

Acts 13 - 1st Missionary Journey: Cyprus, Perga; Paul's First Sermon (Antioch Pisidia), Reaction from Jews & Gentiles

III. Outreach to the remote parts of the earth (Acts 13:1–28:31)

- (1) First missionary journey (13:1–14:28)
 - (A) Paul and Barnabas commissioned (13:1-3)
 - (B) On Cyprus (13:4-12)
 - (C) Pisidian Antioch (13:13-52)

Acts 13

III. Outreach to the remote parts of the earth (Acts 13:1–28:31)

- (1) First missionary journey (13:1–14:28)
 - (A) Paul and Barnabas commissioned (13:1-3)

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

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

1 Now Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius from Cyrene, Manaen, who grew up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul were prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch.

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.

– "...prophets" - a person who receives direct revelation from God; the words they spoke were on par with Scripture at this time in the early church

— The spiritual gift/office of prophet ceased to exist when the canon of Scripture was closed (~95 AD)

– "...teachers" - not someone who received revelation from God, but rather one who taught/exposed God's previous revelation in Scripture

- A teacher's ministry would mainly be the passing on to others of the received apostolic teaching (1 Cor 12:28-29; Eph 4:11). This was how church doctrine was taught before the use of the books that later became a part of the NT.
- All prophets were teachers, but not all teachers were prophets, who were forth-speakers of God, such as Agabus (Cf. 11:28)
- The double use of the Greek word *te* (not translated in English) tells us that there were three prophets (Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius) and two teachers (Manaen, Saul) who were prominent in the Antioch church at this time
- "...Barnabas" - the Levite, from Cyprus; sold all his land and put everything he had into the work of the Lord; he seemed to have been the leader
- "...Simeon who was called Niger" - a black-skinned Hebrew; the fact that he was in the leadership early in the church at Antioch demonstrates that there was no racial discrimination in the early church
- This was possibly the Simeon (Simon) who was forced by the Romans to bear the cross of Jesus
- "Niger" - is Roman and implies that he was dark skinned, possibly from Africa; the Latin word *Niger* means "black"
- "...Lucius of Cyrene" - Cyrene was at the northern tip of what today is called Tunisia, just south of Sardinia, on the African mainland
- He may have been one of the founders of the church in Antioch (Cf. 11:20)
- "...Manaen" - a Jew; the mention of him being "brought up" with Herod indicates that he served in Herod's royal court
- These five demonstrate the wide variety of people-groups, both of race/ethnicity and social status, who were leaders in the early church (Cf. Gal 3:28)
- "...Saul" - listed here as a "teacher" because he had not yet spoken any direct revelation from God up to this point in time. He obviously will later, since he wrote 13 epistles that became part of the biblical canon.
- He was not yet called an Apostle (until the first miracle of his first missionary journey, v11); here, he is still called Saul

2 While they were **serving the Lord** and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said**, "Set **Barnabas and Saul apart** for Me for the work to which **I have called them.**"

2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set Barnabas and Saul apart for me to do the work for which I called them."

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.

- "...serving the Lord" - *leitourgountōn*, used in the LXX of priests as they functioned in the Tabernacle
- It appears 2x in the NT: in Rom 15:27 is was used of aid for Jewish believers in poverty (considered a way of ministering to the Lord)
- In Heb 10:11 is is used in the context of the Levitical priesthood
- The way in which the leaders in Antioch were "serving/ministering to the Lord" was by spending time in prayer and intercession
- "...the Holy Spirit said" - how? audibly? Probably not, He likely spoke to all three prophets during their time of prayer and intercession, and when they came together in agreement (2-3 witnesses), they concluded that the instruction was from God
- There are many instances of the Holy Spirit speaking in the NT (Cf. 1 Tim 4:1)
- "...Barnabas and Saul" - at this point, Barnabas is typically listed first, then Saul, because Barnabas had preeminence (11:30; 12:25; 13:2,7; 14:14; 15:12,25).
- However, after the 1st missionary journey, Saul took over leadership, and in most cases, the order is Saul/Paul and Barnabas (13:43,46,50; 15:2,22,35)
- "...apart" - the command was to set Barnabas apart from the other prophets (v1) and set Saul apart from the other teacher (v1)
- They were to be separated from the church leadership role/office they held in Antioch so that God could send them out as missionaries
- "...I have called them" - what did the Holy Spirit call them to? Service/ministry.
- In God's sovereignty, He called Barnabas and Saul, and not the other men listed in v1
- There is much confusion with election in the Bible, mainly due to Calvinism. A Calvinist sees the words "called" or "elected" and they immediately think it's election/calling unto justification. However, most of the time it is not...it's calling or an election to service.

3 Then, when they had fasted, prayed, and **laid their hands on them**, they **sent them away**.

3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

3 Then they fasted and prayed, laid their hands on them, and let them go.

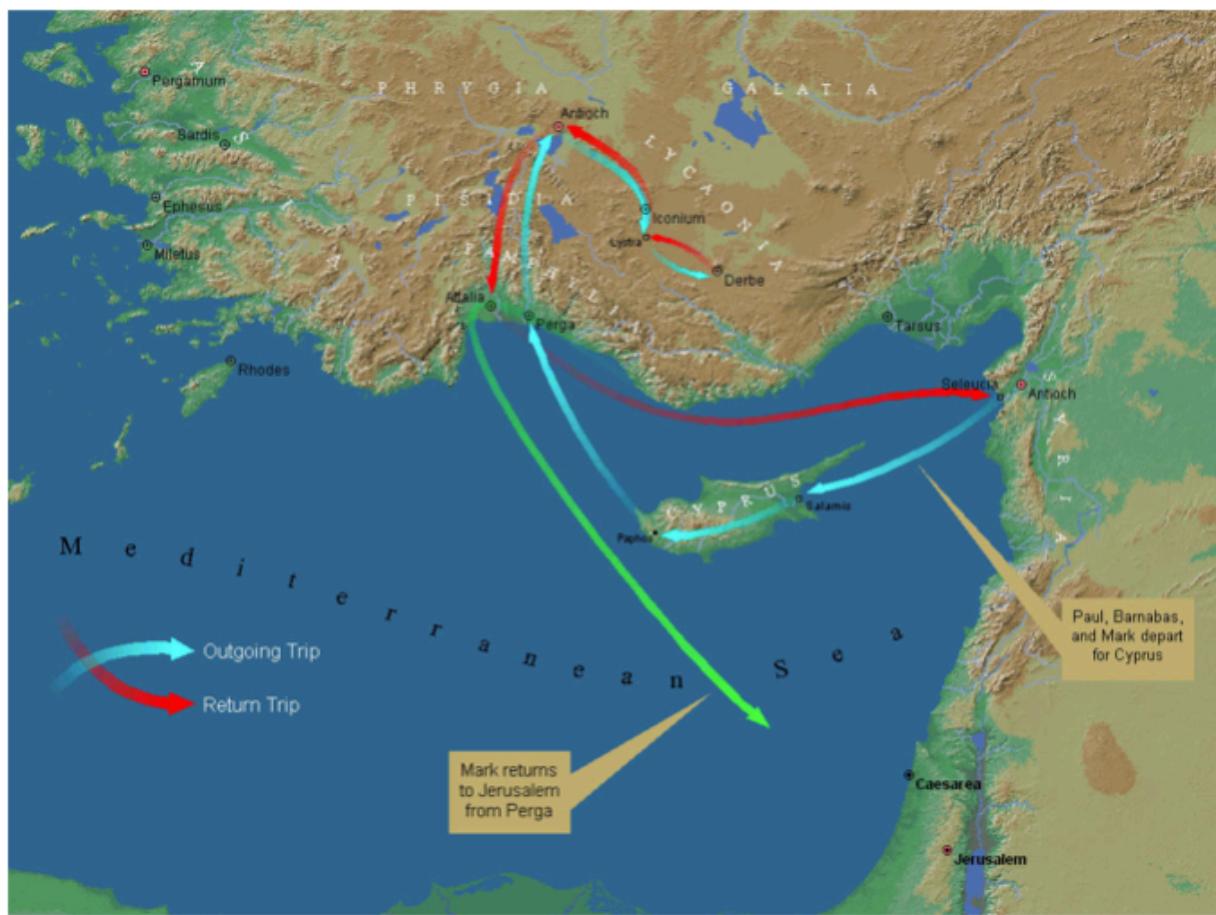
3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

- These men were already fasting and praying when the Holy Spirit spoke to them...this verse indicates that they continued to fast and pray, even after receiving the instructions from God\

— This was likely to confirm the instruction that they received

- Once they had confirmed the instructions through fasting and prayer, they laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul

- "...laid their hands on them" - signifies man's recognition of what God is already doing (1 Tim 4:14)
- Contrary to what many churches/pastors believe and practice today, the laying on of hands is not to *initiate* a calling but to *recognize* a calling
- The prophets and teachers (elders) in the church were praying and fasting, seeking the Lord (v1). While they were doing this, they are allowing the Lord to speak to them and tell them what His plans are (in this case, set aside Barnabas and Paul, v2). Then (v3) the other elders laid hands on them, not to initiate their calling, but because God had already called them. The laying on of hands is to recognize the calling that God already had on their lives.
- "...sent them away" - the beginning of Paul's first missionary journey



Paul's 1st Missionary Journey—Galatia (13:4—14:26)

(B) On Cyprus (13:4-12)

4 So, being sent out by **the Holy Spirit**, they went down to **Seleucia** and from there they sailed to **Cyprus**.

4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

4 After they had been sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went to Seleucia and from there sailed to Cyprus.

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

- "...the Holy Spirit" - the Person ultimately responsible for the venture that followed
- The church leaders had laid hands on Barnabas and Saul, but ultimately it was the Holy Spirit who commissioned (v2) and sent them; the laying on of hands (v2) was only in recognition of the Holy Spirit's leading (Cf. 20:28)
- "...Seleucia" - the Mediterranean port nearest Antioch (15 miles west, where the Orontes River flows into the Mediterranean Sea)
- "...Cyprus" - third largest Greek island in the Mediterranean (150 x 62 miles)
- It is located 130 miles SW of Seleucia
- It was governed by the Roman Senate; the person placed in authority by the Senate to oversee the island is the Proconsul

5 When they reached **Salamis**, they *began to proclaim the word of God* in the **synagogues of the Jews**; and they also had **John** as their **helper**.

5 When they reached Salamis, they *began to proclaim the word of God* in the synagogues of the Jews; and they also had John as their helper.

5 Arriving in Salamis, they began to preach God's word in the Jewish synagogues. They also had John to help them.

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.

- "...Salamis" - the Grecian capital of Cyprus, on the east side of the island (Cyprus had two capitals, the other, a Roman capital called Paphos)

- "...proclaim the word of God" - they didn't embark on service projects, community

events, or other non-gospel-related activities. They began to "proclaim the word of God."

— The more your evangelistic activities focus on preaching the gospel, the better your chance of seeing someone get saved (Cf. Rom 10:17)

- "...synagogues of the Jews" - in every town with a sizable Jewish population, except Athens, the apostle first preached in the synagogue to Jews and God-fearing Gentiles

— When the Jews refused to listen further, he then went to Gentiles directly

— Paul followed this pattern because his audience there had a theological background that made it easier for them to understand and believe the gospel

— There was also a practical matter...if they began evangelizing among the Gentiles, the synagogue would have been closed to them

- "...John" - John Mark (Cf. 12:25), or Mark as he is more well-known; he was Barnabas' cousin (Col 4:10)
- "...helper" - *hypēretēn*, attendant, under rorer; describes someone who is subordinate to another

6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as **Paphos**, they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was **Bar-Jesus**,

6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus,

6 They went through the whole island as far as Paphos, where they found a Jewish occult practitioner and false prophet named Bar-jesus.

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:

- "...Paphos" - the Roman capital of island, where the proconsul resided, 100 miles west of Salamis
- "...Bar-Jesus" - in Greek, "Son of a Savior [Jesus]"; His nickname (Arabic name) was Elymas (v8)
 - He was a Jewish false prophet; he claimed to be a prophet of God, but was not. He was only a so-called magician, who may have had some Satanic power.

7 who was with the **proconsul**, **SergiusPaulus**, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and **sought** to hear the word of God.

7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.

7 He was associated with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, who was an intelligent man. He sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.

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.

- "...proconsul" - *anthupatos*, for settled provinces, placed directly under the Roman Senate by Emperor Augustus. He was the highest Roman governmental official on the island.
- "...Sergius Paulus" - first Gentile convert on their first missionary journey
 - In 1877 his name was found in an inscription discovered in *Soloi* on the northern coast of Cyprus, which read, "Under Paulus the proconsul." The inscription dates from 53-54 AD.
 - Sir William Ramsey also uncovered evidence that his entire family became prominent Christians after this event [*The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament*, p150-172]

- "...sought" - *epizēteō*, desire, to seek after, to seek diligently; according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, it's use in this verse is equivalent to "demand" or "clamor for"
- It's interesting to note that an unsaved man, a Roman proconsul, is "demanding" or "clamoring" to hear the word of God
- Calvinism denies that this is possible (for an unsaved person to seek after God), because of their unscriptural belief in Total Depravity (see notes in Eph 2:1)
- This demonstrates the "advantage" that Jesus spoke of for His departure and the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7)...the Holy Spirit can do things like convict an unsaved Roman proconsul of their sin of unbelief, in far off Mediterranean islands, where Jesus in the flesh could not (Cf. 17:27).

8 But **Elymas** the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

8 But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

8 But Elymas the occult practitioner (that is the meaning of his name) continued to oppose them and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withheld them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

- "...Elymas" - the Arabic name of Bar-Jesus ("wise one"), hiding his Jewish nationality
- As soon as an unsaved man begins to seek God, Satan does everything in his power to oppose it (Cf. Matt 13:19)

- The Mosaic Law forbade Jews from practicing magic (Deut 18:10-11)

- This sorcerer deliberately tries to obstruct the Word of God with the most senior Roman official in the area

- He may have opposed Barnabas and Saul because they brought the true message of God; he may have felt that if Sergius Paulus believed the gospel, his relationship to the proconsul would suffer

9 But Saul, who was also known as Paul, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, stared at him,

9 But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him,

9 But Saul, also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked him straight in the eye

9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

- Many believe that after Saul was saved, he changed his name to Paul...but that is not true

- The Jews of the diaspora who were Roman citizens, such as Saul, always had a Jewish name and a Gentile name. Now that he was operating in the Roman world ministering among the Gentiles, Saul's Latin name (Paul) began to be used.

- From this point forward, Luke only calls him "Saul" in reference to his past (Cf. 22:7; 26:14)
- From this point Paul took the lead, and only in rare instances does will his name appear after Barnabas going forward (Cf. 14:14; 15:12,25)
- "...filled with the Holy Spirit" - the reason why Paul came out on top in this satanic conflict (Cf. 1 John 4:4)

10 and said, "You who are **full of all deceit** and **fraud**, you **son of the devil**, you **enemy of all righteousness**, will you not **stop making crooked the straight ways of the Lord**?

10 and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?

10 and said, "You're full of every form of deception and trickery, you son of the Devil, you enemy of all that is right! You'll never stop perverting the straight ways of the Lord, will you?

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child [son] of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

- Paul doesn't pull any punches as he confronts this satanically-inspired false teacher. Paul says four "not-so-nice" things to this false teacher:

- "...full of all deceit" - *dolos*, guile, subtlety; instead of being full of wisdom (Elymas = "wisdom"), Paul accused Elymas of being "full of all deceit and fraud"

- "...fraud" - *radiourgia*, mischief, cunning, slick

- "...son of the devil" - the Spirit of God never used a term like that of ordinary unsaved men (Cf. John 8:44, to the Pharisees). Instead of being the "son of a savior," he was a "son of the devil."

— The severest words of the Bible are reserved for those who stand between men and truth, and those who stand between men and God

- "...enemy of all righteousness" - perverted righteousness

— So here we see how Paul, filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit, comes into contact with an unsaved man who was seeking after God and eager to hear the gospel, and immediately one of Satan's ministers (in this case, Elymas Bar-Jesus) arrives on the scene to stop the gospel from being proclaimed, and trying to convince this burdened sinner (the proconsul) that what Paul was saying was not the truth.

- "...stop making crooked the straight ways of the Lord" - God made the gospel (good news) simple for anyone to understand (see note: **How Complicated is Salvation?** in John 3:16)

— So what Satan will try to do is complicate the gospel, make it overwhelming and burdensome to an unbeliever, to make it "not worth their while" or "too much effort"

— That is exactly what Satan is doing here...complicating the gospel for the proconsul, and he's using Elymas Bar-Jesus to carry out his work

2 Cor 11:3 [NASB95]: But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness [Cf. Gen 3:1], your minds will be led astray from **the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.**

11 Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand.

11 Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand.

11 The Lord is against you now, and you'll be blind and unable to see the sun for a while!" At that moment a dark mist came over him, and he went around looking for someone to lead him by the hand.

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.

- Paul's first miracle: he makes this guy blind. Blindness is a natural symbol of man's spiritual condition.

— A divine miracle designed to frustrate Satan's work in hindering the progress of the gospel

— This guy is blind for a season, which implies an opportunity for repentance; Paul likely hoped that when God darkened Elymas' physical eyesight, He might restore his spiritual eyesight, as had been his own experience

— This is exactly what happened to Paul during his conversion (Cf. 9:8)

— This is an example of God's sarcasm in judgment...He says, you like darkness so much, I'm going to put you into darkness through blindness (Cf. Ex 10:21-29, 9th plague; Rev 16:10-11, 5th Bowl judgment)

12 Then the proconsul **believed** when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.

12 Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.

12 When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, because he was astonished at the Lord's teaching.

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

- "...believed" - *pisteuō*, the proconsul met the sole condition for salvation/justification: simple belief/trust in Christ
- The salvation of the proconsul follows a couple patterns we see over and over again, in both the gospels and in Acts:
 - The gospel was preached (v5), then people got saved; without the gospel (the proclaiming of God's Word, people CANNOT be saved)
 - Unsaved man CAN seek after (yearn for, grope for) God, contrary to what Calvinism teaches. And when an unsaved person, whether it be the Ethiopian Eunuch, Cornelius, or the proconsul in Cyprus, seeks after God, God will move heaven and earth to get them the gospel, as He did here.

(C) Pisidian Antioch (13:13-52)

13 Now **Paul and his companions** put out to sea from Paphos and came to **Perga** in Pamphylia; but **John** left them and returned to Jerusalem.

13 Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; but John left them and returned to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul and his men set sail from Paphos and arrived in Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them and went back to Jerusalem.

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

— "...Paul and his companions" - Paul now listed first, ahead of all others, indicating that he was now taking leadership among the missionaries

— From this point forward, it was Paul's insight that set the tone for the church's outreach to the Gentile world

— The mission of the church also became more Gentile oriented; the Jewish response continued to be rejection

— Barnabas, now in the background, will later visit again and spend some time there. It was his original home.

— "...Perga" - the principal metropolis in Pamphylia, situated on the river Cestrus, 7 miles N from Attaleia; modern day Perge. The journey from Paphos to Perga was 180 miles.

— "...John" - John Mark; Luke doesn't give us a reason for John Mark's departure, but that doesn't stop people from speculating:

- Maybe his was disillusioned with the change in leadership from Barnabas to Paul
- Maybe the focus on Gentiles was too much of an adjustment for a Jew like Mark
- Maybe he was afraid of the dangerous road over the Taurus mountains to Antioch, which Paul was determined to travel

- There is some evidence that Paul became quite ill in Perga, possibly with malaria, as that was common in the area. Paul later said that he preached to the Galatians "because of an illness" (Gal 4:13). They could have traveled inland to higher ground to avoid the ravages of malaria, which may have discouraged Mark.
- Maybe he was home sick; his mother may have been a widow (Cf. 12:12)
- But whatever the reason was, Paul considered it a defection and a fault, and did not approve of the decision (Cf. 15:38)

Ministry in Antioch of Pisidia

14 But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day **they went into the synagogue** and sat down.

14 But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down.

14 They left Perga and arrived in Antioch in Pisidia. On the Sabbath day, they went into the synagogue and sat down.

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.

- After arriving at the port in Perga and John Mark's departure, Paul and Barnabas immediately headed straight north to the city of Pisidian Antioch

— Paul did not evangelize in Perga on this particular visit, but does so on his return back through the city on his return leg home (Cf. 14:25)

— The journey from Perga to Antioch was a treacherous journey of about 100 miles, through mountainous terrain (Cf. 2 Cor 11:26)

— By bringing the gospel to this Antioch of Pisidia, they were planting Christianity in the communication nerve center and heart of Asia Minor. It was part of the ancient Roman province of Galatia, which included: Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

— Paul later wrote that he preached the gospel to them at first because of a weakness of the flesh (Gal 4:13). This seems to indicate that he was not in good health at the time.

- "...they went into the synagogue" - as will continue to be his custom, Paul will begin his visit and evangelization of a city in the Jewish synagogue

15 After the **reading of the Law and the Prophets**, the synagogue officials sent word to them, saying, "**Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.**"

15 After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it."

15 After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue leaders asked them, "Brothers, if you have any message of encouragement for the people, you may speak."

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.

- "...reading of the Law and the Prophets" - one of the reasons why Paul would always begin in the Jewish synagogue...because they were acquainted with and believed in Hebrew Bible (the OT)

- "...Brothers" - often used by biblical authors to denote their readers as believers; however here, spoken by one of the synagogue officials (a Jew), it is address to other Jews (Paul and Barnabas)(similar usage as in Rom 9:3, from one Jew to another; Cf. v26)

- "...if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it" - Paul's golden invitation to evangelize

— Paul knew the OT like the back of his hand, and he knew that it pointed to Christ, so when this invitation to freely speak was given, Paul jumped at the chance to interpret Hebrew Bible for the congregants, and explain to them how it points to the Messiah (Cf. Luke 24:27,44; John 5:39,46)

Paul's Synagogue Sermon

16 Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "**Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:**

16 Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:

16 Then Paul stood up, motioned with his hand, and said: "Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen!

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

- This is where Paul's doctrine and teaching begins...later he would write 13 epistles of the NT, but this is where his preaching/teaching ministry began

— This impromptu message is the only full synagogue sermon we have from Paul in the book of Acts

— Paul didn't have notes, Powerpoint, a big screen with bullet points...all he had was his study of the OT in his head, along with the filling of the Holy Spirit. There are a number of times in the Gospels and Acts that we see apostles, and Jesus, giving impromptu sermons or teachings without any notes or preparation time:

- Jesus (Luke 4:18-20) opened up a scroll from Isaiah 61 and said that today this was fulfilled in their presence
- Peter in Acts 2 gave a sermon defending the work of the Holy Spirit and the speaking in tongues

- Stephen (Acts 7) gave a sermon defending himself from false charges and implicating the religious leaders for their lack of repentance
- Two groups of people Paul addressed in the synagogue:
 - "...Men of Israel" - Jews; Paul's fellow countrymen/brethren
 - "...you who fear God" - the "God-fearers"; likely proselytes, Gentiles who wanted to follow Yahweh so they converted to Judaism

17 The God of this people Israel **chose our fathers** and **made the people great** during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an **uplifted arm** He led them out from it.

17 The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it.

17 The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and made them a great people during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with a public display of power he led them out of there.

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.

- "...chose our fathers" - national election, through the Abrahamic Covenant

- "...made the people great" - according to His promises in Gen 12:3 (Cf. Ex 1:7)

— God's promise to the Jews was so literal that their population explosion became a problem for the Egyptians

- "...uplifted arm" - a metaphor used by Moses (Cf. Deut 26:8) to describe the Exodus

18 For a period of **about forty years** He put up with them in the wilderness.

18 For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness.

18 After he had put up with them for 40 years in the wilderness,

18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

- "...about forty years" - actually 38 years (Cf. Deut 2:14; Luke 21:32; 11:30-32,50-51)

19 When He had destroyed **seven nations** in the land of Canaan, **He distributed their land as an inheritance—all of which took about 450 years.**

19 When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance—all of which took about four hundred and fifty years.

19 he destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan. Then God gave their land to the Israelis as an inheritance

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

- "...seven nations" - there were seven dominate Canaanite groups in the Land (Deut 7:1 lists these seven groups)

Deut 7:1: "When the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to take possession of it, and He drives away many nations from before you, the **Hittites**, the **Girgashites**, the **Amorites**, the **Canaanites**, the **Perizzites**, the **Hivites**, and the **Jebusites**, seven nations greater and mightier than you,

- "...He distributed their land as an inheritance" - once God defeated the seven Canaanite nations, He distributed the Land to the 12 Tribes of Israel (see maps below)
- "...about 450 years" - it is a chronological nightmare if you try to reconcile the various timeframes given throughout the Bible, both OT and NT, until you realize that in each case they are referring to either a different starting point or a different ending point (see chart below, along with the references for each)

MAP OF CANAANITE NATIONS



The map illustrates the division of the Land of Israel into the 12 Tribes of Israel. The tribes and their assigned territories are as follows:

- Asher**: Located in the north, bordering the Sea of Chinnereth and the Mediterranean Sea.
- Benjamin**: Located in the center, with Jerusalem as its capital.
- Dan**: Located in the north, with Tyre to the west.
- Ephraim**: Located in the center, with Bethel as its capital.
- Gad**: Located in the east, bordering the Jordan River.
- Gilead**: Located in the east, bordering the Jordan River.
- Issachar**: Located in the north, bordering the Sea of Chinnereth.
- Jacob**: Located in the center, with Megiddo as its capital.
- Judah**: Located in the south, with Hebron as its capital.
- Levi**: Located throughout the land, serving as the tribe of God.
- Manasseh**: Located in the center, bordering the Sea of Chinnereth.
- Reuben**: Located in the east, bordering the Dead Sea.
- Simeon**: Located in the south, bordering the Dead Sea.
- Philistines**: Located along the Mediterranean Sea to the west.
- Ammon**: Located to the east of Gilead.
- Moab**: Located to the south of Gilead.

Other labeled locations include Mt. Carmel, Zebulon, Jericho, and the Arnon River.

20 **After these things** He gave *them* judges until Samuel the prophet.

20 After these things He gave *them* judges until Samuel the prophet.

20 for about 450 years. "After that, he gave them judges until the time of the prophet Samuel.

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

- "After these things" - after the Joshua generation re-inhabited the Land but only obeyed 95% of God's commands, we get the Judges era, where Israel is oppressed by a Canaanite power that they were told to completely eliminate, but didn't

— During the cycle of the Judges, they would be oppressed, then call out to God for deliverance. He would deliver them and raise up a judge, the judge would overthrow the Canaanite power, and the Israelites would enjoy peace and prosperity.

— But after a short time, they would fall right back into sin following another Canaanite power, go right back into bondage, and the entire cycle would begin again. The cycle would repeat itself seven times.

— If the Israelites would have fully obeyed God's commands, they would not have experienced the seven cycles of discipline that God put them through

- "...four hundred and fifty years" [KJV] - from Abraham's covenant until Judges

— Israel's 400 years in Egypt + 40 years in the wilderness + 10 years of conquest and settlement in the Promised Land (1845-1395 BC, Cf. 7:6)



21 Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the **tribe of Benjamin**, for forty years.

21 Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

21 When they demanded a king, God gave them Kish's son Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, for 40 years.

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.

- "...tribe of Benjamin" - this was a problem because kings were supposed to come from the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10)

— But if kings were only supposed to come from the tribe of Judah, why did Israel anoint a king from the tribe of Benjamin? Because they were impatient waiting on God; they were tired of waiting on God.

— All their neighboring nations had kings, so Israel wanted a king as well. But if they would've been patient and waited on God, they would have had David as their first king.

22 After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.'

22 After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.'

22 Then God removed Saul and made David their king, about whom he testified, 'I have found that David, the son of Jesse, is a man after my own heart, who will carry out all my wishes.'

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.

- Paul brings up David and provides additional background and detail on him, because he's trying to show these Jews that all of Israel's history points to the Messiah, whom first century Israel rejected

23 From the descendants of **this man**, according to **promise**, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus,

23 From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus,

23 It was from this man's descendants that God, as he promised, brought to Israel a Savior, who is Jesus.

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

- "...this man" - David

- "...promise" - the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:12-16)

- It's highly likely that most, if not all, of the Jews in this synagogue even knew of the name Jesus. There was no NT at this point.

— So what Paul is trying to communicate to them is that Jesus, who was a Savior, was brought forth by God as a descendant of David, according to the Davidic Covenant

— The One to Whom the Davidic Covenant pointed to/promised is this Savior named Jesus (Cf. Matt 1:21)

24 after John had proclaimed, before His coming, a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

24 after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

24 Before Jesus' appearance, John had already preached a baptism of repentance to all the people in Israel.

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

- The references regarding John the Baptist's ministry: Matt 3:11; Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:26

25 And while John was **completing his course**, he kept saying, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not *He*. But behold, one is coming after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'

25 And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not *He*. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'

25 When John was finishing his work, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I'm not the Messiah. No, but he is coming after me, and I'm not worthy to untie the sandals on his feet.'

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.

- "...completing his course" - completing his race; Paul said a very similar thing about himself shortly before his death (Cf. 2 Tim 4:7-8)

- Jesus submitted Himself to being baptized by John the Baptist because Jesus was authenticating John's ministry.

After giving his Jewish brothers the historical and genealogical background for Jesus, Paul now gives them the gospel of Jesus Christ. This presentation of the bare essentials of the gospel appears very similar to what Paul would write later in 1 Cor 15:1-4.

26 "Brothers, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent.

26 "Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent.

26 "My brothers, descendants of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, it is to us that the message of this salvation has been sent.

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.

27 For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the declarations of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, **fulfilled these by condemning Him.**

27 For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled *these* by condemning *Him*.

27 For the people who live in Jerusalem and their leaders, not knowing who Jesus was, condemned him and so fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath.

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.

- Paul condemns the residents in Jerusalem and the religious leaders for not recognizing their Messiah standing in their midst, or what the OT prophets said continually throughout the OT about the coming Messiah

— Even worse, these prophets were read in the Temple around the clock, yet even when the words of the prophets were read out loud, the religious leaders failed to recognize who Jesus was, and eventually killed Him

— It's actually a scary thing to think about reading something over and over again, but completely missing the main point that the text is saying

- "...fulfilled *these* by condemning *Him*" - an amazing statement! Not only did they not recognize Him or understand the words of the OT prophets that were read in the Temple around the clock, but they actually fulfilled the prophecies of the Messiah's death clearly stated in the OT prophets they were reading.

— Not only did they not understand what they were reading, but their very actions were fulfilling what they didn't understand

28 And though they found no grounds for *putting Him* to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed.

28 And though they found no ground for *putting Him to death*, they asked Pilate that He be executed.

28 Although they found no reason to sentence him to death, they asked Pilate to have him executed.

28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

- The Mosaic Law required at least 2-3 witnesses to convict someone of a capital crime and execute them

— And the witnesses whose testimony was relied on for the conviction had to be the first ones to throw the stones during the execution. This is how sure you had to be of your testimony if you were a witness (Cf. Deut 17:6-7).

29 When they had carried out everything that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the **cross** and laid Him in a tomb.

29 When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb.

29 When they had finished doing everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and placed him in a tomb.

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.

- As the religious leaders were killing Him, they were fulfilling all of the OT prophecies about the Messiah that they didn't understand

- "...cross" - *xylon*, tree; often times the cross is referred to as a "tree" (Cf. 5:30; 10:39; Gal 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24)

30 But God raised Him from the dead;

30 But God raised Him from the dead;

30 But God raised him from the dead,

30 But God raised him from the dead:

31 and for **many days** He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are **now** His witnesses to the people.

31 and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people.

31 and for many days he appeared to those who had come with him to Jerusalem from Galilee. These are now his witnesses to the people.

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.

- "...many days" - it was 40 days from Jesus' resurrection to His ascension (Acts 1:3)
- The apostles were personal witnesses of His resurrection (Cf. 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39-41; 13:30-31)
- "...now" - Paul uses this word to urge these Jews, if they don't believe what he's saying, to go ask the 500 or so people who visually saw the risen Christ prior to His ascension, including the 12 apostles (Cf. 1 Cor 15:6)

32 And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers,
 32 And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers,
 32 We're telling you the good news: What God promised our ancestors
 32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 that God has fulfilled this *promise* to those of us *who are the* descendants by **raising** Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm: 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE FATHERED YOU.'

33 that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'You are My Son; today I have begotten You.'
 33 he has fulfilled for us, their descendants, by raising Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm, 'You are my Son. Today I have become your Father.'
 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.

- Quoted from Ps 2:7...
- This verse refers to Jesus first advent ("has fulfilled the promise")

34 *As for the fact* that He raised Him from the dead, never again to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY AND FAITHFUL *MERCIES* OF DAVID.'

34 *As for the fact* that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I will give you the holy and sure *blessings* of David.'

34 God raised him from the dead, never to experience decay, as he said, 'I'll give you the holy promises made to David.'

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.

- Quoting (alluding to) Is 55:3...
- Paul is making the case to these unbelieving Jews that Jesus is that Davidic Descendant referenced in the Davidic Covenant
- Paul's point here is that the obvious fulfillment of the prophecy of an eternal throne and kingdom is in Jesus Christ

35 Therefore, He also says in another *Psalm*: 'YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.'

35 Therefore He also says in another *Psalm*, 'You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.'

35 In another Psalm he says, 'You will not let your Holy One experience decay.'

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

- Quoted from Ps 16:10...

— Peter also quoted this passage (Ps 16:8-11) in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:25-29)

— All three OT texts (v32-35) were fulfilled in the "raising up" of Jesus

— The fact that Jesus was "raised from the dead" and "did not experience decay" prove that He is the "Holy One" of whom David spoken in Ps 16:10

— God had promised David an eternal kingdom and that his seed would not see corruption; David died, so this must refer to the Messiah, the Son of David, who was raised in order for Him to rule over David's eternal kingdom. The resurrection of Christ depended on the loyalty of God to His covenant with David.

— Paul did not say Jesus is now ruling over the kingdom of David, but only that the Son of David is now in a *position* to rule forever when He returns. Both Peter and Paul referred to God's faithfulness to the Davidic Covenant in verifying Jesus' resurrection.

Progressive Dispensationalists believe that Paul meant that Jesus is now ruling over David's kingdom. Though there are connections with Jesus' enthronement as the Davidic King in these OT passages, it seems clear from Paul's emphasis on God raising up Jesus, in v30-37, that he was using these passages to show that Jesus' resurrection proved that He is the Davidic King, not that He has *begun to reign* as the Davidic King. Here Paul said nothing explicitly about Jesus' *reigning* as Israel's King, but he said much about Jesus' *being* Israel's King.

36 For David, after he had served God's purpose in his own generation, fell asleep, and was buried among his fathers and **underwent decay**;

36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay;

36 Now David, after he had served God's purpose in his own generation, died and was buried with his ancestors, and so he experienced decay.

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:

- Paul now takes the evidence he has provided through these two OT passages pointing to Christ, and applies them to his audience...

- "...underwent decay" - David died, and his physical body began to decay. This demonstrates that David could not have been the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, nor the person described in Ps 16:10 (written by David)

37 but He whom God raised did not undergo decay.

37 but He whom God raised did not undergo decay.

37 However, the man whom God raised did not experience decay.

37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

- Unlike David, Jesus was raised from the dead so that His body did not begin to undergo decay

— This demonstrates that Jesus was the fulfillment of Ps 16:10

38 Therefore let it be known to you, brothers, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you,

38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you,

38 "Therefore, brothers, you must understand that through him the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you,

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

- After delivering his sermon, Paul now gets to the application to his audience...it is only through this Messiah, son of David, who died and rose from the grave...you can receive forgiveness of sins

39 and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

39 and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

39 and that everyone who believes in him is justified and freed from everything that kept you from being justified by the Law of Moses.

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

- Now he gets to the condition of salvation...belief

- Paul says that the Mosaic Law did not provide forgiveness of sins. All the OT sacrificial system did was "kick the can down the road" and postpone the indebtedness of sin until the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

- Christ's sacrifice didn't postpone anything...it didn't wipe out the indebtedness for a period of time, it canceled it completely
- What Paul is preaching to these Jews, strictly from memory and off the cuff, had to have been amazing to them. He's telling them that they can completely and totally be forgiven for every single sin, past, present, and future, and the only condition was to believe in what Jesus did for them (Cf. Gal 2:16).

Grand Gospel Statement

Paul later developed the truth of justification, or the forgiveness apart from the Mosaic Law, in his epistle to the Galatians. He wrote Galatians to the same people he spoke to here, shortly after he completed this first missionary journey. Later he set forth these themes more fully in his epistle to the Romans. These verses summarize the arguments of Galatians and Romans in one sentence.

40 Therefore, see that the thing spoken of in the Prophets does not come upon *you*:
 40 Therefore take heed, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon *you*:

40 So be careful that what the prophets said doesn't happen to you:
 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;
 - Paul now gives them a warning from the OT prophets...this is likely a veiled warning about the impending destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD)

41 'LOOK, YOU SCOFFERS, AND BE ASTONISHED, AND PERISH; FOR I AM ACCOMPLISHING A WORK IN YOUR DAYS, A WORK WHICH YOU WILL NEVER BELIEVE, THOUGH SOMEONE SHOULD DESCRIBE IT TO YOU.'"

41 'Behold, you scoffers, and marvel, and perish; For I am accomplishing a work in your days, A work which you will never believe, though someone should describe it to you.'"

41 'Look, you mockers! Be amazed and die! Since I am performing an action in your days, one that you would not believe even if someone told you!'"

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.

- Quoted from Hab 1:5...
 - God told Habakkuk, on the eve of the Babylonian Captivity, that He was going to do something so big that if God told Habakkuk what it was, he wouldn't believe it
 — In context, what God was referring to was the Babylonian Captivity
 — Paul is not quoting this verse to predict that the Babylonian Captivity is going to happen again...he's quoting it to say that some of you Jews are going to believe, but most are going to scoff at, just like Judah did with Habakkuk's prediction.

— But nevertheless, what I (Paul) am saying is hard to believe, but is truth nonetheless, and some will believe me but most will scoff. And this is not something unheard of in Jewish history, because the Jews did the same thing to Habakkuk.

Hab 1:5, which Paul quoted here, refers to an invasion of Judah by a Gentile nation that would be used as God's disciplinary instrument to punish Judah for her disobedience. Paul evidently saw his generation in Israel under a similar disciplinary judgment. Paul's message, like Peter's on the day of Pentecost, was delivered to a generation in Israel under the judgment Christ had predicted in Luke 21:24, i.e., the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. In a larger sense, of course, unbelieving "mockers" will "perish" eternally for rejecting the gospel.

The Consequences of Paul's Message

42 As Paul and Barnabas were going out, *the people repeatedly* begged to have these things spoken to them the next Sabbath.

42 As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath.

42 As Paul and Barnabas were leaving, the people kept urging them to tell them the same things the next Sabbath.

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.

- These Jews had never heard anything about what Paul was speaking of, so they repeatedly begged him to come back next sabbath and to continue teaching them about Christ

43 Now when *the meeting of the synagogue* had broken up, many of the Jews and the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who were speaking to them and urging them to **continue in the grace of God**.

43 Now when *the meeting of the synagogue* had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.

43 When the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who kept talking to them and urging them to continue in the grace of God.

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.

- Many of those who heard Paul's sermon didn't want to wait another week to hear him again, so they began following Paul and Barnabas around
- "...continue" - this implies that as Paul and Barnabas were speaking and ministering, at least some people were getting saved
 - You can't "continue" in the grace of God unless you are first *in* the grace of God
 - It's likely that as Paul got to v39 and talked about believing in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, many right then and there started to believe and were saved
 - "...the grace of God" - not the Mosaic Law, but the grace of God
 - After returning from his first missionary journey, the first epistle Paul would write is Galatians, which was written to the very people he visited and preached to in Galatia. In that epistle, Paul urges them to continue to live under the grace of God, and not follow the false teachers who had come into the church telling them that after they got saved, they still had to adhere to the Mosaic Law (Cf. Gal 3:3)

Paul Turns to the Gentiles

44 The next Sabbath nearly all the city assembled to hear the word of the Lord.

44 The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord.

44 The next Sabbath almost the whole town gathered to hear the word of the Lord.

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

- So the next week, after Paul's previous sermon the week before, nearly the entire population of the city came to hear Paul preach again

45 But when **the Jews** saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and **began contradicting the things spoken by Paul**, and were **blaspheming**.

45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and **began contradicting the things spoken by Paul**, and were blaspheming.

45 But when the Jewish leaders saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to object to the statements made by Paul and even to abuse him.

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.

- "...the Jews" - primarily the religious leadership
- "...contradicting the things spoken by Paul" - this is most likely the beginning of "Non-Messianic Judaism"
 - These Jewish religious leaders were not just jealous, but they began refuting what Paul was preaching, even though Paul was using the OT as his foundation
 - What begins to happen here is that the Jews begin to twist the OT Scriptures (Hebrew Bible) to ensure that Jesus cannot be found at all in the OT

- "...blaspheming" - Luke calls what the Jews were doing (erasing Jesus from the OT) blasphemy; in addition to obvious blasphemy, today we may call it "gaslighting" which is telling you something that you can see is not true with your own eyes (obvious truth)

46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was **necessary** that the word of God be spoken to you first. Since you repudiate it and consider yourselves **unworthy of eternal life**, behold, **we are turning to the Gentiles**.

46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas boldly declared, "We had to speak God's word to you first, but since you reject it and consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we are now going to turn to the gentiles.

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.

- As the apostles in Jerusalem had done, Paul and Barnabas responded to opposition with bold words (Cf. 4:29)

- "...necessary" - the gospel had to go to the Jews first because Jewish acceptance of Jesus is a prerequisite to the messianic kingdom (Cf. 3:26). It was also necessary because Jesus was the Messiah whom God promised to deliver the Jews.

— Paul almost always preached the gospel to the Jews first in the towns he visited (Cf. 13:50-51; 14:2-6; 17:5,13-15; 18:6; 19:8-9; 28:23-28; Rom 1:16)

— The Jews' rejection of the gospel led him to offer it next to the Gentiles

- "...unworthy of eternal life" - Paul stated that those who rejected his message of salvation were really (unconsciously) judging themselves unworthy of salvation, and its benefits

- "...we are turning to the Gentiles" - the Spirit's new initiative toward Gentiles fulfilled OT prophecy (Gen 12:3; Is 52:13-15; 56:6-7; 60:3)

— The first mention of a cycle that will continue throughout Paul's missionary journeys: Paul would first preach the gospel in the Jewish synagogue, receive backlash or persecution, then leave and preach the gospel to the Gentiles, where he would reap a large harvest

— Although this is the first of a common cycle everywhere Paul goes, we cannot look at this nationally concerning Israel. These are regional, local rejections of the Messiah.

— This was not a once-and-for-all turning to the Gentiles in general, as some (replacement theologians) like to believe. In the very next city, Paul would again go to the Jews first, so the turning away from the Jews in Antioch Pisidia was only a local situation.

47 For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE APPOINTED YOU AS A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH!'"

47 For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, That You may bring salvation to the end of the earth!'"

47 For that is what the Lord ordered us to do: 'I have made you a light to the gentiles to be the means of salvation to the very ends of the earth!'"

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.

- Quoting Is 49:6...

- The reason why it was "necessary" (v46) for the gospel to be preached to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles, was because God's purpose for Israel was to be a blessing to the world (Cf. Gen 12:3c; Is 49:5-6)

— Jonah illustrates this...Jonah did not understand that God's purpose for Israel was to be a blessing to the Gentiles, so when God told him to preach to the Ninevites, he refused and ran the opposite direction.

— God had to put him into "time out" for a period of time until he had an attitude adjustment. Even during and after he preached to the Ninevites, he was not happy about what God asked him to do.

48 When the Gentiles **heard this**, they *began rejoicing and glorifying* the word of the Lord; and all who had been **appointed** to eternal life believed.

48 When the Gentiles heard this, they *began rejoicing and glorifying* the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

48 When the gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord. Meanwhile, all who had been destined to eternal life believed,

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.

- "...heard this" - heard what Paul said (v46) and Paul's quote of Is 49:6 (v47)

- "...rejoicing and glorifying" - Luke again stressed that the results of preaching the gospel was God's work. The evangelists were only harvesting the wheat that God had already prepared.

— There's an interesting contrast between the Jews and the Gentiles in their response to the gospel:

— The Jerusalem counsel who heard Peter's explanation of the salvation of Cornelius "quieted down and glorified God" when they understood that God had granted salvation to the Gentiles (Cf. 11:18)

— Contrast the Gentile reaction to the Jewish reaction...Herod, who was trying to please the Jews, did not give God glory when the people lauded him as the voice of God. But God

struck him dead and worms ate his body because "he did not give God the glory" (Cf. 12:22-23)

— So when the Gentiles are hearing the pure gospel of grace for the first time, they are believing and giving glory to God. The Jews on the other hand, are not believing (but blaspheming) and not giving glory to God.

— When you recognize this, you begin to see why God is setting aside Israel (for a season, not permanently) and raising up the church

— "...appointed" - *tassō*, nominative case, perfect tense, passive middle voice participle, indicating an influence upon the Gentiles toward eternal life and believing the gospel. This is a present influence, not an eternal decree. It was at least in part due to Paul's persuasive preaching, which fits the immediate and larger context of Acts (Cf. 14:1).

— This is Calvinism's "big kahuna" verse on their doctrine of Unconditional Election. Calvinists will ask, who believed? Their answer: Those who were appointed. Who didn't believe? Presumably, everyone who wasn't appointed.

— To support their belief in Unconditional Election, they interpret *tassō* as "predestined to salvation" yet that is not the meaning of any of the seven other usages of *tassō* in the NT (Matt 28:16; Luke 7:8; Acts 15:2; 22:10; 28:23; Rom 13:1; 1 Cor 16:15). In the other usages of *tassō* in the NT, there is nothing close to a divine decree causing human action.

— What Calvinists want this verse to say is that God, in eternity past, appointed some people to salvation and appointed everyone else to eternal torment in hell. This was a decision that God sovereignly made. Therefore, when people get saved, God caused it because He gave those who were fortunate enough to be elected the gift of faith. He had to impart to them the gift of faith because otherwise they would have no ability to believe.

— Commentator Adam Clarke says: "Of all the meanings ever put on it (*tassō*), none agrees worse with its nature and known signification than that which presents it as intending those who were predestinated to eternal life; this is no meaning of the term and should never be applied to it."

— And by a simple reading of Acts 13:48, it would appear that the Calvinist interpretation of this verse is accurate. However, remember Prov 18:17: "The first to plead his case seems right, *Until* another comes and examines him." Here is the examination of the Calvinist interpretation of this verse:

1. One verse cannot be used to undo hundreds of other verses that teach the exact opposite. It is exceptionally clear in multiple verses that God desires all men to be saved. Therefore, one verse (Acts 13:48) cannot be used to contradict all of these verses, which declare God's heart for salvation.
 - a. God desires all men to be saved (1 Tim 2:4). God does not wish for anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

- b. So I cannot interpret Acts 13:48 in a way that is out of harmony with these two very clear passages, along with numerous others that agree with them.
- c. If your interpretation of a verse or passage does not correlate with what the rest of the Bible is saying, you have a wrong interpretation. It is a "warning light" that your interpretation is incorrect.
- d. It is critically important to be "hermeneutically humble" enough to recognize that if our initial reading or interpretation of a verse does not correlate with the rest of Scripture, that we do not re-write the verse, we re-write our interpretation.

2. The Greek word (*tassō*) is translated "appointed" [NASB], "ordained" [KJV], "wanted" [Living Bible], or "disposed" [REB] in other English translations. These other translations "soften" the very dogmatic Calvinistic reading of the verse.

3. *Tassō* is used rather than *proorizō*, which is used in other predestination passages

- a. *Tassō* never refers to predestination unto salvation in any of its other NT uses. In fact, no verse in the NT ever refers to predestination to salvation. Predestination/election is always unto specific blessings that accompany salvation/justification, but not to salvation/justification itself.
- b. If *tassō* here refers to an election unto salvation, then that is a usage of *tassō* that is not found anywhere else in Scripture in any of its other usages (Matt 28:16; Luke 7:38; Acts 15:2; 22:10; 28:23; Rom 13:1; 1 Cor 16:15).

4. The corrupted Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate mistranslates *tassō* as "preordained"

- a. The Latin Vulgate was written by Jerome in the 4th century to translate the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin, the common language of the day.
- b. The idea was to translate the Hebrew and Greek into the language of the common man
- c. When Jerome got to Acts 13:48, he translated *tassō* as "preordained." However, many other English translations choose a different word (see #2 above) to be more accurate.
- d. The Latin Vulgate is the Roman Catholic translation of the Bible. Luther, when he was translating the Bible (Hebrew and Greek) into German, refused to use the Latin Vulgate because he didn't trust it. He believed it was corrupted by the Roman Catholic church.

5. The context of the passage pertains to the predisposition of the Gentiles (rather than the Jews) toward the Gospel (Acts 13:46; 28:26-28).

- a. That is the immediate context of 13:48 (Cf. 13:46). So a better translation for *tassō* here is "wanted" or "disposed."
- b. Paul's point here, after the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia rejected the gospel (13:45-46), was that he turned to the Gentiles, who were much more "predisposed" or open to the gospel compared to the Jews.

- c. The Jews of that day, throughout the Acts period, were increasingly closed off to the gospel, while the Gentiles were much more predisposed to listening to and accepting the gospel.
- 6. There is no textual or exegetical evidence that the divine appointing (*tassō*) caused the believing (*pisteuō*).
 - a. The verse does not state that the "appointing" was the cause of the "believing," even though that's how Calvinism wants you to interpret the verse.
 - b. They want you to believe that something that they do not have the ability to have (belief) was imparted ("appointed") to them by God so that they could believe.
 - c. There is a way to express causation (indicate that one thing causes another) in Greek. It's called the *hoti* clause, but that is not present in this verse. In Greek, *hoti* is usually translated as "because" and provides a cause for a specific effect.
 - d. It is grammatically incorrect to say the Greek verb for "believe" (*episteusan*) is the result of the perfect passive participle "appointed" (*tetagemoi*). Grammatically, all that the aorist tense verb "believe" shows when it is combined with the periphrastic construction of "had been appointed" is that the appointing on God's part preceded the believing on man's part. The Greek grammar of this verse does not show that one is the result of the other.
 - e. In order to show that the act of believing was the result of or caused by God's prior appointing, there must be a causal conjunction after "believed" (*episteusan*), so that the verse would say, "and believed" (*episteusan*) because (*hoti*) they had been appointed to life eternal." The conjunctions *hoti*, *hina*, *hos*, or *hoste* are all used in Greek to show purpose, result, or cause. Acts 13:48 contains none of these.
 - f. In order to get to the Calvinist interpretation of this verse, there must be a *hoti* clause, and there is not. If there was, the verse would say, "and as many as were appointed to believe received eternal life." But the verse doesn't say that.
 - g. There are no verses in the Bible that say we were preordained to believe. Acts 13:48 simply doesn't say WHY the Galatians were appointed to eternal life. However, since the context of the passage involves human responsibility (v46), and it is consistent with Scripture elsewhere, we should interpret v48 to mean that God's ordaining must have factored in their faith which He foresaw.
- 7. Contrary to many English translations, the word order of Acts 13:48 in the Greek text places the verb "believed" before the Greek verb "preordained" or "appointed."
 - a. The English translation has the "appointing" first, indicating emphasis, then the "believing" comes second. This opens the door for a Calvinistic understanding.
 - b. But the Greek is the opposite: the "believing" is first, indicating that their belief is the emphasis, and the "appointing" comes second

- c. Reading it in English you're led to believe that the "appointing" is the important fact, but the Greek indicates that the "believing" is the important fact.

Acts 13:48 [MGNT-Morphological Greek NT]: ακούοντα δε τὰ εθνη εχαιρον και εδοξαζον τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου και επίστευσαν [believe] ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι [had been appointed] εις ζωὴν αἰώνιον

- 8. After all of the evidence above, although it's someone complex, it's clear that this verse is not saying that God was the cause in their belief. However, a simple way to slam the door shut on the Calvinist interpretation of this verse is by showing that "believed" is in the active voice, not the passive voice.
 - a. If faith was given to a person in order for them to believe, "believed" would be in the passive voice (indicating that something is being done *to* them). But it's not, it's in the active voice, meaning the person who "believed" is doing the believing, not having the believing done to or for them.
 - b. The active voice of "believed" expresses positive volition (free will) toward the gospel
 - c. Interestingly, "believed" or "believe" is consistently in the active voice in its over 100 uses in the NT relative to trust in Christ and Him alone. This means that the person who believes is actively, not passively, trusting the gospel. They are exercising their faith, not someone else's faith and not a faith given to them.
 - d. Additionally, in contrast those who believed in the context are those who did not believe. Instead, they "contradicted the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming" (v45). Again, the voice is active, meaning these unbelieving Jews were actively expressing their negative volition to the gospel. To their retort, Paul says (v46), "you repudiate it (the word of God expressed in the gospel he had just spoken) and consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life." These verbs are also in the active voice, thus they could not blame their negativity toward the gospel on Satan or anyone else. Paul does not say that God declared these unbelieving Jews unworthy of eternal life...he says that they declared themselves unworthy of it.

Predestination to Salvation—or Not?

Predestination and election are biblical teachings—but they are never unto salvation. To the Calvinist, however, predestination/election is always and only unto salvation—a view that is imposed wrongly upon Scripture. In fact, election/predestination is always unto specific blessings that accompany salvation, but not to salvation itself.

Foreknowledge is always given as the reason for predestination (see notes on Rom 8:29-30; 1 Peter 1:2). Knowing beforehand who would believe the gospel is a valid reason for electing or predestinating those persons to certain blessings.

49 And the word of the Lord **was being spread** through the whole region.

49 And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region.

49 and the word of the Lord began to spread throughout the whole region.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

- "...was being spread" - *diephero*, to carry in different directions

— The strategic location of Antioch Pisidia would help spread the gospel throughout all the region. And the ministry of the gospel continued to grow despite determined opposition.

- This is one of ~18 "progress reports" the reader is given throughout Acts:

- Clear: 2:47; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31

- Less Clear: 1:15; 2:41; 4:4,31; 5:14,42; 8:25,40; 11:21; **13:49**; 17:6

50 But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region.

50 But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.

50 But the Jewish leaders stirred up devout women of high social standing and the officials in the city, started a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their territory.

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.

- The decision of Paul and Barnabas to give preference to the Gentiles from now on (Cf. v46) angered the unbelieving Jews in Pisidian Antioch, who began to persecute Paul and Barnabas

— This is not a complete turning away from the Jews, since Paul, at the next city he visited (Iconium), they went into the synagogue to preach the gospel to the Jews first (Cf. 14:1). This would continue to be his pattern throughout the book of Acts.

Rom 11:28: In relation to the gospel *they are* enemies on your account, but in relation to God's choice *they are* beloved on account of the fathers;

51 But they **shook off the dust from their feet** *in protest* against them and went to **Iconium**.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet *in protest* against them and went to Iconium.

51 So Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.

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

- "...shook off the dust *from* their feet" - a visible, physical, symbolic measure that means a complete break of fellowship and renunciation with a person or community
- This is exactly what Jesus commanded His disciples to do (Cf. Matt 10:14; Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5) when you present the gospel to someone and they reject it
- Notice that Paul and Barnabas did not try to "meet in the middle" with these Jews, or "find common ground." They preached the gospel undiluted, in love, and when the Jews rejected it and began to persecute them, Paul and Barnabas broke fellowship with them.
- This is another example of "ecclesiastical separation," a doctrine found throughout the NT (Cf. Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 5:11; 2 Cor 6:14-18; Eph 5:11; 2 Thess 3:6,14; Titus 3:9-11; 2 John 7-11).
- "...Iconium" - a populous city, 45 miles southeast from Pisidian Antioch, at the foot of Mt Taurus, on the borders of Lycaonia, Phrygia, and Pisidia

What to Separate From?

1. False doctrine - 1 Tim 4:16; Titus 1:9
2. Divisive persons - Rom 16:17; Titus 3:9-11
3. Immorality - 1 Cor 5:9-11; Eph 5:11
4. General disobedience to Scripture - 2 Thess 3:6,14

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a big-time Calvinist, has the biblical idea of "inter-faith dialogues" correct:



D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Knowing the Times (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989; reprint, 2001), 161-62.

"To regard a church, or a council of churches, as a forum in which fundamental matters can be debated and discussed, or as an opportunity for witness-bearing, is sheer confusion and muddled thinking. There is to be no discussion about 'the foundation', as we have seen. If men do not accept that, they are not brethren and we can have no dialogue with them. We are to preach to such and to evangelize them. Discussion takes place among the brethren who share the same life and subscribe to the same essential truths. It is right and good that brethren should discuss together matters which are not essential to salvation and about which there is, and always has been, and always will be, legitimate differences of opinion. We can do no better at that point than quote the old adage, 'In things essential, unity, in things indifferent liberty, in all things charity.'"



D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Knowing the Times (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989; reprint, 2001), 161-62.

"Before there can be any real discussion and dialogue and exchange there must be agreement concerning primary and fundamental matters. Without the acceptance of certain axioms and propositions in geometry, for example, it is idle to attempt to solve any problem. If certain people refuse to accept the axioms, and are constantly querying and disputing them, clearly there is no point of contact between them and those who do accept them. It is precisely the same in the realm of the church. Those who question and query, let alone deny, the great cardinal truths that have been accepted throughout the centuries do not belong to the church, and to regard them as brethren is to betray the truth. As we have already reminded ourselves, the apostle Paul tells us clearly what our attitude to them should be: 'A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject' (Titus 3:10)."



D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Knowing the Times (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989; reprint, 2001), 161-62.

"They are to be regarded as unbelievers and need to be called to repentance and acceptance of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. To give the impression that they are Christians with whom other Christians disagree about certain matters is to confuse the genuine seeker and enquirer who is outside. But such is the position prevailing today. **It is based upon a failure to understand the nature of the New Testament church which is 'the pillar and ground of the truth' (1 Tim 3:15).** In the same way it is a sheer waste of time to discuss or debate the implications of Christianity with people who are not agreed as to what Christianity is. Failure to realize this constitutes the very essence of the modern confusion."

52 And the disciples were **continually filled with joy** and with the Holy Spirit.

52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

52 Meanwhile, the disciples continued to be full of joy and the Holy Spirit.

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

- It is not clear who "disciples" referred to: it could be Paul and Barnabas, or the new converts in Antioch; it was likely both

- "...continually filled with joy" - but wait, I thought they were being persecuted and run out of town (v50)? They are under persecution, but they are "filled with joy." What kind of effect do you think this had on their persecutors?

— Paul and Barnabas were filled with the Holy Spirit, and one of the fruits of the Spirit is joy, in spite of adverse circumstances.

— Joy is a deep-down understanding that God is working in your life, no matter what your current circumstances are, favorable or unfavorable from a human perspective. As God lives through us through the Holy Spirit, He can give us the ability to walk in joy if things are going great or if things are falling apart.

James 1:2: Consider it all **joy**, my brothers and sisters, when you encounter various trials,