

## ACTS Lesson 13

Acts Chapter 13

*Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies*

*Website: [www.KjvBibleStudies.net](http://www.KjvBibleStudies.net)*

*e-mail: [mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com](mailto:mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com)*

Memory verses for this week: *2 Th 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.*

**Introduction:** In Chapter 12, we saw further persecution set out against the church. Herod put James, the brother of John, to death, and when it pleased the people, he set out to put Peter to death. God sent an angel to deliver Peter from prison as the church was busy praying that he would be delivered. We know not what we may face as Christians, as the Bible warns us that we have enemies in high places. *Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Eph 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

In chapter 13, the focus of events changes from Peter to Paul. Here, Paul begins his first missionary journey and preaches at Antioch of Pisidia. It clearly emphasizes the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The last portion of the chapter deals with the persecution Paul and Barnabas suffered there for preaching the gospel.

### I. Paul and Barnabas Called by the Holy Spirit

*Acts 13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

*Acts 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

As the years had passed, the focus of leadership in the New Testament church had shifted from Jerusalem to Antioch. The time is approximately A.D. 45. The church at Jerusalem was the focal point of Jewish opposition and persecution. Even more troubling, it was still prejudiced with hidden Judaism. After Peter took the gospel to a gentile city and Cornelius, many became skeptical and lacked trust.

What will soon be obvious is that the church at Antioch held no such reservations about preaching the gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth. There is a lesson here. When churches lose their evangelistic zeal, God's blessing often

goes elsewhere. In the church at Antioch were “prophets and teachers.” The New Testament office of prophet was an interim office in the early church. It was used as the church made transition from its manner of Judaism to a primarily gentile body. Like the office of apostle, it died out in the first century.

The prophecies mentioned in I Corinthians 13:8 is clearly a reference to the office of prophet. This office functioned as an interim gift of the Holy Spirit in the interval between Pentecost and the completion of the New Testament canon near the end of the first century. Prophets both foretold the Word of God as well as forthtold it. They would be roughly similar to the more familiar term ‘preacher,’ though it was a specific office given to the first-century church.

*Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

*Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

The term teachers is as its name implies. The grammatical construction of the verse would indicate that the two last names mentioned, Manaen and Saul, were the teachers, in distinction to the three prophets mentioned first. Once again, Barnabas is mentioned as a leader and evidently a prophet in the church at Antioch. The Simeon of Niger very well may have been the Simon of Cyrene who carried Jesus’ cross. Niger was a generic name for north Africa of which Cyrene was a part. It literally meant ‘black.’ It may be that this Simeon may have been a black man.

Because of the interaction of Judaism with North Africa, particularly since the time of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, there was (and exists to this day) an element of black Jews. Noted also is “Lucius of Cyrene.” The name Lucius is a form of the more common name ‘Luke,’ though this almost certainly is not Luke the physician who penned Acts. Cyrene was in North Africa. It was first a Greek and later a Roman colony. Ptolemy had brought a great number of Jews there and bestowed upon them citizenship.

The reference to Manaen having been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch implies he was his stepbrother. Though this particular Herod was a lessor ruler than other of the Herod’s mentioned in the New Testament, what is significant is that in the church of Antioch were men of the higher classes. Last, but certainly not least, is mentioned Saul. Recall in Acts 11:25-26 that Barnabas had brought Saul to the church at Antioch and involved him in the ministry there. Clearly, there were a collection of notable men in the young church at Antioch.

It says in verse 2 that Barnabas and Saul “ministered to the Lord, and fasted” in this church. The word translated as ministered (leitourgewleitourgeo) has the sense of a ‘formal ministry’ such as the Levites and priests at the Temple. The

Latin word liturgy was derived therefrom. What is implied is that these men were actively involved in the ministry of the church at Antioch. The word leitourgeo also has the sense of serving at one's own expense. Whether this implies the ministry at Antioch was as yet totally voluntary is not clear.

Paul would soon be sent out, there is no mention of the church there financially supporting him. They very well may have. It just is not mentioned and the word leitourgeo also implies that. Later, however, churches certainly undertook the financial burden for the propagation of the ministry.

*Php 4:14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.*

The reference to fasting here may be related to formal Jewish fasts still voluntarily observed. It also rather may be a reference to individual fasting as a means of abasing the flesh as a means of submitting to the Spirit in prayer. The word translated as fasted (nhsteuw nesteuo) has the sense of abstaining from food or drink for spiritual purposes, particularly prayer. The idea is more relative than absolute. If a fast was for only one day, it might be total abstinence. However, if it was of longer duration, then the abstinence might be only of finer foods, perhaps partaking only of bread and water. The Bible really does not define the details of fasting. Rather it was left largely to the individual before God.

However, two things are clear. (1) Fasting was practiced in the early church. (2) It was practiced in the context of a ministry. In that context, the "Holy Spirit said." What is likely implied is not an audible voice of the Spirit. Rather, He impressed upon the hearts of the leadership of the church, no doubt including Barnabas and Saul, that God was selecting them for a special ministry. The word translated as separate (aforizw aphoridzo) has the sense of 'setting apart,' or 'choosing.' God 'calls' men for His work. And indeed, the ministry of Jesus Christ is not only work, it is "the work."

Numerous times in the New Testament, the ministry of Jesus Christ, in preaching the gospel and planting churches, is called "the work." Here, the Holy Spirit clearly "called them" to this work. Notice also at this point that the first name is Barnabas and then Saul implying, perhaps initially, that Barnabas was the leader. Those who would lead, must first learn to follow. Soon, however, it would be clear that Paul would emerge as the leader.

We see two things revealed in the first two verses. The Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Saul to a special work, and secondly, the Holy Spirit commanded the church to send them forth. This was, and still is God's plan for sending forth missionaries today. Many today want to complicate this plan and add boards or some other man-created agency to stand between the missionary and the

church, but from the beginning, it was not so. God moves on the hearts of men, and then God moves on certain churches to support that missionary. God's plan can not be topped, nor improved. In verse one, it speaks about there being prophets and teachers there in Antioch. It is important to know there is a distinction between the two. A prophet is one who had, by inspiration and authority, revelations given from God to be delivered to the people. A prophet might also be a teacher. A teacher is one who instructs other people in the things that were revealed by inspiration. Today, we have few true prophets. A prophet today will not bring new revelation (as in new books of the bible) from God since His Word is complete, but from the Word may show forth prophecy.

*Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,*

*Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

*Heb 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

*Heb 1:4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

## **II. Paul's First Missionary Journey**

*Acts 13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

*Acts 13:4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.*

*Acts 13:5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.*

Notice the 'commissioning' of Barnabas and Saul involved (1) fasting, (2) prayer, and (3) a laying on of hands. The laying on of hands was a means of identifying to all present and before God the intent to set apart. Today, this practice is perhaps viewed more ceremonial than functional. However, it was a symbol that the blessing and approval of the church was upon the intended. They, to that degree, were sent out by the church. Again, notice the mention of fasting and prayer prior to a major event in the church. We are not told to what degree or length they fasted or prayed. However, what is implied is that it was more than obligatory or ceremonial.

They evidently spent significant time therein prior to sending them forth. A lesson remains for the church today. Seleucia was the port city on the Mediterranean,

sixteen miles down the Orontes River from the city of Antioch. From there they sailed to Cyprus. It is noteworthy that Cyprus was the homeland of Barnabas and he took the gospel there first. Once again, the ultimate agent in sending them forth is noted as the Holy Ghost.

Upon arriving on the Island, they preached first in the city of Salamis which was on the eastern tip of the island. There, in the synagogues of the Jews, they began their ministry. It is noteworthy that mention is made of John. This is John Mark. Some have thought, he was a cousin or nephew of Barnabas whom he had brought to Antioch from Jerusalem (Acts 12:25).

Later, for reasons undisclosed, John Mark would depart from the missionary team (13:13). That departure would become a point of contention between Paul and Barnabas when Barnabas wanted to take him along again. It is this same John Mark who would later pen the Gospel of Mark. The word translated as minister (*uperethv huperetes*) literally means an 'under-rower' as in a slave galley. However, the word came to mean an 'assistant' or 'attendant.' To what degree he assisted in the ministry, we are not told.

Who was the "they" mentioned in verse 3? It speaks of the church there in Antioch, the place where followers of Christ were first called Christians. It was not a man made organization such as a mission board that decided to send them, but it was the local church. We see they had an ordination service of sorts as they gathered together, fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them. After the service, they got aboard a boat and sailed to Cyprus. The two chief cities were Salamis, at the east end of the island, and Paphos, which was at the west end. And when they reached their destination, they wasted no time in beginning to proclaim the Word of God. It says they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They went right where the Jews gathered, and set out to reach lost souls for the Lord.

Oh, that all missionaries would be quick to the field and then to stand fast and not waver in the work the Lord has called them to do. I thank the Lord that we have so many fine men that we support through our local church and pray that God will give us more that we might reach greater numbers for the Lord all around the world. Some foreign nations are truly ripe for the Gospel, and you read where the Gospel penetrates many hearts and souls are saved. Don't forget that last part of verse 5 when it speaks of John Mark being with them to help minister. When he turned back later, this caused a serious problem to develop between Paul and Barnabas. At a later time, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along again, and Paul refused.

They wound up splitting up over it, and Barnabas went with John Mark, and Paul went with Silas. (Acts 15) I know later Paul was glad that John Mark was in the ministry and said so. I believe we can learn from all three men in this instance.

Paul saw the seriousness of the call to the field, and had little tolerance for those who might turn back. The bible backs that up in that we are not to turn back once we have our hands on the plough. But Barnabas, by showing love for the young man, encouraged him to not give up in God's work. Every young man needs a Barnabas to encourage him. And from John Mark, we see a young man who might have made a mistake, but learned from it and kept on serving the Lord. May we all be so determined that the Lord will be pleased with our efforts one day.

*Acts 13:6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:  
Acts 13:7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.  
Acts 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.*

Upon travelling across Cyprus, they came upon a sorcerer. The word so translated (magov magos) could be used in a good sense as in the wise-man who came to Bethlehem. It also can be used in an evil and even occultic sense. Though there is no other evidence of occult activity here, this man as the context shortly will reveal was a charlatan.

Though he was a Jew, he certainly was an ungodly advisor to the local political ruler. His name Bar-jesus simply means 'the son of Joshua.' He also was described as a "false prophet." The word translated as deputy (anyupatov anthaupatos) literally refers to a Roman proconsul which were the governors of Roman senatorial provinces.

Cyprus, by the time Paul and Barnabas visited, had become an official Roman senatorial province. The name of the deputy (proconsul) was Sergius Paulus. In hearing of the ministry of these two missionaries upon his island, he desired also to hear the Word of God. Barjesus also know by his Aramaic name Elymas, as an advisor to the deputy, sought to keep him from hearing them.

*Acts 13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,  
Acts 13:10 And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?  
Acts 13:11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.*

Here, for the first time, Saul is called Paul. Saul was his Hebrew name, hearkening back to his namesake King Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, of which he

gloried. Paul was his Roman name. There is no indication that Saul here changed his name. He apparently had always had both. As a Roman citizen, his name was Paul. As a Jew from Tarsus, his other name was Saul. As his ministry now shifts largely to the gentile world, he would now make use of his Roman name. From hence onward, the name Saul is never used again in the New Testament except when Paul was recounting his testimony of his conversion later in the Book of Acts.

Here, Paul lights into this godless advisor to Sergius Paulus, describing him as “full of subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness.” In essence, Paul accused him of being devious, slippery, a child of the evil one, and hostile to righteousness. In distinction to John the Baptist, who came seeking to make the way of the Lord straight, this fellow sought to pervert the ways of the Lord. To further enforce his spiritual authority, Paul invoked blindness upon this godless political advisor. Paul had used the strongest of terms in condemning this man of influence. Lest this fellow or the Proconsul doubt his spiritual authority, God allowed him to temporarily blind Barjesus. No one thereafter questioned Paul’s spiritual authority.

Even in Paul’s day, as there has always been, there were certain false prophets that prophesied lies. We see Paul and Barnabas confront this Elymas, the sorcerer, at the west end of the island. Here in Pathos, the man is struck blind for his evil speakings. Elymas opposed Barnabas and Paul, and he exerted influence over the Roman Governor. (verse 8). The deputy of that country, Serius Paulus had desired to hear Paul and Barnabas, but Elymas withstood them. Anytime we try to put forth the gospel, be sure Satan will have some hindrances set up for us to face. They may be minor distractions like the phone ringing or the baby waking up from a nap, or it may be a giant wall that we may not even expect.

But Satan wants the lost man and woman to not hear the Gospel, and if he can just keep them deceived for a few days more, he may have their souls for an eternity. We see Paul was not afraid of the man, but rather looks him straight on and exercised his apostolic power over the man. Unfortunately, we don’t have those types of powers today, but we still have the Word of God and the presence of God with us when we go forth and witness.

Matthew Henry said this in his commentary about Paul

Now of Paul it is said,

[1.] That he was *filled with the Holy Ghost* upon this occasion, filled with a holy zeal against a professed enemy of Christ, which was one of the graces of the Holy Ghost—a *spirit of burning*; filled with power to denounce the wrath of God against him, which was one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost—a *spirit of judgment*. He felt a more than ordinary fervour in his mind, as the prophet did when he was *full of power by the Spirit of the Lord*

(Mic. 3:8), and another prophet when *his face was made harder than flint* (Eze. 3:9), and another when his *mouth was made like a sharp sword*, Isa. 49:2. What Paul said did not come from any personal resentment, but from the strong impressions which the Holy Ghost made upon his spirit.

[2.] He *set his eyes upon him*, to face him down, and to show a holy boldness, in opposition to his wicked impudence. He set his eyes upon him, as an indication that the eye of the heart-searching God was upon him, and saw through and through him; nay, *that the face of the Lord was against him*, Ps. 34:16. He fixed his eyes upon him, to see if he could discern in his countenance any marks of remorse for what he had done; for, if he could have discerned the least sign of this, it would have prevented the ensuing doom.

[3.] He gave him his true character, not in passion, but by the Holy Ghost, who knows men better than they know themselves, v. 10. <sup>1</sup>

*Acts 13:12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.*

*Acts 13:13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.*

This high ranking Roman official “believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.” It is noteworthy that his astonishment (amazement) was more of the doctrine of the Lord (i.e., the teaching the Lord) than the forceful miracle he had witnessed. He evidently became a believer in fact. In a Christian cemetery in Rome, there is a record of a Sergia Paullina indicating a member of his family was later a Christian.

Upon finishing their ministry at Paphos, Cyprus, “Paul and his company” came to Perga in Pamphylia. Perga was a port of Pamphylia which was a Roman province in Asia minor adjacent to Cilicia (Paul’s home area). It was bounded on the north by Galatia and Cappadocia where Paul soon would visit. It may be significant that no longer is the missionary party referred to as Barnabas and Saul, but rather Paul’s company. What may be implied is that he now clearly was the leader, which will be amply noted in fact throughout the book of Acts.

Barnabas had directed them to his home region on Cyprus. Now, they head toward Paul’s home area. Of significance as well is the departure of John Mark back to Jerusalem. We are not told why he left.

The word translated as returned (‘upostrefwhupostrepho) has the sense of ‘turning back,’ implying he did just that because the going got tough. Some have speculated that John Mark was disgruntled over the apparent change in leadership. Others have thought he may have contracted malaria, which was not

---

<sup>1</sup>Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.



unusual in the hot coastal areas. Still others have speculated he knew that a ministry in the interior provinces of Asia minor would be difficult. All of this is purely speculation. In any event, he turned back. It would later become a major bone of contention between Paul and Barnabas (15:37-41).

We see that Paul is persuasive in his presentation, and the deputy believed. Oh, that everyone that we preached the Gospel to would be saved. It says they then loosed from Paphos and came to Perga, but John did not continue with them, but returned to Jerusalem.

### **III. Paul and Barnabas' Journey to Antioch in Pisidia**

*Acts 13:14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.*

*Acts 13:15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.*

*Acts 13:16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.*

After disembarking their ship, they headed to an interior city named Antioch in Pisidia. Under Rome, this city had become a colony and also was known as Caesarea of Pisidia. Here was a synagogue into which Paul and his party entered on the Sabbath day. It was customary in Jewish synagogues of that day for visiting rabbis and prominent visitors to be seated in the seats of the rabbis.

Paul, as a rabbi trained at the feet of Gamaliel, would be accorded this courtesy. No doubt, he hoped to be asked to speak, which was not unusual for a prominent visitor. There may be a connection here with Galatians 4:13 where Paul later wrote that he first had preached to them in infirmity of the flesh. Antioch of Pisidia could be considered a part of south Galatia and this may have been Paul's first contact with that region. If that be the case, then he evidently was suffering some physical illness here.

Again, we are not told what. However, we do know he had difficulty with his eyes throughout his ministry. It possibly also may have been malaria which was a common disease of that time and of that region. It was the custom in the synagogues of that day for the law and the prophets to be read and then a sermon to be delivered.

If visiting dignitaries were present, they might be given the opportunity to speak. That is exactly what happened here. The rulers of the synagogue invited Paul and Barnabas to give "any word of exhortation for the people."

In verse 16, it is noteworthy that Paul had clearly assumed leadership of the team. He from hence forward would be the dominant preacher. It also was the custom of the Jews for the invited speaker (in the synagogue) to sit and speak. It was the Roman and Greek custom to stand and speak. Whether Paul preached on his feet or merely rose to step to the platform is not clear. It is likely, however, in noting the passion of his speaking that he stood.

His audience was twofold: (1) “men of Israel” and (2) “ye that fear God.” The latter, no doubt, is a reference to gentiles who were in some state of becoming a proselyte. Judaism of the day recognized two types of proselytes. (1) Those, who having converted to Judaism altogether and being circumcised, were called ‘proselytes of righteousness.’ (2) ‘Proselytes of the gate’ were gentiles sympathetic to Judaism, following many of its tenets, though not yet circumcised. There no doubt was both in the audience.

We see the men coming to the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia, and on the sabbath day, they went forth and preached. We know that Jews were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, and they had set up synagogues in almost every city. On the Sabbath, the Jews came out and the “Law” and the “Prophets” were read in the synagogue.

J. Vernon McGee said this in his Commentary on Acts.

“This sermon which Paul preached in Antioch of Pisidia is one of the great sermons, in my opinion; yet it is generally passed by today. It is the first recorded sermon of Paul, preached in the synagogue on the Sabbath Day. When they asked Paul whether he would like to say something, you can be sure that he wanted to say something. That was his whole reason for being there.” And I might add, if our minds and hearts are open to God, I believe that is why we live and breathe today. God’s Will is for all of us to be telling others about the gift of Salvation that God will give to all who will come to Christ for forgiveness of sins.

I want us to read his entire message for the effect. In verse 16, it says he beckoned with his hand and told all that feared God to give audience to him.

*Acts 13:17 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.*

*Acts 13:18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.*

*Acts 13:19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.*

*Acts 13:20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.*

*Acts 13:21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.*

*Acts 13:22 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 mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.*

In developing his 'case,' Paul begins by briefly rehearsing Jewish history to his mixed audience. He recalls how God had "exalted the people" during their sojourn in Egypt and then brought them out with "an high arm." The phrase "an high arm" is a reference to victory. Athletes and soldiers to this day raise their arms in victory. The reference to how "suffered he their manners in the wilderness for forty years" has the basic sense of how God put up with them over that time.

A point of difficulty in Old Testament chronology in verse 20 is cleared up when understanding the "space of four hundred and fifty years" actually precedes both textually and chronologically the phrase "and after that." There were 450 years from Isaac to the conquest and division of the land, not from the conquest to Samuel. Note I Kings 6:1 and Acts 7:6.

*Act 7:6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.*

Though God allowed them Saul as king, nevertheless, he removed him and "raised up unto them David to be their king." Paul then collates together two Old Testament passages in commenting that David was "a man after mine own heart." See Psalm 89:20-21 and I Samuel 13:14.

*Psa 89:20 I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:*

*Psa 89:21 With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.*

The word translated as fulfill (poiew poieo) literally could be rendered 'do.' Hence, the finality that God knew David would do all His will.

*Acts 13:23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:*

*Acts 13:24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.*

*Acts 13:25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.*

Paul now links the lineage of David to Jesus Christ. Bear in mind that Paul's audience were either Jews or Jewish sympathizers. He therefore puts the gospel into the context of Israel, though the gospel certainly was for the gentile as well. As God had promised, He would indeed raise up a Savior of the seed of David. See II Samuel 7:2, Psalm 132:11, Isaiah 11:1,10, Jeremiah 25:8ff and Zechariah 3:8 et al.

In verse 24, Paul then briefly rehearses the ministry of John the Baptist of whom no doubt the Jews (even in Antioch of Pisidia) had heard. The word translated as preached before (prokhrussw prokerusso) has the sense of a herald announcing before hand of the arrival of a king. John did exactly that. Once again, the basic ministry of John was that of repentance in light of the impending arrival of the King.

John's baptism allowed those who had so repented inwardly to express it outwardly and visibly. Water baptism in the Bible was always an outward expression of an inward spiritual quickening that resulted in confessing Christ.

In this case, it was repentance of Jews before the arrival of their Messiah. Paul further When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. The point Paul simply was making was that John was only a forerunner and not Jesus.

*Acts 13:26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.*  
*Acts 13:27 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 day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*  
*Acts 13:28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.*  
*Acts 13:29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.*

The Apostle begins to draw the focus more closely. He once again refers to both the Jews and sympathetic gentiles present (the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you that feareth God). To both groups is the word of salvation sent. In referring to the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion, Paul notes that the spiritual leadership at Jerusalem, as well as the other residents there, did not know Him because they did not know the prophets read every Sabbath Day.

The word translated as knew not (agnoewagnoeo) is whence the English words ignorant and agnostic derive. What simply is implied is that the Jews who

crucified Jesus were not only ignorant of who He really was, they also were ignorant of their own Scripture they claimed to revere. They condemned the Innocent One.

It is of further note that “all that was written of him” was fulfilled. The reference to a tree once again is a euphemism for the cross. The word so translated (xulon xulos) literally means timbers and is a metaphor for a cross timber. Strictly speaking, it was Joseph of Arimathea along with Nicodemus who removed Jesus from the cross and buried Him. Paul does not get into those details here, only mentioning in passing His burial.

#### **IV. Paul Tells of Christ's Resurrection**

*Acts 13:30 But God raised him from the dead:*

*Acts 13:31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.*

*Acts 13:32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,*

*Acts 13:33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

The great miracle of life—the resurrection of Christ—is the height of Paul's sermon for all present to receive. Throughout the Book of Acts, the resurrection is emphasized over and over again. It is the keystone of the arch of all Christian doctrine. It is the one irrefutable proof which makes New Testament Christianity not arguable.

It stands in its brilliance as a lighthouse of the truth which cannot be ignored. Moreover, those who knew Him most intimately, His disciples—who spent three years living and travelling with Him— were eyewitnesses of His resurrection. If any could verify the truthfulness of His resurrection, it was they. They knew Him as no others did. They, to this day, remain primary witnesses of the resurrected Christ.

In continuing to expound upon Christ's resurrection, Paul further links it to the promises of God, regarding it, in the Old Testament. The word from which the phrase, “we declare unto you glad tidings” (euaggelizw evangelidzo), literally means ‘to evangelize,’ or ‘to preach the good news,’ or ‘to preach the gospel.’ The good news was that God has fulfilled His promises that the Messiah would be resurrected from the dead.

He proceeds to quote first from Psalm 2:7, “Thou are my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” The word translated as begotten (gennaw genao) normally has

the sense of siring children. Here, in the context of the resurrection, it clearly has the sense of 'giving life.' In other words, in quoting Psalm 2:7, Paul applied it to Christ's resurrection in that God then gave life back to Jesus.

*Acts 13:34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.*

*Acts 13:35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

*Acts 13:36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:*

*Acts 13:37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.*

Paul continued in quoting from Isaiah 55:3 to demonstrate that Jesus, though He died, did not suffer corruption (i.e., the decomposition and decay of death). Jesus, unlike Lazarus, would not "return to corruption." His resurrection was permanent and eternal. Lazarus later died again. Jesus did not. The quote from Isaiah 55:3, "I will give you the sure mercies of David," is of note. The word used for mercies ('osiov hosios) has the sense of 'physical holiness' or 'undefilement,' particularly as the Jews understood ceremonial cleanliness. It was the antithesis of the uncleanness of death as understood by the Jews.

Practically, what it alludes to is that Jesus did not face the physical decomposition of death. The eternal covenant God made with David at this point was fulfilled in Jesus as promised in Isaiah 55:3. Paul then proceeds to quote from Psalm 16:10, further strengthening the promise of the resurrection. There, David wrote, "Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

Clearly, the Old Testament Scripture foretold and promised that God's Holy One, the Messiah, would not face the corruption of death. He then goes on to point out that David, in fact after serving his own generation, died and faced the corrupting decomposition of death. The point Paul is making is that David could not have intended the promise of not seeing corruption for himself. He was dead and had been buried for around one thousand years. Clearly, He must have Another in view. That, of course, was the Messiah. Paul powerfully and deftly applies this to Jesus. Once again, he reiterates the truth of the resurrection and that God did it. Paul showed that God had promised in several Old Testament Scriptures how His Holy One, the Messiah, would be resurrected. His major point is that this has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

*Acts 13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:*

*Acts 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye*

*could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

*Acts 13:40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;*

*Acts 13:41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*

Paul mentioned both the personal aspect of salvation—forgiveness—as well as the judicial aspect of justification. The key to it all is believing in Him. In so doing, we are forgiven on a personal level by God of our sin. We also are “justified from all things” judicially. Now, Paul begins to draw the line of truth which will anger the Jewish leadership of the synagogue. They could not be justified “by the law of Moses.”

In so doing, he violated one of the sacred tenets of first-century Judaism—the keeping of the law was the basis of justification before God. It would soon bring fierce opposition and persecution. Nevertheless, what he had preached was the truth. In anticipating the expected reaction of the Jewish leadership, Paul completed his sermon by quoting from Habakkuk 1:5, “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”

The context of Habakkuk 1 was how the Jews of that day refused to believe that God would allow the Babylonians to come in judgment against their land. It happened nevertheless. They likewise refused to believe the message of their resurrected Messiah. Paul applies the warning of Habakkuk to them.

*Acts 13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.*

*Acts 13:43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.*

As the meeting of the synagogue dismissed, what is clear is that the gentiles sympathetic to Judaism were excited about the gospel they had just heard. What also is implied is that many of the Jews were less than enthusiastic. The gentiles present urged Paul to so preach again on the next Sabbath. Moreover, after the meeting was broken up, other of the Jews and “religious proselytes” wished to hear more even then.

Paul and Barnabas therefore in “speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.” The term religious proselytes (sebomai proshlutov sebomai proselutos) literally means ‘worshipping proselytes.’ These again were gentiles seeking the God of Israel. Paul and Barnabas’s encouragement to “continue in

the grace of God” is quite evidently an injunction to trust in Christ (by God’s grace) rather than to seek justification by the law.

What a powerful message. Paul goes to the very place that the Jews understood, the law and the prophets, and from them preached Jesus Christ. Truly the whole bible is about Jesus Christ, with the old testament showing the utter futility of man who tried to come to God by the law. And while many animals died as sacrifices for sin, they could not take away one sin. But praise the Lord, those offerings pointed to the one who would come on Calvary, whose blood can wash away all the sin of all mankind. But only those who come to God for salvation will be saved. As it was in the days of Noah, the people ignored the warning and finally the door to the ark was shut. And when the rain came, all those outside the ark perished.

Today, we all have an opportunity to hear about God’s Son who came and died that we might be set free from the penalty of sin. But only those who come to Jesus in this life will be saved. He is coming back soon, and all those who have failed to acknowledge God’s Ark of salvation will be left to eternal destruction. We see Paul began by speaking of the nation of Israel’s deliverance. (Exo 12:29) He then talked of their time of wandering in the wilderness. (Note Psalm 78). Paul speaks of their entrance into Canaan and the division of the land as we studied in the book of Joshua. Then the time of the Judges which lasted about 450 years. In verse 21, he tells of how they desired to have a king like the other nations and God raised up Saul to be their king. (1 Sam 8 and 9). Then Paul speaks of how he removed Saul and set David, and man after His own heart, in power.

Then beginning in verse 23, the real message comes forth... how that David’s seed (Jesus) was preached by John the Baptist. And he covers how Jesus was rejected by His own, and put to death, and how he rose triumphantly after three days and three nights from the grave. By this one man, all are justified from all things if they believe on the name of Jesus. What the law could not do, Jesus, by His sinless life and death on the cross, paid the penalty for our sins. And he closes with a warning to not reject the one that God sent to save their souls. And it says that the Gentiles greatly desired to hear the words again, and even the Jews encouraged them to stay on and preach again. What a joy this must have been to Paul and Barnabas to get a good reception for a change. But new things are hard for people to grasp, and the happy times soon ended.

## **V. Opposition from the Jews**

*Acts 13:44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.*



*Acts 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.*

On the next Sabbath Day, when nearly the whole city turned out to hear the Word of God, opposition reared its ugly head. The excited gentiles who heard Paul the week before had evidently spread word like a fire throughout the city. They evidently had told how they could be justified without the onerous restrictions of the Jewish law, such as circumcision and observance of the Levitical law. They crowded in to hear Paul. However, the Jews, and no doubt their rabbis, were envious of Paul's success. They immediately went about speaking against everything spoken by Paul, seeking to contradict and blaspheme him. They sought to undercut the message of Paul anyway they could.

Nothing causes greater furor than for a lost religious leader to be bested by a Christian preaching the truth. The Jews are outraged that so many want to come and hear this message of great joy. After talking about it for a week, virtually the whole city came out to hear the Gospel. The Jews were filled with envy, and spoke out against the gospel.

## **VI. Paul and Barnabas Turn to the Gentiles.**

*Acts 13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*

*Acts 13:47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.*

*Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*

*Acts 13:49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.*

The first opposition to Paul's official ministry had begun. They boldly declared that it was necessary for the gospel to go first to the Jew. But inasmuch as these judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, Paul announced that they therefore would "turn to the Gentiles." In so doing, he quoted from Isaiah 49:6 (also alluding to Isaiah 42:6-7) how that God's Servant would be a light to the gentiles for salvation to the ends of the earth.

It is noteworthy that even in the Old Testament, the gospel was foretold as going to the ends of the earth. Recall Acts 1:8 and the "uttermost part of the earth." The gentiles hearing this rejoiced and "glorified the word of the Lord." The following phrase, "and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," needs comment.

The word translated as ordained (tassw tasso) has the sense of 'determining' or 'choosing.' In their excitement, they therefore published the Word of the Lord throughout the entire region. The word translated published (diaferw diaphero) simply means, they carried or took it.

We see that Paul and Barnabas, filled with the Spirit of God, were very bold, and they continue to preach the truth even with opposition. The Jews may have rejected the message, but the Gentiles heard it and were very glad. They glorified the Lord, and it says all that were ordained to eternal life believed.

*Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*

*Eph 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

*Eph 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

## **VII. Opposition from the Devout and Honourable**

*Acts 13:50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.*

*Acts 13:51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.*

*Acts 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.*

The Jews there stirred up not only "devout and honourable women" (i.e., influential women), but also the chief men of the city. The result was they expelled Paul and Barnabas out of the area. This likely is what Paul referred to II Timothy 3:11, "persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch." In being driven out of the city, they may well have been beaten by the mob. This also may be alluded thereto in II Corinthians 11:25-26 where he says, "Thrice was I beaten with rods" and that he faced perils of his own countrymen.

The shaking off of the dust of the city was no doubt in obedience to Christ's command in Matthew 10:14, Mark 10:11, and Luke 10:11. The sandal was taken off and the dust shaken out of it, indicating the very dust of that city was defiling. They headed to Iconium, about forty-five miles to the southeast.

Notwithstanding the persecution, "the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost." Once again, the blood of the saints became the seed of the church. They rejoiced in the spirit of Matthew 5:11-12.

The Jews were very upset that so many were coming to know Jesus as Lord and Savior, and went so far as to get people who were highly esteemed to rise up and speak against Paul and Barnabas and to bring persecution on them. As I mentioned when we began the lesson, we are in a battle not just against flesh and blood, but against Satan himself. They may have been expelled from the coasts of that city, but it says they just shook off the dust of their feet and headed to Iconium, going their way filled with joy and the Holy Ghost. How else could a person under persecution be so joyful, if God were not with them? When we look to Jesus for strength each day, we can face the fiery darts of Satan and still win.

*KJV Bible Studies are prepared and distributed free of charge. The lessons may not be sold without consent. If you have questions or wish to discuss the lessons, or possibly need help in finding Jesus Christ as your Personal Lord and Savior, contact us at the email below.*

*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

*Website:* [www.KjvBibleStudies.net](http://www.KjvBibleStudies.net)  
*e-mail:* [mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com](mailto:mailKjvBibleStudies@gmail.com)

**Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.**