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**A0904 – January 25, 2009 – Acts 13:13-41 – Paul's Historical
Framework Methodology**

Alright, we've been emphasizing the expertise of the Holy Spirit in the mission's methodology that's used in the Book of Acts and we see that He used their natural resources and background. Of course the people pray about it and apply doctrine but they don't try to write their own handbook on missions, they trust the Holy Spirit as He guides in a way that fits common sense. They did not wait for God to paint His will on their forehead. It was not mystical, flighty Christians running around like chickens with their heads cut off. They used a man who had wealth, who had contacts on the island of Cyprus, they used a theological genius who had contacts and knew the region of Asia Minor, they went along the major roadways where Roman colonies had been strategically placed by Rome to protect the Roman Empire. They used the cultural bridge of the Jewish people because they know the categories of Scripture, being dispersed throughout the world they know the local languages and customs. So the Jewish groups then became the vehicles for evangelism and missionary work. The Holy Spirit used these; yet these are not often used in today's missionary strategy and tactics, despite the fact it's right there in the Bible.

Last week we set out on the first of Paul's four missionary journeys. If you turn to the back of your Bible you should have a map section and one of those maps should plot the route of these missionary journeys. You want to get familiar with those maps as we go through the Book of Acts. The expedition began in v 3 when the Holy Spirit chose Saul and Barnabas in Syrian Antioch. In v 4 they traveled to the port city of Seleucia and over to the island of Cyprus, Barnabas was a native, they went to the population centers, Salamis and then Paphos, moving from synagogue to synagogue going to the Jew first, culminating in the first confrontation to the gospel on the island,

the contest between Paul and Bar-Jesus, a battle between light and darkness, good and evil and we saw that greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Darkness is not equal to the light. Light will triumph. In v 13 they depart the island and sail to the mainland of Asia Minor, they enter from the south in the marshy lowlands of Pamphylia. And note it says Paul and his companions and not Barnabas and Saul. There's been a shift in leadership, now Paul comes to the fore as the primary instrument of God the Spirit. but John left them and returned to Jerusalem. We don't know why John left. What we do know is that Paul interpreted him as a deserter. Later in chapter 15 Paul comes to Barnabas and suggests they go back and visit all the churches they planted and visited in missionary journey 1 and Barnabas says, "Hey let's bring John Mark." And that about sent Paul off his rocker. "What, that deserter? I'm not taking him." And Barnabas kept hounding Paul about it until one day Paul had enough of it and they had an all out. And in the end Paul said "Look Barnabas, you go your way and I'll go mine." And they did, Barnabas took John Mark, Paul chose Silas and they went separate directions. It's one of those revealing things in Scripture about human nature. Barnabas was the grace, grace, grace type, he'd give you room to grow and he was a man of second chances. Paul was the type he didn't have time for the flakes, either get with the program or get out of my way. The Bible doesn't fault either one of them. We have both kinds of people in the church and God the Holy Spirit uses both types. And in the end the Lord used both types to generate two groups and two trips. So it had positive effects in that it widened the territory. God the Spirit can use the most unlikely events to get His work done.

Today we come to Paul's first recorded sermon. Acts 13 is as important to Paul as Acts 2 is to Peter and Acts 7 is to Stephen. These chapters show you how these men approached a Jewish audience with the word of God in their generation. And a comparison will show you there are many parallels, for one they all used the historical procedure of reciting Jewish history, which is one thing we don't do to often in our evangelism today. Granting that we aren't required to do everything exactly as they did, nevertheless the principle of a historical framework remains the same. So what are some of the things that Paul did that modern evangelism doesn't do?

One of the things that Paul did in his message was to show the coherence of the message. To give you an illustration of this let's go to Dr Cornelius Van

Til. Dr Van Til was one of the foremost defenders of the Christian faith in the 20th century. On this point he relates it to military warfare in the 1940's. He says, "There is bayonet fighting, there is rifle shooting, there are machine guns, but there are also heavy cannon and atom bombs. All the men engaged in these different kinds of fighting are mutually dependent upon one another. The rifle men could do very little if they did not fight under the protection of the heavy guns behind them. The heavy guns depend for the progress they make upon the smaller guns." His point is that there's a mutual dependence of all those fighting, everybody has *their* job to do. In such a situation what would happen if the enemy really started coming at the riflemen and the riflemen reacted emotionally? The whole thing falls apart and everybody else from the bayonet men to the machine gunners are put at risk. That's why the military trains and trains and trains you so you don't react emotionally, you react according to procedure and when the lead is coming you stick to procedure, you stick with the doctrine, not emotions. You cannot hope to win a war with just the bayonet men, all the pieces have to work together, and you can't expect to defend the Scriptures in just pieces, they have to work together in a framework. So in apologetics and in evangelism, in presenting the Christian faith the same strategy has to be used. There are pieces of the Scripture that we defend but the only way to do it without sacrificing other truths is to keep them in the right orientation to one another. Take for example the Fall of man, Gen 3 in the Biblical text, most Christians think it's just an allegory. So when you go to defend the cross of Christ as a literal historical event you can't because you've already denied the literally historical reason for the cross. The truths are interrelated and depend one upon the other so if you deny one, logically you deny the other. All the truths of Scripture hang together and have to be defended together. And therefore it's terribly important that when Christianity is laid out before a hostile world that it be laid out as a coherent whole and not just pieces.

Let's say you don't do that and like Paul and the other apostles you proclaim the resurrection of Christ, but not following their procedure you present it as an isolated piece of Christianity. And you come to Mr Unbeliever and you present all the historical facts for the resurrection, you go through the historical argument. And Mr Unbeliever graciously hears you out and throws it over his shoulder into the infinite abyss of chance. "Anything can happen, the universe is open, strange things happen," he tells you, "Why not send it in to Ripley's Believe it or not?" And you walk away scratching your head, "I

thought the gospel was the power of God unto salvation. What went wrong?” What went wrong was you tried to defend the resurrection as a piece disconnected from all the other pieces; it would be like trying to fight the whole war with just the riflemen, it would be a disaster, they’d all get killed.

And so it is when Paul begins to preach his sermon in the synagogue at Antioch, that he follows the strategy of connecting all the pieces in a coherent unit so he can’t get flanked by his opponents. He doesn’t open himself up for enemy attack at any point. Now let’s watch how Paul does this. First, let’s read a few verses to get the flow.

¹⁴But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, “Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.” ¹⁶Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, “Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: ¹⁷“The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. ¹⁸“For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹“When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance—*all of which took* about four hundred and fifty years. ²⁰“After these things He gave *them* judges until Samuel the prophet. ²¹“Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²²“After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, ‘I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.’ ²³“From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, ²⁴after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵“And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not *He*. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’

Let's get the background in verse 14. But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, this is not the Syrian Antioch which is on the eastern Levant trade routes, this is in southern Turkey, in the Galatia region. You should be able to see this on a Bible map. The church that Paul founds in this city is the church he'll later write the letter of Galatians too. The Galatia region is about 3,600 feet above sea level. The region they came from down near Perga is a swamps land not much more than sea level. Galatians 4 reports that Paul got sick down here in the swamps around Perga, some say he got malaria and quickly retreated through the mountain pass into the highlands at Pisidian Antioch to get well. So the sermon he preaches here he preached when he was sick. So on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. Since the Sabbath starts Friday at sundown and ends Saturday at sundown they may have met Friday evening or Saturday, we don't know exactly when, but on the Sabbath they went to the synagogue in accordance with the doctrinal principle of Jew first. A synagogue service as best as we can construct it from first century materials goes like this: first the congregation arose and they said the *Shema*, the *Shema* is the Hebrew imperative for "hear," it comes from Deut 6:4 "Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is the LORD alone." And it's that famous pledge of the nation, the pledge of monotheism. So they would recite this accompanied by some wrote Benedictions. Then they would have the reading of the Law or Torah, the first division of the Hebrew Bible, the readings were taken from a lectionary that divided the first five books of the OT into three years so over a period of three years the whole Torah would be read. After the Law they would read from the Prophets, the *Nabbiim*, the second section of the Hebrew Bible, they chose quite freely at the time. After this came the sermon, the *derasha* and this was, in the main, teaching. The sermon could be based on the passage read from the Law or Prophets but it didn't have to be. On this occasion at the appropriate time the synagogue officials sent to Paul and Barnabas saying "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it." We gather that Paul and Barnabas had already met with the synagogue rulers because they didn't just select anyone to come up and gush out of their carnal heart. The synagogue rulers would evaluate people to see if they had the training and were capable of making an address. And if you weren't you wouldn't be asked. And Paul, having been under the rabbi Gamaliel, was obviously qualified for the task and being a prestigious student this must have been a treat to have him attending the synagogue and he's called forward. So Paul stands up in verse 16 and begins his sermon.

Now, the first thing to observe about this sermon is the amount of OT he uses. We emphasize over and over the importance of the OT here. The OT is the foundation for the New and set the categories for understanding biblical theology. Yet evangelical church after evangelical church continue to teach NT only. I ask you how do you understand senior level theology when you skipped all the freshmen and sophomore courses? NT theology presupposes a firm grasp of the Old. So notice the quotations starting in verse 17, "God chose our fathers" He "made the people great" and "with an uplifted arm He led them out of Egypt," a composite quotation from Exod 6:6; 1: 7 and Deut 7:6-8. Verse 18, another composite, "For a period of about forty years He put up with them," Numb 14 and Deut 1. In verse 19 we have an allusion to Deut 7:1 with the destruction of "seven nations." In verse 22, "I have found David, a man after My heart" which is a quote from 1 Sam 13:14. V 33, "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You," famous quote from Ps 2:7. V 34, "I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David," quote from Isa 55:3. V 35 there's more, Ps 16:10, "You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay." And finally, verse 41, a long quote which comes from Hab 1:5. Now just look at the massive amounts of OT content Paul brings in to *get* to Jesus. He doesn't start with Jesus. His audience is familiar with the OT, they hear it every week of their life and still Paul doesn't assume they know all this, they should know all this but he goes through it all again. Why? Because the word of God is the instrument of God unto salvation. And yet today what do we do in an evangelistic confrontation? What's the classic missionary approach to the pagan tribe? Waltz in and spend five years translating Mark 1 so we can tell the people about Jesus. Now do you see Paul starting with Jesus? Do you think Paul would authorize going into little children to do child evangelism with Jesus stories? Absolutely not, you don't start with Jesus stories, you start with God stories. Once you get who God is then we can talk about who Jesus is.

So what does Paul do in verse 17? He starts with God. And he starts with a particular act of God in history. God chose. The doctrine of election. And since we're emphasizing so much around here the biblical framework and we've said there are certain key historical events that are always linked to basic doctrines of the Christian faith, it's very interesting to compare the framework events we've been studying with the one's Paul goes through. You'll notice Paul says in verse 17, "The God of this people Israel chose our

fathers” what event in our framework? The Call of Abraham, three doctrines associated with that event; doctrine of election, doctrine of justification and doctrine of faith, all three will be mentioned by the end of Paul’s sermon, all three of them associated with this event, watch the linkage to history, watch how he ties the whole thing together. Notice also in verse 17 God made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. What biblical event in the framework? The Exodus. What doctrine did we learn at the event of the Exodus? The doctrine of judgment/salvation with the added truth of the substitutionary blood atonement. Again, judgment and salvation an integral part of Paul’s sermon. Verse 19, an event we start in the framework next week, When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance. We call that the Conquest and Settlement. Verse 22, He raised up David to be their king. Another event we’ll emphasize, the Election and Reign of King David. Now just look at what this man brings in. Look how he strings together the great events of Scripture which are just loaded with basic doctrine. Let’s observe some more. Who is the author of all those events? Time and time again in these verses who are they attributed to, v 17 God chose them, v 17 God made them great, more in v 17, God led them out with an uplifted arm. V 19, God destroyed seven nations and God distributed the land. V 22, God raised up David. God does all these things because He’s sovereign over history. And these events are singled out because they’re His redemptive acts of history. And what event is Paul leading us up to? The greatest redemptive event of all. The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Who did that? God did that. There’s a logical flow. Do you see how he knits all this together into an impenetrable fortress? This is how you give the gospel. Not some rinky dink “Jesus loves you right out of the box.” Jesus does love you but who is He? What difference does it make if He loves me?

Paul insists you must start this way even in the synagogues, even with people familiar with the Scriptures, you can’t start with Jesus. And so he starts v 17 with the first piece in the network of truths. “The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, Call of Abraham, doctrine of election. It’s been awhile since we reviewed the doctrine so let’s review it. In a nutshell what it simply says is God is choosey. Not only is God choosey but God has a right to be choosey, He’s the Creator, and we said there are four points to this. We said that this Election Depends Upon the God of Creation, the Creator-creature distinction, if God didn’t create then God doesn’t have all

the molecules under control. And if God doesn't have all the molecules under His control then Chance reigns supreme. And if Chance exists then God's election can't be sure. So the doctrine of election rests on Creation, you can't have one without the other.

The second thing is Election Presupposes the Fall, it must because the Fall shows that man is fallen, sin has marred the clay of humanity, so it's not that God is considering an unmarred lump of clay, He's considering the human race as screwed up and therefore election is His stepping in and remaking some of it.

The third point we said Election Reveals New Thoughts on God's Mind, before it happens we can't predict it. It's a surprise event, take Saul on the Damascus road in Acts 9, that conversion was the last thing people expected. It was on God's mind for all eternity but that thought wasn't revealed until the Damascus road. Nobody could have predicted it. There's not a formula for figuring out what's on God's mind. The gospel goes out and some people believe and some people do not. And when someone does believe a new revelation comes into history in that before that moment we didn't know what was on God's mind with respect to that person. Then we do.

The fourth point is that Election Is God's Basic Eternal Promise. If He has promised that we will share the destiny of Jesus Christ, then He has also included in that statement every provision to get there. Paul says time and again in the book of Romans, "If He's justified you, how much more will he save you from this trial or that trial. It's all arguments from the greater to the lesser. If He's already done the greater for you then obviously He'll do the lesser. In the end the whole things secure. If God is for us who can be against us? So that's what we mean when we say God's election is God's basic eternal promise to us.

The second historical event in Paul's recital, also verse 17, God...made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, that is He increased the population there supernaturally. and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. So he moves from the Call of Abraham to the Exodus. And again another doctrine is associated, the doctrine of judgment/salvation. We review this all the time so let me just say in passing, those two verbs go together, never let those two loose of one another because whenever God saves He also

judges and the two play an important role in Paul's sermon as we'll see. So the Call of Abraham, the Exodus, verse 18 the wilderness wanderings, not an event we spend much time on but following Mt Sinai, ¹⁸"For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. They violated the Mosaic Law code and God put up with them, kept them around none the less. Why? Because He elected them. He swore He was going to work with them and even though they were going down the drain God remains faithful to His promise. Verse 19, another event coming up in the framework, "When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance—all of which took about four hundred and fifty years. That's the Conquest and Settlement of the land. And we want to comment briefly on the four hundred and fifty years. This is an important text for those of you interested in biblical chronology. Depending on your translation, some put the 450 years with the period of the judges till Samuel. It doesn't go there, it goes with the verb distributed...land. Therefore it was about 450 years from their sojourn in Egypt till the land was distributed after the Conquest. Then you have verse 20 after that, "After these things He gave *them* judges until Samuel the prophet." No kings just judges during this period, ²¹"Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²²"After He had removed him, Saul was taken out of the office of king, he was an inept ruler and God judged him in history. Then He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.' The Election and Reign of King David, another coming attraction in our biblical framework. Look how Paul moves through the biblical framework, it's event after event after event. All I'm training you to do in the framework is what Stephen did and what Paul did and what the early Christians were trained to do. That's all in the world I'm trying to train you to do in your own personal life and evangelism.

Now, before we go on, just look at the subjects and verbs starting in verse 17, subject and verb, subject and verb, "God...chose them," verse 17, "God made the people great," and "God led them out." Verse 18, "God put up with them." Verse 19, "God destroyed seven nations," "God distributed the land." Verse 20, "God gave them judges," that didn't work so in verse 21 they asked for a king, "God gave them Saul," Saul by the way was of the tribe of Benjamin and guess who else was of the tribe of Benjamin. The very Saul speaking here, some think he was named after King Saul. Verse 22, who removed

Saul? “God removed him,” and finally, “God raised up David.” So I ask you, who controls history? Who put this framework of history together? God did, and so having very carefully recited this whole framework of history now I add Christ to the framework. See, Christ can’t be preached from the framework you people pick up in the public school system. It’s a totally different framework. These events aren’t covered in the public school, there the event is basically the Big Bang, everything else derives from that, history derives from that. That’s not the framework you can preach the gospel to, history for these people is just an expanding universe that will end either in the great freeze or the thing will contract and we’ll have the great crunch, all depends on the amount of mass in the universe, take your pick, but history in that view doesn’t depend on what a Sovereign Person is doing. Is that the way God wants you to learn history? No, there’s a plan for history, it’s all planned by a person who stands outside of history. And the key events in that plan I bet you never heard in a single history course you ever took. The most important events of history carefully excised from the classroom. It’s a tragedy our children are never told this because after all is said and done this is what is important, but the public schools must remain ‘religiously neutral.’

So now verse 23, having introduced David he finally places Christ in this historical framework. ²³“From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, so here’s another thing the sovereign God of the universe has done, perfectly consistent with the aforementioned events. He made a promise to David that of his biological descendants, one from His seed would come who is the Savior. So now God interferes with the biology and He says, you know, I created the DNA and I will work with the DNA of David to bring forth to Israel a Savior, and that’s the Davidic Covenant, it’s the seed promise, 2 Sam 7, Ps 89. God said, “I will do this and here look I do it. I’m faithful to My word.” I brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, *Yehoshua* or *Yeshua*, the equivalent of the Hebrew Joshua.

Vv 24-25 after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel, a baptism strictly for the nation Israel, a baptism of spiritual preparation in lieu of the coming Messiah. ²⁵“And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not *He*. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’ Paul’s dealing with a little side light here. Paul is attacking a cult that had gotten started in this area, the cult of John the

Baptist, we meet some of the members in chapter 19, a cult still around today in small factions. Just so he doesn't have to deal with objections he heads them off at the pass by quoting John himself, What do you suppose that I am? I am not He...and this shows that Paul had done his homework when he came into this area; he saw this as a potential problem so he dealt with it from the lectern just as I do from the pulpit. That's the way it's supposed to be done.

Now, verse 26 he gets to the heart of the message. He's used all this as preparation, he's laid out the historical framework, he's tied Jesus Christ to the framework and from here on out he basically cites Messianic passage after Messianic passage from the OT that was fulfilled in Jesus. And this we think is an abbreviation of all Paul said, he probably elaborated on the texts he cites. Luke customarily contracts the sermons but the essential elements are here.

Let's read to get the flow.

26“Brethren, sons of Abraham’s family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. **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*. **28**“And though they found no ground for *putting Him to death*, they asked Pilate that He be executed. **29**“When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. **30**“But God raised Him from the dead; **31**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. **32**“And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, **33**that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.’ **34**“As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: ‘I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY *and* SURE *blessings* OF DAVID.’ **35**“Therefore He also says in another *Psalm*, ‘YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.’ **36**“For

David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay; ³⁷but He whom God raised did not undergo decay.

Verse 38 is the invitation, what we just read was the climax of the sermon, let's see what Paul said, verse 26, "Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. Notice the message is for both Jew and Gentile, the one who feared God was a Gentile. Paul was commissioned to go to both Jew and Gentile and both gathered at the local synagogue. To both groups the message of this salvation has been sent. It was a long awaited message, all the prophets spoke of it and finally the salvation had come.

But notice verse 27 because this is how Paul heads something else off at the pass. This is a set up for later. "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*. What's this have to do with the gospel? What kind of approach is this to the truth? What he's clearly saying is those who read and heard the Scriptures week after week ended up fulfilling the Scriptures by crucifying Jesus. They did not recognize Him. But what's the point? The point is that the word of God does not return void. You want to reject the word of God, fine, that's your prerogative. Just know you're going to lose. This is a primary text on this kind of lose/lose situation people are in who go to war with the plan of God. It's like someone said, God's plan is like flipping a coin, heads God wins, tails you lose; tails God wins, heads you lose. You're not going to defeat the plan of God. If you want to reject the plan of God, go ahead, just know by doing so you'll actually fulfill the word of God. And that's exactly the way history is set up, He's sovereign, and that's what Paul's warning; you can go positive or negative but either way God will have His way. God will be glorified by the people that burn in hell for eternity because He has displayed His great character to them and they have rejected. And God will also be glorified by the people that dwell with Him forever in heaven because God has shown them His character and they have accepted. So don't think you're hurting God's feelings by rejecting Him. He's going to win no matter what.

Now look at the language in vv 28-29, “And though they found no ground for *putting Him to death*, they asked Pilate that He be executed. In other words it wasn’t an objective court case where you put forth evidence, evaluate the evidence and so forth. It was pure subjectivity in the courts; the whole thing was based on a lot of very emotional Ivy League lawyers. The guys who are supposed to be calm and collected. And Pilate, he was a pragmatic politician, always going along with the masses to win another popularity pole, “Whatever you guys want,” no moral principles. And “When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, notice again, the plan of God being fulfilled, emotionalism and pragmatism, two false philosophies but two philosophies God used to fulfill His plan, you can’t beat God. The emphasis here again on fulfillment. After that they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. So you have the death of Christ, now the burial, two guys from the Sanhedrin, remember that group, the 70 guys that ruled Israel, two of them took His body off the tree, you know who they were? Joseph of Arimathea, everyone remembers him. The other guy was Nicodemus, yes we think he was a believer too. They took Him down from the tree in strict accordance with Deut 21:23 and they laid him in a tomb, the physical evidence that He did die, so that people can go and check out the tomb and see that this happened in real history. The elements of the gospel you find here, by the way, are the same one’s Paul lists in 1 Cor 15 as the gospel he received. “But God raised Him from the dead; more prophecy being fulfilled, the physical evidence in v 31, and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, forty days of appearances, the guy walked around, He ate, He drank, He taught the word of God, but Paul very carefully leaves out his personal testimony. He wants to present this as objective truth. This is not about someone’s personal experience; all that does is get people bogged down on your experience. He avoids his Damascus road experience altogether. Verse 32, “And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, ³³that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus, and the raising up here doesn’t refer to the resurrection, that’s the next verse, this is simply the sending of Jesus into the arena of history, and by this he connects the gospel of Jesus with the ancient promise made to the fathers, He’s tying it all in with the historical framework of God’s plan; Jesus is the One, the promise has been fulfilled. Notice how much prophecy is being fulfilled in these verses. as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.’ The coronation hymn of the Messiah pronounced at His baptism by John. “As

for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY *and* SURE *blessings* OF DAVID.' Isa 55:3, God is fulfilling the Davidic Covenant. He said He would. Judas Iscariot can betray Him, you can send the Temple police to arrest Him, you're rulers can condemn Him, Pontius Pilate can execute Him, but you cannot defeat the plan of God. The plan of God goes on. Heads, God wins, tails you lose.

Verses 35, 36, 37 are the same argument Peter made in Acts 2. Here we're in the thick of the resurrection, "Therefore He also says in another *Psalms*, 'YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.' ³⁶"For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay; ³⁷but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. Notice verse 36 the purpose of God, it's the plan of God going forward. You can do whatever you want you're not going to stop it. God raised Him, who's there to stop Him. Death doesn't stop Him. He controls death. The stone couldn't stop Him. The four Roman guards with their swords and shields couldn't stop Him. You just keep fulfilling the plan of God.

Acts 13:38-41 is his exhortation. We do not have to go through all the details, the fine points, but I want you to look at these verses and notice the tone... the tone of these verses and look how different the tone is from many evangelistic services today.

Acts 13:38 "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses. The word is freed there is the word for "justified," everyone who believes is justified, which shows that the doctrine of justification by faith was not a late development by Paul but was recorded in the very first recorded sermon, right from the start Paul is teaching justification by faith alone in Christ alone. Justification by faith, what is that? There are two views. The Protestant and the Roman Catholic. Unfortunately even many Protestant evangelicals don't understand it and are Catholic at heart.

The first thing we say is that Justification Rests on The Creation and Fall, at Creation God looks at everything and says it was very good, when you see that, that's a value judgment and that's where the Bible is introducing the

concept of imputation, God is imputing value to His creation, and by that term we mean He's pricing it. He's putting a price tag on what He made. It was very good. Then we have the Fall of man and if we were to ask what price tag God put on man after the Fall and we have a scale of +1, 0, -1, then man is a -1 and that means that fundamentally the human race is flawed. The second point is that justification must be The First Step in Redemption, you can't put it at the end you have to put it at the beginning because you have to get to +1 before God is going to have fellowship with you. So to get to +1 God justifies those who believe. This has to be the first step, it's not that you go from -1 to 0 and then if you're a good little boy you move over toward +1 and you do some more good things and gradually move to +1 over the course of your life. Rather, God declares you a +1, He issues a verdict of + righteousness. The third thing answers to the question, well if God declares a person righteous where does the righteousness come from? Well it comes from an Outside Righteousness, not generated by a fallen son of Adam, but by the unfallen Jesus Christ. What He did in space and time as He walked around on planet earth was generate a righteousness that could be imputed to the account of all who believe. And fourth which was very, very important, Justification Should Not Be Confused With Regeneration Or Sanctification as the Roman Catholic Church does, and as Arminianism does. What they're stressing is that the righteousness has to be infused into the heart and so justification becomes a process and when finally your heart is really righteous then and only then are you justified, so they make justification a long process whereas in Protestantism it's an instant declaration at the moment of faith, it has nothing to do with your heart, it has everything to do with who is at the right hand of the Father in heaven. Roman Catholics look inside the heart to find the righteousness, Protestants look outside to heaven, at the right hand of the Father. This is what Martin Luther discovered, when he looked in his heart as an honest Catholic he didn't find any righteousness, and so he was constantly under the wrath of this holy and righteous Judge, my heart's a mess and so when he discovered in Rom 1:17 that his justification was outside of himself in heaven and that it was Christ's righteousness credited to his account at the moment of faith alone he was freed, freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses. And that's Paul's point here in v 39. The law was insufficient to justify, it could condemn, it could show us our sin but that's all it could do, it could not justify, only God can justify on the basis of Christ's work.

Now verse 40 and 41, as he finishes his invitation he doesn't say folks, now that Jesus has done this great work, will you accept Jesus, are you satisfied with Jesus. He doesn't close his invitation with a plea; he closes his invitation with a threat. Therefore take heed, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon *you*: It matters very little if you are satisfied with Jesus, what matters is if God the Father is satisfied with Jesus, and He was. And therefore if you don't believe in Him then you're going to be judged. And he quotes Hab 1:5 and it refers to the Babylonians coming to judge Israel in 586BC, a horrible time of suffering because they had rejected God's grace. And the warning is that if they reject God's grace in Jesus Christ then they too would be judged. God is going to win, His plan marches ever forward.

That's a threat type of invitation, and if we're to be honest with the text, and if we're to be honest with the God of Scripture, God doesn't come to you and me on His knees begging. God comes to us with authoritative declarations and He says, I'm the author of all facts and the interpreter of all facts and I ask you to respond, respond to Me and to My gracious offer. But I'm not going to beg you, I'm the King of the Universe, I'm the Judge and I've sent My Savior.

So that, in short today is what a powerful gospel presentation looks like, and it's the historical framework methodology, you build the unit of Christianity and present all the pieces in a formation. When done that way a person is pressed into a position of rejecting all the work of God in history or submitting to His plan for history. Those are your only options; there are no other ways out. The only way, as he says in verse 39 is believe in Jesus Christ, the centerpiece of history, and all who believe are justified.

[Back To The Top](#)

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