**Things Didn’t Go As Planned**

(Acts 13:26-39)

By Pastor Ricky Kurth

A woman asked her doctor for a new diet plan. He said, “Try eating regularly for two days, then skip a day. Keep doing that, and you should lose 5 pounds in 2 weeks.” She returned two weeks later, and after weighing her, the doctor found that she had lost *twenty-five* pounds. “That’s amazing,” he said. “Did you follow my diet plan?” She said, “Yes, but it wasn’t easy. I thought I was going to die that third day.” “From hunger?” he asked. “No, from all that skipping!”

Well, I’m sure that woman was glad she lost all that weight, even though things didn’t go as the doctor planned. And here in Acts 13, we have some Gentiles who were glad that the gospel was finally being preached to them, even though things hadn’t gone as *God* had planned.

Paul is preaching in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, where the congregation was mostly Jews, of course. But there must have been some Gentiles there too, for Paul says in Verse 26:

**“Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent” (Acts 13:26).**

Now if you know your Bible, you know that something very new was happening here. Throughout most of the Old Testament, the word of God’s salvation had only been sent *to the Jews.* And that didn’t change in the New Testament either, as we see when Peter said:

***“Ye men of Israel*…unto *you*…God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless *you,* in turning away *every one of you* from his iniquities” (Acts 3:12,26).**

So even in the New Testament, the word of God’s salvation was sent to the Jews.

But we know God had a *plan* to send salvation to the Gentiles, because of a word that I left out of that quote of Peter’s address, a word I replaced here:

**“Ye men of Israel…unto you *first* God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you…” (Acts 3:12,26).**

That word “first”there tells us that God *did* plan to send salvation to the Gentiles. He just planned to send it to the Jews *first,* and then use *them* to save the Gentiles. It’s the plan Isaiah predicted when he quoted something God will someday say to Israel:

**“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, *and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee…*darkness shall cover the earth…*but the LORD shall arise upon thee….*And the Gentiles shall come…*to the brightness of thy rising”* (Isaiah 60:1-3).**

The Jews were supposed to *rise* to the occasion by receiving the Lord when He came and offered *them* salvation, and the Gentiles were supposed to be drawn to the brightness of the rising *of the salvation of the entire nation of Israel.* That was God’s plan!

But as you know, things didn’t go as planned. The Jews *didn’t* rise to the occasion. Instead, they *fell* when they crucified the Lord, and stoned His prophet Stephen. And it looked for all the world like salvation would *never* get to the Gentiles.

But that’s when God revealed His *secret* plan to send salvation *directly* to the Gentiles *in spite of Israel,* instead of *through* Israel, through the ministry of the apostle Paul.It was a secret plan that Paul calls *the mystery* in Romans 11:11,25, when he wrote:

**“…*through their fall* salvation is come unto the Gentiles…I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant *of this mystery…”***

So, just as that woman lost weight, even though things didn’t go as the doctor planned, the Gentiles were sent salvation, even though things didn’t go as *God* had planned.

But Paul also wanted the *Jews* in that synagogue to get saved that day. And he figured out a *brilliant* way to get them to receive Christ without feeling guilty that it was Jews who rejected Christ. Look what he said to them in the next two verses of our text:

**“For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because *they* knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, *they* have fulfilled them in condemning him.**

**“And though *they* found no cause of death in him, yet desired *they* Pilate that he should be slain” (Acts 13:27,28).**

Did you notice all the “they”s in those verses? That’s not the same pronoun that Peter used when he was preaching Christ to the Jews in Jerusalem at Pentecost. He said,

***“Ye men of Israel*…Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs…Him…*ye* have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified…*ye…*denied Him in the presence of Pilate….*ye* denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted untoyou” (Acts 2:22,23; 3:13,14).**

Do you see the difference in the pronouns there? Peter told the Jews in Jerusalem, *“You* killed our Messiah.” Paul is telling these Jews in Antioch, as it were, “It wasn’t *you* who killed our messiah, it was those bozo *rulers* of yours. Why should you guys go to hell just because those big shots in Jerusalem didn’t listen to our prophets? Our prophets predicted that our messiah would come healing people, and riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Our rulers just didn’t *listen* to them!” Can you see how that would make those Jews in Antioch more open to getting saved?

And by the way; the way that Paul presented Christ to those Jews is similar to how Christ should be presented to Jews *today.* Don’t be telling Jews, “You Jews killed Christ, but He’ll save you if you let Him.” Say, *“those Jews 2,000 years ago* killed Christ, but He’ll save you if you let Him.” And then be *sure* to add what Peter prayed in Acts 4:27:

**“…against Thy holy child Jesus…both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, *with the Gentiles,* and the people of Israel, were gathered together”**

The only thing in all of human history that Jews and Gentiles ever got together to do was to kill the Son of God. What an indictment of the depravity of the human race!

Now compare what Peter prayed there to how Martin Luther used to go around calling Jews Christ-killers. That didn’t make Jews very open to the gospel. And I’ve seen atheist web sites that use Luther to say that Christianity is a hateful anti-Semitic religion, as evidenced by one of Christianity’s founding leaders. Don’t fall for into that trap, especially when sharing Christ with a Jew. Make sure he or she knows that the New Testament says Gentiles were just as guilty as Jews when it came to the crucifixion of God’s own Son.

But don’t get confused when verse 27 says that those Jews in Jerusalem *fulfilled Scripture* when they condemned the Lord. It’s easy to wrongly conclude from that that they didn’t have a choice, that they *had* to condemn Him because God *predicted* they’d condemn Him. But just because God *knew* they’d condemn Him doesn’t mean they had no choice. If they’d have *accepted* their messiah instead, God would have *known* that they’d accept Him, and His prophets would have predicted *that* instead.

If you want to talk about things not going as planned—God’s plan was for Jews to *receive* their messiah and sacrifice Him on the altar to pay for their sins, instead of the animals they *usually* sacrificed on the altar to pay for their sins. At least that’s what God told them to do in Psalm 118:

**“Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the LORD…*bind the sacrifice with cords,* even unto the horns of the altar” (Psalm 118:26,27).**

Now *that* was God’s plan! It was a plan they were supposed to execute when the Lord rode the donkey into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday, and people cried,

**“Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 21:9).**

As you can see, they were *quoting* Psalm 118! That shows that at least a few of the Jews in Jerusalem knew that they should do what Psalm 118 said and receive Christ, then with tears in their eyes sacrifice Him on the altar in faith, rather than crucifying Him in unbelief, knowing God would raise Him from the dead as the child of all His promises, just as we see typified when Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac, the child of all God’s promises back then (Heb.11:19).

But either way Christ died, God’s plan included more than just Christ dying for our sins. It also included God raising Him from the dead, as Paul went on to say in our text:

**“And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.**

**“But God raised him from the dead:**

**“And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.**

**“And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,**

**“God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” (Acts 13:29-33).**

God promised to raise Christ from the dead, and He delivered on that promise!

But don’t get confused when verse 33 says that God raised Christ from the dead, “as it is also written in the second psalm…this day have I begotten Thee.” As you know, that word “begotten” is the noun form of the verb *to begat,* and usually refers to a man fathering a son, not to a man raising a son from the dead. We see an example of this in Genesis 5:4, where we learn that

**“…the days of Adam after he had *begotten* Seth were eight hundred years: and he *begat* sons and daughters”**

But when a man fathers a son, he gives him *life.* And when God raised Christ from the dead, he gave Him life as well. That’s why Revelation 1:5 talks about

**“Jesus Christ, who is…the first begotten *of the dead”***

Now Christ wasn’t the first one *in the Bible* to rise from the dead. There were several examples of the dead being raised in the Old Testament, and the Lord Himself raised three people. But Christ was the first to rise from the dead with *new* life*—resurrection* life, *never-ending* life. All the other people raised from the dead in the Bible just got their old lives back again, and eventually died again. But the apostle Paul says,

***“Christ* being raised from the dead *dieth no more;* death hath no more dominion over Him” (Romans 6:9).**

The Lord Jesus Christ was the first to rise from the dead with *that* kind of life!

But why would God have to say to His Son, “Thou art My Son” the day He raised Him from the dead? I mean, when you rise from the dead, you don’t rise with amnesia, to where you have to be told who you are. So why did God have to tell His Son, “Thou art My son”?

The answer is, the day of the Lord’s resurrection was the day of His *bar mitzvah.* I don’t know what modern Jewish fathers say to their sons on the day of their bar-mitzvah, but this is what they are *supposed* to say: “Thou art my son.” You see, a bar mitzvah is the day a father recognizes that his *boy* has become an adult *son,* and is ready to enter into the family business that his father is engaged in. It’s usually observed when the boy is about 12 years old. We know that the Lord’s earthly father Joseph observed it, for

**“…*when He was twelve years old,* they went up to Jerusalem…. And…Joseph and his mother…found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions…..And He said unto them…wist ye not that I must be about *My Father's* business?” (Luke 2:42-49).**

Now He wasn’t saying that He didn’t want to go into *Joseph’s* family business of carpentry. I believe that’s why His parents brought Him to the temple at that age in the first place, for His bar mitzvah. We know that the Lord *did* go into Joseph’s business, for after He performed some miracles, some people asked,

**“Is not this *the carpenter,* the son of Mary, the brother of James…?” (Mark 6:3).**

But on the occasion of the Lord’s bar mitzvah into *Joseph’s* family business, He reminded his parents that he had *another* family business that He needed to go into with His *other* Father. And *that* bar mitzvah day came the day He rose from the dead, and *God* said to Him, “Thou art My Son,” just as Joseph had said it to him.

And we don’t have to guess what business His other Father was in, for He tells us in John 5:17-21:

**“Jesus answered…My Father *worketh* hitherto, *and I work….*The Son can do nothing of Himself, *but what He seeth the Father do:* for what things soever He doeth, *these also doeth the Son likewise.* For the Father…sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth…*For as the Father raiseth up the dead,* and quickeneth them; *even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.”***

The Lord’s Father was in the *quickening* business! That’s the kind of work His Father did hitherto, and that’s the kind of work the Lord went into when He became a quickening spirit (ICor.15:45) after rising from the dead Himself. If we live to see the Rapture, our dead loved ones will be His first projects, for they’ll be the first *other people* to rise from the dead with resurrection life.

But the day God raised Christ from the dead, He said something *else* to His Son—something we read about as Paul goes on in our text here in Acts 13:

**“And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David” (Acts 13:34).**

So what are “the sure mercies of David”? Well, that’s talking about something in Psalm 16 that David *starts* to talk about in Psalm 16:6,7, when he wrote:

**“The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord…”**

Now you read that and you get the idea that David was thinking those thoughts while he was sitting on his throne one day, looking around at the vastness and splendor of his kingdom, thinking, “I got it made in the shade! I have such a pleasant life, I feel like blessing the Lord!” But as we read on in the psalm, we learn that he *wasn’t* sitting on his throne when he was thinking those thoughts. Psalm 16:9,10 says:

**“…my heart is glad…*in hell…”***

David was sitting *in hell* when he was thinking those thoughts. You see, he was a prophet, and he was predicting what he’d be thinking when he died and went to hell.

But what do we learn about hell in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31? Hell in those days had two compartments, a torment side where the rich man went because he didn’t sell all he had and give the money to the apostles to distribute to the poor, as was required for salvation in those days, and a comfort side where Lazarus went. David went to the *comfort* side when he died, and that side was a whole lot more pleasant than the fiery flames found on the other side.

But it really wasn’t much of a “goodly heritage.” I mean, his *soul* was comforted, but his body was in the grave, and he was imprisoned in hell, which is the heart of the earth. So what exactly was David finding so good and pleasant?

Well, let’s read more of what David was thinking in Psalm 16:

**“…my heart is glad…my flesh…shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not *leave* my soul in hell;neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:9,10).**

Ah, *now* we see what David found so pleasant! It was the thought that God wouldn’t *leave* his soul in hell, or allow his body to see corruption in the grave.

We know when corruption starts to set in on a dead body because of what happened when the Lord went to raise Lazarus from the dead:

**“Jesus…cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha…saith unto Him, Lord, by this timehe stinketh: *for* he hath been dead *four days”* (John 11:38,39).**

According to that, a dead body starts to corrupt on the *fourth* day. That means that David was comforting himself with the thought that God was only going to leave him in hell for *three* days before raising him from the dead so his body wouldn’t see corruption.

But can you see a problem with that understanding of that passage? If you can’t, Peter points it out when *he* quoted that psalm in Acts 2:25,27,29:

**“David speaketh…Thou wilt not…suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption….David…is both dead and buried, *and his sepulchre is with us unto this day”***

Peter pointed out that David’s sepulcher was still there with the rock still on the door of the cave, so obviously he *didn’t* rise from the dead three days after he died.

But then Peter went on to explain that David wasn’t talking about *himself* in Psalm 16. He went on to explain,

**“Therefore being *a prophet*…He seeing this before spake *of the resurrection of Christ,* that *His* soul was not left in hell, neither *His* flesh did see corruption” (Acts 2:30,31).**

Did the Lord rise from the dead on the third day, before His body began to corrupt? Of course! Well, that’s what Paul meant in Acts 13:34 when he quotes God as saying to His Son, “I’ll give *you* the sure mercies of David.” And that’s why Paul goes on to quote that same 16th psalm here in our text:

**“Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.**

**“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:**

**“But He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.**

**“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:**

**“And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:35-39).**

Now “the law of Moses” that he was referring to there was the ten commandments. And you know why you can’t be forgiven and justified by that law, for James quoted the ten commandments and said,

**“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, *and yet offend in one point,* he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, *thou art become a transgressor of the law”* (James 2:10,11).**

Think of the ten commandments as a chain with ten links, and you’re hanging on to it while dangling over the open pit of hell. How many of those links have to break before you’re doomed? Just one! And if you’re honest, you have to admit that you’ve broken more than one of them.

But the Lord Jesus Christ never broke any of them! And then He died a sacrificial death for you. And all He asks is that you *believe* that He died for you, and you too can be justified from all things from which you *could not* be justified by trying to keep the ten commandments.

Now if you’ve *already* believed and been justified from all your sins, I want to add that whatever hell you’re going through *in life,* you can learn to look at your life as a goodly heritage if you just remember that God is not going to *leave* you in that hell forever. At the Rapture, all your health problems and all your financial problems are going to be gone with the wind.

Now if you’re not satisfied with that, you can put this article down and go read an article written by some prosperity preacher, who will be more than happy to tell you that all your problems will disappear in *this* life, if you can just be a good enough Christian, or give him enough money! But all that will do is make sure he drives a Mercedes, while you drive a Rolls Canardly. You know what a Rolls Canardly is, don’t you? It’s a car that’s so old and decrepit that it rolls down one hill, can hardly make it over the next one.

Many years ago when I was a painting contractor, I was washing the walls of a customer’s home before painting them, and he was amazed to learn that I was a pastor. He was amazed because the pastor who lived next door to him drove a brand new Mercedes, while I was there sweating away washing his dusty walls!

I hope that instead of putting this article down to find one written by a prosperity preacher that you’ll learn to be content with knowing *you’re justified from all things.* If you will, you’ll learn to look at your life and say with David that the lines are fallen unto you in pleasant places, and that you have a goodly heritage, and that you’ll begin to bless the Lord as never before!