



Book of Acts

Chapter 13

First missionary journey of Paul

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Theme: First missionary journey of Paul

McGee Introduction: We come now to the final major division of the Book of Acts. It is the Lord Jesus Christ at work by the Holy Spirit through the apostles to the uttermost part of the earth. The section includes chapters 13–28.

You will remember that the key to the book is the fact that Jesus said, “Ye shall be witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:8). This was not a command to the church as a corporate body but to you and me individually. This witness was to go out to Jerusalem, then to Judea and Samaria, and then to the uttermost part of the earth. During the Jerusalem period we saw that the gospel went to the Jews, and the church was 100 percent Jewish—no Gentiles. During the next period we saw the gospel go to the Samaritans and we saw the conversion of some Gentiles. Now the gospel moves out officially on its way to the ends of the earth.

On its way to the ends of the earth the gospel came to my ancestors and to your ancestors. Today you and I are the beneficiaries of the fact that someone went down the road of this world to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth. You and I ought to be in the business of taking the gospel down beyond where we are to some who have not heard.

In this surge of the gospel beyond the boundaries of Israel we find that Paul becomes the dominant leader and Peter disappears from the scene. God had used him mightily. Now Paul is the dominant one whom God will use.

As you will see by the map on page 570, Paul begins his journey with Barnabas. The first stop is the island of Cyprus, the home of Barnabas. They cross the island, then set sail from Paphos to go over to Perga in Pamphylia. Then they enter the interior of Asia Minor, which is now Turkey, and go into the Galatian country. They visit Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe; then they return through Attalia, and then sail back to Antioch.¹

This chapter starts the second major division in the Book of Acts (Paul vs. Peter):

Chapters 1-12: Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria

Chapters 13-28: Uttermost part of the Earth

Or: Jews first, then Samaritans, then the Gentiles. It is interesting that the Lord uses Peter to open the door to the Gentiles, but it is really Paul that continues the Gentile evangelism.

LAN: The book focuses now on the ministry to the Gentiles and the spread of the church around the world, and Paul replaces Peter as the central figure in the book. Paul completes three missionary journeys and ends up being imprisoned in Jerusalem and transported to Rome. The book of Acts ends abruptly, showing that the history of the church is not yet complete. We are to be a part of the sequel.²

¹McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:565). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

²Life Application Notes

Barnabas and Saul take Mark (12:25)

The closing verse of Acts 12 picks up the story of the trip of Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem to deliver the relief fund, which is mentioned in 11:30. In neither place does Luke give any details about what happens in Jerusalem. In 12:25, Luke simply notes that Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch after the relief visit. Luke mentions that John Mark accompanies them from Jerusalem to Antioch. His presence will be important to a later disagreement between Paul and Barnabas.

As mentioned earlier, Paul's trip to Jerusalem probably occurs *after* Herod dies. His death may be what makes Paul's trip to Jerusalem safe and feasible. (If Herod imprisoned Peter to please the Jews, he surely would have put Paul in prison, too, because that would have pleased them even more.)

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.

Antioch of Syria is now the center to the Gentiles.

[prophets] Prophets were those who spoke for God (Hebrews 1:1; Acts 3:21). They were primarily preachers of righteousness (Acts 15:32; 1 Cor. 14:3), but sometimes foretold the future (Acts 11:28; Acts 21:10; Luke 24:44). Prophecy was one of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4-11,28) and those who had and exercised this gift were prophets (Ephes. 4:11; Acts 11:27; Acts 13:1). Directions for the exercise of this gift are found in 1 Cor. 14. The office was next in importance to apostles (Ephes. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28). See 1 Samuel 19:20; 2 Chron. 9:29.³

[teachers] Greek: *didaskalos* (GSN-1320), translated master 47 times in the Gospels, 40 times of Christ. Translated "doctor" in Luke 2:46 and "teacher" in John 3:2. Only here in Acts. Always "teacher" in the epistles, except in James 3:1.

(Re: Greek text:) These five men being the "(3) prophets + (2) teachers" (not one lone minister). The first three may have been converts at Pentecost, and the founders of the church at Antioch...⁴

Barnabas, the Levite: man of property on Cyprus; sold all his land and put everything he had into the work of the Lord.

Simeon called Niger (Nigeria): (No race prejudice!) Very possibly the Simeon (Simon) who was forced by the Romans to bear the cross of Jesus. Niger means "black" and refers either to his hair or extra dark complexion.

³ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

⁴ Chuck Missler Notes on Acts, www.khouse.org

Lucius of Cyrene (also black, a Gentile.) Same as ref in Rom 16:21? May have been one of the Cypriots by whom the Gospel was first brought to Antioch in 11:20. This man is from Cyrene in North Africa.

Manaen: Brought up in royal court as foster-brother of Herod, the Tetrarch (now occupying a higher honor than Herod ever obtained!). (Cf. Johanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, Lk 8:1-3.) This man was brought up with Herod Antipas who murdered John the Baptist. The Greek for "brought up" means "nursed together." Manaen was the son of a woman who nursed him jointly with Herod. Jewish writers mention him as a prophet saying that while still a child he predicted the kingship of Herod. When Herod became king he sent for him and held him in high esteem at his court.

Paul: listed as a teacher, not yet as an Apostle (until the first miracle of his first missionary journey), also here still called Saul.

[tetrarch] Greek: *tetrarches* (GSN-5076), from *tetartos* (GSN-5067, fourth, and *arche* (GSN-746), principality or ruler. A ruler over a fourth part of a country, but it came to be used of any governor.

What variety there is in the church! The common thread among these five men was their deep faith in Christ. We must never exclude anyone whom Christ has called to follow him.

IVP Background Commentary: All the overseers of this church are probably understood to be both prophets and teachers. What sounds normal in early Christianity would sound phenomenal to its culture, for prophets were thought to be rare. Simeon and Manaen (= Menahem) are Jewish names, suggesting strong Jewish representation still in the leadership of the church (no doubt because they had better background for teaching Scripture). But Simeon's surname "Niger" was a very respectable and common Roman name; he may be a Roman citizen, although this is not clear—the name was also used by Jews and is here a *nickname*. Nicknames were common and usually significant in antiquity; the meaning of Simeon's Latin nickname suggests a dark complexion and may indicate that he was descended from proselytes from the Romanized coast of North Africa (perhaps also Lucius). Cyrene, on the North African coast, had a large Jewish population.

That Manaen was "brought up" with Herod may mean they had the same wet nurse. Slaves who grew up in the master's household with the son who would inherit them were often later freed by the son, who had been their companion at play; even as slaves they were powerful because of their relation to the owner. Other boys brought up with princes at the royal court also attained prominence. Especially in Greek culture, friendships from youth determined political alliances and favors. Thus, until the fall of Herod Antipas ("the tetrarch") perhaps a decade before, Manaen had held a socially prominent position (and is probably Luke's main source for the Antipas material unique to his Gospel).

13:2–3. Jewish people fasted to mourn or repent, and some fasted to seek revelations; special fasts for prayer related to mourning were called in the face of great crises such as droughts. Here they are probably simply seeking God in prayer. The Holy Spirit was especially known as the Spirit of prophecy, so “the Holy Spirit said” probably means that one of the prophets prophesied.⁵

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.

[they] The five prophets and teachers of Acts 13:1.

[ministered] Greek: *leitourgeo* (GSN-3008), to serve at one's own expense; to render public service; to perform a work; to minister. The same word is used of the daily ministrations of the priests in Mosaic worship (Hebrews 10:11). *Leitourgia* is used of the service of priests in prayer and sacrifice (Luke 1:23; Hebrews 8:6; Hebrews 9:21) and of the relief of the poor (2 Cor. 9:12; Phil. 2:30). The same idea is used of angels executing God's will to saints (Hebrews 1:14). A *Leitourgos* was a public minister or servant; in religion, one busy with holy things (Hebrews 8:2; Romans 15:16; Hebrews 1:7; Phil. 2:25). Thus, ministering to the Lord means that one is performing services for others in the Lord's stead (2 Cor. 5:20; Phil. 2:17). Relief of the needy is called lending to the Lord (Proverbs 19:17). Here, the prophets and teachers were fasting and ministering in Christ's stead to the people in teaching, praying, healing the sick, saving souls, relieving the poor.

[fasted] On Mondays and Thursdays pious Jews fasted and attended worship, but how often or how long Christians fasted is not known. On Sabbaths, Jews also attended worship but did not fast.

[Separate] Greek: *aphorizo* (GSN-873), to mark off from others by boundaries (Matthew 13:49; Matthew 25:32; Luke 6:22; Acts 19:9; Galatians 2:12); to set apart for a specific purpose or work (Acts 13:2; Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:15); and to live separated from sin (2 Cor. 6:17).

You will notice as they begin their ministry it is “Barnabas and Saul.” They will not be very far into the first missionary journey until Saul's name is changed to Paul. It is soon evident that Paul becomes the leader and the chief spokesman; then this team is called “Paul and Barnabas.”⁶

⁵ Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Ac 13:1). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

⁶ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:566). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

[Holy Ghost said] How the Holy Ghost said is not stated.

Eight Ways God Speaks to Men

1. By prophecy (Acts 3:21; 2 Peter 1:21; Acts 11:27-28; Acts 21:10; Hebrews 1:1)
2. Tongues and interpretation (1 Cor. 12:4-11; 1 Cor. 14:1-40)
3. Still small voice (1 Kings 19:12)
4. Audible voice (Matthew 1:17; Matthew 17:5; John 12:28; Acts 9:7; Deut. 5)
5. By angels (Acts 8:26; Acts 12:8; Acts 27:23)
6. By visions (Psalm 89:19; Acts 9:10; Acts 10:3; Acts 11:5; Acts 16:9; Acts 18:9)
7. By dreams (Genesis 20:6; Matthew 1:20; Matthew 2:12-22; Acts 2:17; Daniel 2:19,28,45)
8. By impression upon man's spirit (Acts 17:16; Acts 18:5; Acts 19:21; 2 Cor. 2:13; Ephes. 4:30; 1 Thes. 5:19; Romans 8:16). This could be called intuition, impression, inner consciousness, inspiration. It can come in various forms and ways.

The fact the Holy Spirit acts, chooses, wills, speaks, commissions, sends, and exercises personal powers proves that He is a person with a personal spirit body, a soul, and a spirit.



A call began the third phase of the Great Commission. Saul and Barnabas had already been called to an equipping ministry. The Holy Spirit issued a special call in this instance, calling Saul of Tarsus and Barnabas of Cyprus to make the first missionary tour (13:1-14:28). We do not know exactly how the Holy Spirit administered this call. Likely some practical factor was bearing on the minds of some of the disciples. Out of the desire that their kinsmen should hear the gospel, a great conviction may have welled up within the hearts of these two men, which was then shared with the rest of the brethren. From this came a firmly crystallized call to go to “the end of the earth.” Certainly no man could or would have endured what Paul did, both in Palestine and abroad, without the assurance of a call—divine guidance to a particular individual to pursue a God-assigned task with a heavenly plan (Eph 4:4). Jesus appeared to him at the time of his conversion and on several later occasions to encourage him in the faith.⁷

The church at Antioch (13:1-2)

We have reached a pivotal point in Luke’s account of the growth of the church and spread of the gospel. Up to now, Jerusalem and Judea have been the center of his story. Peter has been the most prominent person in the narrative. Now, Luke shifts his interest to the church at Antioch. Luke says that in the Antioch church there are both prophets and teachers — two important classes of individuals in the church community.

Paul says that prophesying and teaching are gifts of God, given by him for the proper functioning of the church (Romans 12:4-8). In the outline of church roles Paul describes to the Corinthians, prophets and teachers are mentioned just after apostles (1 Corinthians 12:28). In the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul inserts the role of evangelist between that of prophet and teacher (4:11).

Luke names five prophets and teachers in Antioch: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been raised with Herod) and Saul. Their names show that they come from a wide variety of social and ethnic backgrounds.⁸

Acts 13:3

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

The church brethren (Acts 13:1) did four things:

1. They fasted.
2. They prayed.
3. They laid hands upon them.
4. They sent them away.

⁷ Believer’s Study Bible

⁸ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

LAN: The church set apart Barnabas and Saul to the work God had for them. To *set apart* means to dedicate for a special purpose. We too should dedicate our pastors, missionaries, and Christian workers for their tasks. We can also dedicate ourselves to use our time, money, and talents for God's work. Ask God what he wants you to set apart for him.

LAN: This was the beginning of Paul's first missionary journey. The church was involved in sending Paul and Barnabas, but it was God's plan. Why did Paul and Barnabas go where they did? (1) The Holy Spirit led them. (2) They followed the communication routes of the Roman empire—this made travel easier. (3) They visited key population and cultural centers to reach as many people as possible. (4) They went to cities with synagogues, speaking first to the Jews in hopes that they would see Jesus as the Messiah and help spread the Good News to everyone.

McGee: These men are now set aside as missionaries. Did you notice the church that sent them forth into the world? It was not the church in Jerusalem. I say to you very candidly, the church in Jerusalem was not a missionary church. The church in Antioch had the missionary vision. They fasted and prayed because of their earnestness and their desire for the will of God.

They laid their hands on these two missionaries they were sending out. We still do that today to our missionaries. Why? Is it that we are imparting something to them? I'm afraid all that we can impart to someone by laying our hands on them is whatever disease germ we have on our hands. The laying on of hands is a means of identifying, of declaring that we are partners with that one. So the Christians in Antioch are indicating by placing their hands on them that they are in a partnership with Paul and Barnabas in the enterprise of getting out the Word of God. They are sending these men out as their representatives. They will minister at home while Paul and Barnabas go to the regions beyond.⁹

Missions, Sending—Antioch is the first church in recorded history to send out foreign missionaries. This church provides a model for missionary-sending churches: (1) God reveals His will to a church that seeks His face in worship, prayer, and fasting; (2) the Holy Spirit speaks to the group sending the missionary, as well as to the individual called (v. 2a); (3) the Spirit calls individuals to a missions task (v. 2b); (4) the selection of the missionary by a church, or a board is an awesome responsibility and requires personal dedication and prayer for God's guidance; and (5) sending missionaries calls for support by the home constituency. Two expressions described this enabling process of the church in Antioch—the laying on of hands and the sending on the way. The terms express the blessing, the support, and the encouragement for missionaries. Such support would include prayer (Eph 6:19), finances (Lk 10:7; Ro 10:14) and personal support (Php 1:3-5; 4:10, 14-16). Antioch became the sending church with a vision for the world. From there, their missionaries went to Europe and throughout Asia Minor. From here, the spread of

⁹McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:566). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

the gospel to the ends of the earth continued clear to Rome, the nerve center for reaching the ultimate purpose.¹⁰

Church Leaders, Ordination—The New Testament reports the laying on of hands in a variety of situations. Hands were laid on the sick (9:17; 27:8; Mk 5:23), on converts at baptism (Ac 8:17-19), and as a gesture of blessing on those commissioned for a special work of ministry. The word “ordination” in the technical sense of “ordaining to ministry” does not occur in the New Testament. In this passage, Paul and Barnabas were chosen for a special missionary task but not ordained to a lifetime ministry. Paul insisted that he was an apostle since his conversion and that his apostleship was not of human derivation or authorization (Gal 1:1). The commission came from the Holy Spirit (Ac 13:2), and the church responded by confirming with a public and formal act that God had called them to this particular work. It is not clear who laid hands on them, but perhaps the entire church did. In ordination, the church affirms those who have been chosen by God for special ministry, pledges its wholehearted support, and authorizes them to act in the name of the church.¹¹

Holy Spirit sets apart (13:2-3)

After introducing us to the leaders of the Antioch church, Luke tells us that the church is "worshiping the Lord and fasting" (13:2). He doesn't explain why the disciples are fasting, but some reason is probably behind it. Perhaps the church is thinking of moving its missionary venture beyond the confines of Antioch. Or they have already decided to do so and are wondering who should lead the endeavor. The church may be in a special meeting, asking God to make his will known in the matter. That is exactly what God does. The answer to the mission question comes from the Holy Spirit, who says: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (13:2).

The importance of the present narrative is that it describes the first piece of planned "overseas mission" carried out by representatives of a particular church...and begun by a deliberate church decision, inspired by the Spirit, rather than somewhat more causally as a result of persecution.
(I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, page 214)

Luke doesn't define what this "work" is, but from subsequent events, it's clear that it has to do with a mission to the Gentiles. Neither does Luke explain how the Holy Spirit makes his will known. Perhaps what happens is that the Spirit moves one of the prophets to name the missionaries.

Here we have echoes of the Old Testament prophets bringing God's message through his prophets. We are reminded of the story of the Judean king Jehoshaphat and his people who were praying and fasting in Jerusalem. They were hoping for God's intervention against a large army coming against the nation. Then, suddenly, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon" a prophet who gave God's will. The nation would be saved without having to fight a battle with the enemy (2 Chronicles 20:14).

Now, at Antioch, God is showing his will about another, quite different concern. This new and monumental enterprise of spreading the gospel around the Roman Empire,

¹⁰ Disciple's Study Bible

¹¹ Disciple's Study Bible

particularly to Gentiles, will be no mere human initiative. God will guide it through the Holy Spirit. One of Luke's continuing purposes is to show that the Holy Spirit initiates and guides the activities of the church. This theme — pointed up in 13:2 — is a regular occurrence in the first half of Acts (4:31; 8:29, 39; 10:44; 16:6).

Thus, it is through the Spirit that Barnabas and Paul are separated for the task of evangelizing. Then they are "sent on their way by the Holy Spirit" (13:4). While the church "sent them off," they are really dispatched by the Spirit. Luke is showing that Paul's work will occur in cooperation and continuity with the church and the other apostles. Paul is not a lone ranger but a person who respects both the church and the congregation of Israel, even as he preaches a revolutionary message to Gentiles.

We do not find here...a renegade apostle who abandons Israel and delivers a suspect gospel to the Gentiles, but an apostle whose divine commission is confirmed by prophetic election and the charge of the church, whose activities are not only filled with the prophetic spirit but mirror those of Jesus and Peter before him, who remains in constant contact with Jerusalem, and who until the very end of the story tries to convert his fellow Jews. (Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 225)

Even after the prophet utters God's will regarding Barnabas and Paul, the church continues to fast and pray, no doubt for God's continuing guidance. The leaders then place "their hands on them and sent them off" (13:3). The imposition of hands used on this occasion shows that the church supports these men as doing God's will. The Antioch church leaders, by the laying on of hands, agree that Barnabas and Paul have the authority to act on behalf of the Christian community at Antioch. The church leaders' action of imposing hands is taken on behalf of the entire church community at Antioch.

In Acts, the leaders of the church make decisions and take actions that represent its thinking as a whole (1:15, 6:2, 5; cf. 14:27; 15:22). The idea is that the church as a whole, not just the leaders or a single prophet, is motivated by the Spirit. Both the leadership and the community together are working under the direction of the Spirit to set apart Barnabas and Paul for evangelistic work.¹²

Acts 13:4

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

[sent forth by the Holy Ghost] The Holy Ghost called, and now sent them.

Clarke: Being sent forth by the Holy Ghost—By his influence, authority, and under his continual direction. Without the first, they were not qualified to go; without the second, they had no authority to go; and without the third, they could not know where to go.¹³

¹² <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

¹³ Adam Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament

Clarke: Departed, unto Seleucia—This is generally understood to be Seleucia of Pieria, the first city on the coast of Syria, coming from Cilicia; near the place where the river Orontes pours itself into the sea.

Located in the Mediterranean Sea, the island of Cyprus, with a large Jewish population, was Barnabas's home. Their first stop was in familiar territory.

[departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus] Paul's first missionary journey:

1. Left Antioch, Syria (Acts 13:1-3)
2. Seleucia, seaport of Syria (Acts 13:4)
3. Salamis, Island of Cyprus (Acts 13:4)
4. Paphos, Island of Cyprus (Acts 13:6-12)
5. Perga, Pamphylia, Asia Minor (Acts 13:13)
6. Antioch, Pisidia (Acts 13:14-50)
7. Iconium, capital of Lycaonia (Acts 13:51-14:5)
8. Lystra, Lycaonia (Acts 14:6-19)
9. Derbe, Lycaonia (Acts 14:20)
10. Back to Lystra, Lycaonia (Acts 14:21)
11. Back to Iconium, Pisidia (Acts 14:21)
12. Back to Antioch, Pisidia (Acts 14:21-23)
13. Perga, Pamphylia (Acts 14:24-25)
14. Attalia, Pamphylia (Acts 14:25)
15. Back home, Antioch, Syria (Acts 14:26-28)¹⁴

Work on Cyprus (13:4)

Luke now begins the story of Paul's first missionary journey. The entire trip, perhaps about three years in length, is described in the 13th and 14th chapters of Acts. Barnabas and Paul leave from Seleucia, the port city about 16 miles (26 kilometers) west of Antioch and four or five miles northeast of the mouth of the Orontes River.

Their destination is the island of Cyprus, in the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea. The journey by boat is about 130 miles (210 kilometers), and when the wind is favorable, takes only one day. Cyprus is about 140 miles (225 kilometers) long and 60 miles (96 kilometers) wide. Cyprus was once part of the imperial province of Cilicia. But in 22 B.C. it became a senatorial province, and in Paul's day is administered by a proconsul.

Cyprus is a sensible place to begin the church's outreach program because it is Barnabas' native land. He is acquainted with its idiosyncrasies, terrain and people. Christian communities probably exist on the island and can serve as bases of operation (11:19).¹⁵

¹⁴ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

¹⁵ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

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.

[**Salamis**] Grecian capital of Cyprus, East side.. (Cyprus had two capitals, the other, a Roman capital called Paphos.)

Note they start in the Jewish synagogues.

[**John**] actually John Mark, we know as Mark.

[**preached the word of God**] Works on the first missionary journey (Dake) :

1. Preached the Word of God (Acts 13:5,7,44)
2. Caused blindness (Acts 13:8-12)
3. Converted governor of Cyprus (Acts 13:12)
4. First turning to Gentiles (Acts 13:46)
5. Many converts (Acts 13:12-49; Acts 14:1)
6. Converts Spirit filled (Acts 13:52)
7. Many miracles (Acts 13:11; Acts 14:3-20)
8. Rejected worship (Acts 14:11-18)
9. Paul resurrected (Acts 14:19-20)
10. Preached the gospel (Acts 14:7,21)
11. Taught many (Acts 14:21-22)
12. Published the Word of God (Acts 13:49)
13. Established churches and ordained elders for them (Acts 14:23)
14. Made a missionary report (Acts 14:27)

Thirty Major Doctrines Preached

1. The Word of God, the gospel, and the faith are the same (Acts 13:5-8; Acts 14:7).
2. Children of Satan and enemies of God are unsaved (Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:10).
3. Christianity, a religion of miracles (Acts 13:11; Acts 14:3-10; Acts 15:12; Acts 19:11; Mark 16:15-20; John 14:12; Hebrews 2:3-4)
4. Christianity judges rebels (Acts 13:11; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 4:19-20; 1 Cor. 5:5).
5. People must revere God (Acts 13:16; Luke 12:5).
6. Israel, a chosen people (Acts 13:17)
7. The history of Israel is true (Acts 13:17-22)
8. Jesus Christ, David's seed (Acts 13:22-23)
9. Jesus Christ, the promised Savior (Acts 13:23-41; Matthew 1:18-25; Matthew 8:17; Luke 2)
10. Messiah announced (Acts 13:24-25)
11. Salvation is only for believers (Acts 13:26,38-39; John 3:15-20; Romans 10:9-17).
12. Four main points to gospel salvation:
 - (1) Death of Christ (Acts 13:28-29)
 - (2) Burial of Christ (Acts 13:29)
 - (3) Physical resurrection of Christ (Acts 13:30; Luke 24:29; *John 21:14, note)

- (4) Physical manifestations of Christ (Acts 13:31; *John 21:14, note). See 1 Cor. 15:1-8 for the same 4 points
13. Jesus Christ fulfilled prophecy (Acts 13:32-41; Luke 24:44; John 5:39; Matthew 5:17).
 14. Faith in the physical resurrection of Christ is essential to salvation of the soul (Acts 13:32-39; 1 Cor. 15:12-23).
 15. Christ, God's Son (Acts 13:33-37; Luke 1:35; Hebrews 1:5-7; Matthew 1:18-25)
 16. Christ's body saw no corruption, but was resurrected (Acts 13:34-37; Luke 24:39).
 17. In Christ alone is there forgiveness (Acts 13:38; Matthew 26:28; Ephes. 1:7; Col. 1:20).
 18. Justification for all by faith in Christ (Acts 13:39; Romans 3:21-31; Romans 5:1)
 19. The law of Moses cannot justify anyone (Acts 13:39; Romans 3:21-31; Galatians 3:19-29; Galatians 4:21-31; Col. 2:14-17; Hebrews 7:10).
 20. Israel's rebellion predicted (Acts 13:40-41; Matthew 21:33-46; Romans 9:11)
 21. One must continue in grace and faith to be saved (Acts 13:43; Acts 14:22; Galatians 1:6; Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 3:6,12-14; Hebrews 6:4-9; Hebrews 10:26-29)
 22. Eternal life conditional (Acts 13:46-48; Mark 10:29-30; note, *John 6:27)
 23. The gospel is for both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 13:46-47; Romans 1:16; 1 Cor. 12:13)
 24. Christians should be full of joy and the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:9,52; John 7:39)
 25. Healing by faith (Acts 14:3,8-10; 1 Peter 2:24; James 5:14-16; John 10:10)
 26. Conversion necessary (Acts 14:15; Matthew 18:3; John 3:1-8; Acts 3:19)
 27. God is Creator of all (Acts 14:15).
 28. Material blessings confirm God's love (Acts 14:17; Matthew 7:7-11; 3 John 1:2).
 29. Christians must suffer tribulation (Acts 14:22; Romans 5:1-11; 2 Tim. 3:12).
 30. One must enter the kingdom of God to be saved (Acts 14:22; John 3:1-5)

[synagogues of the Jews] The apostles used Jewish synagogues if there was one in the area (Acts 13:5,14,16,42; Acts 14:1; Acts 17:1,10,17; Acts 18:4,19; Acts 19:8).

[John] John Mark (Acts 12:25).

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:

[Paphos] Roman capital of island of Cyprus, where the proconsul resided, west side, 100 miles along the south shore. A temple of Venus was here and she was worshiped with all her rites as "Queen of Paphos."

Clarke: Unto Paphos—This town, next in importance to Salamis, was situated on the western part of the isle; and having gone from Salamis to this place is a proof that they had gone through the whole island from east to west, according to the reading noticed above. There was probably no town in the universe more dissolute than Paphos. Here Venus had a superb temple: here she was worshipped with all her rites; and from this place she was named the Paphian Venus, the queen of Paphos, etc. This temple and

whole city were destroyed by an earthquake; so that a vestige of either does not now remain. There are two islands which go by this name, both adjoining, and on the west side of the island of Cyprus. One is called Old Paphos, the other New Paphos; the latter is probably the island here mentioned, though they are often confounded. On this island there is a Christian Church, dedicated to St. George, in which service is performed by the Greek ministers. It is a bishop's see, suffragan to the Abp. of Nicosia.

[sorcerer] One who used magical arts

Clarke: A false prophet—A deceiver, one who pretended to have a Divine commission, a fortune teller.

[Barjesus] in the Greek: "son of Jesus" or "son of Joshua." This guy goes by two names: Barjesus and Elymas (Arabic name); he is trying to hide his Jewish nationality. This man claimed a divine call; a fortune-teller. As Bar-jona is the son of Jonah; Bar-tholomew, the son of Thalmi, etc.

At Salamis and Paphos (13:5-6)

John Mark accompanies Barnabas and Paul on the journey as their assistant. The fact that he has a family connection with Barnabas and perhaps is familiar with Cyprus, are probably the reasons he is taken along. Luke describes him as the "helper" of Barnabas and Paul. "Helper" translates the Greek word *hyperetes*, which is used of a synagogue attendant (4:20).

The first of two Cypriot cities Luke mentions is Salamis, the administrative center of eastern Cyprus (13:5). Salamis is located a few miles from the modern city of Famagusta. Barnabas and Paul "proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues" of the city (13:5). There is a substantial Jewish population in Salamis, as there are several synagogues for Barnabas and Paul to preach in. Paul continues this pattern of beginning his missionary work in a city by first working within the synagogue (13:14, 46; 14:1, 16:13; 17:1, 10; 18:4, 19; 19:8; 28:17). That is a logical starting point, for it is a gathering place for people likely to be interested in a message from Jewish preachers based on the Jewish Scriptures, about the Messiah.¹⁶

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.

[deputy] Greek: *anthupatos* (GSN-446), proconsul (Acts 13:7-12; Acts 19:38). Luke's record here has been confirmed by recent discoveries of coins and of a slab mentioning Paulus. Anthupatos, proconsul: for settled provinces, placed directly under the Roman Senate by Emperor Augustus. (Title never given to Pilate, Festus, or Felix, who were but procurators, or subordinate administrators, of unsettled, imperial, military provinces.)

¹⁶ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

Cyprus was put directly under the Roman Senate.

Confirmed by Archaeology: Inscription with both title and name found on a coin of 52 A.D. in Cyprus. Sir William Ramsey also uncovered evidence that his entire family became prominent Christians after this event.

Sergius Paulus - first Gentile convert on their first missionary journey.

A proconsul was a high Roman official. Here he functioned as the governor of the island. Such leaders often kept private sorcerers. Bar-Jesus realized that if Sergius Paulus believed in Jesus, he would soon be out of a job.

Proconsul Sergius Paulus (13:7)

The other city Luke mentions is Paphos, the provincial capital, 90 miles (145 kilometers) southwest of Salamis. At Paphos, the island's proconsul, Sergius Paulus, requests a meeting with the two missionaries. Presumably, Barnabas and Paul preach in the city for some time before they come to the proconsul's attention.

Luke describes Sergius Paulus as "an intelligent man," that is, a man of intellectual curiosity and openmindedness — a person of discernment. As we will see throughout Acts, Luke wants his readers to understand that Roman officials are sympathetic to the gospel message. Here he says of the proconsul that he "wanted to hear the word of God" (13:7). Luke doesn't say why Sergius Paulus wants to hear the message of these traveling Jews. Perhaps it is more for the purposes of inquiry, than a desire to be converted.

At Paphos the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus asked them to present their message before him. This was probably meant to be an official inquiry into the nature of what the missionaries were proclaiming in the synagogues so that the proconsul might know how to deal with the charges already laid against these wandering Jewish evangelists and head off any further disruptions within the Jewish communities. Like a "command performance," the invitation could not have been refused. (Richard N. Longenecker, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, "Acts," page 419).

Luke doesn't say that Sergius Paulus becomes a Christian. However, he implies that a false prophet is unable to turn the proconsul "from the faith" (13:8). Later, when the proconsul sees that Paul causes a sorcerer to become blind, "he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching of about the Lord" (13:12). However, is not clear whether this means that he becomes a Christian. He may have believed in the miracle, but not necessarily the message about Christ.¹⁷

¹⁷ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

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.

[Elymas] Arabic name (“all knowing one, wise one”), hiding his Jewish nationality. This sorcerer deliberately tries to obstruct the Word of God with the most senior Roman official in the area!

Acts 13:9

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

[Paul] A Roman name meaning little or dwarfish (see 2 Cor. 10:10). Saul means "asked for."

Saul, who also is—Paul—This is the first time the name Paul occurs, and the last time in which this apostle is called Saul, as his common or general name.

“Paul” from here on.

Commemorates conversion of Paulus?

Signifies “little”? 1 Cor 10:1?

Hebrew => Roman name

JNTC: Sha’ul, also known as Paul. In this verse we are given **Sha’ul**’s Roman name, and from this point on (except at 22:7, 13 and 26:14, where he recounts the incident that led him to faith) the New Testament always speaks of him as **Paul** (Greek *Pavlos*), undoubtedly because his ministry was primarily among Gentiles. The name “**Paul**” appears 132 times in Acts 13–28, 30 times in his 13 letters and once at 2 Ke 3:15. However, except in the present verse, the *JNT* uses “**Sha’ul**” for all of them, to highlight the Jewishness of the New Testament and its major figures. I choose by this means to remind the reader that **Sha’ul/Paul** remained a Jew all his life, indeed, an observant Jew (16:3, 17:2, 18:18, 20:16, 21:23–27, 25:8; 28:17; and see 21:21), even a Pharisee (23:6, Pp 3:5), while nevertheless sparing no effort to bring to Gentiles the Gospel of Yeshua the Messiah.

Some object to my decision on the ground that at this point, they claim, Sha’ul gave up his old Jewish name and took on a new Christian name, which he kept for the rest of his life in order to identify himself henceforth as no longer a Jew but a Christian. But, as explained above, he did no such thing. Rather, Sha’ul, like “Yochanan surnamed Mark” (12:12, 25), like “Hadassah, that is, Esther” (Esther 2:7), and like many Jews today in the Diaspora, had two names all his life—a Hebrew name and a name in the local language. Lutheran commentator R. C. H. Lenski is correct in writing (*ad loc.*), “The child had both names from infancy.” But it does not necessarily follow that the names were used as suggested in his next sentence, “When his father called him he shouted, ‘Saul, Saul!’ but when the Greek boys with whom he played called him they shouted, ‘Paul, Paul!’ ”

I see no theological or spiritual significance in the New Testament’s calling Sha’ul “Paul” from this verse onward. There is only the practical value, at the time the New

Testament was written, of calling the emissary to the Gentiles by the name he used with them. For the *JNT*, with its very different audience and purpose, this value is, in my opinion, outweighed by the value of reinforcing the reader's perception of Sha'ul's Jewishness. See Section V of the Introduction to the *JNT* on "Translation Issues." Also see Lk 23:33N and Ac 12:4N for two instances where the KJV, with far less reason or logic, renders a Greek name by an English name completely unrelated to it.¹⁸

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?

"Son of the Devil": The Spirit of God never used a term like that of ordinary unsaved men (Cf. John 8:44).

The severest words of the Bible are reserved for:

Those who stand between men and truth...

Those who stand between men and God.

Eight woes: not upon sinning men, but on false teachers...Mt 23:13-29. Cf. Jannes & Jambres withstanding Moses before the Pharaoh of Egypt (2 Tim 3:8).

[all subtilty and all mischief] Pretending to have supernatural power without possessing any, and using only cunning and sleight of hand as a substitute to deceive.

The opposition of the supernatural and the occult is one of the gravest perils threatening the Christian faith. See *Beautiful Side of Evil* by Johannah Michealson.

[wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?] This is question 44 in the book of Acts. The next question is in Acts 13:25.

Paul may have been a mild man in some ways, but I tell you, when he encountered this kind of opposition, he denounced it with all his being. He recognized it as satanic and he denounced it. I think we ought to do the same today.¹⁹

In Aramaic, Bar-Jesus means "Son of Jesus." But Paul told him that instead of being a son of Jesus ("Jesus" means "Yahweh is salvation"), Elymas was **a child** (*huie*, lit., "son") **of the devil**. Paul lashed at him with strong language: Bar-Jesus was **an enemy of everything that is right** (lit., "righteousness"), he was **full of . . . deceit** (*dolou*) **and trickery** (*rhadiourgias*, "unscrupulous mischief, work that easily deceives," used only here in the NT) and **perverting the right ways of the Lord**. Sorcery, exercising power

¹⁸Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 13:9). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

¹⁹McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:567). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

lit. literal, literally

NT New Testament

by the help and control of demons, had led him into all kinds of deception of others and distortion of the truth. The occult is indeed dangerous.

This is the second of four incidents of conflict with and victory over demonic powers in the Book of Acts (cf. 8:9-23; 16:16-18; 19:13-17).²⁰

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.

Paul's first miracle. He makes this guy blind. Blindness is a natural symbol of man's spiritual condition. This guy is blind for a season, which implies an opportunity for repentance.

This miracle is Paul's first act as an apostle; he shows that he is more than a teacher.

This is the 8th New Testament prophecy in Acts (Acts 13:11, fulfilled). Next prophecy in Acts 17:31.

He was already in spiritual darkness. Now he is put into physical darkness as well.

Spurgeon: He who refused spiritual light, now lost natural light; he tried to lead others astray, and became dependent upon the leading of others.

Acts 13:12

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

[believed] This was proof that the doctrine of the Lord was true and that the power of God was backing His ministers.

[astonished] Greek: *ekplessō* (GSN-1605), struck with astonishment (Matthew 7:28; Matthew 22:33; Luke 4:32).

McGee: I call your attention to the fact that Paul had the sign gifts of an apostle. When he went over there to Paphos, he couldn't ask them to turn to the New Testament. There was no New Testament for him to preach from or for them to turn to. He couldn't preach from the Epistle to the Romans because he hadn't written it yet. They couldn't turn to the Gospel of John because John hadn't written it yet. So how will they recognize his authority? It is by the sign gifts. Today, the New Testament is written. We are now given

cf. *confer*, compare

²⁰Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:388). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

a different way to recognize authority. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (2 John 10). This doctrine is in the Word of God, in the New Testament.

Probably the sorcerer had been doing some fancy tricks by the power of Satan. In that day a false prophet could probably heal and perform other miracles by the power of Satan.

Paul has his authority from the Lord Jesus Christ. He absolutely dominates the sorcerer by his message of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sergius Paulus comes to the light. He has been in spiritual darkness but now believes and is astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.²¹

Bar-Jesus, the sorcerer (13:8-12)

Whatever Sergius' Paulus final relationship with the church may be, Luke seems not to be interested in documenting it. (Nor does he give us a single scrap of information as to what happens as a result of Barnabas and Paul preaching in synagogues all across Cyprus.)

Luke's main interest in the proconsul is only as the setting for Paul's confrontation with a magician who is the proconsul's court advisor, and who opposes the preaching of the gospel (13:7-8). Luke gives him two names — Bar-Jesus and Elymas the sorcerer. The meaning of "Elymas" is not clear.

Josephus mentions a Jewish magician from Cyprus by the name of Atomos (*Antiquities* 20:7). He is later employed by Felix, the procurator of Judea, to entice the married Drusilla to become his wife (*Antiquities* 20:142). Some commentators speculate that Bar-Jesus and Atomos may have been the same person. Bar-Jesus means "Son of Jesus." But, ironically, he opposes the servants of God. He does this so vehemently and frequently that Paul finally confronts him, probably at the court of the proconsul.

Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, says to Bar-Jesus: "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?" (13:10). The individual who calls himself "Son of Jesus" is now shown to be a "son of the devil." Paul pronounces a curse on the magician, saying he will be temporarily blinded (3:11). Although Paul brings light to the Gentiles (13:47), he brings blindness to this obstinate man —an external indication of his spiritual condition.

The action so impresses Sergius Paulus that he believes. But this doesn't necessarily mean he becomes a Christian. Simon the magician also "believed" upon seeing the miracles Stephen performed (8:13). Simon was baptized, but Luke says nothing of Sergius Paulus being baptized. It would be surprising if he became a Christian.

Luke is more interested in the story of Bar-Jesus being confronted and cursed by Paul. He is interested in telling the story not of a conversion, but of the superiority of God's power over the magic of the spirit world. Luke wants to show how Paul uses his apostolic authority to neutralize the evil spirit influence of Bar-Jesus. Luke wants his readers to understand that the power behind the gospel is superior to that of pagan magic. In the same way, Moses' miracles in the land of Egypt are more powerful than the magicians'

²¹McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:567). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

magic. Paul's squaring off with Bar-Jesus is also reminiscent of Elijah confronting and defeating the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:19-40).

Luke probably has another parallel in mind, this one with the gospel message preached earlier in Samaria. The first major missionary work in Samaria, this one from Jerusalem, was challenged by Simon the Sorcerer (8:9-24). In the same way, the first outreach from Antioch encounters the false prophet Bar-Jesus, who is also defeated.²²

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.

[Paul and Company] - left Cyprus. Barnabas, now in the background will later visit again and spend some time there. It was his original home. Note that "Paul and company" shows that Paul had become the leader. Previous to this Luke put Barnabas before Paul (Acts 11:30; Acts 12:25) but from this time on he usually puts Paul first.

[Perga] the principal metropolis in Pamphylia, situated on the river Cestrus, 7 miles N from Attaleia. The capital of Pamphylia; Antioch was capital of Pisidia and a Roman colony.

[departing from them returned to Jerusalem] John Mark for some reason, perhaps because of homesickness, left them to go home. This was why Paul refused to take him on the second journey (Acts 15:36-41). Later, however, Paul asked for him (2 Tim. 4:11).

Why did Mark leave?

- Blameworthy (son of a rich woman?)
- Resented change in leadership?
- Unattracted to difficulties ahead?
- Paul did not approve (15:38).
- Barnabas did quite share Paul's view.
- Paul later receives Mark (2 Tim 4:11).

LAN: No reason is given why John Mark left Paul and Barnabas. Some suggestions are: (1) he was homesick; (2) he resented the change in leadership from Barnabas (his cousin) to Paul; (3) he became ill (an illness that may have affected all of them—see Galatians 4:13); (4) he was unable to withstand the rigors and dangers of the missionary journey; (5) he may have planned to go only that far but had not communicated this to Paul and Barnabas. Paul implicitly accused John Mark of lacking courage and commitment, refusing to take him along on another journey (see Acts 15:37-38). It is clear from Paul's later letters, however, that he grew to respect Mark (Col. 4:10), and that he needed Mark in his work (2 Tim. 4:11).

²² <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

McGee: That is all Dr. Luke says; he mildly records the fact of John Mark's departure. He doesn't issue a tirade against him. We will learn later that John Mark actually deserted. He showed a yellow streak and ran home to mommy. Remember that his mother was a prominent member of the church in Jerusalem and that her home was the place of meeting for the church there. When he reached Perga and got a look into the interior of Asia Minor—the paganism and the physical dangers and hardships that were there—he decided that he hadn't been called as a missionary. He heads in another direction, and that direction is home.

Later on we will find that Paul refuses to take John Mark on another missionary journey. In fact, Paul and Barnabas disagree so violently over the issue of taking along John Mark that Paul and Barnabas finally separated. Paul went one way and Barnabas went another way. Paul was wrong about John Mark. God didn't throw him overboard because of his failure. Thank God, He doesn't throw us overboard because of our failure either. He gave John Mark another chance. Later on Paul was big enough to admit he had been wrong, and when he was close to his death, he actually asked for John Mark to come to him. "Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (2 Tim. 4:11). This is the John Mark who wrote the Gospel of Mark. He made good. Thank God, He gives us a second chance!

However here at the beginning John Mark is a failure. He left them and returned to Jerusalem. Meanwhile Paul and Barnabas go into the interior of Asia Minor.²³

Paul in Perga (13:13)

The missionary group now sails from Cyprus to Perga in Pamphylia, on the southcentral coast of Asia Minor (13:13). Perga is a river port on the Cestrus River about 12 miles (19 kilometers) inland from the seaport of Attalia (14:25). Luke gives no indication that Paul and Barnabas preach the gospel in Perga or the surrounding area — but they do preach there on their way back to Syrian Antioch (14:25).

It is during the trip to Perga that Luke no longer speaks of "Barnabas and Saul." From now on, Paul is usually in first place, ahead of Barnabas. Before this, Barnabas was usually mentioned first (11:30; 12:25; 13:2). In the account here, Luke speaks of "Paul and his companions," which literally means "those around Paul." This expression indicates that Paul is the leader of the group. Luke appears to be signaling to his readers that Paul has become the dominant partner in the missionary team. Luke doesn't explain why the change occurs. Perhaps it is obvious that the Holy Spirit is working through Paul, as in the case of his confrontation with the magician. Paul's speaking may be getting results, indicating that God is using him in a special way.

John Mark leaves the evangelizing team at Perga and returns to Jerusalem. His departure will later lead to an argument between Barnabas and Paul, and their permanent split (15:2). Luke gives no reason for Mark's departure. Perhaps John Mark does not like the fact that his uncle, Barnabas, is no longer the leader of the team. Or he may be in disagreement over some policy regarding preaching to the Gentiles, or admitting them into the fellowship. He may even be homesick or afraid of traveling into the hinterland.

²³McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:567). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Whatever the reason for Mark's departure, Paul doesn't like it. He calls it desertion (15:38).²⁴

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.

Antioch at Pisidia (not Antioch at Syria). Part of the ancient Roman province of Galatia (includes: Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe).

Three influences:

- Roman government
- Greek mental mood
- Hebrew religious influences

Due North of Perga...mountainous country, difficult to reach; hangout of robbers, etc., re: 2 Cor 11:26.

LAN: When they went to a new city to witness for Christ, Paul and Barnabas went first to the synagogue. The Jews who were there believed in God and diligently studied the Scriptures. Tragically, however, many could not accept Jesus as the promised Messiah because they had the wrong idea of what kind of Messiah he would be. He was not, as they desired, a military king who would overthrow Rome's control, but a servant king who would defeat sin in people's hearts. (Only later, when Christ returns, will he judge the nations of the world.) Paul and Barnabas did not separate themselves from the synagogues but tried to show clearly that the very Scriptures the Jews studied pointed to Jesus.

Pisidian Antioch (13:14)

Paul and Barnabas leave Perga and travel to Antioch in Pisidia. Luke devotes the rest of chapter 13 to the preaching of the gospel in the city, and much of his account centers around a single sermon in a synagogue.

Surprisingly, Antioch of Pisidia is not in Pisidia, but in Phrygia, *near* Pisidia. It may be called Pisidian Antioch because the city is adjacent to, or over against Pisidia (Strabo, *Geography* 12.3.31; 12.6.4; 12.8.14). It's about 100 miles (161 kilometers) north of Perga, some 3,600 feet above sea level. To reach Antioch of Pisidia the missionaries have to cross the Taurus mountains — a difficult and dangerous journey. The Pisidian highlands are subject to sudden flooding. Another danger is from brigands, as the Romans have not yet fully suppressed the robber clans that call these mountains their home.

Thus, on first view it seems strange that Paul and Barnabas would struggle to make their way to such an out-of-the-way town in the center of Asia Minor. Luke doesn't let us in on Paul's thinking, except that it is his goal to preach the gospel in whatever town he

²⁴ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

can. Some commentators speculate that Paul or someone in the party became ill while in Perga, perhaps a victim of malaria that plagues the marshy coastal strip of Asia Minor. In Paul's later letter to the churches in Galatia he says that he came to them because he was ill (Galatians 4:13).

Some commentators think that Paul contracted his "thorn in the flesh" at Perga, the illness for which he beseeches God's healing on three occasions (2 Corinthians 12:7). However, one must wonder how a deathly ill Paul could survive the rigors of crossing the Taurus mountains. Another view is that Paul has a practical reason for going to Pisidian Antioch: The town sits astride the Via Sebaste, the Roman road from Ephesus going to the Euphrates.²⁵

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.*

[reading of the law and the prophets] This was done every sabbath. The law was divided to be read once a year. See Luke 4:16.

[exhortation] Greek: *paraklesis* (GSN-3874), translated "intreaty" (2 Cor. 8:4); "comfort" (Acts 9:31; Romans 15:4; 2 Cor. 1:3-4; 2 Cor. 7:4,13); "exhortation" (Acts 13:15; Romans 12:8; 1 Cor. 14:3; 2 Cor. 8:17; 1 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:13; Hebrews 12:5; Hebrews 13:22); and "consolation" (Luke 2:25; Luke 6:24; Acts 4:36; Acts 15:31; Romans 15:5; 2 Cor. 1:5-7; 2 Cor. 7:7; Phil. 2:1; 2 Thes. 2:16; Philemon 1:7; Hebrews 6:18). See Acts 4:36.

LAN: What happened in a synagogue service? First the *Shema* was recited (this is Deut. 6:4, which Jews repeated several times daily). Certain prayers were spoken; then there was a reading from the law (the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy), a reading from the prophets intending to illustrate the law, and a sermon. The synagogue leader decided who was to lead the service and give the sermon. A different person was chosen to lead each week. Since it was customary for the synagogue leader to invite visiting rabbis to speak, Paul and Barnabas usually had an open door when they first went to a synagogue. But as soon as they spoke about Jesus as Messiah, the door would slam shut. They were usually not invited back by the religious leaders, and sometimes they were thrown out of town!

McGee: Paul follows his method of going first to the synagogue. Jews were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, and they established synagogues in the cities in which they had settled. When visitors would come from Jerusalem, since they would want word from the religious center, they would invite the visitor to say something. This always afforded a marvelous opportunity for the apostle Paul. He certainly took advantage of it here.

²⁵ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

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.²⁶

JNTC: After the reading from the *Torah* and from the Prophets. Then as now, on *Shabbat* there was added to the liturgy a reading from the *Torah* (the Pentateuch) and a *haftarah* (“conclusion”), which consisted of a reading from the *N.vi.im* (Prophets) or *K.tuvim* (Writings). Following this would be a *drashah* (literally, “investigation,” that is, a teaching or sermon), depending on who was available to teach or preach. Hospitality often dictated offering this honor to a visitor, if he was competent. Compare Lk 4:16–17&N.²⁷

In the synagogue (13:14-15)

Luke now turns to describe a sermon Paul delivers in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch (13:14). Paul’s practice of presenting the Christian message in the synagogues of Roman cities becomes a regular feature of his itinerary. Because of this, Paul can put into practice the principle that the gospel should be given “to the Jew first” (Romans 1:16). The synagogue plays a major role in Jewish life in the Diaspora. It serves as a meeting place, schoolhouse, library and court. The synagogue houses the Scriptures and other important writings, so it is a center of religious education and learning. And, of course, it is the place where all Jews came to worship.

For these reasons, the synagogue is a place in which the Christian missionaries can find a receptive audience, primed for the gospel message. This is true because Gentile proselytes and God-fearers attend the synagogue as well as Jews. The synagogue-attending Gentiles serve as a bridge to pagan relatives, acquaintances and business associates.²⁸

After the reading (13:15)

During the synagogue service, Paul listens to the reading from the Law and the Prophets. After this is completed, the synagogue “rulers” ask if Paul and Barnabas have any words of encouragement for the assembly. One might wonder why these strangers are allowed to speak. This is not necessarily their first Sabbath at the synagogue. Thus, they may be known to the synagogue rulers or officials. Paul’s dress or some other symbol may identify him as a rabbi and Pharisee.

The “ruler” or leader of the synagogue is usually an elder or leading layman. He takes charge of organizing and arranging the service and is responsible for maintaining the building. Luke mentions two individuals who hold the office of ruler, Crispus (18:8) and Sosthenes (18:17), both in Corinth.

²⁶McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:568). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

²⁷Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 13:15). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

²⁸ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

Luke provides us with two vignettes in which he describes parts of a synagogue service. The first is a service in the Nazareth synagogue at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry (Luke 4:16-17). The other is the one given here at Pisidian Antioch. From the details Luke gives and our knowledge of later customs, we can reconstruct the following pattern of a Jewish synagogue service. It begins with the *Shema*, summarized in the phrase: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4). Prayers follow the *Shema*. Then comes two readings, one from the Law and a second from the Prophets. A sermon of explanation and exhortation is drawn from the second reading, as was done by Jesus at the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:17). The address is given by one or more persons judged to be competent by the synagogue rulers. Philo in his description of a Sabbath synagogue service writes, "Some of those who are very learned explain to them [the audience] what is of great importance and use, lessons by which the whole of their lives may be improved" (*Special Laws* 2.62). After the instruction period is over, the synagogue service closes with a blessing.²⁹

Acts 13:16

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

Paul's first recorded address: contrast with Peter's (only) address to Gentiles (Cornelius, still very Jewish).

vs. Paul's while although modeled after Stephen's address, Jewish phraseology avoided, he presents the Gospel with no reference to Hebrew history or Hebrew Scriptures: meets Gentiles on Gentile ground. (Cf. 1 Cor 9:20-22).

God's Government
God's Grace

One would conclude from this introduction that there were some visitors there—probably Gentile proselytes.

Paul's sermon (13:16-41)

A large part of the rest of this chapter is devoted to Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch. It is one of three sermons or speeches Luke records for Paul during his missionary tours (13:16-41; 14:15-17; 17:22-31). This sermon is the only one in a synagogue, and it is by far the longest of the three. Luke gives a rather complete summary so he won't have to repeat himself every time Paul preaches in a synagogue. In later episodes, Luke simply tells us that Paul goes into the synagogue to preach, without giving any details (14:1; 17:2; 18:4).

At most, Luke offers only a sentence or two, tersely summarizing what Paul says. We can infer that Luke wants his readers to understand that Paul preaches a similar message in synagogue after synagogue. If we compare Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Pisidian

²⁹ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

Antioch with other speeches given in a Jewish setting, we find they contain the same message and similar elements.

It has often been remarked that this sermon bears a striking resemblance to the speeches of Peter in both outline and content and to a lesser extent to the speech of Stephen (both contain a resume of Israel's history)....It is now widely accepted that all of the early preaching followed a common pattern that to some extent was based on rabbinic models. These models, no less than the form of preaching based on them, were familiar to Paul, and naturally he adopted this pattern himself. (David J. Williams, *Acts*, page 229)

Paul's exhortation here begins with a survey of Israel's history. Like Stephen, Paul describes how God dealt with the Jews' ancestors. However, he begins not with Abraham and the patriarchs, but with God's saving grace in the Exodus. Paul then moves on to Israel's history in the Promised Land, but he focuses on the life of King David. The reason for Paul's emphasis has to do with his being able to proclaim Jesus as the promised Son of David, using proof-texts about the Messiah from the Hebrew Scriptures.

He then moves the point of his speech: that through Jesus his listeners have forgiveness of sins. Paul's speech ends with an appeal not to reject the Savior and a solemn warning about the consequences of unbelief.³⁰

Gentile who worship God (13:16)

Paul begins by addressing not only the Jews, but also "you Gentiles who worship God" (13:16). Besides Jews, there are Gentile proselytes and God-fearers listening to him. Because of their presence, Paul can fulfill his commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles by preaching in the synagogue!

The Gentiles worshipping in the synagogue are an informed audience, already familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures and knowing the messianic hopes of the Jews — which have become their hope as well. Thus, Paul can present his speech as though he is talking to Jews. These Gentiles already recognize the one true God. There is no need to begin at the more elementary level of identifying God and contrasting him with the false gods of the pagans. Later, when Paul talks before purely pagan audiences, he is forced to take this extra step before moving on to explain that Jesus is Savior.³¹

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.

JNTC: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers. While it is possible that some Jews, like some Christians, become proud of being "chosen," I think many find it embarrassing and wish, like Tevye in "Fiddler on the Roof," that God "would choose somebody else, for a change." But only if I take chosenness to imply superiority do I

³⁰ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

³¹ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

become either embarrassed or proud. The right attitude, the one taken by Sha'ul and by the writers of the *Tanakh*, is that Israel's election by God is not predicated on any special quality in Israel but entirely on God's "grace," rightly defined as "undeserved favor." Being aware that his favor is undeserved should make us humble without embarrassing us (see 20:18–19 on "humility").

"*Adonai* did not set his love upon you or choose you because you were more numerous than any people, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but rather because *Adonai* loved you, and because he wanted to keep the oath he had sworn to your fathers." (Deuteronomy 7:7–8)

So long as God's act of choosing Israel is seen as a means whereby God glorified himself by creating opportunities to express his love, it causes neither conceit nor discomfiture. When our attention is diverted from God to ourselves, then enter the sins of pride and embarrassment (a kind of pride in reverse). Sha'ul proceeds to state some of the ways in which God has expressed his love.

With a stretched-out arm. A phrase the *Tanakh* uses repeatedly to describe God's judgment on those who rebel against him and against his people Israel (Exodus 6:6; Deuteronomy 4:34, 5:15, 7:19, 9:29, 11:2; 1 Kings 8:42; 2 Kings 17:36; Jeremiah 32:21; Ezekiel 20:33–34; Psalm 136:11–12; 2 Chronicles 6:32).³²

Acts 13:18

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

"Suffered he their manners in the wilderness": = (1 letter in Greek: as in some manuscripts: "He bare them as a nursing Father..") cf. Deut 1:31; Num 11:12.

[forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness] Numbers 14:33-34; Numbers 32:13; Deut. 2:7; Deut. 8:2-4.

Acts 13:19

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

One verse summarizes the whole book of Joshua.

[seven nations in the land of Chanaan] Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Hivites, Perizzites, Jebusites.

[divided their land to them by lot] Joshua 13 through Joshua 22.

³²Stern, D. H. (1996, c1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Ac 13:17). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

Acts 13:20

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

[judges] Judges 3:7-16:31; 1 Samuel 4:1-8:5.

after that he gave ... judges ... about the space of four hundred and fifty years—As this appears to contradict 1Ki 6:1, various solutions have been proposed. Taking the words as they stand in the *Greek*, thus, “after that, by the space of four hundred fifty years, He gave judges,” the meaning may be, that about four hundred fifty years elapsed from the time of the covenant with Abraham *until* the period of the judges; which is historically correct, the word “about” showing that chronological exactness was not aimed at. But taking the sense to be as in our version, that it was the period of the judges itself which lasted about four hundred fifty years, this statement also will appear historically correct, if we include in it the interval of subjection to foreign powers which occurred during the period of the judges, and understand it to describe the whole period from the settlement of the tribes in Canaan to the establishment of royalty. Thus, from the Exodus to the building of the temple were five hundred ninety-two years [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 8.3.1]; deduct forty years in the wilderness; twenty-five years of Joshua’s rule [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 5.1.29]; forty years of Saul’s reign (Ac 13:2); forty of David’s and the first four years of Solomon’s reign (1Ki 6:1), and there remain, just four hundred forty-three years; or, in round numbers, “about four hundred fifty years.”³³

450 years (= Abraham’s covenant until Judges): or from the first servitude to Samuel (Judges 3:7- 1 Samuel 8-5.

Or: Exodus to building of Temple, 591 years,
less, 40 years wilderness,
25 years of Joshua’s rule,
40 years of Saul,
40 years of David’s
1st 4 years of Solomon to the Temple
= 442 or “about 450 years”

Notice that Paul is doing the same thing that Stephen did before the Sanhedrin. He recounts Israel’s history as a nation.

God chose our fathers (13:17-20)

Paul’s first point is that God chose Israel — “our fathers” — to show his grace and mercy (13:17). He wants to emphasize God’s redemptive activity among the Jews, which would bring him in line with Jewish interests. Paul’s speech is characteristic of rabbinic models of exhortation. The recitation of Old Testament history is a kind of confessional recognizing God’s mighty and merciful hand in the nation’s history. We can see the same

³³Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Ac 13:20). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

pattern in Stephen's speech, Matthew's Gospel and in the book of Hebrews. Paul is beginning on thoroughly familiar and acceptable ground.

But Paul doesn't begin his sermon about God's redemptive acts with Abraham and the patriarchs. Even Moses is not singled out for discussion. Paul moves quickly to events in the wilderness, and then talks about the entrance of Israel into the Promised Land. "All this took about 450 years," Paul says (13:20). This would include the centuries of sojourning in Egypt (Genesis 15:13; Acts 7:6), the 40 years wandering in the desert and an additional 10 years conquering the Promised Land (Joshua 14:1-5).³⁴

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.

[Both "Saul's" were of the tribe of Benjamin...]

[king: and God gave unto them Saul] 1 Samuel 8-21; 1 Chron. 10; Hosea 13:11.

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.

David as a man after God's own heart: Ps 89:20, 1 Sam 13:14, (Ps 78:70-72?) David asked for Fellowship.

[I have found David the son of Jesse] Quoted from Psalm 89:20.

[after mine own heart] According to My choice to rule the kingdom according to My will (1 Samuel 13:14). David did guide the government according to the law. He did not allow idolatry or set up a dictatorship. He sought the leading of God in all things of public interest. After God's heart could refer to his public life, rather than his private life which was not always lived this way. Saul was the opposite (1 Samuel 15; 1 Samuel 28; 1 Chron. 10:13-14).

Acts 13:23

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

[this man's seed] Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38; Isaiah 11:1.

³⁴ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

Clarke: Of this man's seed hath God—raised—a Savior—That Jesus Christ came in a direct and indisputable line from David, according to both promise and prophecy, may be seen in the notes on Matthew 1:1, etc., and particularly in the notes at the end of Luke. And that the Messiah was promised to come from the family of David, see Isaiah 11:1, 2, and Jeremiah 23:5, 6.

[promise] 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 132:11; Isaiah 9:6.

LAN: 23-31 Paul began where his listeners were and then introduced them to Christ. Because Paul was speaking to devout Jews, he began with the covenant, Abraham, David, and other familiar themes. Later, when speaking to the Greek philosophers in Athens (Acts 17:22-32), he would begin by talking about what he had observed in their city. In both cases, however, he centered the sermon around Christ and emphasized the resurrection. When you share the Good News, begin where your audience is—then tell them about Christ.

After recounting their history, he will present to them the person of the Savior.

David, king of Israel (13:21-23)

Paul then recounts events from the period of the judges until the time of Samuel. This enables him to describe Saul as the nation's first king, who was anointed by Samuel. Saul isn't often mentioned in surveys of Israel's history, since he was not a very good example of faith or obedience to God. Perhaps Paul's reference to him reflects his personal interest in a king who bore the same name as he did, and came from the same tribe (Philippians 3:5).

In any case, the reference to Saul's reign is only an aside. Paul is much more interested in Israel's next king, David. Here Paul lingers over the details, as David's example is pivotal to his sermon. Paul quotes God's testimony of David: "I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do" (13:22). This seems to be a composite quote from at least two Old Testament Scriptures: 1) "I have found David" (Psalm 89:20) and, 2) "A man after my own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). For Paul, David is pivotal as the servant in whom the purpose of God is centered. After picturing David as a man of faith, Paul says: "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised" (13:23). Paul's comment about David's "descendants" may be based on an interpretation of 2 Samuel 7:6-16, which describes a descendant of David in the following words: "I will be his father, and he will be my son" (verse 14). This passage may be considered messianic by first-century Jews. It is similar to Psalm 2:7, ("You are my Son; today I have become your Father"), which is usually considered messianic.

David is a type of the Messiah ("he will do everything I want him to do") and also the Messiah's forbearer ("from this man's descendants"). The promise of 2 Samuel 7:12-16 refers to a continuing line of kings. But Paul, and Peter before him, interprets the verse messianically, as referring to one king, the Messiah (Jesus). Paul here builds a bridge from the Jewish expectation of a Messiah — David's Son — to Jesus as the one in whom the

hope is fulfilled. Paul's proclamation to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch is that God has brought forth the Savior-Deliverer from David's line, and it is Jesus.³⁵

Acts 13:24

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

[baptism of repentance] Matthew 3:1-11; Luke 3:1-21; John 1:31-34

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.

[Whom think ye that I am?] this is Question 45 in the Book of Acts. The next question is in Acts 14:15.

[But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose] A New Testament prophecy fulfilled in Acts (Acts 13:25; Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16).

John the Baptist's work (13:24-26)

Paul's speech skips from David to the work of John the Baptist. John is highly regarded by the Jews. Some even thought he was the Messiah (John 1:19-20). Most consider him a prophet (Matthew 21:26). Paul uses John's testimony as a further piece of evidence that the promised Messiah is Jesus. Paul quotes John's statement that the Messiah is one who "is coming after me, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie" (13:25). John clearly pointed out that Jesus is the Messiah "who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29-34).

Paul has made his case about Jesus from ancient Jewish history and the recent testimony of John. Then he begins to show why all this is vitally important to his listeners. "Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles," Paul shouts, "it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent" (13:26).³⁶

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.

³⁵ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

³⁶ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

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*.

[because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day] Pleading ignorance for the priests. They did not know the Messiah nor the prophets, even though the prophecies were read every Sabbath.

Acts 13:28

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

Sin blinds men's eyes to the truth.

McGee: As Paul is reviewing their history, he is pointing out that all this was done as a fulfillment of prophecy. They were fulfilling the prophets at the very same time they were reading them! They read without understanding what they were reading.³⁷

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.

Acts 13:30

But God raised him from the dead:

Paul is telling them the whole story, but from an Old Testament perspective as a fulfillment, and here even all the things they did he highlights showing in the global summary that that was predicted. He is wrapping up with Ps 22 and Isa 53.

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.

[many days] Forty days (Acts 1:3).

[witnesses unto the people] Acts 1:8,22; Acts 2:32; Acts 3:15; Acts 4:32; Acts 5:32.

³⁷ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:568). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Jesus the Savior (13:27-31)

Paul next preaches the gospel message, that Jesus died for our sins and was resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). He proceeds to explain that the people and rulers of Jerusalem condemned Jesus and thereby "fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath" (13:27).

Here is an irony. Jews (and worshipping Gentiles) are in the synagogue every Sabbath listening to the prophets speak of Jesus. Yet they are unable to recognize that the Scriptures are pointing to him. By rejecting Jesus, they are fulfilling the scriptures that foretell his rejection. The very things the Scriptures say should happen to Jesus, the Jews of Jerusalem carried out (13:29). The people who want to live in accordance with the Scriptures had fulfilled the prophecies by (ironically) rejecting God's messenger!

The Jewish rulers took steps to ensure that Jesus' body would not be displayed when the Sabbath began (John 19:31). They tried to make the tomb secure so the disciples couldn't steal the body (Matthew 27:62-66). This is a further irony. The Jews thought they could prove Jesus to be a fake because they had his body. What they didn't know was that "God raised him from the dead" (13:30). His disciples, however, knew he had been raised because they saw him after his resurrection (13:31). And the guards became unwitting supporting evidence that the disciples did *not* steal the body.

God raised up Jesus to be the Messiah even before his death, but God also raised him up after his death. And both "raisings" are predicted in the Scriptures that are read every Sabbath in the synagogues. But people do not have to rely on proof-texts from Scripture to prove that Jesus has been raised from the dead. The resurrection is a verifiable fact because Jesus appeared to his followers over a span of several weeks. "They are now his witnesses to our people" (13:31).

Interestingly, Paul speaks of others as witnesses and not himself. That's because he is not among the original disciples who saw Jesus over an extended period of time after his resurrection.

Neither did Paul say anything of Jesus' appearance to him, perhaps because the circumstances were different and he had not followed Jesus as the others had done or seen him die. So instead of including himself among the witnesses, he presented himself as an evangelist. (Williams, page 235)³⁸

Acts 13:32

And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

[glad tidings] Greek: euangelizo (GSN-2097). Glad Tidings.

[promise which was made unto the fathers] Genesis 3:15; Genesis 12:1-3; Deut. 18:15; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6; Isaiah 11:1; Isaiah 42:1-5; Isaiah 61:1; Psalm 16:10.

³⁸ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

Glad Tidings (Dake)

Greek: *euangelizo* (GSN-2097), good news or glad tidings of various kinds.

Used In the Old Testament (Septuagint) Of:

1. Any kind of good news (1 Samuel 31:9; 2 Samuel 1:20; 1 Chron. 10:9)
2. God's kindnesses (Psalm 36:10; Psalm 96:2)
3. Messianic blessings (Isaiah 40:9; Isaiah 61:1)

Used in the New Testament Of:

1. The kingdom of heaven and of God (Matthew 4:23; Matthew 9:35; Matthew 24:14; Mark 1:14)
2. God (7 times, Romans 1:1; Romans 15:16)
3. Jesus Christ (14 times, Mark 1:1; Romans 1:16; Romans 15:29; 1 Cor. 9:12-18)
4. Salvation, including all phases of redemption of Romans 1:16 (Mark 16:15; Luke 4:18; Ephes. 1:3)
5. The grace of God (Acts 20:24)
6. Peace (Romans 10:15; Ephes. 6:15)
7. The promises (Ephes. 3:6; Hebrews 8:6)
8. The truth (Ephes. 1:13; Col. 1:5)
9. Faith (Phil. 1:27)
10. Hope (Col. 1:23)
11. Immortality (2 Tim. 1:10)
12. The general blessings of the new covenant called "the gospel" 74 times (Mark 16:15; Galatians 1:11; Galatians 3:8). There is only one gospel and both Jews and Gentiles are required to obey the whole New Testament from Matthew to Revelation (Matthew 28:20; Acts 1:1-2; Romans 10:12; 1 Cor. 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Ephes. 2:11-22; Ephes. 3:5-11).

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.

Ps 2 (delete "again").

[Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee] The 14th Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Acts (Acts 13:33; Psalm 2:7). Next, Acts 13:34. This refers to the incarnation when the second person of the Divine Trinity took a human body to redeem (Phil. 2:5-11; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6). It was when God had a Son through Mary (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14). This happened on a certain day: "This day have I begotten thee" (Hebrews 1:5-7). Therefore, we cannot say that God had a Son before this time. This proves that sonship in connection with God had to refer to humanity and not to deity.

As God, the person we now know of as Jesus Christ had no beginning, was not begotten, was not a Son, and did not come into being. He always existed as God (Psalm 90:2; Micah 5:2; John 1:1-2; Hebrews 1:8). But as man and as God's Son He was not eternal. He had a beginning. He was begotten—the same time Mary had a Son. Therefore, the doctrine of eternal sonship of Jesus Christ is irreconcilable to reason,

unscriptural, and contradictory to itself. Eternity has no beginning, so if He has been God from eternity, then He could not have a beginning as God. Eternity has no reference to time, so if He was begotten "this day," then it was done in time and not in eternity.

The word Son supposes time, generations, father, mother, beginning, and conception—unless one is a son by creation, as Adam (Luke 3:38), and angels (Job 1:6; Job 2:1; Job 38:7; Genesis 6:1-4). Time, created, beginning, are opposites to God and eternity and are absolutely impossible to reconcile with them. If sonship refers to deity, not to humanity, then this person of the Deity had a beginning in time and not in eternity. It is plainly stated in Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; Hebrews 5:5 that God had a Son "this day" and not in eternity. It is stated in Hebrews 1:5-7; Luke 1:35; Matthew 1:18-25 when this took place. It was nearly 2,000 years ago. It had been predicted that God would have a Son (Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6; Hebrews 1:5; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:32-35). This was fulfilled when the virgin conceived "of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:20), not at any other time. To say that God had an eternal Son would mean He had two; but it is plainly stated that Jesus was "the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14,18; John 3:16-18; 1 John 4:9).³⁹

McGee: This Old Testament reference, Psalm 2:7, does not refer to the *birth* of Christ; it refers to the *resurrection* of Christ. "This day have I begotten thee"—not begotten in the Virgin Birth but actually in the resurrection from the dead.⁴⁰

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.

[corruption] The Son born of God and Mary was not to see corruption in body. He was to be resurrected before seeing corruption (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:24-27; Acts 13:33; Luke 24:39; John 21:14, note). The idea here is that He should no more return to death or to the grave, the place of corruption.

[I will give you the sure mercies of David] The 15th Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Acts (Acts 13:34; Isaiah 55:3; Psalm 18:50; Psalm 89:3-4,20-24,35-37). Next, Acts 13:35. The sure mercies of David are guaranteed by the resurrection of Christ. They refer to the mercies assured David by an everlasting king and kingdom (2 Samuel 7; Psalm 89:3-4,28-36). The resurrection guarantees even the terms of the new covenant (1 Cor. 15:9-23).

³⁹ Dake Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

⁴⁰ McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (4:569). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Acts 13:35

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

Ps 16, can't apply to David literally; it applied to the Messiah out of David.

[Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption] The 16th Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Acts (Acts 13:35; Psalm 16:10). Next, Acts 13:41.

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.

"You are my Son" (13:32-37)

Paul quotes three more texts and says that they also speak of "raising up Jesus" (13:33). This raising up is prefigured in Psalm 2:7: "You are my Son; today I have become your Father" (12:33) This is echoed when God spoke after Jesus' baptism: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Jesus is then anointed by the Holy Spirit, "raised up" or assigned to be the Messiah.

With a Jewish audience it had first to be established that Jesus was the Messiah. The resurrection was the key to that, hence the emphasis not only of this sermon but of all the early preaching in Acts. Only with their acceptance of his messiahship could the Jews be expected to come to grips with the fact and manner of Jesus' death. For most, however, his crucifixion remained an insuperable obstacle to accepting him as Messiah. (Williams, page 237)

Acceptance of Jesus as Savior-Messiah is the critical difference between those who remain Jews and those who become Christian Jews. As Paul says, "We preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews...but to those whom God has called... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:23).

Jesus is also "raised up" in another way. Paul later writes that Jesus "was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). He was already the Son of God; but after the resurrection, he is declared even more powerfully to be the Son. Thus, Jesus becomes Savior of the world by being "raised up" in resurrection. In his synagogue speech, Paul cites Isaiah 55:3 as his second proof-text: "I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David" (13:34). This, says Paul, refers to "the fact that God raised him [Jesus] from the dead, never to decay" (13:34).

Paul is moving from discussing the "raising" of Jesus as a "sending" to his "raising" in the resurrection of the dead. He does this by claiming that the resurrection itself is the fulfillment of the blessings promised to David.

In his third proof-text, Paul quotes Psalm 16:10: "You will not let your Holy One see decay" (13:36). Paul understands this to be a prophetic statement about someone other than David. After all, David died an ordinary death and his body decayed. But Jesus' body does not suffer corruption. His tomb is empty and his body has not been found. This is the argument Peter used at Pentecost, even citing the same scripture (2:24-32). Peter is a witness to the fact of the resurrection, something Paul mentioned earlier (13:31).

Of the three proof-texts, the last one from Psalm 16:10 is probably the most compelling. It is recognized as a messianic prophecy. But it contains a strange discussion about the Holy One, the Messiah, seeing decay — that is, dying. Those who accept the verse at face value are led to the unmistakable conclusion that the Messiah had to die. But he would also be resurrected — not see decay. Jesus fits both qualifications.

Acts 13:38

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

[through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins] Through Jesus is forgiveness of sins (Matthew 1:21; Matthew 26:28; Acts 2:38; Acts 4:12; Acts 13:38-39; Ephes. 1:7; Col. 1:20; 1 Peter 2:24).

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.

Grand gospel statement...

“Justified” - first use of the word. He is saying that you could not be justified by the Law of Moses. And his point is that all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses.

Shattering to men who honored Law of Moses!

Paul => “justified,” not just forgiven...

....in such a way that God's honor and integrity are preserved (Rom 5:1).

Paul's paradigm: (Hab 2:4)

The Just shall live by faith Rom 1:17

The Just shall live by faith Gal 3:11

The Just shall live by Faith Heb 10:38

[all that believe are justified from all things] Faith in Christ and His atonement is what justifies (John 3:15-20; Romans 1:16; Romans 3:24-31; Romans 10:9-17; 1 Cor. 15:1-8).

[could not be justified by the law of Moses] Faith in the law of Moses, or works by it, could not save the soul (Romans 3:27-31; Romans 4:1-6,14-15; Romans 9:11,30-33; Romans 11:5-6; Galatians 2:16; Galatians 3:1-14,18-29; Ephes. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

Justified from sin (13:38-39)

Paul now comes to the conclusion of his argument. "Therefore, my brothers," he says, "I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you" (13:38). The need for this forgiveness is a common thread through Acts (2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 10:43; 26:18). Humans are sinners, and on their own, there is nothing they can do to change their condition. God must pronounce a person righteous, and he does so upon one's acceptance of Jesus as Savior.

This brings us to the concept of "justification," discussed in the next verse. Paul says: "Through him [Jesus] everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses" (13:39). To be justified is a legal way of expressing the same thing as forgiveness of sin. When a person is justified, he or she is made right with God, or declared to be righteous in some sense. But only through Jesus will God justify a person so that he or she is considered righteous.

However, there is a difficulty with what verse 39 seems to imply about justification. On first view, it seems to say that justification is needed only for sins that one "could not be justified from by the law of Moses" (13:39). So the question is, can the law of Moses justify people from some sins? If that were so, Jesus' work would be needed only to make up the difference — to atone for those sins for which observance of the law could not provide forgiveness.

But this would contradict everything the New Testament says, which demands the all-sufficient work of Christ. The idea that the law of Moses has power to forgive sins is incompatible with Paul's teaching throughout Romans and Galatians (Romans 3:21-28; 5:1, 9; Galatians 2:16; 3:11). The book of Hebrews makes the point that the law of Moses provides no justification for sin in any real sense (10:1-4, 11).

Actually, Acts 13:39 does not say that the law can justify anyone. It might say that you did one certain thing right — you met the legal requirements in respect to a certain incident in your life —but that cannot justify you for everything you did wrong. In the final analysis, the law of Moses cannot provide justification for any sin, period. "Everything" — all sins — must be atoned for by Christ.⁴¹

Acts 13:40

Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;

[Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets] If you reject these benefits now freely offered to you in Christ, the judgment of God will come upon you. As God sent judgment upon your fathers by Babylon (Habakkuk 1:5-10), so now He will send judgment upon you by Rome (Luke 21:20-24).

⁴¹ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

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.

Solemn word of warning! Hab 1:5

You will never be the same again after you have heard the message:

Acceptance: justification

Rejection: Condemnation is greater!

[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 17th Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Acts (Acts 13:41; Habakkuk 1:5). Next, Acts 13:47.

[perish] Greek: *aphanizo* (GSN-853), to snatch out of sight. Rather, hide yourselves through terror of your enemies. Used in Matthew 6:16,19-20; Acts 13:41; James 4:14. This was fulfilled in 70 A.D.

[for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe] This explains the work of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the nation that was soon to be fulfilled in 70 A.D. (Matthew 24:2; Luke 19:41-44; Luke 21:20-24; Daniel 9:26). This does not refer to a spiritual revival in Israel, as some hold, for Habakkuk 1:5-10 refers to destruction, not revival.

Heed the prophets (13:40-41)

At this point, Paul had said enough about the gospel. He has shown that Jesus is the expected Messiah, except he came in an unexpected way. Paul also pressed home the importance of putting one's faith in Jesus. In conclusion, Paul warns his hearers about the danger of rejecting God's offer of salvation. He concludes by quoting Habakkuk 1:5: "Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you."

In its original context, the prophecy of Habakkuk 1:5 referred to the failure of the nation to recognize the Babylonian invasion as the judgment of God for sin. Paul here applies it to any failure on the part of God's people to recognize Jesus as having been "raised up" to be Messiah and Savior. Paul is trying to pre-empt any challenge to his message. What he is doing is saying: If you are ridiculing and scoffing at what I'm telling you, here is one of your own prophets who predicts that you would scoff. So take the prophecy to heart and accept the good news.⁴²

⁴² <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

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.

The Gentiles want to hear more!

[Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath] It seems that the rebellious Jews left the synagogue before the Gentile proselytes (Acts 13:43) and believing Jews requested they speak the next sabbath. Then they all left, following Paul to hear his exhortation (Acts 13:42-43).

LAN: 42-45 The Jewish leaders undoubtedly brought theological arguments against Paul and Barnabas, but Luke tells us that the real reason for their hostility was that “they were filled with jealousy.” When we see others succeeding where we haven’t, or receiving the affirmation we crave, it is hard to rejoice with them. Jealousy is our natural reaction. But how tragic it is when our own jealous feelings make us try to stop God’s work. If a work is God’s work, rejoice in it—no matter who is doing it.

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.

[persuaded them to continue in the grace of God] This is foolish if there is no possibility of failure in the grace of God (Galatians 1:6; Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 12:15).

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.

[filled with envy] They could not bear to know that the Gentiles were equal with them in Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Col. 3:11). See Luke 4:28.

[contradicting and blaspheming] Contradicting the arguments of Christians and blaspheming Jesus Christ.

The people invite Paul (13:42-45)

After giving his message in the synagogue, Paul and Barnabas prepare to leave. But many people are interested, and crowd around him. They invite him to talk further about this

topic the next time they gather, that is, the following Sabbath (13:42). Paul's speech arouses intense interest because it gives a unique explanation of the Scriptures, and the people want to hear more of this message. Of course, Luke wants us to remember that the unseen Holy Spirit is also at work in the minds of the listeners.

Many Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism who hear Paul engage him and Barnabas in conversation after the synagogue service. They want to discuss the topic of salvation further (13:43). Paul and Barnabas give the crowd further words of exhortation. Luke tells us they encourage the crowd around them "to continue in the grace of God" (13:43). Word gets around during the week about Paul's message. Luke says "the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord" (13:44). Luke's expression "the whole city" does not mean that every person from Pisidian Antioch is gathering in front of the synagogue. He uses a bit of exaggeration to make the point that a large crowd gathers to hear this new doctrine. And strange it must have been: a traveling Jewish rabbi describing to Gentiles a Jewish Messiah, who died, but was now resurrected, and is forgiving sins.

But conflict with the synagogue leaders is looming. When they see the large crowd of Gentiles attempting to get into the synagogue to hear Paul, they are upset. Luke says "they were filled with jealousy" (13:45). (The same motive was attributed to the Sanhedrin regarding the preaching of Peter and John in 5:17.)

We can imagine some of the thoughts in the minds of the synagogue leaders, and some of the faithful. The strange ideas Paul is preaching are turning out to be more attractive than Judaism. Proselytes and God-fearing Gentiles might leave the synagogue and no longer support it financially. Or Gentiles might flood the synagogue and take it over for their own purposes — to hear about Jesus rather than Moses.⁴³

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.

All that hate me love death: Prov 8:36.

[waxed bold] Had great liberty of speech and a mouth of overpowering eloquence to shut the mouths of gainsayers (Luke 21:15; Acts 6:10). They had truth and incontestable facts to support their claims, plus the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

[first have been spoken to you] This was the Lord's commission (Acts 1:8; Romans 1:16; Matthew 10:6; Luke 24:47).

[put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life] You disdain it and thrust it from you and thus pass sentence on yourselves as being unworthy of eternal life.

⁴³ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

[we turn to the Gentiles] We will offer eternal life to the Gentiles since you do not want it.

Why was it necessary for the gospel to go first to the Jews? God planned that through the Jewish nation *all* the world would come to know God (Genesis 12:3). Paul, a Jew himself, loved his people (Romans 9:1-5) and wanted to give them every opportunity to join him in proclaiming God's salvation. Unfortunately, many Jews did not recognize Jesus as Messiah, and they did not understand that God was offering salvation to anyone, Jew or Gentile, who comes to him through faith in Christ.

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.

Isa 49:6. Commission as Authority to go to the Gentiles.

[I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth] The 18th Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in Acts (Acts 13:47; Isaiah 49:6). Next, Acts 15:16. A prediction that the Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles. The Jews could not deny their own prophet, so stood condemned.

God had planned for Israel to be this light (Isaiah 49:6). Through Israel came Jesus, the light of the nations (Luke 2:32). This light would spread out and enlighten the Gentiles.

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.

Note: Divine ordination is the cause, not the effect, of believing!

[ordained] Greek: *tasso* (GSN-5021), translated ordain (Acts 13:48; Romans 13:1); set (Luke 7:8); appoint (Matthew 28:16; Acts 22:10; Acts 28:23); determine (Acts 15:2); and addict (1 Cor. 16:15). The simple meaning is that God has appointed and provided eternal life for all who will believe (John 3:15-20; Romans 1:16; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Rev. 22:17). It could not mean that by God's predetermined decree certain ones are to be saved and others are to be lost simply upon the basis of His own choice. Predestination is never that of individual conformity of the will to salvation without man's choice, but rather that God has predestined a plan that all who conform will be saved and all who do not will be damned. It is the plan that is predestined, not the act of the will. The Jews who rebelled here failed to meet the terms of being appointed to eternal life, while the believing Jews and Gentiles who gladly accepted the terms of the gospel were appointed to the blessings promised all who will believe.

We turn to the Gentiles (13:46-48)

Paul is probably denied permission to speak during the next synagogue service. At some point, he turns to the unbelieving Jews and says: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles" (13:46). This begins a pattern that will be repeated in city after city: Paul begins his missionary work by preaching in the synagogue. After he is rejected by the leaders and the majority of the Jewish worshippers, he then preaches to the Gentiles in that city.

Luke records three statements in which Paul says, "I go to the Gentiles." The first is here. It is followed by one in Corinth (18:6), and a final one in Rome, which closes the book of Acts (28:28). Paul's commission includes preaching to the people of Israel, which he will continue to do. In his mind, the gospel is always to go to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles (Romans 1:16). Paul has a special desire to bring the gospel to the Jews in hopes that all Israel will be saved (Romans 9:1-3; 10:1).

But Paul's specific mission is to the Gentiles. On this occasion, he quotes Isaiah 49:6 in support of his contention that he has been commanded by the Lord to preach to the Gentiles. This scripture speaks of someone being made "a light for the Gentiles" that he "may bring salvation to the ends of the earth" (13:47). The words of Isaiah 49:6 were originally addressed to the Servant of Yahweh, and then they are applied to Jesus (Luke 2:32). Now Paul applies it to the missionaries who are bringing the good news of Jesus, the Servant. Thus, Paul is saying that the mission of Jesus (the Servant) is also the mission of the followers of Jesus. It is the task of the new Israel (the church) as the servant of God to bring the light of the gospel to all peoples.

When the Gentiles listening to Paul hear that God has purposed to give them salvation, "they were glad and honored the word of the Lord" (13:48). As many as "were appointed for eternal life believed" (13:48). This verse suggests that a person cannot simply decide to believe in Christ. There is a matter of divine election involved (John 6:44; 1 Corinthians 2:14). That is not to say that salvation is restricted by God in the sense of limiting it to a few people. God's purpose is that all people come to a knowledge of the truth and find salvation (1 Timothy 2:3). However, a person must respond in faith as the Spirit leads him or her to saving knowledge. In the words of William Neil:

It is a pictorial way of expressing the conviction of the sovereignty of God — i.e. that salvation is God's gift, and does not depend on man's efforts. But it is not in any sense narrowly predestination, as if some are scheduled for salvation and others for damnation; the Bible constantly stresses the element of free choice: we may accept or reject the Word of God. (*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 161)⁴⁴

⁴⁴ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>

Acts 13:49

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

[published throughout all the region] Those from different areas who came to the revival and were converted carried the gospel to their respective regions around Antioch, Pisidia.

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.

[devout and honourable women] Women who worshiped with the Jews and who were of high rank, together with the prominent men of the city, caused the apostles to be expelled from the city.

Instead of accepting the truth, the Jewish leaders stirred up opposition and ran Paul and Barnabas out of town. When confronted by a disturbing truth, people often turn away and refuse to listen. When God's Spirit points out needed changes in our lives, we must listen to him. Otherwise we may be pushing the truth so far away that it no longer affects us.

Spurgeon: These bigots imagined that the coming of new teachers into their city was a reflection upon themselves. Were they not both honorable and devout already? Therefore they joined the malicious Jews and chased Paul and Barnabas away. It is not often that we read in Scripture of women, and devout women too, opposing the gospel, yet it is no uncommon thing for formal self-righteous ladies to be very bitter against those who dare to differ from them.

Acts 13:51

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

Iconium: populous city, 45 miles southeast from Pisidian Antioch, at the foot of Mt Taurus, on the borders of Lycaonia, Phrygia, and Pisidia; in later times, contributing to the consolidation of the Turkish empire.

[shook off the dust of their feet against them] This action meant that the very dust of the land was cursed because of their opposition to God. We dare not permit it to cleave unto our feet. We shake it off as a testimony against you (Acts 18:6; Mark 6:11; see Matthew 10:14).

[Iconium] Capital of Lycaonia (Acts 13:5).

“Dust” - Luke 10:10-11.

Similarities:	Peter	Paul
First Sermon	2	13
Lame man healed	3	14
The Sorcerer Simon,	8	Elymas, 13
Influence	shadow, 5	handkerchief, 19
Laying on hands	8	19
Worshiped	10	14
Raised	Tabitha, 10	Eutychus, 20
Imprisoned	12	28

LAN: Often Jews would shake the dust off their feet when leaving a Gentile town, on the way back to their own land. This symbolized cleansing themselves from the contamination of those who did not worship God. For Paul and Barnabas to do this to Jews demonstrated that Jews who reject the gospel are not truly part of Israel and are no better than pagans.

LAN: Jesus had told his disciples to shake from their feet the dust of any town that would not accept or listen to them (Mark 6:11). The disciples were not to blame if the message was rejected, as long as they had faithfully presented it. When we share Christ carefully and sensitively, God does not hold us responsible for the other person's decision.

Acts 13:52

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

[filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost] They had this in the midst of persecution (Acts 5:41; Hebrews 10:34; James 1:2).

Jews incite persecution (13:49-52)

Paul and Barnabas meet with great success in the area around Pisidian Antioch. Luke says, "The word of the Lord spread through the whole region" (13:49). The Jewish leaders are angry, and enter a plot with "the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city" (13:50). Luke is probably referring to Gentile women who are adherents of Judaism and their politically connected husbands.

Apparently, the Jews put pressure on the wealthy women who attend the synagogue. They are probably urged to convince their husbands, the city's leading magistrates, to expell Paul and Barnabas from the area. This is what happens (13:50). Luke doesn't say what excuse is given; perhaps the accusation is that the local Jewish community believes Paul and Barnabas to be heretics. Since they are not representing Judaism, a legal religion in Rome's eyes, Paul and Barnabas are teaching a religion that is not legal. As such, they should be expelled since they are disturbing the Roman peace.

Upon being expelled, Paul and Barnabas shake "the dust from their feet" in protest (13:51). This is a gesture that Jesus himself suggested his disciples practice upon encountering persecution (Luke 9:5; 10:11).

It was customary for Jews to shake off the dust of a pagan town from their feet when they returned to their own land, as a symbol of cleansing themselves from the impurity of sinners who did not worship God. For Jews to do this to their fellow Jews was tantamount to regarding the latter as pagan Gentiles. The Christians were demonstrating in a particularly vigorous manner that Jews who rejected the gospel and drove out the missionaries were no longer truly part of Israel but were no better than unbelievers. (I. Howard Marshall, *Acts*, page 231)

Luke ends his story of gospel preaching in Pisidian Antioch by saying, "The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (13:52). Paul and Barnabas have established a congregation of believers in Pisidian Antioch. But they are forced to move on, this time to Iconium.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ <http://www.wcg.org/lit/bible/acts/acts13.htm>