbabel
3. Jacob	17. Abijah	31. Abiud
4. Judah	18. Asa	32. Eliakim
5. Perez	19. Jehosaphat	33. Azor
6. Hezron	20. Jehoram	34. Zadok
7. Ram	21. Uzziah	35. Achim
8. Amminadab	22. Jotham	36. Eliud
9. Nahshon	23. Ahaz	37. Eleazar
10. Salmon	24. Hezekiah.	38. Matthan
11. Boaz	25. Manasseh	39. Jacob
12. Obed	26. Amon	40. <b>Joseph</b>
13. Jesse	27. Josiah	41. <b>Jesus</b>
14. <b>David</b>	28. <b>Jeconiah</b>	

Why did he pick 14? It has to do with something called Hebrew gematria, where numbers were assigned to letters. You could attach the right number to the right letter, add up the total, and everyone's name in the ancient world—this works in Greek, and it works in Hebrew—would reveal a sum, or a total.

It is very interesting to note that the Hebrew gematria for David, as you attach the right number to the right letter and add up the digits in David's name, yields the number 14. That is why Matthew picked 14 generations from Jesus to the Babylonian captivity; not 13 generations, not 15, he picked 14 from Jesus to the Babylonian captivity, from the Babylonian captivity back to David, and then from David back to Abraham.

What Matthew is showing is that Jesus is the rightful heir to all of Israel's promises funneled through David, David being that pivotal character because to David was given the Davidic Covenant. This is the kind of history that Paul is going into here.

You will notice in Acts 13:23 that this Davidic descendant, that Paul is trying to attract people's attention to in the synagogue, that was brought to Israel is a Savior named Jesus. He is getting across the point that Jesus is the long-awaited Savior. Matthew does that also after he gives that genealogy. Remember, Matthew is the gospel writer that we think is writing to a Jewish audience. Also, Matthew 1:21 says,

*"She [Mary] will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."*

Jesus is his Greek name; His Hebrew name is Yeshua. "Save" is a key word there. He is the one that has come into the world to save Israel from their sins. As we continue into the New Testament, He came into the world to save us all from our sins. That is why He is given this designation of Savior in Matthew 1:21, and that is exactly who Paul calls him there in Acts 13:23—a savior, Jesus, the Davidic descendant.

Then Paul continues on with this sermon in the synagogue. He starts talking a little bit about John the Baptist (Acts 13:24-25). It says,

*"After John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, 'I am not He. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'"*

It is interesting here that John the Baptist had a ministry, and as he came to the end of his ministry, Paul says, "He was completing his course." Does not Paul say that about his own life later on in his writings?

Second Timothy 4:7-8:

*"I have fought the good fight, i have finished the course, i have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to those who have loved His appearing."*

As Paul got to the end of his life, he called it "completing his course" or his race. That is the way he describes John the Baptist's ministry. He got to the end of it, and he was "completing his course".

Obviously, the application for us is: Are we completing our course? Because God has a course or a race for all of us. The goal is to get to the finish line, and not to run off in the opposite direction. We want to always be mindful of the course that God has for each of us in running our race.

John the Baptist had this ministry, like a prophet—Jesus called him the greatest prophet ever of the Old Testament age—of calling the Nation of Israel to repentance, just like all of the other Old Testament prophets did. John was unique in the sense that he got to see the culmination of the fulfillment of the Old Testament, what the Old Testament pointed towards—Jesus Christ Himself.

John is out there baptizing people, which is why he is called John the Baptist. In that time period, you identified with the message of the proclaimer by undergoing baptism. What is shocking is Jesus believed so strongly in the ministry of John the Baptist that Jesus showed up to be baptized, and John recognized who He was. Could you imagine going to work, you work at McDonald's and people are driving through, and you are at the window there. You are the cashier or whatever, and all of a sudden, Jesus, shows up on a donkey or something.

That is kind of what John the Baptist went through. He just showed up to work, and all of a sudden Jesus showed up. That is where John the Baptist makes this statement: "Your sandals I am not even worthy to untie, let alone baptize You. You should be baptizing me, I should not be doing this. You should be in the position of authority." But Jesus submitted to the ministry of John the Baptist, because Jesus believed in what John the Baptist was doing.

That whole story is given to us in the early Gospels. In Matthew 3:11 John says,

*"As for me, I baptize with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."*

Mark's rendition of it is found in Mark 1:7. It says,

*"and he was preaching, and saying, 'After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals.'"*

Luke's version, in Luke 3:16 says,

*"John answered and said to them all, 'As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'"*

John's version, in John 1:26, says,

*"John answered them saying, 'I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know.'"*

John 1:29 says,

*"The next day [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him and said,  
'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the whole world!'"*

Paul's point in all of this is that Jesus is such the central theme of Old Testament revelation, that even the greatest prophet of the whole Old Testament Age, acquiesced, submitted to who Jesus is. That is why Paul records John asking questions to people in Acts 13:25. John is communicating the point "I am not Him" through these questions. "The focus is not me; the focus is Jesus."

This is the unique Davidic descendant that showed up in their lifetime. As you go down to Acts 13:26-29, in this sermon that Paul is giving impromptu in this synagogue, he has given an introduction; he has laid out the historical background, culminating in David; he has laid out who the Messiah is. Now in Acts 13:26-29, Paul the Apostle gets into the whole subject matter of the gospel.

As we look at Acts 13:26-29, I think what you will see there is something that Paul would write to the Corinthians about later—the basics of the gospel. You know, if you are going to go to a passage in the Bible that lays out the basics of the gospel, the bare essentials, what passage of the Bible does that? Most people would agree that you will find that in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

As you read Acts 13:26-29 and following, you will see a lot of 1 Corinthians 15:1-5. Those verses say.

*"Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast to the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance..."*

See these words "first importance" here? What Paul is saying, "These are the basics of the gospel. This is what you have to understand and believe in to be saved."

*"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor 15:3)*

What Scriptures would those be? Old Testament, Hebrew Bible.

*"and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor 15:4)*

If you get an opportunity to share the gospel with someone and you are trying to figure out exactly what to say, just say what is in here. Christ died. He did not just die, but He died for our sins, according to Old Testament Scripture. He was buried and that He was raised on the third day—resurrection—according to the Scriptures. These are just the

basic tenets of the gospel. Paul is going to start going into those right now in Acts 13:26-29. Notice, if you will, what Paul says in Acts 13:26:

*"Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent."*

He says "sons of Abraham" because he is in a Jewish synagogue. He is talking to Jewish people. He calls them brethren, not because they are believers, yet sometimes the word brother or brethren is used to describe the relationship amongst fellow believers. That is true, but sometimes the word "brethren" is also used to describe fellow Jews. That is how Paul is using the word "brethren" here.

The word "brethren" is used that way in Romans 9:3 where Paul later will write,

*"For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."*

When he uses this expression "brethren" he is not saying that these people in the synagogue are saved, but they are fellow Jews. He is a Jew speaking to Jews. Some folks are also gathered there who fear God. If you go back to Acts 13:16 when Paul first started speaking in the synagogue, it says,

*"Men of Israel, and you who fear God..."*

Who are the God-fearers? The God-fearers are what we would call proselytes—Gentiles who converted to Judaism to follow the ways of Yahweh. That is who Paul is dealing with here in the synagogue. He is dealing with Jews still unsaved, and Gentile, God-fearers like Ruth the Moabitess, who was not Jewish.

She said to her mother-in-law Naomi, "Your God will be my God, and your people will be my people" (Ruth 1:16). She was a convert to Judaism—they called them proselytes—even though she was a Gentile. That is who Paul is dealing with here in this synagogue. His point is: all of Old Testament history and all of Israel's history is designed by God to point to the coming of Jesus. We need Jesus because we need a Savior. The second part of Acts 13:26 says,

*"...to us, the message of this salvation has been sent."*

He called Jesus a Savior a little earlier at the end of Acts 13:23. That is why he came into the world—to save Israel from their sins, to save the proselytes from their sins, and to save actually the whole world from their sins. That is Paul's point.

He did not come into the world to be a good moral leader; He did not come into the world to be a philosopher or a teacher; although He is all those things. He is our savior. Our lives were drowning, and we got a life preserver. That life preserver is the person of Jesus Christ.

His death on the cross, that should have been me up there being killed. That is how much God hates my sin. Jesus stepped into the line of fire and absorbed the wrath of a holy God, the Father, in our place. He is my savior. He is not just my mentor; He is not just my example. He is all those things, but He is my savior. Without Him I would be unsaved. I would be hurling towards a crisis, eternity.

As Paul is unfolding the gospel now, he starts to talk about the death of Christ. By the way, Jesus, does He not save us in every way? Justification. Sanctification. Glorification.

Three Tenses of Salvation			
Phase	Justification	Sanctification	Glorification
Tense	Past	Present	Future
Saved from sin's:	Penalty	Power	Presence
Scripture	Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5	Philip 2:12	Rom 5:10

Justification, the past tense of salvation. Sanctification, the present tense of salvation. Glorification, the future tense of salvation. Justification—I have been saved from sin's penalty at the point of faith alone in Christ alone. Sanctification—I am being gradually delivered from sin's power, as I learn to lean upon the resources that God has given to me at spiritual birth. Glorification—the future tense of salvation or I will die. When I do that, I will be freed from the very presence of sin.

None of this would be possible had Jesus not come into the world to be our Savior. That is the point that Paul is trying to get across here. He has applied this to his own audience that he is speaking to in the synagogue. Now he starts to talk about the death of Christ. Acts 13:27-28 talks about the ignorance of the people that put him to death.

You see that in Acts 13:27:

*"For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him."*

Paul is talking about the people in Jerusalem that killed Jesus, the Herodian dynasty that turned Christ over to Rome for execution. He says their biggest problem is they did not recognize who He was. They did not believe Him when He called Himself the Son of God. They should have known better because He was the fulfillment *"of the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath"* (Acts 13:27).

Around the clock on the Sabbath in Jerusalem, whether it is the temple or elsewhere, was read the Prophets, what we call the Old Testament. In other words, that whole Old Testament points to whom? To Jesus. In spite of this, they did not recognize who He was.

In John 5:39 Jesus says,

*"Your search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me."*

*"For if you believe Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about Me"*  
(John 5:46).

Luke 24:27, post-resurrection on the Emmaus Road, says,

*"Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."*

*"Now He said to them, 'These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled'"* (Luke 24:44).

Paul, in Acts 17, will go there into the synagogue, I believe in Thessalonica. It says,

*"Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus, whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ'"* (Acts 17:1-4).

We read earlier 1 Corinthians 15:3-4,

*"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,"*

Now these were the Scriptures that were read over and over and over again in Jerusalem. It is amazing how you can hear something over and over again, maybe having read it yourself over and over again, and yet you completely miss the point of what those Scriptures were about. That is a scary thing when you think about it, to be so familiar with something and to hear something so frequently and yet miss the central point of the writings.

That is what Paul is saying: "What these people did to Jesus, they should have recognized who He was; but they did not. They were ignorant and they should not have been ignorant. They knew the Scriptures, they heard the Scriptures, and they should have connected the dots, but they did not."

Acts 13:27 says,

*"For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath..."*

The Pharisees were the experts on the Law, and they did not understand or comprehend what the Law pointed towards. Then Paul says something absolutely astounding here in Acts 13:27. Even though they did this out of ignorance, when they should have known better, when they killed Christ, they fulfilled the very Scriptures that they were reading every Sabbath, the very Scriptures they did not understand. The moment they took Christ and turned Him over to Rome for execution, they fulfilled those Scriptures that they were blind to. That is amazing to me.

Acts 13:27:

*"For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning them Him."*

It is one thing not to understand what you are reading and hearing all the time; it is totally different to go one step further and to actually fulfill it. Not only do you not understand what you are reading, but your very actions are fulfilling the things you do not understand. Wow!

That is the point that Paul is getting at here with these Jews and God-fearers in this synagogue. They put to death an innocent man. They put to death a man that did nothing wrong at all. You see Paul getting to that point in Acts 13:28:

*"And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed."*

According to Jewish law, you cannot execute somebody unless there are two to three witnesses of a capital crime, under the Mosaic Law. The witnesses had to be the first ones to throw the stones. That is how sure you had to be that you were an eyewitness to someone that committed a capital crime.

That is in the Deuteronomy 17:6-7. It says,

*"On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to*

*death, and afterward the hand of all of the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst."*

You want to put someone to death in the Law of Israel? Deuteronomy 17:6-7 says you had better have your two or three witnesses—one witness is not enough. Then the witnesses need to throw the first stones to demonstrate that they are very sure that this individual being put to death really committed a capital crime.

With Jesus, did they have their two to three witnesses? No, they did not. They just made stuff up. We talk in our culture about miscarriages of justice and mistrials and jury gone wild, all of these kinds of things. There it is right there in the Bible. They did not have their two to three witnesses. They just made things up. "Oh, well, we thought we heard Him say such and such."

By this time Rome had come to power and taken away from Israel the right to execute their own criminals. They had to turn Him over to Pilate to get the guy dead. I am just giving you a little sample of the rules they broke—their own rules. When I was teaching John's Gospel, when we got to the trials—there were six trials, three Jewish, three Roman—I went through a long list of all of the rules, whether it was Old Testament, Jewish tradition, Mishnah, Talmud, whatever you want to look at. They just broke every rule in the book, trying to get the guy dead as quickly as possible.

They literally took Jesus and rushed Him through the judicial system to kill Him. He was completely and totally innocent. Then they condemned Him, and handed Him over to Pilate. Pilate did not want anything to do with it because he saw what was going on. Remember? This is why John 18:38 says,

*"Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, 'I find no guilt in Him.'"*

You know the story of Pilate, how he tried to get Barabbas released instead of Jesus, and the Jews wanted nothing to do with that. Pilate himself recognized that He was completely and totally innocent. Pilate's own wife had a dream, I think it was the night before. She told Pilate, "You better not have anything to do with this guy, because you are betraying an innocent human being. You are going to have an innocent man on your hands." This is why Pilate washed his hands.

This is what Paul is getting at here in Acts 13:28. They killed an innocent man.

*"And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed."*

Acts 13:29 talks about Christ's death and burial.

*"When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb."*

Notice again that Paul says, "When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him." As they were killing Him they were fulfilling the very prophecies of Hebrew Bible that they were not understanding. The whole Old Testament points towards the death of Jesus: John 5:39 and 46, Luke 24:27 and 44, Acts 17:1-3, and 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, which we read earlier.

*"When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross..."*

Now the word "cross" there in Greek is the word for a tree. The cross of Jesus Christ many times in Scripture is referred to as a tree. Acts 5:30 says,

*"The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging Him on a tree" (ESV).*

Acts 10:39 says,

*"They put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree" (ESV).*

Galatians 3:13, which explains why the cross is called a tree, quotes the Old Testament saying,

*"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree."*

They hung Him on this cross called a tree, which is where you put cursed people. Jesus was cursed because He was an innocent man, and the sin debt of the whole world was placed on Him. Then they took him down from the tree. The second part of Acts 13:29 says they *"laid Him in a tomb."*

As you read John's Gospel, you will observe that Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and the Jewish leaders took Jesus down after He was dead. Remember, they came to break his legs. Why were they breaking people's legs? Because part of the horrors of crucifixion was suffocation. You were not only dying on a cross, but you were dying because you could not breathe.

Obviously, a criminal hanging on that cross would use their legs to push themselves up to get their next breath. The Jews wanted to get on with Passover. It is amazing to me. They wanted to get on with their religious ceremony. "We have to get these guys dead now because they are ruining our religious ceremony." Is that not amazing? That is how religion can blind people to truth.

"We have to create a scenario where these guys cannot push themselves up and get their next breath. Let us get the show on the road here. Let us get these guys dead as quickly as we can." They started breaking the legs of these crucified victims so they could not push themselves up and get their next breath of air.

The story, John tells us, is that they got to Jesus and they found that He was already dead. There was no need to break His legs, which, by the way, is also a fulfillment of prophecy because He is the Passover lamb. Exodus 12 is pretty clear that the bones of the Passover lamb cannot be broken.

They took that spear and slammed it into His side to make sure that He was dead. John 19:34 tells us that out of His side flowed blood and water separated, which medical people tell me is symptomatic of a ruptured heart. Jesus died of a broken heart, literally and metaphorically.

He was dead. They took Him off the tree and they put Him in the tomb—Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and the Jewish leadership—because they wanted to get to church, so to speak. You know, we are all involved in this. John 19:31 says,

*"Then the Jews, because it was the day of the preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away."*

Then they took Jesus, and "they laid Him in a tomb." Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:4 "that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Their burial of Him in a tomb as a common criminal was a fulfillment of the very Scriptures that were read to them over and over again every single Sabbath, that apparently they did not understand. That is why Jesus says things like, "*Father, forgive them*" (Luke 23:34). It is one of His final words on the cross. "*They do not know what they are doing.*"

Was it ignorance or was it willful ignorance? I have a tendency to think the latter, but they just had no idea what they were doing. They just thought it was a common execution. Yet God takes lemons and turns them into lemonade. This is how the sin debt of the world was paid for. Paul is dealing with all of this stuff here in this synagogue, in this speech.

Now he begins to talk about the resurrection (Acts 13:30-37). First, he mentions the fact of the resurrection (Acts 13:30): "*But God.*" Aren't those wonderful words? This whole thing looks tragic, "but God." God took lemons and turned them into lemonade.

It is the same verbiage we saw last Sunday when we were studying the life of Joseph. Joseph said to his brothers in Genesis 50:20,

*"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good..."*

God the Father has a great way of snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, right? What looks to be a total miscarriage of justice, God turns around for good as only God can do.

Acts 13:30:

*"But God raised Him from the dead."*

He is stating the fact of the resurrection. If you look at Acts 13:31 it says,

*"And for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people."*

You have the fact of the resurrection (Acts 13:30) and then you have Jesus appearing to people for many days (Acts 13:31). How many days did He appear to people? Acts 1:3 tells us it was about 40 days. It says in Acts 1:3,

*"To these also He presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God."*

Then Paul, as he is talking, says something very interesting:

*"...the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people." (Acts 13:31)*

When he says "now" he says, "Do not take my word for it. Go talk to the people that He talked to when He came out of the grave. There are 500 of them (he will later tell the Corinthians), some are dead, but most of them are still alive.

First Corinthians 15:6-7 says,

*"After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles."*

Paul put his whole reputation on the line when he said "now" in Acts 13:31 and later when he told the Corinthians "most of whom remain alive". What he said is, "Do not take my word for it. Go talk to the 500 or so people that are still alive." Could you imagine going out and doing what Paul said and discovering that the whole thing is made up? There are not 500 eyewitnesses.

Paul's whole credibility would have been shot right out of the gate, but Paul had no problem attaching his credibility to saying, "Talk to the witnesses that saw Him alive" because there really were 500 witnesses that saw Him alive. "A few have died, but most of them are still alive. Go talk to them." Who would make a statement like that if there was not something to back it up?

In Acts 13:32-33, as he is talking about the resurrection, he starts to talk about the good news of the gospel. Acts 13:32 says,

"And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers."

Why do we call the gospel the gospel? Because it is good news. Because of the horrors that just happened, my sin debt can be taken away if I place my personal faith in Christ alone.

Did you catch his appeal to the Old Testament? "*And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers.*" This whole transaction was laid out in the form of a script hundreds and thousands of years in advance, that was read every single Sabbath in Jerusalem.

The killers of Christ, the murderers of Christ, the betrayers of Christ, apparently heard these Scriptures over and over again and were ignorant of them; but when they turned Christ over to Rome for execution, and the whole horror of the crucifixion went forward, they were actually fulfilling the very Scriptures that they did not understand.

That is what Paul's saying. We have already made reference to John 5, Luke 24, Acts 17, and 1 Corinthians 15, which tell us that this whole thing was laid out like a script in the pages of the Old Testament.

Go to Acts 13:33, and I believe he is talking about the first coming of Christ. Acts 13:32-33 says,

*"And we preach to you the good news or the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.'"*

This was a fulfillment of Psalm 2:7, which indicates that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. The word "begotten" can be very confusing because people like the Jehovah's Witnesses will try to tell you that Jesus is begotten or created. There was a time in which Jesus was not, according to Jehovah's Witness doctrine. It is recycled Arianism.

Arius, a heretic very early on in church history in the early fourth century, said there was a time in which Jesus was not because He was created—He was begotten. The Creed of Nicaea, about AD 325, called Arius out for that heresy. There is a line in that creed that says of Jesus, "Begotten but not made." Yes, He was begotten, but He was never made.

Obviously, there is a big difference between being begotten and being created, or else the creed of Nicaea, AD 325 makes no sense. What does it mean to be begotten? The Greek word for "begotten" is "mono"—"mono" one, "genes" as in species and biology; kind. "One of a kind" that is what "begotten" means.

John 1:14 uses this word:

*"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

That does not mean created. Nicaea says, "Begotten, but not made." One of a kind, yes; made, no. "Arius, you are a heretic. The church has determined that you are a heretic." Athanasius, in that battle, was right, even though (if you know a little bit about church history), Arius almost won. Arius, in the Arian heresy, almost succeeded in bringing in Jehovah's Witness doctrine. The Jehovah's Witnesses are just recycling ancient Arianism.

In fact, there is a famous line, because Athanasius was the one guy that was standing up against Arius, and the church said to Athanasius, "Athanasius, the world is against you." Athanasius said, "It is not the world against Athanasius, it is Athanasius against the world." He was one of the only people that stood for the eternal existence of the Son of God. It shows you that majority opinion is not always right, because if majority opinion was always right, we would be under Jehovah's Witness-type Arian teaching today.

Fortunately, the table, the tide, whatever you want to call it, swung the other way eventually. Now we have the Nicene Creed condemning Jehovah's Witness Arian doctrine today with that wonderful statement, "Begotten and not made." Begotten does not mean created. There never was a time in which Jesus was not. He has always been. He is the uncaused cause. Yes, the Bible does use the word "begotten" but it does not mean "created", it means "one of a kind". That is the declaration of Him in Psalm 2:7.

We know John 3:16 pretty well, right?

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*

"Begotten" is a translation once again of the "mono"; begotten and not made. In Psalm 2:7, God is just acknowledging, on a particular day, that Jesus is "begotten"; He is "one of a kind". He is not saying that on that day He was created. This man, Jesus Christ, rose from the dead, which paved the way to the good news of the gospel. The proper identification of who Jesus is, from Psalm 2:7.