

A Study in Acts

Chapter Thirteen – First Journey of Paul



ACTS 13:42-52:

In our previous lessons, we began the first journey of Paul. It began in **Antioch** of Syria and from there; Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark went down to **Seleucia**. From Seleucia, they caught a ship to **Cyprus** and landed at **Salamis**. They would share the Gospel of Jesus as Christ in the synagogues of the Jews.

As Barnabas and Saul came to **Paphos**, they crossed paths with the proconsul and a sorcerer who had been acting as his advisor. As the proconsul wanted to hear from Barnabas and Saul, the sorcerer withstood them.

Saul, who will now be called from this point forward, Paul openly denounced the sorcerer and struck him blind by the power of the Lord. This would give cause for the proconsul to believe the words concerning the teaching of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas left Cyprus and came to **Perga** in **Pamphylia** where John Mark would leave them and return to Jerusalem for unknown reasons. From Perga they would travel north inland to **Antioch** in **Pisidia**, where they would go into the synagogue of the Jews on the Sabbath. As the invitation is given to speak, Paul is going to preach the Gospel, and this becomes Paul's first recorded sermon.

Post Sermon Events –

Text #1:

Acts 13:42-45 “So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. ⁴³ Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

⁴⁴ On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. ⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.”

Vs. 42-43 – At the conclusion of the sermon to the Jews in Antioch, Paul would obtain an appointment to preach again the next Sabbath, because of the requests of the Gentiles. Some of the Jews and proselytes were anxious to hear more; they obviously were able to see the value of Paul's words.

They were told by Paul to “**Continue in the grace of God**”.

There is much debate concerning whether or not these were believers in salvation, based on the words of Paul and Barnabas. We would be very naive to think that the Body of Christ in Antioch was made up only of Gentiles (**Vs. 52** – as Paul and Barnabas would continue with these Jews and proselytes for the remainder of the week as well); however, based on the context of **verses 42-45**, we have to see that Paul is encouraging them on two distinct things:

1. To continue in the right attitude towards the grace of God – see: **Acts 14:3; 20:32; Titus 2:11-15** – which would lead them to become Christians and keep them once they were.
2. Paul is also commending them to continue in the grace of God in the face of the coming opposition to this grace that is about to rise and trouble these who have seen clearly.

Congregation – Greek ‘*Sunagoge*’; here translated congregation, in most places, translated, “synagogue”.

Vs. 44 – The talk about Paul and Barnabas and the sermon they had preached the former Sabbath has spread from the proselytes to the other Gentiles and the result was a vast interest spreading

through the city. Imagine the interest created by Paul's sermon, in that there were no requirements to become Jews or adopt Jewish separate laws.

Vs. 45 – We see here that the Jews are envious, not during the regular week, not by agitators, but by the sight of the masses of Gentiles. To this end, Luke records that they objected vehemently and went to the length of blasphemy (to speak evil of God – different from revile, which is to speak evil of men), against Jesus as the Christ (Who was to be Superior to Moses and the Law – **Vs. 38-39**).

Text #2:

Acts 13:46-47 “Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us:

**‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,
That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’” (Isaiah 49:6)**

It may be redundant at this stage to point out that this is going to be a repetitive pattern in many of the cities that Paul will come to; however, it is important to note the procedure for its expedient nature. Paul will use the expediency of synagogue worship to often initiate the Gospel to a location first, then use this word-of-mouth system to bring it to vast amounts of others as well.

Both Paul and Barnabas boldly acknowledge that the Gospel was to come to the Jews first, as they were to be those who would help usher in the kingdom of heaven (**Acts 4:11** “**you builders**”; **Romans 1:16**).

In the rejection of the Gospel, however, they have **judged themselves** unworthy of the life it was to bring. This clearly states that by throwing away the words of life, they act as judges in their own case; to even proclaim the verdict! They would have no one to blame in this day, but themselves, and this is universally true for every man who will do the same, regardless of motive!

“We Turn to the Gentiles” Here, at last, Paul's mission as defined by the Lord comes to full realization, **“To bear My name before Gentiles”** – **Acts 9:15**. The power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ would create saints who would be devoid completely of the teaching of the synagogue and Jewish traditions. It would be formed by those called out of the world by its power into a glorious bride for Jesus Christ – **Acts 26:17-18; Ephesians 5:23-27**.

Paul now announces a powerful fulfillment of prophecy made by Isaiah, who will now become the spokesmen out of the prophets of Israel. This is given to show them that if they are going to revile the words of Paul and Barnabas, they are going to have to first comprehend that they are

speaking blasphemy against God's Great Servant (a term used by Isaiah to describe the work of the Messiah in four songs – 1st song – **Isaiah 42:1-13**; 2nd song – **Isaiah 49:1-13**; 3rd song – **Isaiah 50:4-11**; 4th song – **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**).

Paul confirms in fulfillment of the Servant's (Messiah's) work, that those whom He has sent are to accomplish that which was said of Him; preach to the Gentiles that light and salvation can be brought to the furthest parts of the earth! God Himself has appointed the Messiah for this work – Remember the Great Promise made to Abraham, **“And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”** – **Genesis 12:3**.

Fulfilled in the Gospel of Christ for all men:

Galatians 3:26-29 **“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”**

Text #3:

Acts 13:48-52 **“Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**

⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. ⁵⁰ But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. ⁵¹ But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. ⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”

“Appointed” From the Greek, *‘Tasso’*, to put in place, to station, or to place in a certain order. In the majority of places in the New Testament that this word is translated, it is translated, “Set in order” (see example – **1 Corinthians 11:34** - NKJV).

This coincides with the precedence set in **Acts 2:47** – **“added to the church daily those who were being saved”**. This passage is not teaching “special election”, as we know that the Apostle Peter has already established that God is not a respecter of persons – **Acts 10:34**.

These were ‘set in order’ because they were glad to hear the word, they glorified the word of God, and they didn't judge themselves unworthy, but had the attitude of appreciation.

This would not only establish disciples among these, but the entire region as well; however, at the same time many were being convicted to obey, many were also convicted to lash out against Paul and Barnabas (once again showing that the Gospel universally convicts men of sin to one of

two choices – **Mark 16:16**). This last group would stir up men and women of high standing in the city and expel Paul and Barnabas; but not before the success of the Gospel is established.

“Filled with Joy and Holy Spirit” They had the best *‘Parakletos’* (Greek – one with the ability to give aid), the Holy Spirit who filled their hearts and gave them joy. Luke makes no mention of a charismatic presence, but of the gracious spiritual presence that was mediated objectively by the Word through faith in the Savior Jesus the Christ (**Vs.23; Romans 10:17; Galatians 3:2, 5**).