

<b>Series:</b> Proclaim	<b>Reference:</b> Acts 13:16-42	<b>Title:</b> All Our Hopes & Fears	<b>Date:</b> 05.15.2022
<b>Website Writeup:</b>			
<p>The theme of Messianic prophecy deeply appeals to people - many a story is written with that theme. The Gospel's from the beginning, God defines our worldview from the start. From the beginning of Scripture we see the Good News, Glad Tidings, what we call the Euangelion. How does this give us an eternal perspective &amp; bring hope in our time of need? How are all our hopes &amp; fears of all the years met in Jesus?</p>			

## COLOR CHANGES IN TEXT INDICATE SLIDE CHANGES

Last week we talked a lot about the Christian Worldview. How we view reality defining our beliefs, values, behavior & artifacts. What is true, what is real, done, good & right, etc. It begs the question, how do we view history? Life? People? Money? Everything? Do we take all thought captive to Christ allowing Him to define our reality, history past, present & future?

The past few years have been difficult, and continue to be so. One person I know recently said, "I'm an extravert, I love people, but lately, I've just wanted to be alone in my garden!" I know what they mean. Do we have current & future Gospel hope in our time of need? Does our worldview enable us to see God at work even in the difficulty? Are we holding onto things which we think will satisfy instead of grasping hold of the corner of Jesus' cloak? Do we need to see God at work all throughout history?

You may remember *The Matrix*, a movie about a dystopian world - people held captive in chambers; oblivious to the reality of living in a fallen world, ruled by machines using them as the power source of technology.<sup>1</sup> Their minds continually plugged into the Matrix, a computer-simulated reality. Some escape. Some are set free. One group, led by Morpheus, is searching for 'the One', prophesied to be humanities savior, setting them free from the rule of machines; a Messianic prophecy & plot.

The theme of Savior or Messianic prophecy deeply appeals to people - many a story is written with that theme. The Gospel's from the beginning, God defines our worldview from the start. From the beginning of Scripture we see the Good News, what scholars call the Euangelion.

In Christianity, Genesis 3:15 is known as the protevangelium - a compound of two Greek words, protos meaning 'first' & euangelion meaning 'good news/gospel'. Thus the verse is commonly referred to as the first mention in the Bible of the 'good news' of salvation - the euangelion. God, in speaking to the serpent/Satan in Genesis 3:14-15 says... "*Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock & above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you & the woman; and between your offspring & her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel*"

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<sup>1</sup> Directed by Lana Wachowski & Lilly Wachowski [Warner Brothers, 1999]

A *Ligonier Ministries* article points out that...“after pursuing Adam & Eve so that they might find repentance, the Lord next turns to the serpent/Satan. Yet the Creator offers Satan no opportunity to confess his guilt; rather, He immediately judges the one who attacked Him by tempting His image bearers (in other words, we were used as pawns in Satan’s attempt to attack God & usurp His authority).

First, God curses the serpent above “*all livestock & above all beasts of the field*” (Gen. 3:14). It’s given to eat dust, a biblical metaphor for humiliation (as seen in Micah 7:16-17). The figurative language is a clue - the curse upon the serpent isn’t simply an explanation for why people fear snakes. And, we shouldn’t quickly pass over the presence of a talking serpent in the narrative, which doesn’t happen every day. Something more profound is going on here than conflict between man & beast.

Genesis 3:15 reveals man versus serpent as cosmic struggle. It’s God who perpetuates enmity between the human race & its primal enemy (Satan). The seed of the woman will be bruised by the destructive efforts of the seed of the serpent (Sin), but the woman’s descendants will fight back. Every time a snake bites we’re reminded of the war between God & the one who first tempted us to sin - sin, a poison injected into us bringing spiritual death.

Likewise, when we see a serpent licking the dust of defeat we’re reminded this struggle won’t last forever. The seed of the woman has bruised the head of His enemy, and He (Jesus) will crush it. Mankind is given the tactical advantage over the serpent. There will be real war, but God will graciously give His people victory in Christ.

Genesis 3:15, the proto-evangelium - the first Gospel, proclaims God’s people will triumph over the serpent (see 1 John 3:12). The ‘seed of the woman’, a collective noun, indicates corporate victory. However, if left to ourselves, we can’t win the war. It took Jesus, Eve’s seed par excellence, The Second Adam, to deliver the crushing blow (Col. 2:15). If we’re in Him, we share in & extend His victory to others (Matt. 28:19; Rev. 20:4).”<sup>2</sup>

Today we look at one crucial element in the proclamation of the early church - Jesus as humanities promised Savior, or Messiah. The Gospel preached from the Old Testament by Paul. Turn with me to Acts 13:16-42, p753 of your pew Bibles & follow along as I read. As you turn there, let me preface; the early church proclaimed Jesus as the promised Messiah from the beginning who fulfills our deepest yearnings & hopes for life.

By Acts 13 focus has shifted from Peter to Paul. Paul & company have arrived in Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they attend synagogue. After reading Scripture, the leader invites Paul to address the congregation. Paul steeps his message in the Scripture the Jewish & Gentile converse would know, the Old Testament, going over four important events in Jewish history, ending in a declaration of messianic hope in v23. He points out Jesus is the One about whom John the Baptist testified (vv. 24-25). John the Baptist was

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/proto-evangelium>

well known, even in Acts 19, Paul encounters people in Ephesus who were followers of John the Baptist. So Paul uses John the Baptist as his launching pad from Old Testament Scripture to the promised Messiah Jesus.

It's lengthy, so bear with me. It reads...*Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand & said: "Fellow Israelites & you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! <sup>17</sup>The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; <sup>18</sup>for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; <sup>19</sup>and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. <sup>20</sup>All this took about 450 years.*

*"After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. <sup>21</sup>Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. <sup>22</sup>After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'*

*<sup>23</sup>"From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. <sup>24</sup>Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance & baptism to all the people of Israel. <sup>25</sup>As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'*

*<sup>26</sup>"Fellow children of Abraham & you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. <sup>27</sup>The people of Jerusalem & their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. <sup>28</sup>Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. <sup>29</sup>When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross & laid him in a tomb. <sup>30</sup>But God raised him from the dead, <sup>31</sup>and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people. <sup>32</sup>"We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors <sup>33</sup>he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus.*

*As it is written in the second Psalm: "You are my son; today I have become your father.' <sup>34</sup>God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said, "I will give you the holy & sure blessings promised to David.' <sup>35</sup>So it is also stated elsewhere: "You will not let your holy one see decay.' <sup>36</sup>"Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors & his body decayed. <sup>37</sup>But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.*

*<sup>38</sup>"Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. <sup>39</sup>Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. <sup>40</sup>Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you: <sup>41</sup>"Look, you scoffers, wonder & perish,*

*for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you.”<sup>42</sup>As Paul & Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath.*

Commenting on this passage, William Larkin Jr. writes, “The human spirit can come under bondage because of external political/economic oppression & because of self-imposed religious legalism. First-century Jews needed relief from both. Paul came preaching a dying & rising Messiah who’d free people from inner bondage so they could cope with external oppression. His message of hope should resonate with all those who long to be able to say, ‘Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, I’m free at last!’”<sup>3</sup>

That’s what the Jews were experiencing under Roman rule as they yearned for the Messiah who’d set them free both physically from military oppression & spiritually as a Jewish kingdom would be established. In Acts 1:6 they gathered around Jesus & asked, “*Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?*” This was their hope.

Paul clarifies the freedom Jesus brings is different & more powerful than what they’ve expected. Declaring, they’re messengers of God’s salvation in v26 & all the prophets they read every Sabbath point to Jesus in v27. Death couldn’t stop Jesus (vv30-37), so Paul proclaims “*through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you*” in v38.

Then in v39 Paul drives home the power of this liberation in saying... “*And by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.*” A salvation where we’re justified by faith in Jesus alone, not by what we do - radical & liberating! The division between clean & unclean which guided the life of observant Jews was never enough to make them acceptable to God. They still had to perform sacrifices of cleansing, sin offerings, purification rites & so forth.

As Hebrews 10:4 says... “*It is impossible for the blood of bulls & goats to take away sins.*” These practices were practices of faith in the coming Messiah, foreshadowed by the sacrifices, worship practices & declared from the beginning in the euangelion! Jesus lived the perfect life for us taking the curse of God upon Himself as He was crucified.

What’s the reaction to this good news? The people “begged” for them to return the next Sabbath & speak more. The Greek word for ‘begged’ is *parakaleō*, from two words: to be near (*para*) and cry out (*kaleō*). The image is of people running up to Paul after his sermon crying out for him to continue speaking about this gift of salvation which God’s given us.<sup>4</sup> Like the messianic theme of a good movie, they’re starved to hear more. They needed a Savior.

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<sup>3</sup> William Larkin Jr., Acts, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995], 196–97

<sup>4</sup> Strong’s Greek Concordance, s.v. “G3870, *parakaleō*,” <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G3870&t=KJV>

Begging because as the classic Christmas carol says, “The hopes & fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.”<sup>5</sup> The God who had shepherded His people for thousands of years had made good on His euangelion promise to deliver them in a new & unexpected way. God had kept His promise. They can be truly free & beg Paul for more.

Good news, first given in Genesis 3:15, and reiterated all throughout Scripture! Listen as I read a few. Isaiah 7:14 says...*“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive & bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”* Immanuel meaning ‘God with us’ which Matthew 1:28 restates applying it to Jesus at His birth.

“2 Samuel 7:6 says...*“And your house & your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne will be established forever.”* This promise given to David that his line would continue on eternally. Fulfilled in the New Testament through the lineage of Mary & Joseph. Christ’s throne will be established forever because He’ll live on eternally in Resurrection rule - dying, raised to life, establishing His kingdom forever.

Countless verses also speak of the Messiah’s lineage in David including Psalm 89:3-4...*You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: 4I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.”*

Ezekial 37:24-28 promises an everlasting kingdom...*“My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules & be careful to obey my statutes. 25They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They & their children & their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. 26I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land & multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28Then the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”*

Then Psalm 132:11 states...*“The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: “One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne..”* All the eternal promises given to David are extended in Christ as He is established as king in his coronation before the crucifixion.

Psalm 22 lays out the Resurrection of the coming Messiah. The opening lines of the Psalm read, *“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”* the very words uttered by Jesus right before His death. He was referring back to this Psalm in the final moments of His life. Read through the entire Psalm, you’ll be amazed at the prophecy & accuracy. Verses 16-18 say...*“For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands & feet - 17I can count all my bones - they stare & gloat over me;*

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<sup>5</sup> Phillips Brooks, “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” 1867

*18they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.” This is exactly what happened to Christ at His crucifixion.”<sup>6</sup>*

Throughout Scripture God promises salvation in the Gospel from beginning to end despite humanities rebellion. God reveals how & where the Messiah would be born, what He'd come to do, that He'd die, rise from the dead & His kingdom would be established forever. Most of these written around 700 years before His coming. It's been said that over 300 direct prophecies concerning Christ's 1st coming, His virgin birth, and 2nd coming at the end of time are revealed - most concern His being born as a man, dying as suffering servant, and rising from the grave in eternal rule!

In the Christian Worldview, we see God's promises & communication of salvation from the beginning & extending through history. The early church proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah, answer to these prophecies, who fulfills our deepest yearnings & hopes for life.

*But here's the problem...people remain plugged into the matrix, a simulated reality. Held captive, oblivious to the reality of living in a fallen world, ruled by destructive sin, needing the hope of the Gospel! And more tragically, due to enculturation we also, although we say we believe in Christ, still remain plugged into the matrix as well. Not taking all thought captive to the Gospel of Christ, instead allowing the world to define reality, robbing us of hope, bringing despair.*

What oppresses you today? Weighs you down? What are you hoping for that Jesus has already provided? Yearning for that Jesus can satisfy now? Or that eternal perspective would diminish significantly in its power over you? Have you discovered He comforts our fears & gives us hope for the future? The invitation always stands because God is faithful in His promises. He doesn't judge on how well we believe, but desires us to have freedom. The invitation is, come to Him, choose to believe the Gospel revealed in prophesy, foreshadowed in Scripture & confirmed by eyewitness.

*As Mark 1:15 says...“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent & believe in the gospel.” Because as Mark 8:35 says, “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake & the gospel's will save it.”*

And when salvation occurs in us, we're called to bring it to others...Mark 16:15, *“And he said to them, “Go into all the world & proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”* Mark 13:10, *“And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.”* Matthew 24:14, *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”*

That was Paul's proclamation in Pisidian Antioch, still relevant to all peoples today - all the hopes & fears of all the years answered in Christ - humanities true reality - past, present & future hope! God kept His euangelion promise! As Paul said, *What God*

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<sup>6</sup> <https://findingjoyinyourhome.com/promises-of-the-coming-messiah-a-journey-through-the-old-testament/>

*promised our ancestors 33he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. Be unplugged from the matrix!*