

Acts Chapter 16

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Date: 19 December 2012

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- [0 : 0 0] This material that we are going to be considering this morning is not new to us because we visit it each year. And the reason we do so is because of its absolutely critical nature. Everything hinges upon the identity of this person we refer to as Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It was the issue that was on the front burner for all of the people who lived in Israel when John the Baptizer introduced Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Israel. And he indicated that in John's Gospel, chapter 1, and he makes it clear that it is to introduce Jesus as the Messiah to the nation of Israel. And John says, that's why I am come baptizing. It was for that specific purpose. And it was kind of a formal introduction to the nation as to who this one was. You've got to keep in mind, and this is very important to note, that when the fall occurred, when humanity in the person of Adam and Eve took upon themselves the exercise of their volition, and God gave them volition.
- [1 : 2 0] He gave them the power to make moral choices. And when they exercised that volition in a way that was contrary to the will of God, they took upon themselves something that God didn't put in them. And that was a sinful nature, a disobedient nature. God did not create them that way. He created them in a state of innocence. But along with that innocence, he also created them with the ability to possess and to exercise a free moral capacity. So they could obey him if they chose to. They could disobey him if they chose to. I don't want to detour from this and become too philosophical as to why God did that, except to say that we have concluded that only an obedience that is a voluntary obedience is worth anything. An obedience that is automatic because the one obeying has no choice, like a puppet or a robot who is programmed to obey and can't do anything else, that did not suffice. Nobody likes that kind of obedience nor recognizes it, and certainly nobody wants that kind of love. God wants to be loved because we want to love him, not because we have to love him.
- [2 : 5 2] So he created us with the ability to obey and the ability to disobey. There is a tendency with that, and I use this term advisedly because it's not a good term to use with God, but I don't know what other word to use. There is a risk involved. We would call it a risk. I know God knew full well what path these people were going to take, so it actually wasn't a risk at all. And let me just cut to the chase and say, the reason God created as he did, how he did, is given in Revelation chapter 4, and it's the only place I know in all of the Bible that states it as clearly as it does there. It says, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive honor and glory, etc., because Thou hast created all things, and by Thy will they were created, or by Your good pleasure God created everything as he did.

It simply means God was pleased to create as he did. Well, didn't God know that Lucifer would disobey and rebel? Yes, God knew that.

[4 : 00] Didn't God know that Adam and Eve would disobey and bring down the chaos upon humanity that that did? Yes, God knew all of that.

But he was pleased to create. And then chapter 5 says that God is worthy to be praised because not only did he create everything, but he redeemed everything.

God was in Christ reconciling the world, reconciling all that was fallen and ruinous. He reconciled it and brought it back to himself. And that is the plan and program of God in a very short form, and we are confident that there is so much to it that we don't understand, but this is what God has been pleased to reveal.

And everything about this redemption, everything about buying back, reconciling the lost world back to himself, calling humanity back to himself into a loving favor, everything, absolutely everything hinged upon one individual being able to balance the scales, to serve the justice of God, yet as an expression of the grace of God and the mercy of God, everything hinged upon one individual being able to do that.

And that's the one whom we are considering this morning in the incarnation. That, of course, is Jesus Christ. And you'll recall way back in Genesis 3, shortly after this fall took place, God promised a Redeemer.

[5 : 38] And that Redeemer did not come for 4,000 years. And when John announced him, this was the moment that the nation of Israel had awaited.

Because, you see, God not only promised that he would send a Redeemer who would buy back everything that was lost, but that he would send him through a particular line.

It would be when all the world was destroyed and no one was left, but Abraham, I mean, Noah, his wife, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives, these eight souls, were all the people that were there.

And out of those three, out of those four couples, one would be the progenitor of this Messiah, this Redeemer who was promised.

And out of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, it was Shem. That was the chosen son. Shem, S-H-E-M, you just put that H in there, and you are very close to the word Semitic.

[6 : 47] S-E-M-I-T-I-C. And these are the Jewish people. And it was through the line of Shem. And as you look at the genealogy in Genesis 10, the table of nations, et cetera, you will see that this genealogy comes down all the way to a man by the name of Abraham.

And it will be through Abraham, and his son Isaac, and his son Jacob, and Jacob's son of the twelve sons.

It will be Judah, who will be the fourth born son of Jacob, who will constitute the royal line. And you keep following the genealogy, and this is all in the Old Testament.

Actually, it's in the New 2. It's in Matthew 1, and it's in Luke 4. You follow the genealogy, and it comes down from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to David the king about a thousand years later.

And you keep following the genealogy, and generation by generation, then it comes down to Jesus the Messiah. So when he came on the scene, there was only one question that any Jew had to ask, and that is this.

[8 : 05] Is this Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph the carpenter, is he the one that God promised 4,000 years ago that we've been waiting?

Is this one the long-awaited one? The Jewish people to whom this promise was originally given vested everything on this person when he came.

This Messiah, this anointed one, which is what the Messiah means. It is God's anointed one. God's special one. God's specifically sent one.

The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Is he the one that should come? And John who identified him, John, you will recall, John was a second cousin of Jesus.

John's mother and Jesus' mother, Mary, were first cousins. And when Christ came on the scene and was introduced by John, some immediately believed that and picked up on it and threw their lot in with him.

[9 : 16] And one, of course, was John himself. And then the others, the 12 apostles that Christ chose in Matthew chapter 10, they were all on board, including at that time, Judas.

So, this truth then began to be preached everywhere that Jesus was the Messiah. There were a lot of doubters.

One of the first doubters was, was it Nathaniel? John chapter 1, remember, slips my memory now.

I think it was Philip who told him, you've got to come and hear this guy. I think he's the Messiah. Who are you talking about? I'm talking about Jesus of Nazareth.

Nazareth? You've got to be kidding. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? That's on the wrong side of the street, you know. And the issue, the only burning issue was, is he the one that should come or not?

[10 : 17] And John introduced him as that. But, it wasn't long into the earthly ministry of Christ, and things weren't looking very rosy.

And one of the real setbacks was, the man whom God chose as the forerunner to introduce Jesus of Nazareth, was taken out of commission. He's in jail.

And John, John the baptizer, sitting there, in his cell, looking at these bars, and saying to himself, man, this isn't the way this thing's supposed to be.

This isn't right. I've introduced Jesus as the Messiah, who's going to come and set up his kingdom, and this sure doesn't look like much of a kingdom to me. And John called some of his disciples over and says, listen, I want you to go find Jesus, wherever he is.

You go find him. When you find him, you ask him, are you really the one that should come? Or ought we be looking for another? Because this isn't playing out right.

[11 : 22] Something is wrong with this picture. And they went and found Jesus, and they told him what John said. And Jesus says, you go back and tell John that the blind see, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and blessed is he who is not confounded in me.

And apparently, that suffice for John, but we know that John lost his head. So, this confession, the identity of Jesus of Nazareth, is that upon which absolutely everything hung during that first century.

And for Christians, it still does. This is the burning issue. Is this the one, or is he not? And there must have been a time when even the twelve were wondering.

And Jesus was talking to them up at Caesarea, Philippi, not Caesarea by the sea, which was a Roman garrison, but up by the sea of Galilee.

And they were all together. And Jesus asked them, Fellas, you hear all the scuttlebutt that's going on, what everybody's saying.

[12 : 38] Tell me, what do they say about me? Who do they say I am? One of them piped up and says, well, I heard some think that you're John the Baptist, come back from the dead.

You're an reincarnation. Some think you're a reincarnation of Elijah. And some think that you are that prophet of whom Moses spoke. By the way, that's who he was.

And Jesus said, well, all of these rumors are floating around and all of these ideas. The thing that really matters to me now, fellas, among you twelve, is, who do you say I am?

And Peter spoke up and said, thou art the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood is not revealed that unto thee.

He went to the Son. So, right from the get-go, that was the issue. Who is this person? And fellas, there is no middle ground.

[13 : 43] The philosophers call this the law of the excluded middle. You can say that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the promised one, or you can say that he isn't.

But you cannot say, well, it's somewhere in between. Because there is no in between. The middle is excluded. It's a positive or a negative. Jesus Christ was not the Son of God, kind of.

He was not the Son of God if you believe he was. He either was, is, or isn't. And this little document that we've got here was compiled by Marvin Rosenthal, who is a Hebrew Christian, young man at the age, I think, of about 18 or 19, who as a Jewish boy living in Philadelphia came into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and devoted his life to him.

And this is one of many articles and many books that he has written. And it is called The Incarnation. It is taken from the publication Israel My Glory, the December-January issue of 1977 and 78.

As this Christmas season approaches, men and the world over will look back 2,000 years to the incarnation of the Son of God. But for more than 4,000 years, men living on the other side of the incarnation looked forward to that same event.

[15 : 21] The birth of the eternal Son of God was no accident. It was not the result of unforeseen or uncontrollable events. Jesus was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.

God does not respond to human events. He superintends them. Nowhere is that more clearly seen or more profoundly delineated than in the birth of the Lord Jesus.

Down through the Old Testament period, there were definite prophecies concerning the ancestry of the Messiah, who was to come and the conditions that must be fulfilled.

So here at the outset, there are seven prerogatives that must be true of this Messiah if he is to be who he will be purported to be.

These are not optional. These are absolute necessities. First of all, he must be of the seed of Abraham. And I would just add something here because that would amplify it a little more.

[16 : 30] Not only must he be of the seed of Abraham, but he must be of the seed of Isaac. Because Isaac had two seeds.

Remember? Jacob and Esau? he had to be not only from Abraham and not only from Isaac, but he also had to be from Jacob.

And he not only had to be from Jacob, but he had to be from Judah. And on and on it goes. So these things are not coincidental. And anybody who wants to attribute this to just an amazing coincidence, they have no idea of the phenomenal odds that they would be dealing with, whereby these things would just happen to occur in this one man.

I mean, the odds are staggering. You couldn't pronounce the number. So in addition to being the seed of Abraham, he must be of the tribe of Judah, that's the royal tribe.

He must be of the house of David. David established a dynasty. When Saul, the first king of Israel, was deposed and David came to the throne, anointed by God to be the king of Israel, David established a dynasty.

[17 : 51] A dynasty is when a royal line continues directly from the loins of the one who began it.

In other words, there has to be a bloodline flow continuing from the one who started the dynasty. The dynasty today remains intact.

It is the Davidic dynasty, and the Davidic covenant is given in 2 Samuel 7, and it is referred to again in Psalm 89, and of course it is continued and concluded in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

The interesting question was asked that the nation of Israel today, of course, does not have a kingdom.

They do not have a throne. They have a democratic type of government, and they have a Knesset, which operates much like our Congress, made up of several political parties, but there is no king in Israel.

[19 : 03] Israel has not had a king for over 2,000 years, and the question could well be posed, if Israel were to establish a monarchy, and go back to having a king, king.

How would it be determined who that king should be? And as you look at the royal lines that are given in both the Old Testament and the New, there is only one conclusion that can be reached.

The dynasty is maintained and the only person today who would have the legal throne right to the nation of Israel is Jesus Christ. That's really interesting.

If you do that, if you do the research from the bloodline aspect, and bring all of the qualifications and requirements into play that are in effect for establishing and determining royal succession to the throne, like England does, for instance, you end up with the person of Jesus Christ, and of course with him, the line ends.

He is the fulfillment of that Davidic dynasty. And this is why people who recognized him for who he was shouted what they did when he came into town on Palm Sunday.

[20 : 25] It was Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. So, he has the legal right to the throne of David, item 4.

He must be born of a virgin, indicated in Isaiah 7.14. He must be born in Bethlehem, according to Micah 5.2. And he must be God.

He is the theanthropic individual. He is utterly unique. Nobody has ever existed like this person. He is the incarnation of deity.

He is the God-man. His name shall be called Emmanuel, which means God with us.

God never has there been a person like this. Never will there be. During Old Testament times, many determined efforts on the part of man, inspired by Satan, to interrupt the bloodline of the Messiah.

[21 : 25] Among them, the decree of Pharaoh to kill all the newborn male children. Among the Israelites, going all the way back to Exodus 1. The attempt of Athaliah to exterminate all the seed royal.

And she succeeded. She succeeded except for one little boy. And his nanny held him out secretive in the ruins of the temple that had been destroyed and was overgrown with weeds and everything else.

And she lived there in the ruins of the temple with that one little boy who was the heir to the throne. And of course, nobody knew that he even existed at that time.

And the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities with the attendant danger of assimilation. It often appeared that the promise of a divine deliverer who would meet the required conditions had been rendered void, but God overruled man's wickedness and actually made it serve his purposes.

You see, Satan knew because this promise was given to him that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. He knew his time was coming. He knew that God was going to provide a Messiah.

[22 : 40] So he took every precaution that he could to head this off. And you can see his nefarious activities in things like Herod's murder of the innocents when he heard that the Messiah, the king of Israel was born and they calculated his age and Herod simply took the position, well, if that's what he is, two years old, well, we'll make sure that we get him.

Kill all the boys. Kill all the boys two years of age and under. It was the massacre of the innocents. And of course that was in an effort to kill the promised seed. And we know that the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, take the lad and get down to Egypt.

And that's how God provided escape for them. God made two unchangeable and unresistable promises to David, Psalm 89.

First, that the throne of David would endure forever. Well, we know David didn't endure forever, but the throne of David does. 2 Samuel 7.

Secondly, that his seed, that is his actual descendants, his bloodline, would sit upon the throne, 2 Samuel 7, 13. In other words, David was unconditionally assured that lineal descendants of his would be preserved to sit upon the throne.

[24 : 06] And fellas, that unconditional thing is the key. The promise that was given to David was unconditional. In other words, God says, David, this is what I'm going to do.

And it doesn't make any difference what you do. God didn't say to David, David, I'm going to perpetuate a line through your and your throne will endure forever if, if you keep your nose clean.

But if you go messing around with some other woman or take some other husband's wife, the deal's off. It was never conditional. This is something that God said he was going to do.

And God doesn't make his promises to people who deserve them. Because there aren't any people like that. Nobody deserves them. He makes promises based upon his own grace and goodness and upon his own plan and program.

Never are his promises based upon the deservedness of the individual. And that's what makes him a God of grace. These promises look forward to the coming of the Messiah.

[25 : 13] Now David had several sons. This is David the king had several sons. But the right to sit upon the throne passed to only one of them, namely Solomon.

And Solomon, you will recall, was the son who was born of Bathsheba. Only those who were of the kingly line inherited throne rights.

In other words, one could be a descendant of David and yet not have a legal right to sit upon the throne. And we know that David had a number of sons, but only one of them was eligible.

And here is the list of David's descendants to whom was given the right to sit upon the throne of Israel. You can find it in Matthew chapter 1. This genealogy terminates with Joseph, the betrothed husband of Mary.

The genealogy beginning with Solomon is as follows. And I'll not enumerate the names. You can see them all. They are listed there. Now you will notice that number 14 in the list was Jeconias, whose name also was Jeconia or Conia.

[26 : 26] He went by different names. Jeremiah 22 and verse 30 pronounces a curse on this king because of his sin. And it's recorded here in Jeremiah 22 and verse 30.

No man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David and ruling anymore in Judah. This curse did not mean that Conia would never have any children but rather that none of Conia's descendants would sit upon the throne of David.

Those who had the legal rights to the throne were thus barred from occupying it. And on the reverse side in Matthew 1 it is recorded that Joseph the espoused husband of Mary was a direct descendant of Conia.

And this is one more reason not only because Mary had to be a virgin but this is one more reason why Joseph could not be the father of Jesus because that would have brought his curse that was given upon that line into play and that would have negated the possibility of his seed being upon that throne although Joseph inherited the legal right to the throne of David because descended through the kingly line of Solomon yet he could not sit upon that throne because he came under the curse of Conia and if you look at your genealogies in Matthew and in Luke and this has been very confusing to some people because the genealogies don't really square and the reason they don't is because they're a genealogy of two different people Matthew is a genealogy of Joseph and

Luke is a genealogy of Mary and there are certain descendants that they have in common both of them had David as an ancestor in common so the line crossed back there and continuing on it means something else he says no man of his seed would ever sit upon the throne it means something else of far greater importance it means that if Jesus had been the real son of Joseph he too would have come under the curse pronounced on Conia and would not have been able to sit upon the throne of David this poses a real problem three main conditions must be met that seem humanly impossible of fulfillment first Jesus must be a lineal or direct descendant of David in order to fulfill God's promise to David that his seed would sit upon his throne and second he must also be the legal son of

[29 : 23] Joseph in order to inherit the right to sit upon the throne of David and three yet he cannot be the real son of Joseph without coming under God's curse on Canaan now how in the world could a problem like that ever be solved and you can read for yourself the solution that is given there and this necessitates the virgin birth this necessitates God being able to bring a seed into the world through a human being namely Mary but be able to avoid the curse that was on Canaan how is he going to bypass that and that is part of the rationale for the virgin birth it is a remarkable thing as you read on the rest of the story you'll see why you want to keep this article forever it's that great of an article keep you Howard keep up to neh she will watch