

WEEK 1 — OUTLINE

Propagating the Resurrected Christ as the Firstborn Son according to the Promise Made to the Fathers

Scripture Reading: Acts 13:23, 32-34, 38-39; Rom. 1:3-4; 8:29

« DAY 1 & DAY 2 »

- I. “From this man’s seed, God, according to promise, brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus...And we announce to you the gospel of the promise made to the fathers” (Acts 13:23, 32):**
- A. *The seed of David mentioned in 2 Samuel 7:12 is actually Christ as God’s firstborn Son (v. 14; Heb. 1:5-6), who has both divinity and humanity and is typified by Solomon.*
 - B. *The word concerning “your seed” in 2 Samuel 7:12 and “My son” in verse 14 implies that the seed of David would become the Son of God; that is, a human seed would become a divine Son:*
 - 1. This corresponds with Paul’s word in Romans 1:3-4 concerning Christ as the seed of David being designated the Son of God in His humanity in resurrection.
 - 2. These verses clearly reveal that a seed of man, that is, a son of man, can become the Son of God:
 - a. God Himself, the divine One, became a human seed, the seed of a man, David.
 - b. This seed was Jesus, the God-man, who was the Son of God by virtue of His divinity alone (Luke 1:35).

- c. Through His resurrection He as the human seed became the Son of God in His humanity as well.

II. “God has fully fulfilled this promise to us their children in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son; this day have I begotten You’ ” (Acts 13:33):

A. *In verses 32 and 33 we see that Christ as the Firstborn of God was promised to the fathers, and God fulfilled this promise by raising up Jesus.*

B. *Resurrection was a birth to the man Jesus:*

1. He was begotten by God in His resurrection to be the firstborn Son of God among many brothers (Rom. 8:29).
2. He was the only begotten Son from eternity (John 1:18; 3:16).
3. After His incarnation, through resurrection He was begotten by God in His humanity to be God’s firstborn Son (Heb. 1:6).

C. *Paul was able to see the Lord’s resurrection in Psalm 2:7: “You are My Son; / Today I have begotten You”:*

1. Paul applied the word today to the day of the Lord’s resurrection.
2. This means that Christ’s resurrection was His birth as the firstborn Son of God.
3. Jesus, the Son of Man, was born to be the Son of God through being raised up from the dead; therefore, God’s raising up Jesus from the dead was His begetting of Him to be His firstborn Son (Acts 13:33).

« DAY 3 »

D. *Through incarnation God’s only begotten Son put on humanity and became the God-man (John 1:14, 18; Luke 1:35); then in resurrection this God-man was born of God to be His Firstborn*

(Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:6; Rom. 8:29):

1. Before incarnation God's only begotten Son did not have the human nature; He had only the divine nature.
2. In resurrection God's firstborn Son has the human nature as well as the divine nature.

E. Through His resurrection Christ was born to be the firstborn Son, and at the same time all His believers were born to be the many sons of God (1 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 2:10):

1. Among these many sons, only the Firstborn is God's only begotten Son (John 1:18; 1 John 4:9).
2. This only begotten Son of God, in His resurrected humanity, is also the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29).
3. The Firstborn has both divinity and humanity, and we, His believers as God's many sons, also possess both the human nature and the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

F. In Acts 13 Paul was not preaching Christ as the only begotten Son, as the Gospel of John does (1:18; 3:16); rather, in Acts 13 Paul was preaching Christ as the firstborn Son of God for propagation:

1. As the only begotten Son, the Lord is the embodiment of the divine life; the Gospel of John emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that, as the Son of God, He is the embodiment of the divine life (1:4).
2. Through resurrection Christ became the firstborn Son of God as the life-dispenser for the propagation of life (Rom. 8:29).
3. First, Christ was the only begotten Son as the embodiment of life; now He is also the firstborn Son for the propagation of life.

4. Through His becoming the firstborn Son of God in resurrection, the divine life has been dispensed into all His believers to bring forth the propagation of the life that is embodied in Him.

III. “As to His having raised Him up from the dead,...He spoke in this way, ‘I will give you the holy things of David, the faithful things’ ” (Acts 13:34):

- A. *The resurrected Christ is the holy and faithful things of David; the holy things of David, the faithful things refers to the resurrected Christ (vv. 33-34).*
- B. *The phrase the holy things of David, the faithful things indicates that Christ was of David, for it was out of David’s seed that God raised up such a One (Rom. 1:3-4).*
- C. *The phrase the holy things of David, the faithful things is actually a divine title, a title of Christ.*

« DAY 5 »

- D. *These holy and faithful things are all the aspects of what Christ is, such as life, light, grace, righteousness, holiness, the bread of life, the living water, power, wisdom, glory, the depths of God, the Head, the Body, the firstfruits, and the second man.*
- E. *All the holy and faithful things are Christ Himself as mercies to us (Isa. 55:3; 2 Chron. 6:42; Psa. 89:1).*
- F. *We need to see that the resurrected Christ is all the holy and faithful things given to us by God as an all-inclusive gift; this was the Christ preached by Paul in Acts 13.*

« DAY 6 »

IV. “Through this One forgiveness of sins is announced to

**you,” and “in this One everyone who believes is justified”
(vv. 38-39):**

- A. *To be forgiven of sins is on the negative side and is for our release from condemnation (v. 38).*
- B. *To be justified is on the positive side and is for our reconciliation to God and our being accepted by Him (v. 39; Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:24-25).*
- C. *In Acts 13:38 and 39 Paul twice spoke of “this One”:*
 - 1. This is the One who has been resurrected to be God’s firstborn Son, our Savior, and the many holy and faithful things.
 - 2. Through the One who is the firstborn Son, the Savior, and the holy and faithful things, forgiveness of sins has been announced to us, and through this One we are justified.
 - 3. The One by whom we are forgiven and justified is Himself our forgiveness and justification:
 - a. Both forgiveness and justification are mercies from God to us, and these mercies are aspects of the resurrected Christ (vv. 33-34, 38-39).
 - b. Christ in His resurrection is our forgiveness and justification.

« WEEK 1 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 13:32-33 And we announce to you the gospel of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fully fulfilled this promise to us their children in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, “You are My Son; this day have I begotten You.”

Your seed in 2 Samuel 7:12 refers, literally, to Solomon, David’s son, who built the temple as God’s dwelling place in the Old Testament (1 Kings 5:5; 8:15-20; 1 Chron. 22:9-10; 28:6). However, according to Hebrews 1:5b, which quotes verse 14a of 2 Samuel 7, David’s seed is actually Christ as God’s firstborn Son (Heb. 1:5a, 6), who has both divinity and humanity and is typified here by Solomon (see footnote 3 on Matt. 1:1). The Son of God became David’s seed by being constituted (built) into David’s family, that is, into David’s being. Here God was actually telling David that instead of building something for God, David needed God to build His Son into him. God did not want David to build Him a house of cedar (2 Sam. 7:5-7), nor was God satisfied that David would be merely a man according to His heart (1 Sam. 13:14). God’s desire was to work Himself in Christ into David’s humanity to be his life, nature, and constitution. In this way Christ, the Son of God, would become everything to David, including his house (dwelling place) and his seed. (2 Sam. 7:12, footnote 1)

Today’s Reading

The word concerning “your seed” in 2 Samuel 7:12 and “My son” in verse 14 implies that the seed of David would become the Son of God, that is, that a human seed would become a divine Son. This word corresponds with Paul’s word in Romans 1:3-4 concerning Christ as the seed of David being designated the Son of God in His humanity in resurrection....It also relates to the Lord’s question in Matthew 22:41-45 concerning how the Christ could be both the son of David and the Son of God as David’s Lord—a wonderful person, a God-man with two natures, divinity and humanity. These verses clearly unveil that a seed of man,

that is, a son of man, can become the Son of God. God Himself, the divine One, became a human seed, the seed of a man, David. This seed was Jesus, the God-man, Jehovah the Savior (Matt. 1:18-21; 2 Tim. 2:8), who was the Son of God by virtue of His divinity alone (Luke 1:35). Through His resurrection He as the human seed became the Son of God in His humanity as well. Thus, in Christ God was constituted into man, man was constituted into God, and God and man were mingled together to be one entity, the God-man. This implies that God's intention in His economy is to make Himself man in order to make man God in life and in nature. (2 Sam. 7:14, footnote 1)

In Acts 13:32-33 Paul says, "We announce to you the gospel of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fully fulfilled this promise to us their children in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'You are My Son; this day have I begotten You.'" Here we see that Christ as the Firstborn of God was promised to the fathers, and God fulfilled this promise to their children in raising up Jesus. Resurrection was a birth to the man Jesus. He was begotten by God in His resurrection to be the firstborn Son of God among many brothers (Rom. 8:29). He was the only begotten Son of God from eternity (John 1:18; 3:16). After incarnation, through resurrection, He was begotten by God in His humanity to be God's firstborn Son.

Paul was able to see the Lord's resurrection in the word in Psalm 2: "You are My Son; / Today I have begotten You" (v. 7). Paul applied the word today to the day of the Lord's resurrection. This means that Christ's resurrection was His birth as the firstborn Son of God. Jesus, the Son of Man, was born to be the Son of God through being raised up from the dead. Therefore, God's raising up of Jesus from the dead was His begetting of Him to be His firstborn Son. We need to realize that the Lord's resurrection was His birth. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2993-2994)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 & 2 Samuel, msgs. 23, 25

« WEEK 1 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 1:5-6 For to which of the angels has He ever said, “You are My Son; this day have I begotten You”? And again, “I will be a Father to Him, and He will be a Son to Me”? And when He brings again the Firstborn into the inhabited earth, He says, “And let all the angels of God worship Him.”

The Lord Jesus had two births. First, He was born of Mary to be the Son of Man. Then thirty-three and a half years later He was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. Through resurrection He had a second birth, for as a man He was born in His resurrection to be the Son of God. Therefore, in His first birth He was born of Mary to be the Son of Man, and in His second birth He was born in resurrection to be the Son of God. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2994)

Today's Reading

In His second birth the Lord Jesus was born to be the firstborn Son of God. According to the New Testament, He is the Son of God in two aspects. First, He was God's only begotten Son; second, He is now God's firstborn Son. The words only begotten indicate that God has only one Son. John 1:18 and 3:16 speak of the only begotten Son of God. Eternally speaking, Christ is the only begotten Son of God. This is His eternal status. But through resurrection He, as a man, was born to be the firstborn Son of God. The word firstborn indicates that God now has many sons (Heb. 2:10). Romans 8:29 and Hebrews 1:6 both speak of Christ as the Firstborn. We who believe in Christ are the many sons of God and the many brothers of the Lord, the many brothers of the firstborn Son of God (Rom. 8:29). (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2994)

Of course, Christ's incarnation was also a birth, but that birth made Him the Son of Man. Christ did not become the Son of God through incarnation. In eternity past, before His incarnation and before His resurrection, Christ was already the

Son of God. The Bible reveals that Christ, the Son of God, is eternal. God is triune—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—and all three are eternal. God the Father is eternal (Isa. 9:6), God the Son is eternal (Heb. 7:3), and God the Spirit is eternal (9:14).

To be eternal means to have no beginning and no ending. Students of the Bible sometimes use a circle to signify eternity. A circle has no beginning and no ending, and it is difficult to tell whether one point on a circle comes before or after another point. In the same way the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all eternal, having no beginning or ending. Hebrews 7:3 tells us that the Son of God is eternal, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. The revelation in the Bible is not that the Father existed before the Son, that the Son came into being after the Father, or that the Spirit came after the Son. Rather, the Bible says that all three are eternal.

The Son of God is eternal, yet this eternal Son of God was born as the Son of Man about two thousand years ago. In His incarnation He was born of Mary, and by that birth He became the Son of Man. Therefore, His incarnation was His first birth. But the Bible also tells us that Christ had a second birth. In His first birth Christ was born as the Son of Man, and in His second birth He was born as the firstborn Son of God. On the one hand, John 3:16 says, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” This verse indicates that Christ was God’s only Son. On the other hand, Romans 8:29 says, “That He might be the Firstborn among many brothers.” Have you ever considered that Christ is the Son of God in two ways? In the first way He was God’s only begotten Son, and in the second way He is the firstborn Son among many sons. Romans 8:29 says that the believers are to be conformed not to the image of the only begotten Son but to the image of God’s firstborn Son. (CWWL, 1980, vol. 2, “The Secret of Experiencing Christ,” pp. 470-471)

Further Reading: Life-study of 1 & 2 Samuel, msg. 27

« WEEK 1 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

Rom. 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers.

The difference between the only begotten Son of God in eternity past and the firstborn Son of God in resurrection is that in eternity past, before His incarnation, He possessed only divinity without humanity. But through the process of incarnation, He put on humanity. He passed through human living, entered into death, and came out in resurrection. In resurrection He still remained the Son of God according to His divinity, but there was something more; He also possessed the humanity that He obtained through incarnation. The humanity that He put on in incarnation was also brought into resurrection to share in the sonship. This is why Acts 13:33 says that on the day of resurrection Christ was begotten of God to be God's Son. It means that resurrection "sonized" His humanity, made it also the Son of God. According to Acts 13:33, Christ's resurrection was a birth, making Him not only God's only begotten Son with divinity but also God's firstborn Son with both divinity and humanity. (CWWL, 1980, vol. 2, "The Secret of Experiencing Christ," p. 471)

Today's Reading

Today Christ is the Son of God in two respects: He is God's only begotten Son, and He is also God's firstborn Son. However, if He were only God's only begotten Son, He could not have any brothers. To have us as His brothers, He must possess humanity, but as God's only begotten Son in eternity past, He possessed only divinity, not humanity. Nevertheless, in His incarnation Christ put on humanity, and through resurrection He brought this humanity into sonship. In this way

He became God's firstborn Son with both divinity and humanity. Then, as the life-giving Spirit, He entered into us to make us also sons of God. Now we are the many sons of God being conformed to the image, not of God's only begotten Son but of His firstborn Son. Therefore, as God's firstborn Son, Christ has many brothers.

On the day of His resurrection Christ was begotten by God in His humanity. He became the firstborn Son of God in order to produce many sons of God. We need to realize that the date of our regeneration was the date of Christ's resurrection. When Christ was resurrected from the dead, we, all the believers, were resurrected with Him (1 Pet. 1:3). Through His resurrection He was born to be God's firstborn Son, and at the same time all His believers were born to be the many sons of God. On the day of Christ's resurrection, all God's chosen people were resurrected and were born to be God's many sons. Now God has many sons with both divinity and humanity. But among these many sons, only the Firstborn is His only begotten Son. This only begotten Son of God, in His resurrected humanity, is also the firstborn Son of God. As the firstborn Son of God, He has both divinity and humanity, and we His believers as God's many sons also possess both the human nature and the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). Now day by day we are being conformed to the image of God's firstborn Son (Rom. 8:29). (CWWL, 1980, vol. 2, "The Secret of Experiencing Christ," pp. 471-472)

As the only begotten Son of God, the Lord is the embodiment of the divine life. The Gospel of John emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that as the Son of God He is the embodiment of the divine life (1:4). Through resurrection Christ became the firstborn Son of God as the life-dispenser for the propagation of life. First, He was the only begotten Son as the embodiment of life; now He is the firstborn Son for the propagation of life. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2994)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1980, vol. 2, "The Secret of Experiencing Christ," ch. 4

« WEEK 1 — DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 13:34 And as to His having raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to corruption, He spoke in this way, “I will give you the holy things of David, the faithful things.”

Rom. 1:3-4 Concerning His Son, who came out of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.

At this point we need to ask ourselves what the difference is between the only begotten Son and the firstborn Son. Our first response may be to say that the only begotten Son had no brothers, but the firstborn Son has many brothers. (CWWL, 1980, vol. 2, “The Secret of Experiencing Christ,” p. 471)

Through His becoming the firstborn Son of God in resurrection, the divine life has been dispensed into all of His believers to bring forth the propagation of the life which is embodied in Him.

In Acts 13 Paul was not preaching Christ as the only begotten Son of God, as the Gospel of John does. Rather, here Paul was preaching Christ as the firstborn Son of God for propagation. For this reason, he preached the resurrection of the Lord Jesus as His second birth. Through His second birth, His birth in resurrection, Christ became the firstborn Son of God for the propagation of the divine life. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2994-2995)

We all need to see that being born as the firstborn Son of God was a great work, which Christ accomplished through His resurrection. Although it is clearly taught in the Bible, many Christians have never seen this matter. (CWWL, 1980, vol. 2, “The Secret of Experiencing Christ,” p. 472)

Today's Reading

[Acts 13:33 and 34] are concerned with the resurrected Christ. Verse 33 indicates that Christ's resurrection was His second birth to bring Him forth as the firstborn Son of God.

The Greek word for the holy things...in verse 34 is in the plural. The same Greek word is used for Holy One in the next verse, but in the singular. However, it is not the regular word for holy; it is a Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word *chesed*, which is translated "mercies" in Isaiah 55:3, 2 Chronicles 6:42, and Psalm 89:1, both in the Septuagint and in the King James Version. In Psalm 89 the word *mercies* in plural in verse 1 (KJV) is the same word as for Holy One in singular in verse 19. This Holy One is Christ, the Son of David, in whom God's mercies are centered and conveyed. Hence, the holy things of David, the faithful things refers to the resurrected Christ. This is fully proved by the context, especially by Your Holy One in the next verse, and by the verse following Isaiah 55:3.

Paul's thought in Acts 13:33 and 34 is very deep. The resurrected Christ, who is God's firstborn Son brought forth through His second birth, His resurrection, is the holy and faithful things. In verse 34 the word faithful means "trustworthy." The resurrected Christ is the holy and faithful things God gives to us. Here Paul indicates that the resurrected Christ is not only our Savior bringing us God's salvation and that He is not only the firstborn Son of God. This resurrected One is also the holy and faithful things as a gift given to us by God.

It is easy for us to understand that Christ is our Savior. It is more difficult to understand that Christ is the firstborn Son of God. But it is very difficult to understand that the resurrected Christ is the holy and faithful things given to us by God. The holy and faithful things cover a wide span, a span much wider than that covered by the titles Savior and firstborn Son. The phrase the holy things...the faithful things is actually a divine title, a title of Christ. In these verses Christ is called the holy and faithful things. The Savior God raised up out of the seed of David has become the holy and faithful things. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2995-2996)

Further Reading: Life-study of Acts, msg. 37

« WEEK 1 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Isa. 55:3-4 ...I will make an eternal covenant with you, even the sure mercies shown to David. Indeed, I have given Him as a Witness to the peoples, a Leader and a Commander to the peoples.

2 Chron. 6:42 O Jehovah God,...remember Your lovingkindness to David Your servant.

Psa. 89:1 I will sing of the lovingkindness of Jehovah forever; from generation to generation I will make known Your faithfulness with my mouth.

The resurrected Christ is the holy and sure things of David, things that are mercies or blessings to us. The resurrected Christ is the mercies and blessings God gives to us in this age. These are the holy and sure things of David prophesied in Isaiah 55:3 and fulfilled in Acts 13:34. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 400)

Today's Reading

Acts 13:34 says, "As to His having raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to corruption, He spoke in this way, 'I will give you the holy things of David, the faithful things.'" Verses 33 and 34 are concerned with the resurrection of Christ. Verse 33 says, "That God has fully fulfilled this promise to us their children in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'You are My Son; this day have I begotten You.'" We have seen that Christ's resurrection was His second birth to bring Him forth as the firstborn Son of God. God promised to give Him to His people, and this resurrected One is the holy and faithful things of David. The phrase the holy things of David, the faithful things indicates that Christ was of David, for it was out of David's seed that God raised up such a One. To God the resurrected Christ is the firstborn Son, but to us He is the Savior. Moreover, He is a great gift given by God to His chosen people and this gift is entitled the holy

things...the faithful things.

These holy and faithful things are all the aspects of what Christ is. According to the New Testament, Christ is life, light, grace, righteousness, holiness, sanctification, and justification. He is also the bread of life and the living water. Furthermore, the holy and faithful things include all the aspects of Christ unveiled in 1 Corinthians: power, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, glory, the depths of God, the unique foundation of God's building, the Passover, the unleavened bread, the spiritual food, the spiritual drink, the spiritual rock, the Head, the Body, the firstfruits, the second man, and the last Adam. We see many more aspects of Christ in the Gospel of John, such as the Shepherd and the pasture. Oh, how much Christ is to us as the holy and faithful things! As the resurrected One, He is the firstborn Son, the Savior, and all the holy and faithful things.

In the Old Testament the holy and faithful things are regarded as mercies. Isaiah 55:3 speaks of "the sure mercies shown to David." Second Chronicles 6:42 mentions "the mercies of David" (KJV), the Lord's servant, and Psalm 89:1 says, "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever" (KJV). Mercy implies both love and grace, but it reaches further than love. Where love and grace cannot reach, mercy can reach. All the holy and faithful things are Christ Himself as mercies to us. Life is a mercy, and light is also a mercy. Likewise, righteousness, holiness, justification, and sanctification are mercies. In chapter 10 of the Gospel of John we have the door, the pasture, and the Shepherd, all of which are mercies. If we took time to count all the aspects of these mercies, we would have a long list of mercies. A husband's love for his wife and the wife's submission to her husband are Christ as mercies to us. If a husband, in Christ, loves his wife, this surely is a mercy. His love for her is Christ Himself as a mercy to her. In a similar way, if a sister, in Christ, submits to her husband, that also is a mercy. Her submission is Christ Himself as a mercy to her. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 400-401, 2996-2997)

Further Reading: Life-study of Acts, msg. 38

« WEEK 1 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Gal. 2:16 And knowing that a man is not justified out of works of law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we also have believed into Christ Jesus that we might be justified out of faith in Christ and not out of the works of law...

Acts 13:38-39 ...Through this One forgiveness of sins is announced to you; and from all the things from which you were not able to be justified by the law of Moses, in this One everyone who believes is justified.

Our speaking the word of God year after year inexhaustibly is certainly Christ as a mercy to us. This is not a matter of our ability or gift. It is altogether a matter of mercy. Not only is it a mercy for us to speak the word of God, but even the dear Savior is our speaking. Our speaking is Christ, and to us this speaking Christ is a mercy. Though our speaking may not be eloquent, our speaking may be full of Christ. This is wholly due to Christ being a mercy to us in speaking the word of God. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2997)

Today's Reading

We all need to see that the resurrected Christ is all the holy and faithful things as mercies given to us by God as an all-inclusive gift. This was the Christ preached by Paul in Acts 13. Paul, in his gospel message, not only preached Christ from the Old Testament, but also preached the resurrected Christ as the holy and faithful things. Actually, what Paul proclaimed here in his preaching of the gospel requires all the Epistles written by him for its definition. Therefore, if we want to see more concerning Christ as the holy and faithful things, we need to study the fourteen Epistles of Paul. In his preaching Paul set up an excellent pattern for us to follow in our gospel preaching today. Like Paul, we need to preach Christ in a rich and uplifted way.

In Acts 13:38 and 39 Paul goes on to say, "...Men, brothers,...through this One

forgiveness of sins is announced to you; and from all the things from which you were not able to be justified by the law of Moses, in this One everyone who believes is justified.”

To be forgiven of sins (v. 38) is on the negative side and is for our release from condemnation. To be justified (v. 39) is on the positive side and is for our reconciliation to God and acceptance by Him.

In both verse 38 and verse 39 Paul speaks of “this One.” Who is this One? This is the One who has been resurrected to be God’s firstborn Son, our Savior, and the many holy and faithful things. Therefore, through the One who is the holy and faithful things as God’s mercies to us, we are forgiven and justified. Through the One who is the firstborn Son, the Savior, and the holy and faithful things, forgiveness of sins has been announced to us. And through this One we are justified from all the things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses.

The One by whom we are forgiven and justified is not only our Savior; He Himself is our forgiveness and justification. Both forgiveness and justification are mercies from God to us, and these mercies are aspects of the resurrected Christ...Never consider forgiveness and justification as something apart from Christ. Both forgiveness and justification are aspects of Christ Himself as mercies from God to us, and these mercies are holy and faithful things. To be sure, forgiveness and justification are gifts of God, and they certainly are holy and faithful things. If we have this understanding, we shall see that forgiveness and justification are not common. Rather, they are holy. Furthermore, they are faithful, sure, trustworthy. This is Paul’s preaching of Christ as the Firstborn of God in Acts 13, through which many were saved.

In Acts 13:32-39 we see Christ as the Firstborn of God, who was promised to the fathers and was begotten by God in resurrection to be His Firstborn. As the Firstborn of God, He is the holy and faithful things of David. Through such a One, forgiveness of sins is announced, and whoever believes in Him is justified from all things. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2997-2999, 2993)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msgs. 38, 293

WEEK 1 — HYMN

In the bosom of the Father

Praise of the Lord — His Increase

203

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notes are: A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Above the notes are the chords: F, F7/A, Bb, Gm, Am, Dm, G7, C7. The second staff begins with a measure rest (9) and continues with notes: A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Above the notes are the chords: F, F7, Bb, Gm, F, F/A, Bb, F/C, C7, F. The third staff begins with a measure rest (17) and continues with notes: A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Above the notes are the chords: F/A, Dm, Gm, C7, Dm, F/A, Bb. The fourth staff begins with a measure rest (25) and continues with notes: A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Above the notes are the chords: F, F7, Bb, Gm, F/C, Dm, Bb, F/C, C7, F. The lyrics are: 1. In the bo - som of the Fath - er, Ere the a - ges had be - gun, Thou wast in the Fath - er's glo - ry, God's u - nique be - got - ten Son. When to us the Fath - er gave Thee, Thou in per - son wast the same, All the ful - ness of the Fath - er In the Spir - it to pro - claim.

2. By Thy death and resurrection,
Thou wast made God's firstborn Son;
By Thy life to us imparting,
Was Thy duplication done.
We, in Thee regenerated,
Many sons to God became;
Truly as Thy many brethren,
We are as Thyself the same.
3. Once Thou wast the only grain, Lord,
Falling to the earth to die,
That thru death and resurrection
Thou in life may multiply.
We were brought forth in Thy nature
And the many grains became;
As one loaf we all are blended,
All Thy fulness to proclaim.
4. We're Thy total reproduction,
Thy dear Body and Thy Bride,
Thine expression and Thy fulness,
For Thee ever to abide.
We are Thy continuation,
Thy life-increase and Thy spread,
Thy full growth and Thy rich surplus,
One with Thee, our glorious Head.