

SIMPLE FACT AND SIMPLE FAITH

NO. 3547

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“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 they could not be justified by the law of Moses.”
Acts 13:38, 39. (NKJV)

APOSTOLIC preaching was widely different from the common sermonizing of this age. Doubtless, when the apostles addressed assemblies of believers, they took distinct subjects and kept to them, opening up and expounding the particular truths of God they had in view. But when speaking to the outside world, and making their appeals to unbelievers, they do not usually appear to have selected any one doctrine as their topic. The manner in which they preached did not so much consist in inculcating a specific doctrine and showing the inferences that would naturally arise from it, as it did in declaring certain facts of which they had been actual witnesses themselves, and had been chosen to bear witness to others. Turn to Peter’s sermon at Pentecost, or the same apostle’s sermon to Cornelius, or to the record of Paul’s preaching at Perga or at Antioch. You will find these discourses were an argument from the Scriptures that as God had of old promised to send a Savior, so Jesus Christ had come into the world, had lived a holy life, had been put to death, being falsely accused, had been laid in the grave, after three days had risen again and that afterwards He had ascended, according to the testimony of the prophets. Of Him they spoke, that whoever believed in this man, who was very God, should certainly be saved by Him. This was the declaration which they made. I do not find them, as a rule, expounding the doctrine of election in promiscuous assemblies of unbelievers, or arguing the subtle questions of free agency and predestination, or striving about words to no profit, to the subverting of the hearers. Their resolute purpose was to declare those things that pertain directly to the salvation of the soul, this being the all-important matter which they would have all men to heed. Thus they charged everyone who heard them, at the peril of his soul, to accept the revelation and embrace the faith of the gospel!

Listen to the apostle Paul in that famous 15th chapter in the first epistle to the Corinthians which is usually read at funerals. He says there—“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I delivered unto you.” Now you expect him to begin a long list of doctrines, but instead of that, he says, “How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that on the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures.” This it is that he emphatically describes as the gospel! To assert these facts, to exhort men to believe them and to put their trust in the man who thus lived, and died, and rose again, was the preaching of the gospel which of old shook the hoary systems of superstition, fastened though they seemed to be upon their thrones most securely! This preaching it is which enlightened the darkness of heathendom and made, in those first ages of Christianity, the whole world to be astonished with the light and the glory of Christ!

Let us, then, strive to imitate the apostles, and endeavor to preach a simple gospel sermon, if not with their ability, or with their inspiration, yet with their earnestness and with the same desire as burned within their bosoms—that men may be saved thereby! We shall accordingly have to deal, first, with the history of Jesus, whom we hold forth as a Savior; secondly, with the claims of Jesus, and thirdly, with the blessings which Jesus brings. In respect to—

I. THE HISTORY OF JESUS, if you will kindly refer to your Bibles, you will find that the apostle here commenced his sermon by noticing that many prophets had gone before to speak concerning the coming of Jesus. In the 23rd verse he especially mentions the promise made to David, that of his seed God

would raise up a prince and a Savior to the house of Israel. Let me remind you, brothers and sisters, that full often in the world's history, sages have appeared claiming a divine inspiration, whose announcements fostered the hope of a coming man who should redeem the world from thralldom, and become the Savior of our race. All the seers whose eyes were anointed of God to look into the future, heralded the advent of a great prophet, a prince and a Savior, whose claims to homage it would be alike perilous and preposterous to reject! These prophets appeared at divers times and various places, and without any collusion they have, one and all, proclaimed the same thing! The most of them sealed their witness with their blood. "Which of the prophets did not your fathers slay?" Yet in the teeth of extreme suffering, or of violent death, they seem to have been compelled by a divine furor within them to proclaim, even to the last, that one was coming who would overturn the old reign of terror and the old order of outward ceremonies, to introduce a spiritual kingdom, and to redeem the world from its sins and sorrows!

In the favored land of Judea, that bright star of hope beamed most brightly through the dark night of long years and dreary watches. At length there appeared a remarkable individual who had been foreshown by some of these prophets. They had signified that before the promised man, the Messiah, arrived, there would be a harbinger—one like unto Elijah. Elijah would come first. Now the Tishbite, whose career had been so memorable in Israel, was a man of much sanctity, but little polish. His raiment was rough, his diet frugal, his bearing austere and his address earnest or even vehement. He seemed to be fire embodied, if such a thing could be—so strong was his passion and so dauntless his courage! He laid the axe at the root of every sin, nor did he quail before any man's face, however high his station or lofty his pretensions. Let him but detect a wrong, he denounced it with all his might! Eighteen centuries have transpired since there appeared in the wilderness, near the river Jordan, a man whose raiment was of camel's hair and whose meat was locusts and wild honey. John the Baptist, a child of the desert, ascetic in his habits, with a ministry all his own, rebuked the vices of the age with a defiant air and summoned men to repentance in trumpet tones till the whole of Judea was startled with the phenomenon—and the multitudes poured forth from town and village to hear his preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The one culminating point of his exhortations was this, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Look for Him, gaze at Him, resort to Him. He takes away the sin of the world. John's mission it was to make straight in the wilderness a highway for the coming of the Lord, whose shoe laces he declared himself not worthy to unloose!

At length the Savior came—the Savior long promised. From the privacy of His home at Nazareth, where He had been brought up, He came to the river of Jordan. Of His miraculous birth and His infancy I forbear to speak. He appeared in the wilderness where John ministered by the fords of Jordan, and demanded baptism—and as He came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and a voice was heard by many witnesses, "This is My beloved Son. Hear you Him." This man, this wonderful individual who had now become openly manifest, lived for three years a public life of extraordinary benevolence in which there was a combination of deep humility and divine power—the most memorable life on record! Imagination has never dreamed its equal! Those who have thought much on virtue have been utterly unable to construct the story of a life out of their invention that could at all resemble it, or compare with it for purity or symmetry—a life in which there was not so much any one prominent virtue, as all the virtues divinely blended! As gentle as a lamb, as bold as a lion, stern against hypocrisy, always tender towards the sinner, especially when the teardrop of repentance glistened in the eyes. A man who tore to pieces all the old formalities, denounced the learning of the Rabbis, and came with nothing but His own force of character and the witness of God, to speak truths of God which, like light, are self-evident truths which stand the test of time and weather the changes of circumstance—truths which will endure unimpaired when this old world has passed away—truths which have set free human minds from the shackles of superstition! Truths which have gladdened the daughters of despair! Truths which have always been most acceptable to the poor and needy! Truths which have elevated humanity from the very hour in which they were first proclaimed! Truths which have drawn disciples through the ages and have filled heaven with His admirers who fall down before the glorious Son of God and worship Him! Truths of God, I say, which will yet make this world bright in the light of heaven!

Now that man lived a perfectly blameless life—so blameless that when His enemies sought His death, they could not find anything to lay to His charge and, therefore, by false witnesses they accused and

condemned Him. The great point in His history to which we always call your most devout attention, and to which the apostles always bore the most vehement testimony, was this—that He was crucified. It would be policy, some suppose, to conceal this. This great teacher, this promised one, this divine man—for He was man, yet God, perfect God and perfect man—actually died a felon’s death! He was taken by wicked hands, scourged, mocked, made to carry His cross, and then on Calvary was fastened to the tree and there He died. But we must tell you the interpretation which lends a charm to the information. He died there as a substitute for man. He had no guilt of His own, but He was appointed by God to bear all the sins of all His people—of all men, in fact, who will believe on Him! He was punished that they might not be punished. He bore the penalty for all believers, that they might be released from the dread punishment that justice demanded of them. He did, in fact, go up to that tree with the load of all the guilt of all who had believed and all who should believe piled upon His shoulders! And owing to the excellence of His nature, being God, His sufferings made atonement for all the guilt of all that vast multitude! It was as much a vindication of God’s justice as if all those ten thousand times ten thousand had been cast into hell forever. Here was the fact. The punishment due to all those souls was put into one bitter cup and Jesus, on the cross, put that cup to His lips and—

*“At one tremendous draught of love
He drank damnation dry”*

—drank to the very dregs all the wrath which God had towards His offending, sinful, guilty and condemned people! And they were, therefore, clear. This is the great doctrine of the cross. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” When taken down from the cross, He was laid in a tomb. There His sacred body remained for three days but on the morning of the third day, by His own eternal power and Godhead, He rose again from the grave, since He could not be held by the bands of death. And now He lives—henceforth He ever lives! At this moment, the man who was born of the Virgin at Bethlehem, who was put to death in weakness by Pontius Pilate, but was raised in power having ascended on high after His resurrection, sits at the right hand of the Father, whereas man, though God, He incessantly pleads with God for us, and by His eternal merit saves as many as put their trust in Him. These are historical facts which the gospel holds forth to be surely believed. Some think them old wives’ fables. Let them think so—they miss the benefit which simple faith would certainly confer. On their own heads be the blame, for on their own souls will come the smart! Many of us can vouch, with our hands on our breasts that we have proved the Truth of all that is written in the book. These precious Truths of God have exerted a potent spell over our own lives. Our believing them has enabled us to overcome our passions and it has been the leverage which has lifted us up out of our depravity. These verities are our unfailing solace while as creatures we are subject to vanity—and in the hour of death they shall be our succor and support as tens of thousands before us have found them to be! With the history of Jesus thus clearly in our view, let us now ask—

II. WHAT ARE THE CLAIMS OF JESUS?

He claims, as the ever-living one, that we should accept Him as being what He professes to be, if we would derive any benefit from Him. He professes to be the Messiah, anointed and commissioned of God. Do you believe that? Reading the prophecies concerning Him, can you see how exactly He fits them as the key fits the wards of the lock? If you see that, I am glad. Moreover, He demands that you should receive Him as God. This is His profession, that He is God over all, blessed forever, God incarnate. He trod the waves of the Lake of Gennesaret. He raised the dead. He healed the sick. He multiplied the loaves and fishes. He stayed the winds. He lulled the storm. He has done all things that only God can do! He was almighty, even here below as a man. Accept Him, then, as very God. If you do so intelligently, sincerely, I am glad. And now will you accept Him as your Priest, and none upon earth beside? To have Him, you must renounce all else, for know of a surety that our High Priest will not stand side by side with any other priest! Resort to Him only for atonement, for intercession, for benediction. He offered Himself as a sacrifice, gave Himself up for the sins of His people. Believe in Him as your Priest, and in His sufferings and death as your sacrifice. Away, you priests of Rome! Be gone, you priests of every other order! Away

with every vain pretender to the priesthood! To Him who has entered into the holy place not made with hands pertains the exclusive privilege of the priesthood! Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only priest over the house of God. His people become priests through Him—every one of them. Yes, kings and priests after the Melchizedek type, but we acknowledge no priestcraft now. The religion of Jesus disavows and denounces all prelatic pretenses. It proclaims forever the putting down of the hierarchy of men, with all their empty conceits and their inflated arrogance, their frocks and their robes, their lawn sleeves and their fine millinery, their vain boasting and their sanctimonious finger play—with all the preternatural influence that is supposed to emanate from a bishop's hands! Jesus is the only Priest!

Will you take Him to be such? Then I rejoice that you are thus enlightened! Yet know that He claims to be your King. You must do what He bids you. You must be His subject, observe His statutes and keep His commandments. Are you His subject? He will be your friend. You shall even be His brother or sister, and you shall live near to Him as one dear to Him, in affectionate communion with Him. Though He is in heaven, yet will He reveal Himself to you on earth. Now, are you willing to accept Him as such—your Prophet, so that you shall believe what He teaches you? Your Priest, so that you shall confide in His mediation. Your King, so that you shall serve Him. And oh, in what accents of tenderness does Jesus claim that we should trust Him! This is a blessed message to some of you who may not have heard it before. If you will but trust this glorious man, this blessed God, you shall this moment be saved! To trust Him is what He demands. He said, "I am God; rely upon Me implicitly. I am perfect Man. I died for My enemies out of love to them. I have all power given to Me in heaven and in earth, and with My blood sprinkled on My Father's throne, I reign supreme in the realm of mercy. Only trust Me, and I will save you—save you from the guilt of the past, save you from the power of passion in your soul, save you from the dominion of sin—and in the future I will change you. I will make you a new man. I will give you a new heart and a right spirit. All of My grace shall be yours, if you will but trust Me."

Even the power to trust Jesus—He gives—for it is all of His grace from first to last! But whoever trusts Him shall be saved. My Master has a right to this, and nothing short of this will He take, for these are His own words, "Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; He that believes not shall be damned." He does not admit of any medium! You must either believe or not believe—and if you believe not, His wrath falls upon you." He that believes not has made God a liar because he has not believed on His Son, Jesus Christ." "He that believes on Him is not condemned, but he that believes not is condemned already." "He that believes on Him shall never perish; he shall never come into condemnation, for he has passed from death unto life." I do hope I am making this plain. It is my fervent desire and my heart's prayer that you may all know the gospel if you never knew it before. If you have known it before, I would that you might discern it more clearly. Should you reject it, the fault shall not be mine. God is my witness—I have eschewed every idea of trying to be eloquent or oratorical in my preaching! I care nothing whatever about the gaudy show of speechmaking. I only want to tell you these Truths of God in unvarnished speech. It may be that they awaken prejudice and you who listen to them, perhaps, are saying they are dull and trite. Such trite truisms, however, contain the very pith and marrow of the gospel whereby you can be guided to heaven! Dull as you may account them, if rejected, dark and dreary, indeed, will be the ruin of your souls. I charge you, therefore, before Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, that you remember these few simple things, seeing they involve your hope or your despair, your salvation or your condemnation for eternity! Door of heaven, there is none but this! Gate of Paradise, there is none beside it! "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation." He has devised for us a way of redemption. Trusting in Him, we shall be saved! Rejecting Him, we are lost!

Jesus claims of you that you do not trust in yourselves. That you do not think that you are good enough. That you should not imagine that you ever can be good enough of yourselves. That you rely not in any ceremonies. That you will not depend upon any man. That you do not encourage a hope of heaven by any reasoning or resolution of your own, but that you just put your sole trust in Him! Though it seems too good to be true, yet true it is, that if you are the worst of sinners, defiled with vilest lusts and degraded

with heaviest crimes—though your sins are of scarlet dye, and their remembrance haunts you like ghostly specters—yet if you will trust in Jesus, whom God has set forth for a propitiation, you shall have perfect forgiveness from God, the eternal Father, and power shall be given you to overcome those very trespasses to which you were prone, that you fall not into them again! Oh, glorious Gospel of the ever-blessed God! Would that men had hearts to receive and welcome its gracious provisions!

III. THE BLESSINGS WHICH JESUS CHRIST BRINGS TO ALL WHO TRUST HIM.

This may well exceed our power to enumerate them. “By this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins.” Not lenience, but pardon—the forgiveness of all sins! From your childhood to your old age! The sins of fourscore years, if you have lived so long! Your public misdemeanors, your private trespasses, your overt acts, your secret thoughts, your uttered words, your smothered wishes—the whole catalog all unrolled of your transgressions and obliquities shall be at once blotted out from the book of God’s remembrance, if you trust in Jesus Christ! They shall not be laid to your charge. However black the list, or long the inventory, do but trust in this man and they shall be all forgiven you! He that confesses his sin and comes to Jesus shall find mercy, shall find mercy now! Is there one here who feels his guilt? What grateful news this must be to his aching heart! I wish that you all knew how guilty you have been, and how deeply stained you are. A real broken-hearted sinner is a gem wherever you meet with him. There is no music in the world like the notes of pardon to the conscience-stricken self-convicted sinner! Jesus gives pardon for all sin. To those that believe in Him, He gives immediate pardon—not pardon in prospective, not pardon to be revealed when you come to die, but pardon now—pardon reaching sins yet to come, pardon comprehending the whole of your sinful life, given into your hands to be read by the eye of your faith and to be as distinctly known as though it were delivered to you on parchment written by an angel’s hand, sealed with the Savior’s blood! Christ Jesus will give a pardon which shall never be revoked! A pardon that cannot hereafter be canceled. God never plays fast and loose with men. Whom He once pardons, He never condemns. If He pronounce a man forgiven, forgiven he is and forgiven he shall be when the world is on a blaze! What unspeakable joy shall fill the soul of him who hails this hallowed hour a pardon from the skies! His burden gone! His manacles struck off! His fetters loosed! The fever cured! His health restored! How he will leap with delight! Dance with pleasure and sing with holy mirth! Believe in the slain but ever-living Son of God, poor sinner, and this heavenly rapture shall be yours to prove!

This is a pardon of pure good will that retains no dregs of animosity. A man forgives his child and foregoes the rod, but he may say, “I shall not forget your conduct, for in the future I cannot trust you.” But when God forgives, He does not reproach. He takes the prodigal to His bosom. He does not seat him at the end of the table to remind him of his waywardness, but He kills the fatted calf for him to convince him of his welcome! In some of us who were the very chief of sinners, He puts such confidence that He gives a commission to preach the gospel to others by which we are saved ourselves—and sends us about the business which lies nearest to His heart—and most concerns His own glory. Oh, yes, it is a blessed pardon which sweeps the whole extent of human ruin and redeems us, restores us and recoups us for the losses we sustained by sinning! And not only so, but by Him, by Jesus, all who believe are justified as well as forgiven—justified from all things which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. Here we have a comparison, or rather a contrast. What does this mean? When men came to the altar, according to the law of Moses, they brought a bullock which they offered for their sin. This done, with what feelings would they depart from the altar? Conscious of guilt the man came—convinced that he had complied with a statute, he went away. But his conscience was not cleansed! The stain was not removed. Though the blood of the beast quieted some of his scruples and eased some of his terrors, it did not, could not, give him perfect peace! He must have known that the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer could not take away sin, neither could it atone for its guilt, or eradicate its venom.

By so much is the gospel of Christ better than the law of Moses. If you will come and trust Christ, you shall feel that you are no longer guilty! Up till now you have lived in guilt and sin. Henceforth the whole force of sin upon the conscience shall be gone! You shall have peace with God through Jesus Christ our

Lord! You shall feel that for the past it is so obliterated that you have it no longer on your conscience. You can sing—

“Thro’ Jesus’ blood, I’m clean.”

What a mercy this is—this perfect cleansing of the conscience from guilt! He that come to the altar under Moses’ law did not always feel that he could come to God. The blood was sprinkled and there was the way of access—but only the High Priest went within the veil once in the year. The law of Moses could not so justify a man as to let him have access to the Mercy Seat, but Jesus Christ so justifies His people that they come right up to God and speak to Him as a child to a father! They tell Him all their needs and weaknesses, all their gratitude and joy. Into His very ears they pour out their loving hearts. How sweet the access of the creature man, to his covenant God, when once he knows Christ! I do avow that some of us have as truly talked with God as ever we spoke to men—and have been as sure that we were in the presence of our heavenly Father, and as conscious of that wonderful overshadowing as ever we have been conscious that we have been in fellowship with any man or woman born! Oh, if you did but know it, God would not seem far off from you when you once trusted Christ! You would not think of Him as the God of thunder driving His rattling car over the sky with a flashing spear of lightning, but you would sing of Him—

*“The God that rules on high,
And thunders when He pleases,
That rides upon the stormy sky
And manages the seas.
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our Love—
He will send down His heavenly powers
To carry us above.”*

You would see Him everywhere about you with the eyes of your spirit and rejoice in Him!

They who came by the law of Moses to the altar were not justified from apprehensions of the future—but each worshipper, as he went home after all the killing of lambs, and rams, and bullocks—was afraid to die. But he that trusts in Jesus feels that, as far as the future is concerned, he is perfectly secure. “Now,” he says, “God has promised to save those who trust Christ. I trust Christ—God must save me. He is bound by His justice to do so.” On the lion of justice rides the fair maid of faith, and she has no fear! While God is just, no disciple of Jesus can be destroyed! What if Justice charges me with being a sinner? I reply, “‘Tis true I am, and yet I am not amenable to judgment, for all my sins are taken from me. They were laid on my blessed Surety! I have not one left. Christ has been punished for my sins—shall two be punished for one offense? Shall my substitute die, and I die, too? Shall Christ be condemned and I be condemned, too, for the one and same offense? God is not so unjust as to punish first the substitute, and then the man for whom the substitute stood.”

Oh, this is something to roll back on! This is a pillow for an aching head! This is a safe boat to sail in amidst the storms of life and across the seas of death. Jesus Christ in my place, outside the gate of the city, poured out His heart’s blood as God’s great victim! I trust in Him. Trusting in Him, I cannot perish! He has sworn and will not change His mind! By two immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie, He has given strong consolation to them who flee for refuge to the hope set before them in the gospel! Oh, beloved, surely we can live on this promise, and on this promise die!

Would to God that you all trusted Him! May full many of you trust Him now for the first time. The preaching of this gospel is trustworthy because the promise is trustworthy. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes. Do you believe? Say, “Yes,” or, “No,” for there are signs following in either case. Say “Yes,” and say it now! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ACTS 13:14-42.

Verses 14, 15. *But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath, and sat down. And after reading of the law and the prophets.* From which there

were always two appointed lessons, one from the writings of Moses, and another from one of the prophets. And on this day it was probably the first chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, or the first chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah—"the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them."

15. *The rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, You men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.* They were seen to be Jews who were traveling, and they were invited by the minister who conducted the service, to stand up and say anything they had to say. "Then Paul stood up and, beckoning with his hand, said—

16. *Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and you that fear God, give audience.* You, who, though Gentiles, have come to worship Jehovah, God of Israel—"men of Israel."

17, 18. *The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought He them out of it. And about the time of forty years suffered He their manners in the wilderness.* You that are familiar with your Bibles will be struck with the great likeness of this sermon by Paul to that of Stephen. It seems to run on the same lines. Stephen gave the history of Israel to the Israelites. Paul does the same. Ah, we can never tell how great was the influence of that dying Stephen upon this living Paul! Paul is the continuation of Stephen. His blood was not lost in that day when they stoned him to death. From his ashes sprang this mighty preacher of the Word of God!

19-22. *And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He divided their land to them by lot. And after that He gave unto them judges for about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterwards they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul, the Son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up unto them, David, to be their king; to whom also He gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, which shall fulfill all My will.* All this would be very pleasing to the Jews. They were never weary of hearing the ancient history of themselves as a chosen people. Paul ingratiates himself with them. The gospel that he had to preach was bitter to them, but he gilds the pill! And we must do what we can lawfully and properly do to win the attention of men and their kindly feeling to us, although we must faithfully preach the gospel. Now he got as far as David into history. Now we will step to Christ.

23-25. *Of this man's seed has God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Savior—Jesus—after John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think you that I am? I am not He. But, behold, there comes One after me, whose shoes of His feet I am not worthy to loosen.* He brings in the testimony of John, who was universally respected among them. They regarded him as the last of the prophets, and so Paul still tries to win their kind feelings.

26, 27. *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whoever among you fears God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him.* Not knowing it, they have fulfilled the prophecies of old in condemning Jesus, the Son of David!

28, 29. *And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulcher.* You see he has given the story of Christ—His life, His death, His burial, His Resurrection.

30, 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.* He does not expect them to believe without proofs, but he adduces the proof of the resurrection in the many witnesses who saw Him after He had risen.

32-37. *And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God has fulfilled the same unto us, their children, in that He has raised up Jesus again: as it is also written in the Second Psalm, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You. 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. Therefore He also says in another Psalm, You will not allow Your 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. So that David was not speaking of himself, but he was speaking of another and higher David, his greater son, the Son of God, begotten of the Father!

38. *Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins*— Now they have it. Now he brings it out very clearly, indeed! Glad tidings are now ringing in their ears!

39. *And by Him all who believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.* The sins which the law of Moses did not propose to touch, yes—all sins which the law of Moses could only typically remove—all these sins are now really taken away by this glorious son!

40, 41. *Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, you despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though one were to declare it unto you.* You cannot imagine anything more appropriate to the occasion, more properly set forth, more bold, more clear—but these men were not prepared to receive it.

42. *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.* They are earnest hearers who want to hear the same sermon again! But perhaps they did not expect to hear the same words, but to get the same sense and have it explained more fully that they might the better grasp it. Oh, what a mercy it is when the congregation is going away, if there are some that stay behind, anxious to learn more!

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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