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PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY
(Continued)

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
NUMBER 53
ACTS 13:31-42

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ACTS 31-42 "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. 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. 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. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken on in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

We closed our study last week with the amazing statement of Paul, "But God raised Him from the dead". Behind this statement of the glorious resurrection lies the cross. When Christ hung upon the cross, the greatest courtroom trial in the history of the world was conducted. Christ was judged for our sins. All the sins of the whole world were poured out on him and actually judged. There is not one sin in the history of man that has not been judged, and for this reason, salvation is open to every man in the human race. There are no exceptions to this. "Whosoever" means that all were included. In dying on the cross, Christ rejected every act of human good.

Man's human soul is made up in this way:

First, there is self-consciousness which makes a man aware of his own existence.

Second, there is mentality which is the ability to think and in this way man can characterize human phenomenon.

Third, the volition which is the will and here is our ability to make decisions.

Fourth, emotion and this is the appreciator of the soul.

Fifth, conscience which gives us the basis for an established norm of right and wrong.

6th Old Sin Nature

When Adam sinned he received an old sin nature and he died spiritually. Immediately he began to crank out human good, as evidenced by the fig leaves.

1 Peter 2:24 reminds us that Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree. So you will never commit a sin which has not been judged at the cross. In this way Christ rejected human good. Faith is the absence of human merit. When we reject Christ we stand on our own human good, our own merit. There is absolutely no way to be saved by being good or by depending on your own works. No human good can save us. Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit". Jesus saw the sin problem and he died spiritually--after that he said, "It is finished" then he died physically. The Lord had said to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden that in the day they ate of the forbidden fruit, "Dying thou shalt die".

The wages of sin is spiritual death. The pay off is spiritual death. When Christ died physically, his human spirit went into the presence of the Father. His human soul went into Paradise which the Bible calls Abraham's bosom. His body went into the grave. In his resurrection the soul came out of Paradise, the human spirit came from the presence of the Father and entered into his resurrected body. Phil. 3:21 tells us that we are to have a body like his. X It is necessary for us to have all this truth in our minds to fully understand what Paul meant when he said, "God raised him from the dead". Here Paul was preaching in a Jewish synagogue, many Jews and many Gentiles were present. Many had positive signals toward God. Paul is being used of God to give them the message of salvation. God's volition here overruled human volition and thus we read, "God raised him from the dead". It is more specific than that--for it says, "THE GOD raised him from the dead". THE GOD refers to both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Scriptures such as Psalm 16:10-11, Acts 2:24 and Ephesians 1:19-20 tell us that God the Father had a part in the resurrection. But the mechanics of the resurrection actually belong to the Holy Spirit as shown in Romans 8:11 and 1 Peter 3:18. At the point of Christ bearing our sins both the Father and the Holy Spirit forsook him, and in the resurrection both participated in raising him from the dead.

The word "raised" is in the aojist tense and this means in a point of time Christ was raised and he will remain resurrected forever. Forever more Jesus Christ will always be in his resurrected body. Please remember that this was a resurrection from physical death, a real actual resurrection. It was not just a spiritual resurrection. Jesus Christ is actually physically and spiritually alive.

ACTS 13:31 "And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people." Now Paul gives them a brief history of the resurrection. "He was seen" is an aojist, passive, indicative and this means in specific points of time, he caused himself to be seen by people and groups. Before he ascended Jesus lived forty days in his resurrected body. (Acts 1:3) Ten days after his ascension came Pentecost. During those forty days Jesus was seen many times, and we have eleven of those appearances recorded in Scripture.

1. Seen first by Mary Magdalene
2. Was seen by the other women who had been at the cross
3. By Simon Peter
4. Unknown Disciples on the road to Emmaus
5. To the ten disciples in the upper room
6. To the eleven disciples in the upper room a week later
7. To the seven disciples on the Sea of Galilee
8. To 500 believers at one time
9. To James, Jesus' half brother
10. To the eleven Disciples on a Mountain in Galilee
11. Seen by many at the Ascension

These are the recorded appearances, but there were actually many more.

ACTS 13:32 "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers" "We declare" means to give a happy message. The happy and good message is preaching the Gospel, this is the good news. Sin is not an issue in salvation for Christ has paid the price of sin already. The issue is Christ and the good news that he has died for all of our sins.

"The promise that was made unto the fathers" means all that was said of Christ in the Old Testament. The proclamation of Christ as Saviour in the Old Testament is fantastic. Christ was revealed to Adam and Eve and to Abraham and to Moses. He was pictured in all the Levitical offerings and in every piece of furniture in the Tabernacle and in the Temple. He was promised in Isaiah 7:14 and in Isaiah 53. Indeed Jesus was face to face with the people in the Old Testament and there is only one way to be saved, both in Old Testament times and in New Testament times and that way is Christ.

ACTS 13:33 "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." "God hath fulfilled" is a perfect, active, indicative and means an accomplished fact which is perfect. Millions of years ago God designed the plan of salvation, and that plan was perfect. "He hath raised up" comes from the word "Anistemi" pronounced anhistimi. It actually means to bring someone on the scene who was not there before. Jesus was brought on the scene. This refers to the humanity of Christ. The word "again" is not in the original. This quotation from the 2nd Psalm "Thou art my Son" comes from the word "eimi" and is the verb of perfect status quo. Means that Christ always was his Son and always will be. "This day have I begotten Thee" refers to the birth of his humanity. Jesus was millions of years old when he was born. In fact, he had always existed as the Son of God, but now he entered a human form. So here is God plus man. Sovereignty cannot die, so Jesus had to become a human in order to die. Christ was sinless and this is the reason he could bear our sins. He is the unique figure of the universe.

ACTS 13:34 "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 Christ was raised up again. He was raised up never to die again. This is the meaning of resurrection. Once we are raised from the dead we will never die again. Now we have a quotation from Isaiah 55:3, "I will give you the sure mercies of David". This refers to all the doctrine that was given to David during his lifetime. It specifically refers to the Davidic covenant which is the promise to David that his son will sit on the throne forever. This is outlined in 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89. "The holy and trustworthy things of David" refers to Bible doctrine.

ACTS 13:35 "Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." This is a quotation of Psalm 16:10.

ACTS 13:36 "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:" Here a comparison is made with David. David was a believer with a life of service. He fulfilled the will of God. This can be true of you and of me if we are willing to learn Bible truth. The will of God is the plan God has for you and it is revealed in the Bible. One of the most important truths you will ever learn is this one--"You cannot know the will of God unless you know the word of God". When he speaks of David falling on sleep, he is referring to his death, but the eternal plan God had for David went right on. Death never can disturb God's plan. There is no end to the plan of God, only a beginning. You and I will not have an old sin nature in eternity. God's plan of salvation starts at the cross, but it never ends. No matter how you slice it, God has a plan for your life.

ACTS 13:37 "But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption." Here we have a contrast between David and Christ. David died and his body saw corruption. He is yet to be resurrected. But Christ died and the third day rose and his body did not see corruption. 1 Cor. 15 tells us that Christ is the firstfruits, in other words, he is the very first one to ever experience resurrection.

Paul is now going to conclude his sermon in the synagogue with a presentation of Jesus Christ.

ACTS 13:38 "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:" Paul says in essence "Keep on knowing this, that remission of sins became your possession as a result of the cross".

ACTS 13:39 "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

All that believe are justified. Believe is a non-meritorious verb and you don't get any credit for believing. All the credit belongs to him. So it is not faith plus something. Not faith plus baptism, or plus church membership, or plus our trying to live a good life. "Justified" here means to be vindicated, and the passive voice means we receive justification. The moment you believe God credits to your account the righteousness of Christ. You by faith are delivered from human sins, from all human good, and from the curse of your old sin nature.

Now we have Paul's closing admonition.

ACTS 13:40-41 "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Moses here quoted Habakkuk 1:5 which tells that the Jews were trying to be saved by keeping the Mosaic Law. Habakkuk warned the Jews of their coming downfall but they wouldn't listen. He said in essence--"Look you Jews, your discipline is coming". "Ye despisers" refer to those who go on negative volition and won't accept Christ. Wonder and perish literally means "Be shocked and receive death". So they were like people are today.

God has warned of the coming doom of the nations and the Second Coming of Christ, but the unbelievers don't believe it, they laugh at it, they scoff at it, and go on their merry way. Well, Habakkuk warned them and they didn't believe. Then Jesus warned them and they didn't believe. Now Paul is warning them again. Will they believe? Will we believe today?