

# Acts 13 Commentary

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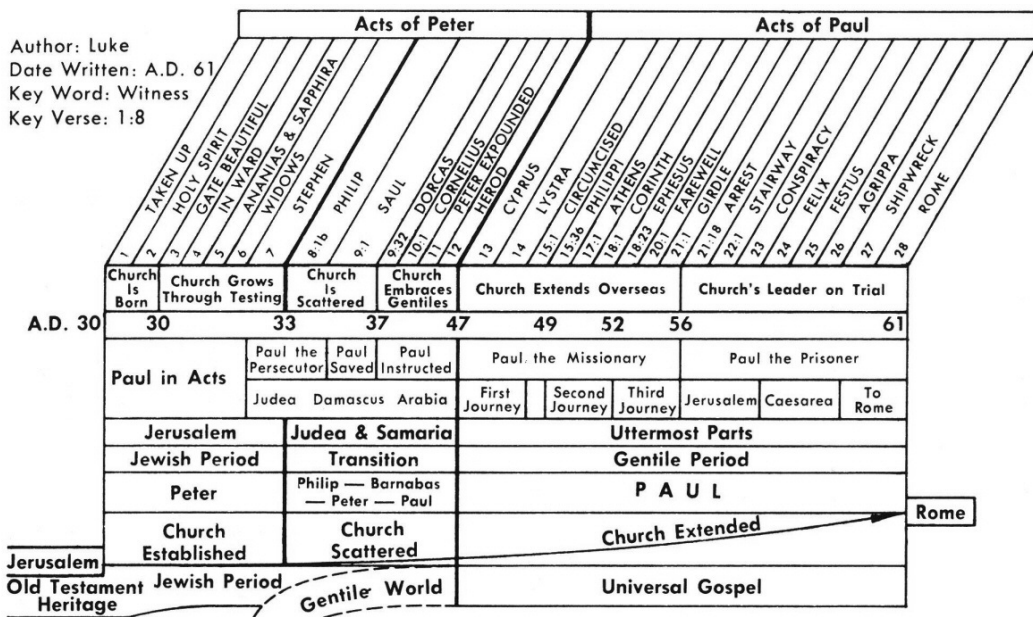
NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

- [Acts 13:1](#)
- [Acts 13:2](#)
- [Acts 13:3](#)
- [Acts 13:4](#)
- [Acts 13:5](#)
- [Acts 13:6](#)
- [Acts 13:7](#)
- [Acts 13:8](#)
- [Acts 13:9](#)
- [Acts 13:10](#)
- [Acts 13:11](#)
- [Acts 13:12](#)
- [Acts 13:13](#)
- [Acts 13:14](#)
- [Acts 13:15](#)
- [Acts 13:16](#)
- [Acts 13:17](#)
- [Acts 13:18](#)
- [Acts 13:19](#)
- [Acts 13:20](#)
- [Acts 13:21](#)
- [Acts 13:22](#)
- [Acts 13:23](#)
- [Acts 13:24](#)
- [Acts 13:25](#)
- [Acts 13:26](#)
- [Acts 13:27](#)
- [Acts 13:28](#)
- [Acts 13:29](#)
- [Acts 13:30](#)
- [Acts 13:31](#)
- [Acts 13:32](#)
- [Acts 13:33](#)
- [Acts 13:34](#)
- [Acts 13:35](#)
- [Acts 13:36](#)
- [Acts 13:37](#)
- [Acts 13:38](#)
- [Acts 13:39](#)
- [Acts 13:40](#)
- [Acts 13:41](#)
- [Acts 13:42](#)
- [Acts 13:43](#)
- [Acts 13:44](#)
- [Acts 13:45](#)
- [Acts 13:46](#)
- [Acts 13:47](#)
- [Acts 13:48](#)
- [Acts 13:49](#)

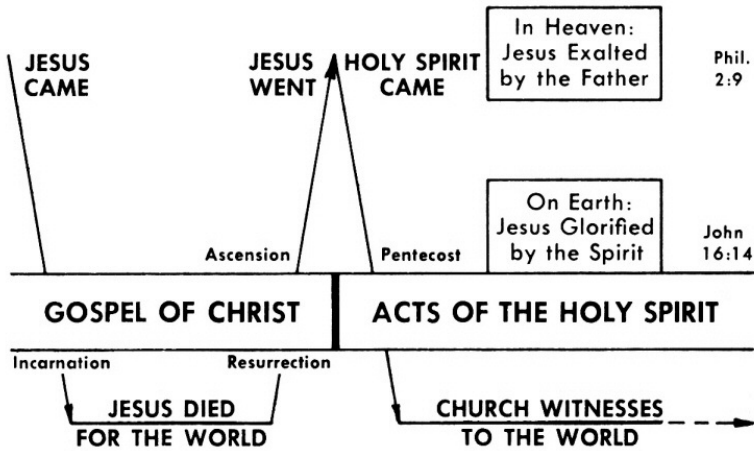
- [Acts 13:50](#)
- [Acts 13:51](#)
- [Acts 13:52](#)



Click chart to enlarge

Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

### THE EXPANDING WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH



Click chart to enlarge

Considering the fact that Acts 13 is such a strategic chapter in regard to world evangelism, take a moment and study Irving Jensen's chart at top of the page (click it to enlarge it which is what I have to do at age 72!). Notice the **bold vertical line** (|) at the end of Acts 12 and beginning of Acts 13 which Jensen estimates to be about year 47 (it could be a short time prior). Note the horizontal description of "Church" - **Church Established** in the first 13 years from Acts 1 through Acts 7, then the **Church Scattered** between Acts 8 through Acts 12, which occurred over a period of about 14 years (and remember all dates and times are at best approximations because Luke gives only a few events that allow us to give specific dates, such as the death of Herod in A D 44 in Acts 12:23) and lastly, beginning in Acts 13 (and until the end of this age), the **Church Extended**, this extension being the primarily the fruit of Paul's Three Missionary Journeys which "upset the world!" (Acts 17:6) Now, you have a good grasp of the chronological context of Acts 13. And as they say in the restaurant when your delicious meal is served "Enjoy!" The three missionary journeys are summarized below (this note will be repeated in subsequent chapters). Click links for the maps of each journey.

<a href="#">Paul's First Missionary Journey</a>	Acts 13:4-14:28
<a href="#">Paul's Second Missionary Journey</a>	Acts 15:36-18:22
<a href="#">Paul's Third Missionary Journey</a>	Acts 18:23-21:26

- Maps in table above are from the **Holman Bible Atlas** ([Hardcover/Paperback version](#)) copyrighted © 1998 B&H Publishing Group, used by permission, all rights reserved. This is one of the best resources for Bible maps as the maps also include helpful short descriptions of the events portrayed on the maps. Please do not download for use on another website. Thank you.
- [Here is a map](#) with all three journeys on one map.

## THE ITINERARY OF PAUL'S THREE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 13:1-3	1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 15:36-40	1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 18:23
2. <a href="#">Seleucia</a> Acts 13:4	2. <a href="#">Syria</a> Acts 15:41	2. <a href="#">Phrygia/Galatia</a> Acts 18:23-28
3. <a href="#">Salamis on Cyprus</a> Acts 13:5	3. <a href="#">Cilicia</a> Acts 15:41	3. <a href="#">Ephesus</a> Acts 19:1-41
4. <a href="#">Paphos on Cyprus</a> Acts 13:6-12	4. <a href="#">Derbe</a> Acts 16:1	4. <a href="#">Macedonia</a> Acts 20:1
5. <a href="#">Perga in Pamphylia</a> Acts 13:13	5. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 16:1-5	5. <a href="#">Greece</a> Acts 20:2
6. <a href="#">Pisidian Antioch</a> Acts 13:14-50	6. <a href="#">Phrygia/Galatia</a> Acts 16:6	6. <a href="#">Macedonia</a> Acts 20:3-5
7. <a href="#">Iconium</a> Acts 13:51	7. <a href="#">Mysia</a> Acts 16:7	7. <a href="#">Philippi</a> Acts 20:6
8. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 14:6-20	8. <a href="#">Troas</a> Acts 16:8-10	8. <a href="#">Troas</a> Acts 20:6-12
9. <a href="#">Derbe</a> Acts 14:20	9. <a href="#">Samothrace</a> Acts 16:11	9. <a href="#">Assos</a> Acts 20:13
10. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 14:21	10. <a href="#">Neapolis</a> Acts 16:11	10. <a href="#">Mitylene</a> Acts 20:14
11. <a href="#">Iconium</a> Acts 14:21	11. <a href="#">Philippi</a> Acts 16:12	11. <a href="#">Samos</a> Acts 20:15
12. <a href="#">Pisidian Antioch</a> Acts 14:21	12. <a href="#">Amphipolis</a> Acts 17:1	12. <a href="#">Miletus</a> Acts 20:15-38
13. <a href="#">Pamphylia</a> Acts 14:24	13. <a href="#">Apollonia</a> Acts 17:1	13. <a href="#">Cos</a> Acts 21:1
14. <a href="#">Perga</a> Acts 14:25	14. <a href="#">Thessalonica</a> Acts 17:1-9	14. <a href="#">Rhodes</a> Acts 21:1
15. <a href="#">Attalia</a> Acts 14:25	15. <a href="#">Berea</a> Acts 17:10-14	15. <a href="#">Patara</a> Acts 21:1
16. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 14:26	16. <a href="#">Athens</a> Acts 17:15-34	16. <a href="#">Tyre</a> Acts 21:3-6
	17. <a href="#">Corinth</a> Acts 18:1-17	17. <a href="#">Ptolemais</a> Acts 21:7
	18. <a href="#">Cenchreae</a> Acts 18:18	18. <a href="#">Caesarea</a> Acts 21:8-14
	19. <a href="#">Ephesus</a> Acts 18:19	
	20. <a href="#">Caesarea</a> Acts 18:22	
	21. <a href="#">Jerusalem</a> Acts 18:22	
	22. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 18:22	

**Charles Swindoll** points out that "When we study the journeys of Paul in the book of Acts, we're not just reading the travel log of a man; we're observing the redemptive plan of God unfolding as He promised. Through the ministry of Saul of Tarsus, God's mission to reclaim His creation from the death grip of evil would move to its next stage. The plan of this mission was outlined in the Lord's promise at His ascension, where He said,

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses..."

1. In Jerusalem [Stage 1: Acts 2–7],
2. and in all Judea and Samaria [Stage 2: Acts 8–12],
3. and even to the remotest part of the earth [Stage 3: Acts 13–28]." (Acts 1:8-)

**David Jeremiah** - Another way to outline the book of Acts is to center it on the book's key character: the apostle Paul. More than half of the book of Acts (chapters 13–28) chronicles Paul's missionary activity. Chapters 1–12 can be read as a prologue to Paul's work, as these chapters identify him as the leading persecutor of the church, describe his conversion to Christ, and record his pre-missionary activities.

1. **Prologue** (Acts 1–12): The church is born; believers are persecuted and scattered; Saul of Tarsus, the Christians' chief persecutor, is converted; Paul is gradually accepted by the church.
2. **Paul's first missionary journey and the council at Jerusalem** (Acts 13–15:35): Paul preaches to the Gentiles in Cyprus,

Turkey, and Syria, taking Barnabas and John Mark with him; the council at Jerusalem declares that Gentiles who come to Christ do not need to be circumcised.

3. **Paul's second missionary journey** (Acts 15:36–18:22): Paul and Silas strengthen churches in Syria; Paul travels throughout Greece, preaching and encouraging new believers (such as Lydia, Priscilla, and Aquila).
4. **Paul's third missionary journey** (Acts 18:23–21:16): Paul ministers in Ephesus (in modern-day Turkey) before returning to Jerusalem, where he is arrested.
5. **Paul's fourth "missionary journey"** (Acts 21:17–28:10): This is not a planned missionary journey; it comes as a result of Paul's arrest in Jerusalem and his appeal to make his case to Caesar in Rome.
6. **Epilogue** (Acts 28:11-31): Paul is incarcerated in Rome.

Outlining the book this way affirms what American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson believed: that all history is biography. In addition to recounting key events in Paul's life, Acts is filled with descriptions of other people we can learn from. Another lesson we can glean from this overview of Paul's conversion and ministry is that God always has a plan. Paul wouldn't have mapped out his life this way —particularly not being struck with blindness for several days or being imprisoned for several years—but it's clear in retrospect that God's plan was sovereign even in these apparent setbacks. How would you outline your own life? Thematically, geographically, or chronologically? Based on high points and low points? It doesn't really matter, because all are relevant. God is always at work in our circumstances with "a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure" (Ephesians 1:9). The path of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome and to "other places far beyond" (2 Corinthians 10:16) is not a straight line. There were, and will continue to be, twists and turns, starts and stops, all along the way. But in the end, God's plan is always fulfilled: "We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps" (Proverbs 16:9). The same is true of our lives. On the front, our lives look like a beautiful tapestry. But on the back, there are all kinds of knots and tie-offs and connections and repairs that make the front of the masterpiece possible. The book of Acts can look a bit "messy" at times, just like our lives do. But all of this is ultimately part of God's plan to build his church (Matthew 16:18) and conform us to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29), regardless of the difficulties involved (Romans 8:28). (A.D: The Bible Continues: The Book of Acts)

**Acts 13:1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ([NASB95](#))**

KJV 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.

- Circa A.D. 45-47
- **in the Acts** 11:22-24; 14:26,27
- **prophets** Acts 11:25-27; 15:35; Romans 12:6,7; 1 Corinthians 12:28,29; 14:24,25; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:20
- **Barnabas** Acts 4:36; 11:22-26,30; 12:25; 1 Corinthians 9:6; Galatians 2:9,13
- **Lucius** Acts 11:20; Romans 16:21
- **who had been brought up with Herod** Acts 14:1-10; Luke 3:1,19,20; 13:31,32; 23:7-11; Philippians 4:22
- **and Saul** Acts 13:9; 8:1-3; 9:1
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **"THE ANTIOCH FIVE" MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP**

**Ray Stedman** points out that **"The thirteenth chapter is a turning point in the book of Acts.** It is what Winston Churchill would have called one of the **hinges of history.** It marks the beginning of the third phase of our Lord's great commission. In the opening chapter of this book, before he ascended into the heavens, he said to his disciples, "You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and you will be witnesses of me..." (Acts 1:8a RSV). Then he outlined geographically how that witness should proceed, beginning in Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria, and finally unto the uttermost parts of the earth. In Chapter 13 we meet the beginning of the last phase, the going unto the uttermost parts of the earth. It is also the beginning of the apostleship of Paul. Up to this time, though he was called to be an apostle when he was first converted on the Damascus road, he has never acted as an apostle. Now, some eleven or twelve years after his conversion, he begins to fulfill the ministry to which he was called as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Perhaps the most important thing about this section is that here is found a revelation of the manner of the leading of the Spirit, how the Spirit of God guides his people. Let us get this before us, for this is of great importance. The first three verses relate the setting for the call of the Holy Spirit." ([Acts 13:1-13 The Strategy Of The Spirit](#))

**Now (de)** - In context "[de](#)" indicates transition, continuation or further thought, all descriptions which are [apropos](#) here because Herod had just died after the Passover in AD 44 (Acts 12:20-24) and in Acts 12:25 Luke records that "Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark." So "**NOW**" we are in Antioch and at the beginning of the "evangelism explosion" to the Gentiles and the entire world!

**There were at Antioch** ([map of ancient Antioch](#), [an engraving of the city](#)) - Recall that Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire and was well-known as a center for pagan idolatry and licentious behavior (NB: idolatry and immorality frequently "traffic together" in the Bible). It was in this "cesspool" that God established His Church to be the base of missionary activity. See detailed description of Antioch in [Acts 11 Commentary](#). Note that this Antioch is in Syria and is not [Antioch in Pisidia](#), which Saul and Barnabas will visit in Acts 13:14+ on the First Missionary Journey. It is interesting to note that at least forty different cities are named in Acts. As Wayne A. Meeks writes "within a decade of the crucifixion of Jesus, the village culture of Palestine had been left behind, and the Greco-Roman city became the dominant environment of the Christian movement" ([The First Urban Christians](#)).

**Warren Wiersbe** writes that "The church began in Jerusalem, and then spread to other cities, including Samaria, Damascus, Caesarea, and Antioch in Syria. At least forty different cities are named in Acts. From Antioch, Paul and his helpers carried the Gospel throughout the then-known world. In fact, the record given in Acts 13–28 is almost a review of ancient geography. About the year 56, the Apostle Paul was able to write, "So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ" (Rom. 15:19). What a record! In these two chapters (Acts 13-14), Dr. Luke described Paul's ministry in six different cities, beginning and ending at Antioch." (Bible Exposition Commentary)

**Swindoll** comments that "In this compost-like blend of East and West, good and bad, morality and depravity, the gospel germinated, took root, and flourished like a rose in a garbage dump."

**In the church that was there, prophets and teachers** - God had this church well-equipped to be edified and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Do you recall God's pattern for Church growth (in Christ-likeness, not necessarily numbers!) in Acts 2:42+? "They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching ([didache](#))...." The priority of the Church in Jerusalem was the same as the priority of the Church at Antioch, explaining in large part why God's Spirit used both churches mightily for His glory and the spread of His Gospel! God's pattern for "success" has not changed! **Preach** ([aorist imperative](#)) = "Just Do It!" in season and out! (2 Ti 4:2+).

**Church** ([1577](#)) ([ekklēsia](#)) describes the assembly of believers at Antioch who by this time were already an established spiritually strong church, even though they were only a few years old.

**THOUGHT** - How could such a relatively young church be so spiritually strong? I think the answer is crystal clear in (Acts 11:26+) where Luke describes Barnabas finding Saul after which "he brought him to Antioch. And for an **entire year** they met with the church and **taught** ([didasko](#)) considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." Barnabas and Saul filled with the Spirit fulfilled Jesus' command in Mt 28:19+ to "**make disciples**" (aorist imperative speaks of urgent need to obey) which literally means **tomake learners**, but not just learners who knew more about Christ, but who obeyed what they learned and thereby grew more like Christ -- not "**smarter sinners**" but "**more like the Savior**" as Howard Hendricks used to say! Barnabas and Saul were following through on Jesus' commission, "**teaching** (same verb [didasko](#) in present tense = continually!) them (THE DISCIPLES AT ANTIOCH) to **observe** ([tereo](#)) = describes action of keeping one's eye upon something to watch or guard over so as to obey it - aka, "doers of the Word" - James 1:22+) all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always (HOW? THE SPIRIT OF JESUS - ILLUMINATING THE TEACHING, EMPOWERING THE DOING!), even to the end of the age." (Mt 28:20) While Luke does not say, it is doubtful that this year of **teaching** was just a Sunday morning class or a single Bible study during the week, but knowing Saul/Paul (cf Acts 20:9-10, 11+) it probably went on every day and for most of the day for 365 days. Now that quality and quantity of sound doctrine will always produce a healthy and dynamic Body! Dear pastor and elders, are you imitating Saul/Paul's example (cf 1 Cor 11:1+)? If you want a missionary minded church you need to repeat the pattern of the church at Antioch!

**Swindoll** - Though great congregations can accomplish great things for the Lord, they need godly leaders to bring them together and to focus their efforts. Luke names five who were "prophets and teachers" (Acts 13:1)—two different gifts, two distinct offices working in harmony together to bring the word of God to the people and then to instruct them in how to apply it. God calls prophets to a ministry of "**forth-telling**," which in the first century, before the New Testament Scriptures were written and circulated, included "**foretelling**"—providing new divine revelation that includes predictions of the future (Acts 11:28). **God calls teachers to help individuals turn truth into action.** (Acts - Swindoll's Living Insights NT Commentary)

**Prophets** ([4396](#)) ([prophetes](#)) from [próphēmi](#) = literally to tell beforehand in turn from [pró](#) = before, in front of, forth, on behalf of + [phēmi](#) = speak, tell) is primarily a **forth-teller** or one who speaks out God's message, primarily to their own generation, usually

always calling the people to God's truth for them at that moment, often using the phrase "Thus saith the Lord." Although we commonly think of the prophet as predicting future events (foretelling) generally this was secondary to his work of forth-telling. In sum, **forth-telling** deals with current events (spiritual life today) and **fore-telling** with future events, but in **both** the goal is the same -- to call us to trust the Lord and submit to His will for our lives, living in conformity with His Word and growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to Whom be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2 Peter 3:18+).

In Acts 11:27+ Luke records that Agabus came down from Jerusalem to give a fore-telling of a future famine in A D 45. Though the prophets were not essentially predictors of the future, the case of Agabus shows that their functions sometimes did include the actual prediction of coming events. Apparently Agabus returned to Jerusalem after giving his prophecy of a famine because Luke records that while Paul was staying with Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8+) "a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea (used for "Jerusalem")," (Acts 21:10+) and foretold of Paul's subsequent binding and deliverance into the hands of the Gentiles (Acts 21:11+), a prophecy which came to pass.

**Teachers** (1320)(**didaskalos** from **didasko** = teach to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught <> cp **didaskalia**) is one who provides instruction or systematically imparts truth. Teachers give others a clear understanding of Biblical truth. The **teacher** teaches in such a way as to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught. The teachers at Antioch taught sound (Gk "hugiaino" ~ hygienic) doctrine which resulted in healthy growing saints. Teachers are needed to ground the converts in the doctrines of the faith and produce disciples who in turn reproduce disciples, something I fear the modern church has lost sight of as I seldom see older men discipling younger men. (2 Ti 2:2+) Once I even met with the young leadership of a church and offered to stir up and head up the older, more mature grey heads to intentionally (one on one or more) disciple the younger saints and I was gently rebuffed and the suggestion was "shelved." The modern church seems to have forgotten that there is actually only one absolute command in Jesus' "great commission" and that is the "**make disciples**" (aorist imperative = "Nike commercial = "Just do it! Mt 28:19+). I fear the great commission has become the great omission of the modern church, for when the spiritually mature "Paul's" (and Paulettes) in a congregation are not utilized, the maturity of the younger saints is sure to suffer loss. It certainly cannot be what it could have been! But that is just my opinion beloved. I pray your church is using the older men and women (and that they are willing) to intentionally, aggressively disciple the Timothys and the Timothettas.

**MacArthur** observes that "The distinctive of the ministry of teachers is its emphasis on pedagogy rather than on proclamation. That they are somewhat different from preachers seems apparent in texts that discuss both, though the same gifted man can sometimes perform both functions, as Acts 15:35 indicates."

**THOUGHT** - Someone has said that "The great teacher is the one who turns our ears into eyes so that we can see the truth." Henry Brooks added that "A (Bible) teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." So dear teacher of the Word of Truth and Life, let me ask you "Are you tired?" I understand, as I get tired too, but it is too soon to quit! What you are doing is God's work and it will impact both time and eternity! Be encouraged that you will one day hear "Well done My good and faithful servant!" God grant you to be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Amen (2 Ti 2:1+). If you need some encouragement, let me recommend a wonderful little book by **Dr Warren Wiersbe** entitled "**Too Soon To Quit**" ([read some of the reviews](#)) in which he reviews the lives of men and women of the Bible who could easily have "thrown in the towel" but didn't. As **V R Edman** said "**It is always too soon to quit**" Indeed, when you're working for Jesus, it's always too soon to quit! And remember that perseverance comes not only from a strong will but also from a strong won't (enabled by the Spirit of grace!)

O for a faith that will not shrink,  
Though pressed by every foe,  
That will not tremble on the brink  
Of any earthly woe.  
—Bathurst

**Robertson** comments that "All prophets were teachers, but not all teachers were prophets who were fore-speakers of God, sometimes fore-speakers like Agabus in 11:28. The double use of τε [te] here makes three prophets (Barnabas, Symeon, Lucius) and two teachers (Manaen and Saul)." However **Utley** writes that "The grammatical construction is such that it is uncertain whether the five men listed were both prophets and teachers or if the first three are prophets and the last two are teachers."

**John MacArthur** writes that "Effective, strong churches inevitably have godly leaders, and the church at Antioch was no exception. God has always put a premium on spiritual leadership (Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; cf. Hos. 4:9; Matt. 9:36). These five men were the heart of the ministry at Antioch....The prophets edified the saints by preaching expositions of existing revelation (cf. 1 Thess. 5:20). Although prophets of that unique kind no longer exist, the similar gift for preaching the Word of God remains. It is given to pastors and evangelists, who proclaim what Peter called "the prophetic word" (2 Pet. 1:19) and is still vital to the spiritual health of the church (cf. Rom. 10:14–18). All the way to the return of the Lord, the "spirit of prophecy" continues to be "the testimony

of Jesus" (Rev. 19:10).

Peterson notes that "**Barnabas** and **Saul** have already been identified as teachers in Acts 11:26+ where they "**taught** ([didasko](#)) considerable numbers."

**Barnabas** - He is first mentioned in Acts 4:36+ as **Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth** ([Cyprus](#)) which is the only time **Barnabas** is referred to as **Joseph**. The **apostles** gave **Joseph** the [nickname](#) of **Barnabas**. He was not only generous with his goods, but also with his encouragement. Oh, for a church full of "Barnabases"!

**Barnabas** - 27x in the NT -

Acts 4:36; Acts 9:27; Acts 11:22; Acts 11:30; Acts 12:25; Acts 13:1; Acts 13:2; Acts 13:7; Acts 13:43; Acts 13:46; Acts 13:50; Acts 14:12; Acts 14:14; Acts 14:20; Acts 15:2; Acts 15:12; Acts 15:22; Acts 15:25; Acts 15:35; Acts 15:36; Acts 15:37; Acts 15:39; 1 Co. 9:6; Gal. 2:1; Gal. 2:9; Gal. 2:13; Col. 4:10

#### Related Resources:

- [What can we learn from the life of Barnabas?](#)
- [Barnabas](#) - Whyte's Dictionary of Bible Characters - nice discussion
- [Barnabas](#) - Fausset Bible Dictionary
- Utley's [on Barnabas](#).

**And Simeon who was called Niger** - **Niger** means dark complexioned or black so the NLT paraphrases it "Simeon (called "the black man")". This is the only mention of Simeon in Scripture. You have to love the Church at Antioch as it was clearly "color blind" and [inclusive](#)! Oh, to be a "Colossians 3:11+ church" where there "is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all."

**Stephen Ger** comments on **Simeon** - Simeon, nicknamed Niger, "the Black One." The combination of his Hebrew name with his distinctive nickname indicates that he was an African Jewish believer.

**NET Note on Simeon** - Simeon may well have been from North Africa, since the Latin loanword Niger refers to someone as "dark-complexioned."

**Bock** points out that "The Greek names of many of these prophets in Acts 13 are significant. God is gifting the church without ethnic distinctions." (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT - Acts)

**And Lucius of Cyrene** - This name is mentioned only one other time in Ro 16:21 but this is thought by most commentators as a different individual. Recall that in Acts 11:20+ some men from "Cyprus and Cyrene...came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus." It is possible that Lucius was one of the men described in Acts 11:20 but we cannot be dogmatic.

**Wikipedia** - [Cyrene](#) was an ancient Greek and later Roman city near present-day [Shahhat, Libya](#). It was the oldest and most important of the five Greek cities in the region.

**And Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch** - His name is transliterated from the Hebrew "[Menachem](#)" and means "comforter" or "consoler." **Manaen** was raised in the environment of the generally evil Herodian line. **Manaen** was the childhood companion of Herod, either a close friend or the foster brother of [Herod the Tetrarch](#) (aka "Herod Antipas" who governed Galilee from 4 BC to AD 39). **Herod the Tetrarch** is the ruler who had John the Baptist imprisoned in Lk 3:19+ and beheaded in Mt 14:10. Later **Herod the Tetrarch** played a role in the contempt and mocking of Christ (Lk 23:11+) and subsequent condemnation of Christ (see Lk 23:7-10, 11, 12+). And yet in spite of being raised in such an evil environment, **Manaen** was redeemed by God to be used to edify the body of Christ in Antioch! Is this not amazing grace!

**THOUGHT** - Is there anyone you know who you think is essentially too far gone, or too "unredeemable," because of having been raised in an evil family environment? Then think of **Manaen** and be encouraged to keep interceding for that person's eternal soul! Beloved, our **God is able** to save from the "*guttermost*" to the "*uttermost*" (Hebrew 7:25KJV+).

**Brought up** ([4939](#))([suntrophos](#) from **sun** = together + **trepho** = to grow, nourish) means to be nourished together, to be brought up with someone (in this case Herod Antipas) as his childhood companion, and either "foster brother" (it is translated that way in a secular Greek document) or intimate friend. The word refers to children raised in the same household but not blood relatives. **Suntrophos** was used for someone adopted by a family as a childhood playmate (Herodotus, Persian Wars 1.99) or as a court title, meaning 'intimate friend' (Lucian of Samosata, Nigrinus 12; 15). **BDAG** states **suntrophos**, "pertains to being brought up with

someone, either as a foster-brother or as a companion/friend," which covers both alternatives. Context does not give enough information to be certain which meaning is intended by Luke. As discussed above, in either case, Manaen clearly was exposed to the "evil seed" of the Herodian line, and yet by God's grace had a "crop failure" of "corrupt fruit" (so to speak).

**And Saul** - Last on the list, a converted Pharisee educated under the great rabbi [Gamaliel](#), but certainly not the least, although that was his self-assessment in 1 Cor 15:9 "I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." But as Jesus taught the **last** shall be **first** (Mt 19:30) and indeed that proved true in the case of Saul (whose name means "asked for, prayed for" and is later changed to Paul which means "little").

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**Steven Cole** gives a "pithy" introduction to Acts 13:1-3 - Some years ago, an article in the Harvard Business Review called "Market Myopia" talked about how some people didn't understand what business they were in. For example, the railroad people didn't understand that they were in the transportation business. Had they realized it, they would have invested in the airplane. The telegraph people thought that they were in the telegraph business. They failed to realize that they were in the communications business. In 1886 or so, they could have bought all of the telephone patents for about \$40,000. But they didn't know what business they were in. **What is the main business of the church?** Some would say that it is to care of its members. The church is here to visit the sick and pray with them, to take care of people at important transitions in life, such as marriage, childbirth, and death. It's here to provide guidance and comfort for people at important times. No doubt, these are all functions of the church. But I would argue that these functions are not the main business of the church, and if we start acting as if they were, we will miss our main business. **We are always in danger of slipping into a maintenance mentality in the church, where we focus on maintaining our religious club and preserving its sacred traditions, and we forget about the lost.** Erwin McManus, a pastor in Los Angeles, said, "We somehow think that the Church is here for us; we forget that we are the Church, and we're here for the world." John Piper, a Minneapolis pastor, says, "The book of Acts is a constant indictment of mere maintenance Christianity. It's a constant goad and encouragement and stimulation to fan the flame of Advent—'The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.'" (Sermon on [The Straight Paths of the Lord - Acts 13:1-12, 12/8/91](#)). As Piper elsewhere articulates, the main goal of evangelism and missions is not just to reach the lost, but to glorify God. The glory of God is the supreme goal of history. He saves sinners "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1:6, 12). Thus, **the main business of the church is to obey the Holy Spirit in promoting God's glory among the nations by sending out workers called by God to preach the gospel.**

**Acts 13:2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ([NASB95](#))**

KJV 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.

NLT Acts 13:2 One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them."

- **While they were ministering to the Lord** Acts 6:4; Deuteronomy 10:8; 1 Samuel 2:11; 1 Chronicles 16:4,37-43; Romans 15:16; Colossians 4:17; 2 Timothy 1:11; 2 Timothy 4:5,11
- **fasting**, Acts 13:3; 10:30; Daniel 9:3; Matthew 6:16; 9:14,15; Luke 2:37; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 6:5; 11:27
- **the Holy Spirit** Acts 10:19; Acts 16:6,7; 1 Corinthians 12:11
- **Set apart for Me** Acts 22:21; Numbers 8:11-14; Romans 1:1; 10:15; Galatians 1:15; 2:8,9; 2 Timothy 2:2
- **the work to which I have called them** Acts 9:15; 14:26; Matthew 9:38; Luke 10:1; Ephesians 3:7; 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11; Hebrews 5:4
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ANTIOCH: A MISSIONAL CHURCH

**While they were ministering to the Lord** - They would include the five men mentioned in verse 1. **Ministering** is in the present tense which indicates they were doing this continually or habitually. **ESV** has "While they were **worshipping** the Lord and fasting." Notice their priority as this is important in every church that would seek to emulate the Church at Antioch -- **they were ministering to the Lord!** This is the first place for any servant of God to go -- to the Lord, worshipping Him, seeking His face, His will. Paul later spoke of this in his letter to the Colossians writing...



Whatever you do, do your work heartily, **as for the Lord rather than for men**, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. **It is the Lord Christ Whom you serve** (Col 3:23-24+).

We need to make sure that we minister **TO** the Lord  
before we try to minister **FOR** the Lord!  
We need to make sure we **WORSHIP** the Lord  
before we try to **WORK** for the Lord!

**Kenneth Gangel** on the pronoun **they** - Does the word they refer to the five candidates or to the entire congregation? There is no way to fix that conclusion grammatically, but we certainly understand the Holy Spirit speaks to the entire congregation when he calls for two of the five candidates to be selected for the mission. The word called, transliterated *proskaleo*, clearly indicates a divine call. (Holman NT Commentary - Acts)

**John MacArthur** wrote, "Their ministering was not to the congregation but to the Lord. It is crucial to understand that God is the audience for all spiritual ministry."

**Jack Arnold** makes an interesting point -- "The fact that they were serving (**ministering** in the present tense) and then received the missionary call has great significance. While these men were performing their spiritual gifts, busy serving Christ in Antioch, the Spirit of God spoke to them. They were being faithful in exercising their gifts where they were and were in a constant attitude of prayer. Then the Holy Spirit spoke to them. We know it is easier to steer a ship or car when it is moving so the Holy Spirit can more readily communicate with those who are moving for God. This teaches us that a missionary must be a faithful witness at home before he goes to a foreign field to preach. If he is a failure at home, he will be a failure on the field. These men were developing their spiritual gifts. They did not sit around and wait for a bolt of lightning to hit them from heaven. They did not hole up in a cave in order for God to speak to them. They were carrying out their ministries faithfully as unto the Lord and God spoke to them." ([The First Official Missionaries](#))

**John G. Butler** wrote, "They were busy serving the Lord in Antioch when God called them. God does not call the lazy, the slothful, the loafers. God calls those who are busy doing what they can. Serve faithfully where you are if you are going to receive a call to serve elsewhere."

**David Jeremiah** wrote, "God doesn't usually ask people who are doing nothing to do something. He calls people who are doing something to do something more—more important, more urgent, more sacrificial."

**And fasting** - Here Luke connects service to (worship of) the Lord with **fasting**. Have you ever fasted? Have you considered it to be part of your service/worship to the Lord? Interesting thought!

**Ministering** (3008) (**leitourgeo** from **leitourgos** = public servant from **léitos** = of the people [NIDNTT says it from "**laos**" = people] + **érgon** = work) means to be a worker of the people or a public servant. In classical Greek the root word **leitourgos** referred especially to persons performing public duties, or works of public use and so to perform religious or charitable functions (worship, obey, relieve). It meant to render special formal service, and thus **leitourgeo** can literally describe a priest who officiates or ministers. **Leitourgos** is frequently used in the Septuagint of the service performed by priests and Levites in the tabernacle (Ex 28:35, 43; 29:30; 30:20; 35:19; 39:26; Nu 1:50; 3:6, 31) and the temple (2 Chr 31:2; 35:3; Joel 1:9, 13; 2:17). As used in this verse **leitourgeo** describes the performance of religious duties (privileges) in the sense of a Christian performing services to God through such activities as prayer, teaching, fasting, etc.

**Jack Andrews** on **fasting** - This word tells us that they sensed the urgency of the situation and sought to draw near to God. They denied the physical so that they could focus on the spiritual. The early church fasted for spiritual breakthroughs and they saw God answer prayers, send His power, change lives, and save souls. Are we so hungry for God that we would do without food for the express purpose of seeking God's will?

**Fasting** (3522) (**nesteuo** from **ne-** = not + **esthío** = to eat) means to abstain from food (or some equivalent) for a certain length of time. Fasting consisted of abstinence in order to express dependence on God and submission to His will. **Thayer** - to abstain as a religious exercise from food and drink: **NIDNTT** - says *Nesteuo* is from *ne-*, particle of negation, and *edo*, eat, i.e. not eating) means, having an empty stomach. **Manser** - Abstaining from food, and possibly drink, for a limited period of time as a mark of religious commitment and devotion or as an expression of repentance for sins.

**Zodhiates** - Pharisees practiced often, sometimes twice a week (cf. [notes](#) on Luke 18:12; Sept.: Is. 58:3ff.; Dan. 9:3). In their longer fastings they abstained only from better kinds of food. The Jews used to call such a fast "The great annual public fast of the great Day of Atonement" which occurred in the month Tisri, corresponding to the new moon of October. It thus served to indicate the season of the year after which the navigation of the Mediterranean became dangerous (Acts 27:9 [cf. Lev. 16:29ff.; 23:27ff.]).

**Related Resources:**

- [What is the connection between prayer and fasting?](#)
- [Christian fasting - what does the Bible say?](#)
- [What are the different types of fasting?](#)
- [How to fast—what does the Bible say?](#)
- [Fast, Fasting - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Fast; Fasting - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Fasting - Article by Archibald Alexander](#)
- [Why don't Christians fast the same as Muslims?](#)

**The Holy Spirit said** - This is the second mention of the **Holy Spirit** speaking to the saints, the first instance being to Peter in Acts 10:19+. And then in Acts 16:6-7 the Holy Spirit in some way directly intervened to forbid Paul to speak the Gospel in Asia, forbidding them to enter Bithynia. Luke does not explain exactly how the Holy Spirit spoke. It is possible that the Spirit's call came through the ministry of one of the prophets (revealed to him and then he spoke it), though it could have come simply through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. In any event, there was clear communication from God to these men. And they obviously were in unanimous agreement (a reflection of "the unity of the Spirit" - Eph 4:3). The point is that yes the church is praying and fasting, but here we see it is God Who gives the plan for world evangelism. (John Piper has passionate presentation of God's plan in his sermon [The Straight Paths of the Lord: Acts 13:1-12](#) - If you or your church have fallen into a "maintenance mentality" - Piper elaborates - then you need to listen to this message!).

**Jack Arnold** - Notice very carefully, it was not the Apostles, elders, deacons or congregation who gave Paul and Barnabas instructions to go on the missionary journey, but God the Holy Spirit. The first step in becoming a missionary or any full-time worker is an inner conviction from God that He has called you to this work. In the missionary call, the initiation is with the Holy Spirit. The local church must never send people arbitrarily to the mission field who think it would be nice to serve Christ in another country. No, there must be an inner conviction that one has been called to this task. A person can not just volunteer his services to the mission field. No, there must be Holy Spirit conviction that one is divinely called. There must always be that subjective confidence that one has been called. If you have this call, you know it. If you don't have it, pray for it. If you don't get it, don't worry about it and serve the Lord faithfully wherever you are. The call to full-time Christian service which includes the missionary call is realized through a study of the Bible, through trusting in God to open and close doors, through the inward persuasion of the Holy Spirit, and through a commitment of the life to do whatever God calls to do. ([The First Official Missionaries](#))

**G Campbell Morgan** wrote ""I do not for a moment imagine that the assembly heard a voice. That is the mistake we too often make. We try to force ourselves into ecstasies in order to hear the voice, then we imagine we hear it!"

**Jack Andrews on the Holy Spirit said** - When we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit we can hear what He says to us. They discerned the Spirit's voice. The Holy Spirit doesn't use wasted words. It is interesting to note that when we get serious about seeking the Lord Jesus that He will speak to us and we will discern His will. They were serious about seeking the Lord and they were sensitive to the Spirit. They were busy ministering to the Lord and fasting and it was during that time that the Lord clearly spoke to these men about His will. When the Spirit calls He knows where we are, who we are and what we are doing! He called their name. There was no mistaking who the Lord was calling.

**Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul** - Notice the phrase "**for Me**," indicating these two are God's holy possession for God's holy purpose. They are no longer their own (even as we are no longer our own! cf 1 Cor 6:19,20+).

**THOUGHT** - There is a principle inherent in the Spirit's charge to **set apart** these two men. God's work calls for separation - from the world. **Guzik** says it well "You can't really say "yes" to God's call on your life until you can say "no" to things that will keep you from that call." (cf Mt 6:24+). God's most effective ministers of the Gospel are those men and women most separated from this godless world.

**Set apart** (separate - aorist imperative - Do it now!) (873)(**aphorizo** from **apó** = off from, apart + **horizo** = mark out the limit) means to mark off the boundaries, to appoint, set one apart for some purpose. It is used of the final **separation** of the righteous from the wicked at the end of the age (Mt 13:49; 25:32); of the separation of the disciples from the world in this present age (Lk 6:22 contrast James 4:4+); and here of the setting apart of these five men to special function (Acts 13:2). The central idea is "to limit by setting apart from the rest," hence, to distinguish from others in some specific way. In the OT **aphorizo** (and the related word group) is used of setting apart to God the firstborn, of offering to God first fruits, of consecrating to God the Levites, and of separating Israel to God from other peoples. The basic instruction was that there was to be no intermingling of the chosen people with the Gentile nations or of the sacred with the profane and ordinary. Paul used **aphorizo** to describe his call in Ro 1:1 ("**set apart** for the gospel of God,")

and Gal 1:15+ ("God, who had **set me apart** even from my mother's womb").

Every saint ([hagios](#)) has (1) been positionally set apart ([hagios](#) means "set apart ones") but (2) we have also been called to practical (daily) separation. In Second Corinthians (Corinth was a city filled with sin tempting the saints to indulge themselves), Paul quotes from Isaiah 52:11, like a commanding officer issuing three "staccato like" commands - "Therefore (see 2 Cor 6:16), **COME OUT** (aorist imperative) FROM THEIR MIDST AND **BE SEPARATE**, (aphorizo in aorist imperative)" says the Lord. "AND **DO NOT TOUCH** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) WHAT IS UNCLEAN; **AND** I will welcome (receive graciously into God's presence) you." (2 Cor 6:17)

**THOUGHT** - Have you separated from this increasingly godless world? Yes we are still **IN** it of course (Jn 17:11), but are not to be not **OF** it (Jn 17:14)? Or are you still "touching" the unclean things of this sin saturated world forgetting the high calling of the Holy One on your life? Beloved, refrain from the temptation to "touch" for every touch blunts the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit in your life. And the paradox is that the only way we can obey Paul's 3 commands is by continual dependence upon the enabling power of the Spirit.

**Aphorizo** - 10x in 10v - Mt. 13:49; 25:32; Lk 6:22; Acts 13:2; 19:9; Ro 1:1; 2 Co. 6:17; Gal. 1:15; 2:12)

**Herschel Ford** said, "Before the Spirit **separates** us unto service, there must be in our own lives a separation from the world. There are many things that a Christian can do which will not hurt him physically or morally but **they will hurt his spiritual power**. Therefore, if we are to have **spiritual power for service**, we must be separated from the world."

**Barnabas** and **Saul** had (VOLITIONAL CHOICE) set apart themselves apart from the world and were diligently serving the Lord Jesus. Now they were to be set apart (DIVINE CHOICE) from the church for a special service.

**Merida** on sending their "first team" **Barnabas** and **Saul** - This means the Antioch church is stepping out in an act of faith and making a sacrifice. They are willing to give away key leaders in obedience to God and for the good of others. Jesus loves churches that think beyond themselves. These two high-capacity leaders are set aside for this work, even though the nature of the "work" isn't described here. Theirs was somewhat like Abraham's calling in that what they were commissioned to do was vague (Gen 12:1). While the calling itself is clear, the work and its location aren't. This chapter reminds us that we must continue to send high-capacity leaders and to support their work. That's what missionary churches do. And as we follow this pattern, we will reflect—albeit dimly—the missionary heart of the Father, who sent heaven's best, Jesus Christ, for the good of the nations (Azurdia, "The Antioch Paradigm")! "God had only one Son, and He was a missionary," said David Livingstone. The Father sent that Son that we may be saved, and now he sends us that others may be saved (John 20:21). Let's imitate our missionary Father and his missionary Son by sending out others for the advancement of the gospel. (Exalting Jesus in Acts)

**For** - **For** is the preposition "[eis](#)" means *unto* and in this context indicates the purpose - in order to, with a view to, for the purpose of

Recall that approximately 13 years earlier Jesus had alluded to **the work** to which He called them when He encouraged Ananias to "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel." (Acts 9:15+)

**Warren Wiersbe** adds that "God had already called Paul to minister to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15+; Acts 21:17–21), and now He summoned Barnabas to labor with him. The church confirmed their calling, commissioned the men, and sent them forth. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit, working through the local church, to equip and enlist believers to go forth and serve. The modern mission board is only a "sending agency" that expedites the work authorized by the local church. (Bible Exposition Commentary)

**The work to which I have called them** - There is an [effectual call to salvation](#), but the call in this context refers to the **divine call to the work** that God had prepared for Barnabas and Saul to accomplish. Note that it is past tense **have called** indicating this call was from eternity past (God's sovereignty) but the saints at Antioch were to set them part for the work (Man's responsibility).

[Henry Martyn](#) (or [here](#)) once said, "The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions, and the nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we must become."

**Kenneth Gangel** on the word **work** - An interesting little word, so common in the Greek language and in English as well, yet in this case designating the missionary effort as a whole. It appears in the same context again in Acts 14:26+ ("for the **work** that they had accomplished") at the conclusion of this first journey.

Paul later spoke of a similar **call** on **every believer's life** writing that "we are His workmanship ([poiema](#) = see God's Masterpiece = what YOU REALLY ARE!), created in Christ Jesus for (HERE IS OUR CALL - IT IS FOR) good works (see what constitutes "[Good Deeds](#)"), which God prepared beforehand (IN ETERNITY PAST!) so that we would walk in them (IN ETERNITY PRESENT WITH A VIEW TO HEARING "WELL DONE MY GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT" IN ETERNITY FUTURE!)." (Eph 2:10+)

**THOUGHT** - It is interesting that in the context of their call, **prayer and fasting** were instrumental and integral

in the Spirit telling them about their specific call. Are you walking in God's good works that He prepared in eternity past? If we are unsure whether we are carrying out our worthless works or God's "good works" it behooves us to spend some time in **prayer and fasting** that He might show us His will. (for motivation read Jn 15:5)

#### Related Resource:

- [How can I recognize the guidance of the Holy Spirit?](#)
- [What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives today?](#)
- [How can I receive divine guidance?](#)
- [How can I know God's will for my life? What does the Bible say about knowing God's will?](#)

Recall that Jesus had already issued a sobering call to Saul, which Jesus explained to Ananias after Saul's Damascus Road conversion...

But (rebutting Ananias' trepidation in Acts 9:11-12, 13-14) the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."(Acts 9:15-16+).

In addition Luke reiterates the call in Acts 14

**John MacArthur** wrote, "God sovereignly **calls** men to the ministry. The church did not choose Saul and Barnabas (**ED**: COMPARE FREQUENT PHRASE "BY THE WILL OF GOD" IN PAUL'S CALLS IN 2 Ti 1:1, 1 Cor 1:1, 2 Cor 1:1, , Eph 1:1, Col 1:1, cf also 1 Ti 1:1 Gal 1:1 Ro 1:1). Indeed, they would probably have been the last two chosen, since they were the best the church had. Nor did Saul and Barnabas volunteer. Instead, the Spirit sovereignly called them to full-time missionary service. **A final principle to be gleaned from this text is the importance of waiting for God's timing.** The Antioch church did not concoct schemes or map out strategies to reach the Gentile world. Instead, it concentrated on carrying out the ministries God had already entrusted to it. **An important feature in discerning God's will for the future is to do His will in the present.** (**ED**: READ THAT AGAIN SO YOU DO NOT FORGOT THIS VITAL PRINCIPLE!) (Bold added) (MacArthur NT Commentary - Acts)

**Called** (summoned) (4341)(**proskaleo** from **pros** = to + **kaleo** = to call) is used only in the middle voice (**reflexive**) and means call to oneself. (1) literally; (a) call to oneself, summon (to call in an official matter) (Mt 10.1); (b) to call in an official or legal (Acts 5:40+, Mt 18:32). **Proskaleo** is used of a divine call, as God's call to faith and salvation (Acts 2.39+ = "as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself") or as in the present passage a call to a special task which here is God's entrusting Barnabas and Saul with the privilege of preaching of the Gospel to the lost Gentiles (Acts 13:2; cf Acts 16:10+). Paul spoke of his call in Ephesians 3:7+ writing "I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power." So with the call of God comes the power of God to carry out the call by God's grace and His Spirit! In First Corinthians Paul wrote "by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored (**kopiao** = to point of exhaustion, not "Let go, let God," but "Let God, let's go!") even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." (1 Cor 15:10+) And the only way we can carry out God's call on our life is by depending on His Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29b) and working to the point of exhaustion, 100% dependent, 100% responsible! Does this describe your present ministry for the Lord?

**Jack Arnold** - God not only sovereignly chose the men He wanted to be His missionaries but He chose the work they were to do. If God touches anyone to be a missionary, He always provides the **place of service**. For instance, when **Adoniram Judson** started to go to India, God directed his steps to Burma. When the father of modern missions, **William Carey**, planned to go to the South Seas, the Holy Spirit directed him to India. God always gets the right people in the right places because He has a work He wants to do in this world. Every person whom God calls to the mission field gets to the mission field and they are effective. Those who drop out were never called to be missionaries and were duped by some emotional response to commit to missionary work. ([The First Official Missionaries](#))

**Jack Andrews** - Have you heard God's call and said, "Here I am, send someone else?" **Illustration**: I read about this football team that was facing the biggest team they had ever faced. The Coach called the play to run the tailback Jones off left tackle. The quarterback called the play, broke huddle, and ran the play. Instead of running the play the coach called the quarterback ran a bootleg and was clobbered. The coach was furious. He called the same play to run the tailback Jones off left tackle. This time the quarterback dropped back and passed to the wide receiver and it was incomplete. The team huddled up and the quarterback looked to the sideline for the play. This time the frustrated coach yelled to the quarterback. "Give the ball to Jones!" Jones stepped out of the huddled and yelled back to the sidelines, "Coach, Jones doesn't want the ball!" Thank God that Barnabas and Saul wanted "the ball!"

**Ray Stedman** - The Strategy of the Spirit - The missionary call of Barnabas and Saul, recorded in the thirteenth chapter of the book

of Acts is replete with practical helps in a problem that bothers many Christians: **How to recognize the guidance of God, how to know the directions of life, and to find the will of the Holy Spirit in these matters...**Now, I do not know how He spoke. It may have been through a prophetic utterance of one of these prophets as they were gathered together worshipping and ministering, (performing their gifts). Or it may well have been that He spoke as He speaks to many today in what we have learned to call "**insistent unanimity**," i.e., a deep conviction shared by everyone in the group that the Spirit of God desires a certain thing. This is the way He has led us many times here at Peninsula Bible Church. We have felt a deep, insistent sense that the Spirit was moving in a certain direction, and everyone shared it. Whenever we have had this sense of unanimity we have taken it as the leading of the Holy Spirit, and subsequent events have invariably proved it to be true. This is often the way God works. (ED: I WOULD ADD THIS "INSISTENT UNANIMITY" WAS CATALYZED WITH PRAYER AND FASTING) **He spoke to men who were already at work doing what they knew. You can steer a ship or a car if it is moving, but it is very difficult to steer it when it is sitting still.** God loves to see people at work at what they know to do, and then He will give them further direction. Notice also two elements of the Spirit's sovereign choice: He chose the men, and He chose the work....They went to Cyprus, landed at Salamis, and began to preach. Obviously they expected God to be with them and to open doors everywhere they went. This is the way the Holy Spirit commonly operates. No one is to wait for orders covering everything he does.

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### **Acts 13:1-5 Pray Or Act? By Dave Branon**

Having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. —Acts 13:3

A missionary comes to your church and says that he needs some short-term help. Do you pray or do you act?

The youth pastor says your church needs some new musical instruments for the youth ministry. Do you pray or do you act?

A mission needs help in a soup kitchen. Do you pray or do you act?

Prayer is one of the most powerful tools we have at our disposal. It allows us to speak to the Lord and to petition Him directly for guidance and help.

But sometimes we can be the answer to our own prayer. Those are the times when we should pray and act. Maybe that missionary's request can be answered by your willingness to go. Perhaps you can donate a musical instrument. Are you the person God is leading to help in that soup kitchen?

In the first century, the good news of Christ was spread by people going out and taking action. That's why their story is told in a book called The Acts of the Apostles, not The Prayers of the Apostles.

We should never downplay prayer, for it is something God commanded us to do. But let's realize that sometimes we need to back up our prayers with action. —JDB

Lord, when I sense Your call to serve,  
Help me to follow through;  
I must not simply pray and wait  
When there is work to do. —Fasick

God may want you to be the answer to your own prayer.

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### **Acts 13:1-5 Are You Ready? By Dave Branon**

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work." —Acts 13:2

Three months before a planned missions trip, a friend and I were talking about the upcoming event. He said to me, "If anyone can't go, I'd be willing to step in and join you." This was not going to be an easy 8 days, for we would be painting, repairing, and fixing stuff in the July heat of Jamaica. Yet my friend seemed eager to go.

About 6 weeks before we were scheduled to leave, there was an opening. I e-mailed my friend—whom I hadn't seen in the interim—and asked if he was still interested. He immediately responded, "Sure! And I got a passport just in case you asked." He had made sure he was ready—just in case he got the call to go.

My friend's preparation reminds me of what happened back in the first century at Antioch. Paul and Barnabas were among a number of people getting themselves ready spiritually for whatever God might ask them to do, or wherever He might send them. They didn't prepare by getting a passport, but they "ministered to the Lord and fasted" (Acts 13:2). And when the Holy Spirit said, "Separate to

Me Barnabas and Saul for the work" (v.2), they were all set for the journey.

Are you preparing for what God might want you to do? When the Spirit says, "Go," will you be ready?

Keep your tools ready—God will find work for you.

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### Acts 13:1-13 Doing Things God's Way By Dave Branon

Being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia. —Acts 13:4

Again and again we hear of groups who claim to be doing things in God's name yet don't seem to be truly serving Him. For instance, we see cults rising up—groups that are headed by a leader with personal magnetism, who draws people to himself with promises, claiming to have special knowledge from God.

To avoid being carried away by this kind of person, it might be helpful to look closely at the suggestions of Watchman Nee, a Chinese Christian writer. He said God will bless:

- what He initiates
- what depends on Him for its success
- what is done according to His Word
- what is done for His glory

The work of Paul and Barnabas in their first missionary journey met those guidelines. As we read Acts 13, we see that God initiated it (v.2), the people depended on God (v.3), it was done according to the Word of God (v.5), and God received the glory (v.12).

Whenever we wonder whether some work we hear about is done with God's blessing, we need to apply this four-step test. It's the best way to make sure things are done God's way, not man's.

They truly lead who lead by love  
And humbly serve the Lord;  
Their lives will bear the Spirit's fruit  
And magnify His Word. —DJD

The only leader worth following is the leader who is following Christ.

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

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

- **when they had fasted and prayed** Acts 13:2; 6:6; 8:15-17; 9:17; 14:23; Numbers 27:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6; 2:2
- **they sent them away.** Acts 14:26; 15:40; Romans 10:15; 3 John 1:6,8
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE FIRST "OFFICIAL MISSIONARIES"

Note the designation "official missionaries" because if you are a believer, you are a "missionary!" Jesus is your Lord, and Gospel propagation is His command (cf Mt 28:18-20). Every Sunday when you go through the "EXIT" sign in your church, you need to imagine that what that sign really says is "You Are Now Entering the Mission Field!" Do you believe that?

**THOUGHT** - Remember that one thing we will no longer be able to do in Heaven is share the Gospel. Today is the day of opportunity presentation of the salvation message to your lost friends, relatives, co-workers, et al. The application is simple and yet sobering - Are you fulfilling His missionary mandate? Will you seize the day of opportunity?

**Then** (5119)(tote) is an adverb that functions as an [expression of time](#). In this context tote means subsequently or soon afterward.

In this case the "then" is driven by a "when" referring to their spiritual exercises enabling them to focus their heart and minds on the heart and plan of their Lord Jesus, the Head of the Church. Jesus is Heaven at the right hand of His Father, communicates His mission plans through His Spirit to the Church (then and now!).

**Jack Arnold** - There can never be an effective missionary church unless there is a praying church. The church must pray for God to speak to the congregation about missions, trusting God to pick out and touch some for missionary work. A church is not really missionary minded unless people are being called by God into full-time Christian work. A missionary church prays for the missionaries on the field. Whatever else a missionary church may be, it is first and foremost a praying church which pleads with God for the salvation of souls and the raising of laborers for the reaching of the lost masses in this world. "And seeing the multitudes He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest'" (Matt. 9:36-38). ([The First Official Missionaries](#))

**Brian Bell** - Fasting often makes us more sensitive to the Spirit's leading

**When they had fasted and prayed** - This refers to a voluntary fast. Having focused first on God and heard from Him, they took action. Their priority of presentation of themselves first to the Lord God reminds me of Paul's exhortation to all believers...

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship ([latreuo](#)) (THIS IS AN APT DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENE IN Acts 13:2). And **do not be conformed** ([present imperative with a negative](#) - [suschematizo](#)) to this world, but **be transformed** ([present imperative](#) - [metamorphoo](#)) by the renewing ([anakainosis](#)) of your mind ([nous](#)), so that you may prove ([dokimazo](#)) what the will of God is (IN THIS CASE TO SEND BARNABAS AND SAUL), that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Ro 12:1+, Ro 12:2+)

**THOUGHT** - The Church at Antioch's prioritization of presentation of themselves to God gives us a wonderful "pattern" which will aid us in discerning the will of God for our life and in His Church. Note the pattern of (1) wholly presented, (2) separated from unholy, (3) transformed today by the Holy Word and Holy Spirit which results in (4) a renewed mind, (5) able now to test and discern what the will of God is in given situations. See discussion on site of "The Will of God." When was the last time you had a significant decision, one of those "crossroads" decisions, and you set aside time to fast and pray? Are you single? Perhaps you need to fast and pray before you enter the marriage covenant with your future spouse! When was the last time your church fasted and prayed over a "crossroads" decision, such as calling a pastor, expanding to another location, etc? It is interesting that there is much disagreement today about whether certain spiritual gifts have ceased in the church (cf [What is a cessationist?](#)), and yet one of the greatest "gifts" to the Body is sadly often neglected. Prayer and fasting are as relevant today as they were in the church at Antioch.

**And laid their hands on them** - What a difference a chapter makes! In Acts 12:1+ Herod "**laid hands on** some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them." Here the church (presumably the other 3 saints mentioned in Acts 13:1) **laid their hands on them** to send them off to the Gentiles to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. It is important to note that this act of laying on of hands did not (1) grant the the Holy Spirit for they already had received the Holy Spirit (see Acts 9:17 and Acts 11:24+), nor did it "ordain" them to ministry because they were already actively involved in ministry.

**Swindoll** - Through the "laying on of hands," the leaders said, in effect, "We endorse you and authorize you to carry out this mission on our behalf; we go with you in spirit as we pray for you here at home." Luke deliberately ties the action of the church in the laying-on-of-hands ceremony to the commissioning of the Holy Spirit. They are, in fact, complementary acts; one goes with the other.

**John MacArthur** on **laid their hands on them** - The laying on of hands simply signified (1) identification, (2) confirmation, and (3) unity in their upcoming mission (cf. Nu 8:10; 27:18-23). (Numbering added).

**Jack Andrews** on **laid their hands on them** - The laying on of hands was a symbolic act of identifying with the believers. It was used in the Old Testament where the worshiper would lay hands on the sacrifice before the animal was sacrificed to the Lord. This laying on of hands in no way conveyed spiritual power or rites to Barnabas and Saul. The believers laid hands on the two men and prayed for them. They were coming together and letting Barnabas and Saul that they were endorsing their ministry, they would support their work, they would pray for their usefulness in service to the Lord Jesus Christ. **Johnny Hunt** pointed out that, "the laying on of hands was a sign of identification, confirmation, and unification." When we endorse workers and missionaries from the local church we must pray for them, support them, work with them, encourage them, etc...

**Jack Arnold** - This **laying on of hands** had no magical powers, but it was merely an expression of the Antiochian Christians with these two men as they started the work of world evangelism. While the leaders (elders) of the local church probably did the actual

laying on of hands, this act was representative of the whole body of believers at Antioch. The whole church was involved. They acted as one, identifying themselves with the work of Barnabas and Paul. This was their way of approving the work of these missionaries and indicating that they would be with them in prayer and financial support when necessary. The church sent them out with the unity and harmony of the whole church behind them. These two missionaries knew that the local church was with them and behind them in this new venture of organized missionary work to the ends of the earth. ([The First Official Missionaries](#))

**David Matthis** basically agrees with Jack Andrews writing that "It serves as a means of grace to the candidate in affirming God's call through the church and in providing a tangible, physical moment to remember when ministry gets hard. It's also a means of God's grace to the commissioning leaders, who extend and expand their heart and work through a faithful candidate. And it's a means of God's grace to the congregation, and beyond, in clarifying who are the official leaders to whom they will seek to submit to (Hebrews 13:7, 17). And in it all, the giver and blesser is God. He extends and expands the ministry of the leaders. He calls, sustains, and makes fruitful the ministry of the candidate. And he enriches, matures, and catalyzes the congregation to love and good works, to minister to each other, and beyond, served by the teaching, wisdom, and faithful leadership of the newly appointed elder, deacon, or missionary." ([Laying on of Hands](#))

**Jack Arnold** comments - It becomes obvious that the local church at Antioch was the basic unit from which the first organized missionary effort sprang forth. God has ordained the local church as the primary base for missions. These original preachers were not church officials or ordained men, but laymen who had a heart for evangelism....Men cannot call and send missionaries, evangelists or ministers. Theological seminaries and Bible schools cannot call and commission a missionary, evangelist or minister. They can train those who are called, but they cannot force the call of God. To be successful .in the full-time work of the Lord, one must be called of God, separated by the Holy Spirit, commissioned and ordained by God unto the work He has called that person to do.

**A T Robertson** has an interesting note regarding the support of the two missionaries first noting that the laying on of hands was "Not ordination to the ministry, but a solemn consecration to the great missionary task to which the Holy Spirit had called them. Whether the whole church took part in this ceremony is not clear, though in Acts 15:40 "the brethren" did commend Paul and Silas. Perhaps some of them here acted for the whole church, all of whom approved the enterprise. But Paul makes it plain in Phil. 4:15 that the church in Antioch did not make financial contribution to the campaign, but only goodwill. But that was more than the church at Jerusalem would have done as a whole since Peter had been arraigned there for his activities in Caesarea (Acts 11:1–18). Clearly Barnabas and Saul had to finance the tour themselves. It was Philippi that first gave money to Paul's campaigns. There were still heathen enough in Antioch, but the church approved the going of Barnabas and Saul, their very best."

## THEY RELEASED THEM FOR THEIR DUTIES

**Gangel** comments "What a joyous passage. Willing workers released by a worshipping congregation through a wise procedure. No apostles were present—the sending of the first missionaries was a people project (**ED**: "A PEOPLE" JOINING GOD WHERE HE WAS WORKING!)." (Ibid)

It is interesting of two Greek words for sent Luke selected the second one, *apolouo* - **Pempo** which is usually a more proactive kind of sending or dispatching (eg. Acts 10:5, 32, 33); and **apoluo** frequently means releasing something that has its own inherent source of energy (cf Acts 3:13 "release Him.", Acts 4:21 "let them go", Acts 4:23, 5:40 = "released them") Upshot - The Church at Antioch did not "send" these missionaries, but they "released" them. A subtle but interesting difference.

**They sent them away** (released them)([630](#))(**apoluo** from **apó** = separation, away from + **luo** = loose) is used of sending a person away and has several senses in the NT (release from jail - Acts 4:21, 23, 5:40), release from marriage (Mt 1:19, Mt 5:31, Lk 16:18, et al), to forgive, grant pardon (Lk 6:37), but in the present context simply means to send away or send off (away from [apo](#)) from the local church at Antioch). In this context, the idea of **apoluo** is probably more accurately conveyed by the phrase "they let them go" or "they released them" which is interesting as the etymology of "**mission**" (see below) means a "*sending abroad*" or a release. As **MacArthur** explains "It is clear from Acts 13:2 that the Spirit, not the church, sent out (**ED**: ACTUALLY SET THEM ASIDE) the two missionaries. Since He had already sent them (**ED**: SET THEM ASIDE), all the church could do was cut the cord and let them go. That truth is repeated in Acts 13:4, where Luke relates: that they were "sent out by the Holy Spirit,

**Luke's** uses **apoluo** far more than any other NT writer -

Lk. 2:29; Lk. 6:37; Lk. 8:38; Lk. 9:12; Lk. 13:12; Lk. 14:4; Lk. 16:18; Lk. 23:16; Lk. 23:17; Lk. 23:18; Lk. 23:20;  
Lk. 23:22; Lk. 23:25; Acts 3:13; Acts 4:21; Acts 4:23; Acts 5:40; Acts 13:3; Acts 15:30; Acts 15:33; Acts 16:35;  
Acts 16:36; Acts 17:9; Acts 19:41; Acts 23:22; Acts 26:32; Acts 28:18; Acts 28:25

**Swindoll** comments that "Not unlike the Lord's call of Abram, "Go forth from your country...to the land which I will show you"



(Ge 12:1+), He gave the men enough information to take the first step. After they responded in obedience, God would reveal the information they needed next in due time.

**Guzik** write that "Being intentionally sent by the church in Antioch, many regard this as the first real known missionary effort of the church. "The word 'missionary' has to do with sending. The Latin word *mitto*, *mittere*, means 'to send'; 'mission' and 'missionary' come from the forms *missi* and *missum*." (Boice) They seem to have done this without a committee report, without a demographic analysis, without a marketing survey, without what is sometimes called "spiritual mapping." Barnabas and Saul went out without any of these things, only with the call and power of the Holy Spirit. ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**ONLINE ETYMOLOGY DICTIONARY** note on "[mission](#)" - 1590s, "a sending abroad," originally of Jesuits, from Latin *missionem* (nominative *missio*) "act of sending, a dispatching; a release, a setting at liberty; discharge from service, dismissal," noun of action from past participle stem of *mittere* "to release, let go; send, throw,"

**Dick Hillis** of Overseas Crusades Mission said, "**Missionaries** are those who never get accustomed to the thought of Christless feet on the way to a godless eternity."

**Tony Merida** comments that "While these missionary journeys throughout Acts have particular relevance for international missionaries, people who cross the street to bear witness to Jesus can also find much instruction and inspiration in these moving narratives." (Ibid)

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**Gangel** - One can hardly overemphasize the significance of lay leaders, congregational involvement, and ministry teams throughout Acts. The church is not, and never has been, buildings, programs, and property. God's church consists of people, and the emphasis always falls on them in Luke's record. Criswell tells an interesting story emphasizing this tone of Acts:

Some years ago a famous radio entertainer delivered his version of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. His presentation was so different that he was deluged with mail after he delivered the address. You see, the entertainer did some research and found that when Lincoln delivered that address, he put an emphasis upon one word in that dedication. We always say: "The government of the people, by the people, and for the people should not perish from the earth." The entertainer discovered that when Lincoln delivered his speech he said, "That government of the people, by the people, and for the people should not perish from the earth." **Lincoln emphasized not a preposition, but the people. He was moved by the people. That is the emphasis that ought to be in our work and in our assignments. Our work concerns people. It concerns human souls** (Criswell, 400).

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[John G. Paton](#), the great missionary to the New Hebrides, had a subjective calling to the ministry of missions. A synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland was looking for a missionary to join the Rev. John Inglis in New Hebrides. They took a poll of the synod in the hope that the votes of the members would reveal one who should go. When the votes were counted, it was seen that the action was inconclusive. And as the vote tabulation came in, a cloud of sadness appeared to fall over all the synod. Then the Lord began to speak to John Paton in his inner conscience, "Since none better qualified can be gotten, rise and offer yourself." Paton says there was an overpowering impulse to answer aloud, "Here am I, send me." He went on to say, "I was dreadfully afraid . . . and yet I felt a growing assurance that this was the call of God to His servant and . . . the voice within me sounded like the voice of God."

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**Gotquestions answers the question - Question: "Laying on of hands - what does the Bible say?"**

**Answer:** "Laying on of hands" is a biblical action; however, there is no biblical mandate requiring the physical laying on of hands for a particular spiritual ministry. Jesus certainly laid His hands on many of those He healed; however, He also healed without laying His hands on people. In fact, there were times when He was nowhere in the vicinity of those He healed. Matthew 8:8 describes Jesus healing the servant of the centurion without going near the centurion's house. Here are two instances to consider: in one case the Holy Spirit bestows the gift of speaking in tongues with the act of an apostle's laying on of hands, and in the other case He does so without the laying on of hands, but simply through the apostle's preaching. "Paul said, 'John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.' On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:4-6). "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God" (Acts 10:44-46). First Timothy 5:22 says, "Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure." The thought here is not so much in cautioning the physical action of

laying on of hands but to urge care in bestowing the responsibility of spiritual leadership (however it is done). It is not to be done "suddenly" or without due consideration. Undoubtedly, the laying on of hands in the early church was a means of connecting the message with the messenger, or the spiritual gift with the gifted giver. It provided a "sign" authenticating him through whom the physical manifestation of a spiritual gift was bestowed. We need to understand very carefully that there are no magical biblical formulas for the ministry of the church. Laying on of hands has no power in itself. Laying on of hands is only used by God when it is done in agreement with God's Word.

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### **Here is the summary of laying on of hands by Bob Utley - LAYING ON OF HANDS IN THE BIBLE**

This gesture of personal involvement is used in several different ways in the Bible.

1. oath taking (i.e., hand under thigh [cf. Gen. 24:2,9; 47:29])
2. passing on the family leadership (cf. Gen. 48:14,17,18)
3. identifying with the death of a sacrificial animal as a substitute
  - a. priests (cf. Exod. 29:10,15,19; Lev. 16:21; Num. 8:12)
  - b. laypersons (cf. Lev. 1:4; 3:2,8; 4:4,15,24; 2 Chr. 29:23)
4. setting persons aside to serve God in a special task or ministry (cf. Num. 8:10; 27:18,23; Deut. 34:9; Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6)
5. participating in the judicial stoning of a sinner (cf. Lev. 24:14)
6. the hand on one's mouth denotes silence or acquiescence (cf. Jdgs. 18:19; Job 21:5; 29:9; 40:4; Micah 7:16)
7. the hand on one's own head means sorrow/grief (2 Sam. 13:19)
8. receiving a blessing for health, happiness, and godliness (cf. Matt. 19:13,15; Mark 10:16)
9. relating to physical healing (cf. Matt. 8:3; 9:18,20; Mark 5:23; 6:5; 7:32; 8:23; 16:18; Luke 4:40; 13:13; Acts 9:17; 28:8)
10. receiving the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 8:17-19; 9:17; 19:6, note Deut. 34:9)

There is a surprising lack of uniformity in the passages that have been historically used to support the ecclesiastical installation of leaders (i.e., ordination, see Special Topic: Ordination).

1. In Acts 6:6 it is the Apostles who lay hands on the seven for local ministry.
2. In Acts 13:3 it is the prophets and teachers who lay hands on Barnabas and Paul for missionary service.
3. In 1 Tim. 4:14 it is the local elders who were involved in Timothy's initial call and installation.
4. In 2 Tim. 1:6 it is Paul who lays hands on Timothy.

This diversity and ambiguity illustrate the lack of organization in the first century church. The early church was much more dynamic and regularly used the spiritual gifts of believers (cf. 1 Corinthians 12; 14). The NT is simply not written to advocate or delineate a governmental model (see the variety in Acts 15) or ordination procedure. Church organizational traditions are necessary but not biblical. The godliness of the leadership is far more important than the form of the leadership (i.e., polity).

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### **TIME OUT**

Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. —Acts 13:3

A restaurant in Spain is so popular that customers must reserve a table 6 months in advance. But noted Spanish chef Ferran Adrià decided to close the doors of his award winning restaurant for 2 years so he and his staff could have time to think, plan and improve. Adrià told a magazine, "If we are winning all the prizes, why change? Working 15 hours a day leaves us very little time to create." In the midst of great success, they took time out for what is most important to them.

The first century church in Antioch experienced a time of exciting growth when "a great number believed and turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:21). As a result Barnabas and Saul came to teach the new believers (vv.25-26). But along with the hard work, they took time to seek the Lord through prayer and fasting (13:2-3). Through this, God revealed His plan for taking the gospel into Asia.

Few people can take 2 years off to think and plan. But all of us can build time into our schedule to talk to the Lord through prayer. As

we open our hearts and minds to God, He will be faithful to reveal the steps of life and service He wants us to take to honour Him.

PRAYER IS AS IMPORTANT AS BREATHING.

David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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### **James Smith - The Call of Barnabas and Saul**

After a missionary in China had been showing them the folly of idols, and had preached Jesus to them, one old man said—"Stop and tell us, for we cannot find the door." How sad to think of the multitudes who are groping in the dark for the door of eternal life and cannot find it. How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent. The Holy Spirit is very desirous to thrust out laborers; pray you Him. The young Church at Antioch had grown in number and power. Among the notable converts was Manaen, who had been a companion of that Herod who ordered the death of John the Baptist, and who mocked the Lord Jesus Christ, "setting Him at naught." But by the grace of God he was plucked as a brand out of the fire. As the members of this Church "served and fasted," the Holy Spirit met their real need by pressing home to their hearts this message of definite direction, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul." Perhaps they had been waiting on the Lord for special guidance, as to how they might further the cause of Christ when this unmistakable call came—

1. It was a Divine Call. "The Holy Spirit said," etc. (v. 2). They were as surely "called of God" as was Aaron. As all fitness for this service must come from Him, so also must the call. The Holy Spirit will never choose a man possessed by the spirit of the world as an ambassador of the Kingdom of Christ.

2. It was a Personal Call. "Barnabas and Saul." There was no room for questioning as to whom the Lord meant, neither was there any occasion for envy or jealousy. The Holy Spirit divides to every man severally as He will (1 Corinthians 12:11). Not everyone that says Lord, Lord, is fit for the service of God. "No man takes this honor unto Himself but he who is called of God" (Hebrews 5:4).

3. It was a Call to Separation. "Separate Me," etc. Barnabas and Saul were to be separated unto the Holy Spirit, that He might breathe the will of God through them, as He had done with the holy men of God in old time (2 Peter 1:21). To be used of the Holy Spirit we must be separated from the world, and entirely yielded unto Him, as vessels meet for His use. But we are not to suppose that those who remained in Antioch were not separated unto God. We can live the separated life anywhere by living for His glory.

4. It was a Call to Work. "For the work whereunto I have called them." Only those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus can have a hand in the work of this "new creation." We are not called to ease and idleness, but to be "workers together with Him," who has called us into this holy calling. Have we entered into this work whereunto God, the Spirit, has called us? Or are we idlers in His vineyard?

5. It was a Call which met the Approval of the Brethren. "They sent them away" (v. 3), but not without "fasting and prayer." It would be a great blessing to the Church and the world today if the Church was anything like so willing to recognize, and send forth, those who have been called of the Holy Spirit to do the work of an evangelist. By their fruit you shall know them. These holy men were "solemnly ordained," not with dinners and toasts! but with "fastings and prayer." There were no "hip, hip, hurrahs!" but there was a solemn doing of the will of God. Many modern ordinations are a scandal to the cause of Jesus Christ.

6. It was a Call, Followed by Mighty Deeds. How can we believe that we are called and empowered by God if "signs and wonders" worthy of God are not being done through us in His name? (vv. 5-12). Two wonders were wrought here by Barnabas and Saul (a) The overcoming of the sorcerer. This "child of the devil" and "enemy of all righteousness" was smitten with temporary blindness. The works of the devil were destroyed. (b) The conversion of the deputy (v. 12). The salvation of the governor of the island, and the silencing of Elymas, the enemy of God, were surely works worthy of the Holy Spirit, unto whom Barnabas and Saul had been separated.

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### **Brian Bill - Opportunities Come to Those Who Serve! And, Opposition Comes to Most Opportunities!**

**The missionary call came when? When they were busy serving the Lord.**

**Want God's direction? Get busy serving, He'll show you the next step**

**Ob Portu** - In ancient times before modern harbors, ships had to wait for the timing of the tide before they could make it safely to port. Thus "OB PORTU," described the ship waiting "FOR PORT," ready to seize the crucial moment when it could ride the tide into safe harbor. The captain knew that if he missed the passing tide, the ship would have to wait for another tide to come in. God gives each of us many "ob portu's", but we must be spiritually wise and Spirit filled in order to see and seize them. As Charles Swindoll said "We are all faced with a series of great opportunities (ob portu's) brilliantly disguised as impossible situations."

The English word **opportunity** is derived from this original meaning. Shakespeare turned this background of the exact meaning of

opportunity into one of his most famous passages. (Julius Caesar, Act 4, Scene 3)

There is a tide in the affairs of men,  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

On such a full sea are we now afloat;  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.

Paul would later write "**redeem the time** ([kairos](#))" - The idea is not to make best use of time as such, which is what we should do in the sense of not wasting it, but of taking advantage of the OPPORTUNITIES that present themselves." The time/opportunity for bringing forth fruit is the spring SEASON (kairos) in which the tree bears fruit, in contrast to late autumn, when there is no fruit. And so [kairos](#) is the time which God allots to each believer to bring forth for themselves "spiritual fruit." This truth calls for us to "Seize the Day" (Carpe diem) because "Time flies" (Tempus fugit). As Horace Mann put it "Lost yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever." Kairos represents the best time to do something, the moment when circumstances are most suitable. Kairos can be a moment or a season, but always refers to specific times in which opportunity is "ripe", so that when the time passes, so does the opportunity - "Opportunity only knocks once."

See discussion of the important topic Redeem the Time.

**Acts 13:4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. [NASB95](#)**

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

- **being sent out by the Holy Spirit** Acts 20:23
- **they sailed to Cyprus** Acts 4:36; 11:19; 27:4
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Antioch](#) > [Seleucia](#) > [Salamis](#) > [Paphos](#)  
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## SENT OUT BY THE SPIRIT

**So** ([oun](#)) is most often translated "**therefore**" and thus functions as a **term of conclusion**. On the basis of all that transpired in Acts 13:1-3, the conclusion is that it is time to "move out."

**Being sent out by the Holy Spirit**- Don't you love this description? Yes, they were sent (released) by the other prophet-teachers and the assembly of believers at Antioch, but ultimately they were **sent out by the Holy Spirit!** Talk about have a "holy wind" at your back (Spirit = "pneuma" = wind)! But the Spirit did not supernaturally transport (as He had in the OT with the prophet Ezekiel - Ezek 11:1, 24) them to Seleucia. The Spirit provided them supernatural power (God's sovereignty) but they had to carry out their part (human responsibility) (cf the vital principle of [100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)).

**THOUGHT** - Guzik adds an important caveat - "Any group of Christians can send someone, but if the Spirit doesn't send them, it won't amount to eternally effective ministry." ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

This description by Luke of the Spirit sending the missionaries reminds me of Peter's description of the Spirit's giving the writers of the NT the "winds" of inspiration = "no (ou = absolute negation) prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but **men moved** ("[divine passive](#)") **by the Holy Spirit spoke** (NOTE THIS INDICATES MEN'S PART - THEY STILL HAD TO WRITE, BUT THEY WROTE INSPIRED IN VOCABULARY WITH WHICH THEY WERE FAMILIAR) **from God.**" (2 Peter 1:21+).

**Sent out** (1599) (**ekpempo** from **ek** = out + **pempo** = to send) means to send forth (cause someone to go away for a purpose) and is used only here and Acts 17:10. Seven uses in the Septuagint - Gen. 24:54; Gen. 24:56; Gen. 24:59; 1 Sam. 20:20; 1 Sam. 24:19; 2 Sam. 19:31; Prov. 17:11.

**Tony Merida** notes that "We must recognize the absolute necessity of living by the Spirit when living out Jesus's mission (Acts 1:8)." I would add the corollary is that no dependence on the Spirit equated with no spiritual power! Woe!

**The Holy Spirit** - Notice on the diagram above ([click](#)) that when Jesus ascended, He sent men the "Helper" Who would function much like a "COO" or Chief Operating Officer in human terms. And yet His names clearly show His intimate relationship with Jesus Who is the Head of the Church, the Body of Christ - and so He is name "Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:7+), "Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Php 1:19+), and "Spirit of Christ" (Ro 8:9+, 1 Pe 1:11+).

**Gangel** observes that "Though Luke does not tell us, we can safely assume that the Antioch congregation continued to pray for the missionaries and to thank God for selecting them, even though they had lost the two most prominent members of their pastoral staff. As we leave the Antioch church along with Barnabas and Saul, let's take a quick glance ahead 350 years. After the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Antioch became the world center of Christianity. By A.D. 400, one hundred thousand Christians lived in that city." (Ibid)

**Ray Stedman** - There is a blending here of two factors: **God's sovereign authoritative choice**, and **man's necessity to choose within a more limited area**. There is first the sending out of these men and the account says they were sent out by the Holy Spirit. It was the Spirit who laid this on their hearts, and created an intense desire within to move out. But then the next phrase reads, "they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus." The Spirit did not tell them to go to Cyprus; that was the choice of Saul and Barnabas. The Spirit told them to move out, but the men decided where to go. This is perfectly proper. Paul and Barnabas were acting on the basis which Paul describes later in the Philippian letter: being confident that the Spirit was not only thrusting them out but was working in them to decide where to go. As Paul put it, "work out your own salvation [solutions] with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his pleasure..." (Philippians 2:12-13 RSV). When they thought over the situation they decided Cyprus would be the logical place to start. They did not wait for the Spirit to point it out on the map; they decided on the basis of the natural contacts they had. You see, Barnabas was from Cyprus and so were the men who started the church at Antioch. They undoubtedly had many contacts there, so that is where they started. But they went with the confidence that God was in that choice. Now that is the way to be led of the Spirit. The Spirit may lay on your heart some need, some ministry, some opportunity that is before you, and you feel impressed to do it, and perhaps others will join you in it. But you do not know quite how to get started. Then, start with what looks like the most natural thing, being confident that God is in you to govern and lead you in your choice, and to bring out of it what he wants. ([Acts 13:1-13 The Strategy Of The Spirit](#))

**They went down to Seleucia** - Here we see the clear juxtaposition of God's sovereignty (Sent out by the Holy Spirit) and Man's Responsibility (The Spirit did not specifically tell them WHERE to go, but with prayer and common sense they chose Cyprus). Thus Saul and Barnabas began the journey of a lifetime by traveling 14-16 miles down the [Orontes River](#) ([See map of rivers](#) - note the Orontes originates further inland and courses through Antioch to the sea)(Luke does not specify whether by boat or on foot) to catch a ship from [Seleucia](#) to the eastern coast of Cyprus, landing at [Salamis](#) (click map above). Luke does not describe any specific ministry at Seleucia, but it would be difficult to imagine these men not "redeeming the time" in some way in this city prior to embarking for Cyprus!

**Jack Arnold** adds "This is a beautiful picture of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility at work. God called and sent the missionaries out, promising them blessing, and the missionaries prayed and went where they felt they had natural contacts, trusting God for blessing." ([The Blessings, Burdens and Blunders of Missionaries](#))

**And from there they sailed to Cyprus** - From Seleucia to Salamis on the eastern coast of Cyprus is 130 miles. Recall that Acts 4:36 Cyprus was the home of "**Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas**" so they begin their missionary efforts in territory with which Barnabas would be familiar and may have had some ties. The point is that they did not go immediately to areas that would be considered "less hospitable." And as noted below Cyprus had a relatively large Jewish population and established synagogues (Acts 13:5) which would also facilitate the beginning of their missionary efforts.

We know from Luke's earlier record that this was not the first time the Gospel had come to Cyprus, but at that time it was only to Jews, not Gentiles

So then those who were scattered because of the persecution (In Acts 8:1-3) that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, **speaking the word** (Acts 8:4 = "those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.") **to no one except to Jews alone.** (Acts 11:19).

**Cyprus** is an island country in the Eastern Mediterranean, about 90-100 miles long and 60 miles at the widest point making Cyprus the third largest (after Sicily and Sardinia) and third most populous island in the Mediterranean, the two major cities being the seaports of Salamis (chief port) and [Paphos](#) (the capital), located 60 miles west of Syria and Lebanon, so close in fact that on a clear day it was visible from Seleucia.

**Swindoll** adds that Cyprus was "Lush with crops and rich with minerals and precious metals, this became a favorite stopover for

merchant ships sailing the Mediterranean Sea. Situated just 60 miles off the Syrian coast, it became a refuge for Jews hundreds of years before the birth of Christ. The Apocrypha notes settlements there during the Maccabean Revolt (1 Macc. 15:23), and when Caesar granted copper mines to Herod the Great, more people undoubtedly sought work there. So, it comes as no surprise that several synagogues dotted the island. During the persecution that followed the martyrdom of Stephen, some Christians took refuge on Cyprus (Acts 11:19)....[Paphos](#) first became famous when mythology set the city as the [first home](#) of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, after she was born from sea foam. When the Romans annexed Cyprus in 58 BC and later made the island its own province, [Paphos](#) became the seat of the military government.[" (Ibid)

So although there were a number of [Jewish synagogues](#) on Cyprus at this time, there was also a significant pagan/idolatrous influence, which of course was no major impediment for the Gospel proclaimed by Barnabas and Saul for inherent in their Gospel message was the power of God (Who is omnipotent! cf Ro 1:16+). We need to remember this basic truth when we preach and teach the Gospel in the culture in America which is increasingly becoming less genuine Christian and more pagan. Indeed, as someone has well said "When the effect of the Gospel is all important in the church, the force of the Gospel is unstoppable in the world." Amen!

**William Barclay - Cyprus** was a Roman province, famous for its copper mines and its shipbuilding industry. It was sometimes called Makaria, which means the Happy Isle, because it was held that its climate was so perfect and its resources so varied that it was possible to find everything necessary for a happy life there. Paul never chose an easy way. He and Barnabas preached in Paphos, the capital of the island. Paphos was notorious for its worship of Venus, the goddess of love.

**Paphos** was "a great center for the worship of [Aphrodite](#) [Venus]....The greatest festival in Cyprus in honor of Aphrodite was the Aphrodisia, held for three days each spring. It was attended by great crowds not only from all parts of Cyprus but also from surrounding countries....Extensive religious prostitution accompanied [Aphrodite's] rites at Paphos (The Wycliffe Historical Geography of Bible Lands)

**THOUGHT** - The modern reader needs to be aware that the ancient culture that Paul confronted with the Gospel was not much different from modern day culture where ethics and morals have been largely jettisoned by a significant portion of Americans. And yet the Gospel is still the power of God and is able to penetrate into the darkest of cultures!

Below is more detail on the mythological figure Aphrodite ([main article on Aphrodite](#)).

**Wikipedia on Aphrodite and Paphos** (See also [Sanctuary of Aphrodite Paphia](#); also [article on Aphrodite](#)) - The Greeks agreed that Aphrodite had landed at the site of Paphos when she rose from the sea.[11] According to Pausanias (i. 14), her worship was introduced to Paphos from Syria; but much more probably it was of Phoenician origin. Before it was proved by archaeology it was understood that the cult of Aphrodite had been established before the time of Homer (c. 700 BC), as the grove and altar of Aphrodite at Paphos are mentioned in the Odyssey (viii. 362). Archaeology has established that Cypriots venerated a fertility goddess before the arrival of the Greeks, in a cult that combined Aegean and eastern mainland aspects. Female figurines and charms found in the immediate vicinity date as far back as the early third millennium. The temenos was well established before the first structures were erected in the Late Bronze Age: "There was unbroken continuity of cult from that time until 391 AD when the Roman Emperor Theodosius I outlawed all pagan religions and the sanctuary fell into the ruins in which we find it today." [12] **Here the worship of the goddess was centered, not for Cyprus alone, but for the whole Aegean world.** The Cinyradae, or descendants of Cinyras, were the chief priests, Greek by name but of Phoenician origin. Their power and authority were very great; but it may be inferred from certain inscriptions that they were controlled by a senate and an assembly of the people. There was also an oracle here.[13] Few cities have ever been so much sung and glorified by the poets.[14] The remains of the vast sanctuary of Aphrodite are still discernible, its circumference marked by huge foundation walls. After its destruction by an earthquake it was rebuilt by Vespasian, on whose coins it is represented, as well as on earlier and later ones, and especially in the style on those of Septimius Severus.[15] From these representations, and from the existing remains, Gustav Friedrich Hetsch, an architect of Copenhagen, has attempted to restore the building.[16][17] ([For footnotes see original article in Wikipedia](#))

**Acts 13:5** When they reached Salamis, they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they also had John as their helper ([NASB95](#))

KJV 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.

- **in the synagogues of the Jews** Acts 14,46; 14:1; 17:1-3,17; 18:4; 19:8
- **they also had John** Acts 12:25; 15:37; Colossians 4:10
- **as their helper** Ex 24:13; 1 Ki 19:3,21; 2 Ki 3:11; Mt 20:26; 2 Ti 4:11
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL TO THE JEW FIRST

**When they reached Salamis** (see [map above](#), see [Wikipedia on Salamis](#)) - Apparently the voyage from Seleucia was without incident (including no storms, etc). One can only imagine what good news the crew members on this vessel must have heard from Barnabas and Saul! We will see when we get to heaven! Note their missionary strategy in this passage - (1) to the cities, (2) to the synagogues (and if they refuse to listen, to the Gentiles) and carrying out ministry as a team (Paul's speech on the Aeropagus in Acts 17 being an exception).

**William Ramsay** on Seleucia to Salamis - As they were able to make the harbour of Salamis, on the south coast, they were not impeded by westerly winds, which commonly blew throughout the summer (see p. 298). With such winds, they would have run for the Cilician coast, and worked along it westward with the aid of land breezes and the current (p. 299), till they could run across to the north coast of Cyprus, as Barnabas had to do on his next journey (if the Periodoi Barnabæ can be trusted). But they probably started on the opening of the sailing season (March 5). ([St Paul the Traveller - online - go to page 46](#))

**Darrell Bock** feels "the account of Paul's ministry has two parts: his journeys (Acts 11-20) and his trials (Acts 21-28)."

**They began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews**- The imperfect tense indicates they kept proclaiming it over and over! The **Word of God** is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Why did they go first to the Jewish Synagogues?

(1) The Gospel is "power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, **to the Jew first** and also to the Greek." (Ro 1:16+). In Acts 13:46+ the missionaries addressed the Jews stating "**It was necessary** (obligation) that the Word of God be spoken to you first..." Paul's unremitting concern was for his people (read Ro 9:1-5+, Ro 10:1+). In addition, Peter had already established that the inauguration of the coming [Messianic Kingdom](#) was dependent upon Jewish response to the Gospel (Acts 3:19-20+) Jesus Himself had declared to the twelve disciples "'Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but **rather go to the lost** ([apollumi](#) literally "perishing" in perfect tense = their enduring state/status) **sheep of the house of Israel.**" (Mt 10:5-6). Finally, Jesus Himself promised the Jews that "from now on you will not see Me until (implies they will see Him and will cry out - cf Zech 12:10-14+) you say, ("*Baruch ha ba b'shem Adonai,*") 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!'" (Mt 23:39).

(2) Gentile proselytes (those Gentiles who had been circumcised, baptized, and offered sacrifices) and God-fearing Gentiles (short of full fledged proselytes) would have been in the synagogue (cf Jesus' call to Paul "to bear My name **before the Gentiles** and kings and the sons of Israel." Acts 9:15+) And in Acts 26:17+ Jesus had told Paul (I am)."rescuing you from the Jewish people and **from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you.**"

(3) The Jews would be the most logical initial contacts because they had knowledge of the OT Scriptures, which the missionaries would use in their "apologetic" presentations (see Paul's first recorded sermon in Acts 13:16-22+ in which he gives a "Walk Thru the Bible" Jewish style, i.e., with focus on the OT). Paul's "procedure here is exactly as at Damascus, where he proceeded to preach in the synagogues immediately after his conversion (Acts 9:20+ = "immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."")" (Ramsay)

(4) The Abrahamic Covenant had not been nullified - Ge 12:3 "I will bless those who bless you" (This promise of blessing should motivate us to go to our Jewish friends, etc)

(5) The law of natural affinity - to his own ethnicity, the Jews.

**Stanley Toussaint** has some additional thoughts to consider (there is some repetition) - It was necessary that the apostles go to the Jews first for a number of reasons. First, the coming of the earthly kingdom depended on Israel's response to the coming of Christ (cf. Mt. 23:39; Ro 11:26). Second, only after Israel rejected the Gospel could Paul devote himself to the Gentiles. Third, the message of Jesus is fundamentally Jewish in that the Old Testament, the Messiah, and the promises are all Jewish. (On "the

Notice also that **synagogues** is plural indicating there were two or more Jewish synagogues in Salamis. **Ramsay** writes "There must have been a large Jewish colony in Salamis, with more synagogues than one. Cypriote Jews are often mentioned in Acts 4:36, 11:20, 21:16; and Barnabas himself was a Cypriote." ([St Paul the Traveller - online](#)) That they would go first to the Jewish synagogues would prove to be Saul/Paul's pattern for the rest of his ministry, in accord with what he wrote in Romans 1:16 "**to the Jew first** and also to the Greek."

**THOUGHT** - What a privilege Gentile believers have today to share the Gospel with their Jewish acquaintances! Have you ever shared the Gospel with a Jewish person? Remember Paul's pattern - to the Jew first! Three wonderful ministries with which I have had the privilege of being associated for almost 2 decades are the following (if you do not support any Jewish outreach, you might want to check them out if the Spirit leads) - [Chosen People Ministries](#), [The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry](#) and [Jews for Jesus](#). And to encourage you to reach out (you might be surprised at the reception by your Jewish friend!) watch a few of the [Jewish Testimonies - I Met the Messiah](#) - here is one by popular author [Joel Rosenberg](#) discussing the first page of his first novel which described the 9-11 attack before it occurred in 2001.) One Caveat - If you share the Gospel with your Jewish friend, be prepared that they may bring up the great Christian reformer Martin Luther's treatment of the Jews and his legacy in Nazi Germany! ([See article](#)).

**Wikipedia** - Tradition says that Barnabas preached in Alexandria and Rome, and was stoned to death at Salamis in about AD 61 (**ED: WHICH WOULD BE ABOUT 12 YEARS AFTER BARNABAS FIRST VISIT HERE IN ACTS 13**).. He is considered the founder of the [Church of Cyprus](#). His bones are believed to be located in the nearby monastery named after him.

**Synagogues** (4864)([sunagoge](#) from [sunágo](#) = lead together, assemble together) refers to a group of people "going with one another" ([sunago](#)) literally describes a bringing together and eventually, **sunagoge** came to mean the place where the Jews congregated together. The word was used to designate the buildings other than the Jewish Temple (in Jerusalem) where the Jews also congregated for worship. Historically, the Synagogues originated in the Babylonian captivity after the 586 BC destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar and served as places of worship and instruction. **Synagogues** should have been (and frequently were) a place of teaching and proclamation of the Gospel (Mt 4:23, 9:35, 12:9, 13:54, Mk 6:2, Lk 4:15, 16, Lk 4:44, 6:6, 13:10, Jn 6:59, 18:20, Acts 9:20 = Paul immediately "began to proclaim Jesus," Acts 13:5 = Paul proclaimed "the word of God," Acts 14:1 = place Paul, et al, spoke and where "a large number of people believed," Acts 17:17, 18:4, 18:19, 19:8 = Paul, et al reasoned with various audiences in synagogues).

<b>PAUL'S PATTERN: TO THE JEW FIRST</b>	
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b>
1. Damascus	1. Acts 9:20
2. Jerusalem	2. Acts 9:28-29
3. Salamis	3. Acts 13:5
4. Pisidian Antioch	4. Acts 13:14
5. Iconium	5. Acts 14:1
6. Philippi	6. Acts 16:13
7. Thessalonica	7. Acts 17:1-2
8. Berea	8. Acts 17:10
9. Athens	9. Acts 17:16-17
10. Corinth	10. Acts 18:1-4
11. Ephesus	11. Acts 18:19; 19:8
12. Rome	12. Acts 28:17

Messianic commentator **Steven Ger** adds that "Within every Jewish community was at least one synagogue. In fact, the Jewish population of Salamis was sufficiently extensive to require and sustain several synagogues. The synagogue served as a communal Jewish oasis in the midst of the vast Gentile world, enabling the Jewish community to remain educated in their faith and observant in their practices. In addition, the synagogue also served as a center in which interested Gentiles might investigate Judaism; an environment in which they could, as God-fearers, proselytes of the gate or full proselytes, worship the one true God. The variegated matrix of the first century synagogue would understandably prove fertile soil for responding positively to news of the Jewish messiah.



Paul would capitalize on this accessible network of synagogues to strategically propagate the gospel, using the synagogues, city by city, as a strategic bridge to penetrate the Roman world....There is no indication in either Acts or the epistles that Paul viewed following this model as incongruous or incompatible with his calling as the "apostle to the Gentiles." Throughout Paul's missionary career, he first shared the gospel with the Jews and affiliated Gentiles within the synagogue prior to directly approaching the Gentiles. Paul's commitment to this principle was so great that in the event the city's Jewish population was too small to sustain a synagogue, Paul first went instead to the Jewish place of prayer (Acts 16:11-13). It was only after the Jews in the synagogue had staunchly and overtly rejected that gospel that Paul would even attempt a direct approach to the Gentiles, even when, as in Athens, he was aggravated by the Gentiles' overt idolatry (Acts 17:16). In both word and deed, the apostle to the Gentiles was unambiguous in articulating the inherent priority of Jewish evangelism (see Rom. 1:16)." (Acts-Twenty-First Century Commentary)

**Proclaim** (2605)(**kataggello** from **kata** = an intensifier, down + **aggelos** = messenger and **aggello** = to declare, report) literally means to "declare down". It means to announce, with focus upon the extent to which the announcement or proclamation extends and so to proclaim throughout. It means to declare plainly, openly and loudly! It was used of solemn religious messages. Marvin Vincent says **kataggello** means ""to proclaim with authority, as commissioned to spread the tidings throughout, down among (**ED**: cf prefix "kata") those that hear them, with the included idea of celebrating or commending."

**Webster** adds that our English "**proclaim**" (from **pro** = before + **clamare** = to cry out) means to "declare publicly, typically insistently... in either speech or writing... and implies declaring clearly, forcefully, and authoritatively." (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary)

It is not surprising that most of the uses of **Kataggello** are in Acts and the remainder in letters by Paul - Acts 3:24; Acts 4:2; Acts 13:5; Acts 13:38; Acts 15:36; Acts 16:17; Acts 16:21; Acts 17:3; Acts 17:13; Acts 17:23; Acts 26:23; Rom. 1:8; 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 9:14; 1 Co. 11:26; Phil. 1:17; Phil. 1:18; Col. 1:28. If you have time, take a moment and observe these 18 NT uses of **kataggello** noting specifically what was proclaimed (e.g, in Acts 4:2 they were "proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead." You will discover that there proclamation was very focused and so too should ours be today!)

**The Word of God** - That is, the Gospel. It is interesting that Luke does not describe the effects of the Gospel in Salamis. We will find out in Heaven! **Gangel** adds that "Assuming Christians were already there, however, this was not a pioneer effort. The focus could well have been upon confirming Cypriot Jews already committed to Christ."

**And they also had John as their helper** - John Mark was from Jerusalem (Acts 12:12) and had accompanied Barnabas (John Mark's cousin Col 4:10) and Saul when they returned to Antioch from Jerusalem (Acts 12:25+) after delivering the support from the church at Antioch (cf Acts 11:28, 29, 30+)

**Robertson** observes "There were probably others also in the company (Acts 13:13)."

John Mark was like a college student who does short term missions work in the summer but as we soon discover, his "short term" was considerably "shortened" (Acts 13:13).

**Helper** ("Assistant" = NET, CSB)(5257)(**huperetes** from **hupo** = under, beneath + **eretes** = a rower) is literally an under oarsman ("under-rower") and then a subordinate, a servant, an attendant (Lk 4:20), one who is in the service of another or an assistant in general. **Huperetes** describes a a helper who willingly submits himself to carrying out the will of the one over him. In John 7:32, 45, 46 it is used of the Temple "police" or guards. The subordinate official who waits to accomplish the commands of his superior. The first use by Luke in Luke 1:2+ is to describe **servants of the word** where the definitive article ("the") speaks of a specific word, the Word of God. **A T Robertson** rightly says "Here (Lk 1:2) "**the word**" means the Gospel message. Servants of the word describes these men as focused on the word, listening and acting according to the word."They not only had personal knowledge of the facts but also practical experience of the facts." (Plummer commenting on the use in Lk 1:2+)."

In Classic Greek **huperetes** was a common sailor, distinguished from a **nautes** (3492), a seaman, sailor. These were the men down in the ship's galley, doing one thing -- rowing and with their eyes on one man, the man standing at the front of the hull, shouting "Row, Row, Row"! This suggests an interesting picture of John Mark as the **helper** of Barnabas and Saul. He most likely functioned like our modern day ministry "interns."

Here are Luke's uses of **huperetes** (6 of 18 NT uses). Lk. 1:2; Lk. 4:20; Acts 5:22; Acts 5:26; Acts 13:5; Acts 26:16. Acts 13:5 is the only use translated "**helper**". Here are the other 18 translations - attendant(1), helper(1), minister(1), officer(1), officers(13), servants(3).

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**Jack Arnold applies Acts 13:5** - What does a missionary do? He may be called upon to do many things in the line of duty, but his primary task is "to proclaim the Word of God." His first obligation is to speak to men about Jesus Christ. A missionary goes and spreads the gospel of Christ to foreign lands or places which are barren to the gospel or relatively untouched for Christ. Did you

know there are about 2.7 billion people in this world at this hour who have really never had an opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ in a meaningful way? Over half the world knows nothing of Christ. We must pray that God will raise up laborers for the harvest. Also our local church must send out missionaries who are spreading the gospel and who are committed to establishing indigenous local churches in foreign lands. God has given us the command. ([The Blessings, Burdens and Blunders of Missionaries](#))

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (Matt. 28:18-20).

We must pay the price to see the Great Commission accomplished in our generation.

**ILLUSTRATION** - Many years ago there was a great missionary rally in the Royal Albert Hall in London, England, and a clergyman turned to the Duke of Wellington (the “Iron Duke,” whose armies had defeated Napoleon) and asked, “My lord Duke, do you believe in missions?” “What are your marching orders?” asked the Duke. “Of course, the Bible says to go into all the world,” answered the clergyman. “Then you have nothing to say about it. As a soldier, you are to obey orders.”

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**Ray Stedman** on leading of the Holy Spirit - They went to Cyprus, landed at Salamis, and began to preach. Obviously they expected God to be with them and to open doors everywhere they went. This is the way the Holy Spirit commonly operates. No one is to wait for orders covering everything he does. There are many mistaken ideas abroad today as to how the Holy Spirit leads us. Young Christians often get the idea that they are to be like robots, automatons, ruled by computer-impulses which come from the Spirit. They think we are to sit and wait until we get one of those. I remember a young man at Dallas Seminary when I was a student there who thought that was the way the Spirit worked, so he would stop at the foot of a staircase and ask God to show him whether he should go up the right side, or the left. He would pray about whether to put his hat on in the morning, or not. If God ran our lives like that we would be nothing but mechanical beings. Animals are run like that by instincts, but not men. God is not interested in such antics. He is interested in our understanding that he is to live within us. He will direct us precisely at times (and when he does, don't ignore it), but when he doesn't, move out where you are with the confident expectation that God is with you and will open the doors to make a way for you. When you follow that pattern, you are bound to find life exciting. God is very creative, and he is always doing something surprising, unexpected. You cannot improve upon the strategy of the Holy Spirit. No one could anticipate the right way to approach these Cyprian cities, and plan out an attack in some systematic way, and expect it to succeed. This is the problem with the church in the twentieth century. We are forever calling conventions, councils, retreats, and conferences to try to decide where we ought to go next, to program it all, structure it, organize it, and move along carefully planned lines as though the whole thing depended on us. That is why the church is faltering, and failing, and has lost its note of excitement. The strategy belongs to the Holy Spirit. He is the only one that knows how to reach a city, or a country, or a nation -- how to proceed. He already has men planted here and there, ready to respond whenever his people go out to proclaim the truth. That is what Paul and Barnabas found. I heard a wonderful example of how the Holy Spirit works along this line recently. A friend told me that the Christian World Liberation Front was trying to do something about the topless and bottomless bars in San Francisco. They organized a protest, and on Saturday would walk up and down in front of some of these lewd, lurid places, carrying signs, rather ironic signs, such as: THURSDAY NIGHT IS FAMILY NIGHT BRING THE CHILDREN TO EL CONDOR They made people so embarrassed by these that they would not go in and the attendance decreased remarkably. Finally the management became quite upset and sent out a bouncer to order them off the place. But these Christians, knowing they had a right to orderly protest, refused to leave. One night the bouncer got very angry, and hit one of the leaders square in the mouth. The next night they were back again, not knowing how to proceed, but counting on the Lord. This time the bouncer came out and ordered them to go, and they said, No not unless they could go in and pray for the people first. Surprisingly, the management agreed and invited them in. They all went in and the place was absolutely dead silent. These Christians stood up on the stage by the microphone, surrounded by naked girls, and led the whole place in prayer. One fellow said he peeked while the rest were praying and saw the bouncer going around quietly closing all the doors so they wouldn't be disturbed by any noise from the street. They had a tremendous opportunity to speak the truth to people, who became utterly different in their demeanor when they were confronted with this kind of a contrast between the right and the wrong. Now that is the radicalism of the Holy Spirit. You cannot improve on it. That is what we find all through the book of Acts; this remarkable combination of divine sovereignty and human responsibility which, working together, co-laborers with God, produces exciting situations and climactic circumstances where anything can happen, yet which almost always opens a wide and fruitful door for ministry. ([Acts 13:1-13 The Strategy Of The Spirit](#))

**Acts 13:6** When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, ([NASB95](#))

KJV 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:

- **they found a magician**, Acts 8:9-11; 19:18,19; Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 20:6; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; 1 Chronicles 10:13; Isaiah 8:19,20
- **a Jewish false prophet** Deuteronomy 13:1-3; 1 Kings 22:22; Jeremiah 23:14,15; Ezekiel 13:10-16; Zechariah 13:3; Matthew 24:24; 2 Corinthians 11:13; 2 Timothy 3:8; 2 Peter 2:1-3; 1 John 4:1; Revelation 19:20
- **whose name was Bar-Jesus** Matthew 16:17; Mark 10:46; John 21:15-17
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SUDDEN, SURE SATANIC OPPOSITION

When the pure Word of God is proclaimed (whether in preaching or teaching), you can "rest" assured that our mortal Enemy who is roaming around (1 Peter 5:8) will send his demons to oppose, assail, attack, twist, hinder, obstruct, impede, inhibit, retard, pervert, mislead, misrepresent, distort, revile, counterfeit, imitate, simulate, feign, falsify, etc, the Word of God, the Word of Truth, as well as attacking the one who proclaims it making us discouraged, despondent, hopeless, lacking enthusiasm, lacking confidence, pessimistic, disillusioned, despairing, dispirited, fearful, depressed, and the list goes on! As they say in Latin "praemonitus, praemunitus" which loosely translated means [Forewarned is forearmed!](#)

**Brian Bell** writes "Opportunities Usually Produce Opposition...Expect it! 1 Cor.16:9 "a wide **door** for effective (adapted to success) service has opened (stands wide open) to me, and there are many adversaries." A "**door**" is a metaphor for an opportunity.

**Charles Hummel** wrote that our "greatest danger is letting the urgent (secular) things crowd out the important (divine things)." Our problem is that too often we live by life's demands, instead of by God's priorities. Remember that life is too short for us to do everything we want to do, but it is long enough for us to do everything God wants us to do.

A Pessimist is one who "sees a difficulty in every opportunity"; an Optimist is one who "sees an opportunity in every difficulty"

**Warren Wiersbe** points out that "This event is an illustration of the lesson that Jesus taught in the Parable of the Tares (Matt. 13:24–30, 36–43): wherever the Lord sows His true children (the wheat), Satan comes along and sows a counterfeit (the tares), a child of the devil." (Bible Exposition Commentary)

**Jack Arnold** reminds us that "The enemy of the Gospel is always an unseen enemy, for Christians struggle against the very powers of darkness. "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the **schemes** (see [methodeia](#)) of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world-forces of the darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:11+, Eph 6:12+). Elymas was Satan's man. Bar-Jesus was the best specimen hell could produce!" ([The Blessings, Burdens and Blunders of Missionaries](#))

### Related Resource:

- Online book by Donald Barnhouse - [The Invisible War](#) - 272 pages

**When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos** (see [map above](#)) - Barnabas and Saul were not wasting time just "passing through" but were intentionally proclaiming (Acts 13:5) throughout the island the heart penetrating Gospel of Jesus Christ. **Whole** is **holos** which generally speaks of totality (Mk 1:33), but is most likely used as [hyperbole](#) to emphasize the extent of their "**broadcasting**" the seed of the Gospel (cf Lk 8:11, 15+) on Cyprus which has a total area of 3,572 square miles. Clearly they did not go through the **whole** 3572 square miles. More likely they may have visited every Jewish synagogue on the island.

**Polhill** points out that "The old settlement of Paphos was originally established by the Phoenicians and lay some seven miles to the southeast of the new city of that name. This original settlement had been destroyed by earthquake in 15 B.C. The new city had thus been built during the Roman period in Roman style." (NAC)

**Jack Arnold** - Notice how it says "**they** had gone ." It appears that the New Testament pattern is the sending out of a team of two or three or more missionaries to the same place.....When missionaries are sent out in teams, they can encourage, exhort and uphold one another. This is a very practical way to deal with the discouragement, depression and disillusionment that comes with missionary work. Another New Testament principle of missions is that the missionaries went to the cities, the cultural and population centers, to preach and establish a local church. The indigenous church in the city then began to reach the country area around the

city. ([The Blessings, Burdens and Blunders of Missionaries](#))

**They had gone through** (1330)(**dierchomai** from **dia** = through + **erchomai** = come, go) means to go through, to pass through, to move through an area. It is interesting that Luke uses this verb figuratively in the prophecy to Jesus' mother Mary that "a sword **will pierce** (dierchomai - go through) even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." (Lk 2:35+) Indeed, as Barnabas and Saul traversed the whole island out of their mouth came the message of the Gospel that undoubted would pierce hardened hearts and revealed their thoughts and intentions (cf the effect of the Word of God proclaimed in Hebrews 4:12-13).

**THOUGHT - SPURGEON** on use of dierchomai in Luke 2:35+ - Christ's death revealed the thoughts of many hearts. It revealed the thought in the heart of Pilate, that he loved popularity better than the truth. It revealed the thought of the heart of Judas, that he loved gold better than he loved his Master. It revealed the thought in the heart of Caiaphas, that he would keep to old customs rather than to the right. It revealed the thought in the hearts of the disciples, and showed what poor timid, trembling hearts they had. Peter's impulsive spirit, too, was revealed in all its weakness by the death of the Saviour. **The cross is the great touchstone; wherever it comes, it tests and tries us, even as the crucible tries the metal that is put into it, and lets us know what manner of men we are.** Dost thou love Christ? Dost thou glory in his cross? Then it is well with thee. But dost thou despise the cross? Dost thou set up thine own righteousness in opposition to it? Art thou depending upon anything beside Jesus Christ and him crucified? Then his cross reveals thee to be self-righteous, and dead in trespasses and sins.

**They found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus** - **Bar** is the Aramaic word meaning "Son of" and **Jesus** is the Latin form of the name "Joshua" which gives him the name "Son of Joshua." What an **Incongruous** name! The man named "Son of Jesus" or "Son of salvation" opposes Jesus the Son of God Who alone brings salvation! Satan is a deceiver and so even the name of this "son of the Devil" suggests in some way he seeks to counterfeit the true way of salvation, to "**make crooked the straight ways of the Lord.**" (Acts 13:10) Elymas, "Satan's man in Paphos" reminds us of **Simon Magus** "Satan's man in Samaria" who Peter encountered and confronted (read about it in Acts 8:9–24+).

**MacArthur** on **Bar-Jesus** - His name, ironically, means "son of salvation"—a strange name indeed for a deceiving false prophet. It was no accident that this man had attached himself to the Roman proconsul. The kingdom of darkness is eager to influence those who rule. Much of the evil in this world can be traced ultimately to such baleful influence by "the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12; cf. Dan. 10:13–11:1).

**Jack Arnold** - **Bar-Jesus** means "the son of Jesus." In the Hebrew culture, to call yourself the son of someone was to designate yourself his follower. This man was claiming to be a follower of Jesus, but what he taught was absolutely contrary to what Jesus taught. Today we have cults such as the [Mormons](#), [Jehovah Witnesses](#), [Unitarians](#), [Unity](#), [Christian Science](#), [Armstrongism](#), [Spiritism](#), [Rosicrucianism](#), [Bahaim](#) and many others who seize upon the name of Jesus, claim the name of Christianity and yet teach unchristian and unbiblical doctrine. They have mixed much error with a little truth and are cults because they deny the fundamentals of the Christian faith. The age we are living in is the age of the cults and all of them are false and Satanically inspired. It is common today to hear of Astrology, I Ching, [Edgar Cayce and A.R.E.](#), [Spiritualism](#), [Witchcraft](#), [Satanism](#), [Scientology](#), [Hare Krishna](#), [Transcendental Meditation](#), [Sun Myung Moonism](#), and many others. We live in an age when the forces of hell will openly challenge the forces of God. It is frightening, but exciting, since it will give us an opportunity to see God work for Christians in supernatural ways to put down the forces of evil. ([The Blessings, Burdens and Blunders of Missionaries](#))

**Magician** (3097)(**magos**) is derived from the Persian word magus meaning "great" (thus "great, powerful men") and in the plural ("magi") as in Mt 2:1, 7, 16, magi referred to the high priestly caste Persians (also Medes and Babylonians) who are affectionately called the "wise men." The other sense of magos is that of a magician or sorcerer, one who used magic crafts or "witchcraft." **BDAG** adds that magos referred to "a Persian and then also Babylonian wise man and priest, who was expert in astrology, interpretation of dreams and various other occult arts (Herodotus, Josephus 20.142). The Septuagint uses **magos** in Daniel 2:2 when King Nebuchadnezzar desired to know the meaning of his dream and called "the magicians (epaoidos - one that uses charms or incantations), the **conjurers** (magos), the sorcerers (pharmakos)."

**John MacArthur** adds this note on **magos** - They were well-versed in astronomy and astrology, agriculture, mathematics, and history. They were involved in various occult practices and were famous for their ability to interpret dreams (cf. Dan. 2:1ff.). Such was their political power and influence that no Persian ruler came to power without their approval....(and in his note on the use in Matthew adds) The **magi from the east** (the word literally means "from the rising" of the sun, and refers to the orient) who came to see Jesus were of a completely different sort. Not only were they true magi, but they surely had been strongly influenced by Judaism, quite possibly even by some of the prophetic writings, especially that of Daniel. They appear to be among the many God-fearing Gentiles who lived at the time of Christ, a number of whom—such as Cornelius and Lydia (Acts 10:1–2; 16:14)—are mentioned in the New Testament. (For more discussion on the magi see MacArthur's sermon [Matthew 2:1: Who Were the Wise Men?](#))

**TDNT - Magos** in the Greek World. Four meanings are found together in almost every age.

**a. The specific meaning of a "member of the Persian priestly caste"** (which acc. to Hdt., I, 101 was one of the 6 tribes of the Medes), about which the Gks. had various opinions. Strabo, XV, 3, 15 tells of a fire cult; acc. to Hdt., I, 132 they had to be present to speak the sacred words at sacrifices; in VII, 37 they are the interpreters of special signs. Heracl. Fr., 14, (I, 154, 13 ff., Diels<sup>5</sup>) ascribes to them mysteries which put them on the same plane as followers of Dionysus; he also realises plainly that they are the rulers of a distinctive religion. Their religious ideas are thought to be strongly influenced by philosophy; for this reason the Gk. philosophers are often portrayed as their pupils. This idea occurs again and again in Democr. esp. If later this is linked up with a Romantic veneration for the exotic, this assertion, though it cannot be checked in detail, may contain a grain of truth and may point to a historical cultural and intellectual link. Something of the same may be seen in the more likely account of the education of Protagoras by the magi at the time of the campaign of Xerxes (c. 480 B.C.; Protagoras Fr., 2 [II, 255, 17 ff., Diels<sup>5</sup>]). Even if this account is to be rejected on chronological grounds, the total presentation does at least show the possibility of such a contact. Ps.-Plat. Alc., I, 122a (written in the 4th cent.) refers to the activity of the Persian μάγοι as teachers; μαγεία is here quite correctly defined as θεω ν θεραπειά. Nor does the Platonic school see anything incongruous in causing Socrates to speak of a λόγος, ον εμοι ημοί η γγειλε Γωβρύης, ανηρ μάγος, (Ps.-Plat. Ax., 371a). Aristot. has more exact information about the philosophical labours of the magi: το γεννη σαν πρω τον α ριστον πιθέασιν και οι Μάγοι (Metaph., XIII, 4, p. 1091b, 10). Cf. Philo Spec. Leg., III, 100 → [358](#).

The content of the Gk. philosophies had also a strong religious impulse. Obviously, along the traditional lines of the magi, there was a close, inward and indissoluble connection between philosophy and religion, as may be seen in the strongly religious form of the doctrine of the two principles, which is also known in the Gk. tradition concerning the magi (Aristot. Fr., 8, p. 1475a, 35 f.). This explains how, with a strong restriction of understanding, a second meaning could develop out of the original sense, with no national limitation. It is no longer possible to discern the deeper reasons for the development.

**b. More generally "the possessor and user of supernatural knowledge and ability."** Thus by his initiations he protects the soul of the dying against Hades (α ξουσι τη νψυχη ν α νω, Python Fr., 1, 5 ff. [TGF, p. 811]); cf. on this Heracl. Fr., 14. He foretells the future (the way Socrates will die, Aristot. Fr., 27, p. 1479a, 13 ff.; this one is from Syria; cf. Herm. m., 11, 2). Comparing Joseph. Ant., 10, 195 with 216 we find that μάγος is a comprehensive term (used here for the interpreter of dreams). The boundary line with the next meaning is fluid; it should be recalled how in the popular mind those who place no value on superstitious devices and ideas are thought to believe in nothing.

**c. "Magician"** (cf. Phot. Lex., 240, 13: μάγους = του ς μαγγανεύοντα ς = exercising magic). His arts are connected with the name of a Persian magus Ost (h) anes (II, 216, 28 ff.; 217, 1 ff., Diels<sup>5</sup>); but Orpheus and Pythagoras had to put up with the same (*ibid.*, 216, 35 ff.), so that this religious bridge is an artificial construction. The μάγος as a magician is in general higher than the → [γόνος](#), but he, too, works with compulsion, accomplishing, e.g., purification and expiation by magical means, Philo Spec. Leg., III, 100. The meaning is sometimes the same as that of γόνος, cf. Act. Thorn., 152. In a derogatory sense it may also be used for the missionary of a new religion whose success can then be explained in terms of the use of magical compulsion, Act. Thorn., 101, cf. 20. The religious antithesis may be seen clearly in the question put to the missionary: μάγος or θεός, Mart. Mt., 22. The pagan thus distinguishes sharply between a divine gift which is given, and forced (demonic) magic.

**d. Figuratively, "deceiver," "seducer."** This sense may be found on the lips of those who know of genuine magic but do not uncritically accept all that claims to be such, and also on the lips of those who rationalistically refuse to accept magic as real power. It has not been explained how μάγος could come to take on this general sense so early, cf. Plat. Resp., IX, 572e in a purely ethical sense of corrupters of youth; Soph. Oed. Tyr., 387, probably deceiver. Later it is, of course, very common. (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament - Theological Dictionary of the New Testament – Volume IV)

**False prophet (5578) (pseudoprophetes** from **pseudes** = false, untrue + **prophetes** = prophet) who teach any other way than that our Lord has clearly marked out in this passage. These men (1) claim to be a prophet from God and (2) utter falsehoods under the name of divine prophecies. They he pretended to foretell things to come (Mt. 24:11, 24; Mk 13:22) or they teach false doctrines in the name of God (Mt 7:15; Lk 6:26; Acts 13:6; 2 Pe 2:1; 1 John 4:1 Sept.: Jer. 6:13; Zech. 13:2)

**W E Vine** - "a false prophet," is used of such (a) in OT times, Luke 6:26; 2 Pet. 2:1; (b) in the present period since Pentecost, Matt.

7:15; Matt. 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; Acts 13:6; 1 John 4:1; (c) with reference to a false "prophet" destined to arise as the supporter of the "Beast" at the close of this age, Rev. 16:13; Rev. 19:20; Rev. 20:10 (himself described as "another beast," Rev. 13:11).

**Pseudoprophets** - 11x in the NT - Matt. 7:15; Matt. 24:11; Matt. 24:24; Mk. 13:22; Lk. 6:26; Acts 13:6; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Jn. 4:1; Rev. 16:13; Rev. 19:20; Rev. 20:10

**Beware - False prophets** are not just wrong but are very dangerous (cf "savage wolves" Acts 20:28, 29, 30), and **one should not expose their minds** (Remember: The battle is not as much physical as it is mental, so the battlefield is our mind and the great divine weapon is His Word and Sword of Truth, Ep 6:17-[note](#), [2Co 6:7, Col 1:5-[note](#), 2Ti 2:15-[note](#), Jas 1:18-[note](#)]) to their false message because they inevitably pervert (cf Acts 20:30 - where "perverse" = to turn or twist the truth throughout and) distort their listener's thinking and poison their souls. **False prophets** are more deadly than physical wolves and other predators, because they can kill not just the body but the soul. I recently met a man who had just been born again and had a great hunger for the Word of God, but he supplement this by listening to [Joel Osteen](#)! I tried in vain to reason with him from Scripture but he became angry with me saying that he liked the "positive" message that Osteen preaches. I told him (1) to find a mature believer to disciple him and (2) go to a church that preaches the Word of God, preferably expositionally. He was only minimally "receptive" to my pleas and suggestions. Sadly, I no longer have contact with him. False teachers can "shipwreck" one's faith!

[Evangelism Explosion](#) – starts off with that exploratory question: "If you were to die tonight and stand before God, why should He let you into His heaven?" - Roman Road – quoting different verses through the Book of Romans

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**Steven Cole** - When we share the gospel, we engage the enemy of souls in spiritual combat, so we must be prepared for spiritual battle.

1. When we share the gospel, we engage the enemy of souls in spiritual combat. Note three tactics of the devil:

- The devil holds people in spiritual blindness.
- The devil uses deceit, fraud, and opposition to righteousness to carry out his evil designs.
- The devil uses selfish motivation to keep people in spiritual deception.

2. We must be prepared to do spiritual battle.

- To do spiritual battle, be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- To do spiritual battle, confront false prophets or spiritual error when you sense the Spirit's prompting.
- To do spiritual battle, reach out to those who show an interest in the things of God.
- To do spiritual battle, present the teaching of God's Word on the gospel clearly.
- When you do spiritual battle, do not mistake opposition or apathy to the message as failure on your part.

**Acts 13:7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. ([NASB95](#))**

KJV 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.

- **who was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus** Acts 13:12; 18:12; 19:38
- **a man of intelligence** Acts 17:11,12; Pr 14:8,15,18; 18:15; Hos 14:9; 1 Th 5:21
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SERGIUS THE SEEKER

**Who was with the proconsul** - **Who** refers to Bar-Jesus from the previous passage. The phrase "**was with**" is interesting as the verb **was** is in the imperfect tense signifying Elymas was frequently (over and over, again and again) in the company of **the proconsul** and the preposition **with** is the Greek word [sun/syn](#) not **meta**, the former describing a closer relationship than meta. **Sergius Paulus** was the **proconsul** ([see discussion below](#)) of the Roman senatorial province of Cyprus. Senatorial provinces were led by the proconsul and imperial provinces were led by a governor (like Pilate in Palestine).

**Ramsay** - A Greek inscription of Soloi on the north coast of Cyprus is dated "**in the proconsulship of Paulus**," who probably is the

same governor that played a part in the strange and interesting scene now to be described.

**Utley** adds that "There has been much discussion about the historicity of Luke's accounts. Here is a good example of the accuracy of Luke the historian. He calls this man "a proconsul," which meant Cyprus was a Roman Senatorial province. We learn this occurred in A.D. 22 by decree from Augustus. We also learn from a Latin inscription at Soloi that Sergius Paulus began his proconsulship in A.D. 53. The more information archaeology discovers from the Mediterranean world of the first century, the more Luke's historical accuracy is corroborated."

**A T Robertson** - Luke used to be sharply criticized for applying this term to Sergius Paulus on the ground that Cyprus was a province under the appointment of the emperor with the title of *propraetor* and not under the control of the senate with the title of *proconsul*. That was true B.C. 30, but five years later it was changed to *proconsul* by Augustus and put under the control of the Senate. Two inscriptions have been found with the date A.D. 51 and 52 with the names of proconsuls of Cyprus and one is in the Cesnola Collection, an inscription found at Soli with the name of Paulus as Proconsul, undoubtedly this very man, though no date occurs.

**Barclay** points out that "These were intensely superstitious times—and most great men, even an intelligent man like Sergius Paulus, kept private wizards, fortune-tellers who dealt in magic and spells. Bar-Jesus, or Elymas—an Arabic word which means the skillful one—saw that if the governor was won for Christianity he would no longer be needed. Paul dealt effectively with him." (Daily Study Bible - Acts)

**Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence** - Sergius was clearly an intelligent man, but just as important, he was understanding and prudent (KJV). **Intelligence** is the most common translation but I think that "**intelligence**" is not the most accurate reflection of the original Greek term (*sunetos*) for it speaks more of one who is wise, understanding, prudent (the KJV translation), able to see the various aspects of a given situation and arrive at the best assessment, one which allows for the best course of action, which is a wonderful outset for the leader of a country, Sergius of course being the ruling authority over the entire island (province) of Cyprus. As a medical doctor I have had the privilege of being around many extremely intelligent men and women (high IQ's), but sadly not all of them manifested a "sunetos" spirit of understanding and prudence in the everyday affairs of life. As further support for the thought that "intelligence" is not the best rendering of *sunetos* is the fact that the Septuagint uses *sunetos* to translate the Hebrew word for wise (*chakam*, cf Ge 41:33, 39, Ex 31:6 where "skillful" = literally a "wise heart"; Dt 1:13, 15 it translates "experienced", etc). In a word Sergius was a man possessing [sunesis](#) (understanding).

**THOUGHT** - Many opponents of Christianity make the accusation that the good news of the Gospel is only welcomed by those of lower social class and lower intelligence. Sergius Paulus immediately crushes that ridiculous "[straw man](#)" argument!

**Longnecker** notes that "Cyprus was an island of great importance from very early times, being situated on the shipping lanes between Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece. In 57 B.C. it was annexed by Rome from Egypt and in 55 B.C. incorporated into the province of Cilicia. In 27 B.C. it became a separate province governed on behalf of the emperor Augustus by an imperial legate. In 22 B.C. Augustus relinquished its control to the senate, and, like other senatorial provinces, it was administered by a **proconsul**." (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**Intelligence** ([4908](#))(*sunetos* from [suniemi](#) = understand) is an adjective describing a person with good sense, one who is wise, one who is able to understand ([suniemi](#) = to put together things so to speak and make sense out of them, think of our English "synthesize"), one who is [sagacious](#) (acutely insightful and wise; skillful in statecraft or management), one who is [prudent](#) (term used in KJV). It is interesting that *sunetos* in the Septuagint is frequently associated with a trait that is desirable in one who is in a leadership position (e.g., Ge 41:33, 39, Ex 31:6, Dt 1:13, 15, Da 11:33 = "insight," Pr 12:23 for "prudent," etc) which is not surprising as understanding and conduct are an indissoluble unity. The word group of *sunetos*, *suniemi*, et al, is also not surprisingly very common in the Septuagint in the Wisdom literature where the focus is on "wisdom" and not on "intelligence" per se.

**Sunetos** - 4x in 4v - Matt. 11:25; Lk. 10:21; Acts 13:7; 1 Co. 1:19 - clever(1), intelligence(1), intelligent(2). The **KJV** translates all uses with the English word [prudent](#), which I think (as discussed above) better reflects the original meaning of *sunetos*.

**Sunetos** in the **Septuagint** -

Gen. 41:33; Gen. 41:39; Exod. 31:6; Deut. 1:13; Deut. 1:15; 1 Sam. 16:18; 2 Ki. 11:9; 1 Chr. 15:22; 1 Chr. 27:32; Job 34:10; Job 34:34; Prov. 12:8; Prov. 12:23; Prov. 15:24; Prov. 16:20; Prov. 16:21; Prov. 17:24; Prov. 23:9; Prov. 28:7; Prov. 31:30; Eccl. 9:11; Isa. 3:3; Isa. 5:21; Isa. 19:11; Isa. 29:14; Isa. 32:8; Jer. 4:22; Jer. 9:12; Jer. 18:18; Jer. 49:7; Jer. 50:9; Jer. 50:35; Dan. 1:4; Dan. 6:3; Dan. 11:33; Hos. 14:9

**Jack Arnold** - Sergius Paulus had all the qualities which are supposed to make people happy, but he was still searching for the truth that brings rest and peace to a troubled soul. The Holy Spirit was operating in a marvelous way. Paul and Barnabas had no

idea that they would be able to have a hearing before the governor. However, Sergius Paulus was prepared by the Holy Spirit to hear the gospel and he sent for the missionaries. We can never anticipate how the Holy Spirit is going to work things out. (AMEN!) Sergius Paulus must have known all the Greek and Roman philosophies and been acquainted with the mystery religions of that day, but none of them solved his problem of the heart. Had he reached a state of satisfaction through these philosophies and religions, he would not have hungered for something else. These missionaries appeared before the governor and declared to him "the word of God." They did not tell the governor stories or jokes or do magic tricks as did Elymas, but they preached the Word of God. ([The Blessings, Burdens and Blunders of Missionaries](#))

**Ray Stedman** on leading of the Holy Spirit - Here is a remarkable example of how the Holy Spirit works. Paul and Barnabas had no idea that they would be able to have a hearing before the governor of the island, the proconsul, the man placed there by the Roman senate and responsible for the control and governance of the whole island. But that man, prompted by the Holy Spirit, though he was a pagan Roman, sent for Paul and Barnabas, and asked them to speak to him the words of truth. You can never anticipate how the Holy Spirit is going to work things out. But Paul and Barnabas came and began to preach to the governor. ([Acts 13:1-13 The Strategy Of The Spirit](#))

**This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God** - In the book *Experiencing God*, one of Henry Blackaby's main points (at least the one I still recall 15 years later) is to look for where God is acting and determine to join Him! (See summary "[Seven Realities for Experiencing God](#)") So how does one determine when God is acting? Luke gives us a beautiful example in this section. Think with me on this -- Sergius Paulus is a [rank](#) (and ranking) Roman pagan, and we know from Romans 3:11+ that "**there is none who seeks for God,**" certainly not a man like Sergius Paulus. And yet he summons the missionaries and desires to hear the word of God! This is clearly, unequivocally doing a supernatural work on the stony, uncircumcised heart of this pagan proconsul! And note carefully that the proconsul is not seeking the Word of God because he is a man of intelligence. In fact that even makes this more of a miraculous, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, for Paul later would write

"For consider your calling, brethren, that there were **not many wise according to the flesh** (LIKE SERGIUS), **not many mighty, not many noble** (LIKE SERGIUS); 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise (GOD HAS SOVEREIGNLY CHOSEN SERGIUS PAULUS), and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God." (1 Cor 1:26-29+)

**THOUGHT** - As you go about living your life, do you do so with your senses trained (cf Heb 5:14) to be on the lookout for those lost people (both poor and rich) you encounter in whom God is clearly doing a supernatural work? And then do you boldly join God where He is working? If you begin to live your life with this supernatural, other worldly focus, God's Spirit will bring you into some of the most supernaturally satisfying situations you will ever be blessed to experience in this short life.

**Summoned** (4341) ([proskaleo](#) from **pros** = to + **kaleo** = to call) is used only in the middle voice and means call to oneself. It is used of the brother of the prodigal son when he "summoned one of the servants" to inquire what was happening in his father's house (Lk 15:26). In Acts 2:39+ **proskaleo** speaks of the divine ([effectual](#)) call to salvation. In Acts 5:40+ the Sanhedrin called ([proskaleo](#)) "the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them." In the present context, **proskaleo** conveys the sense of Barnabas and Saul being called in an official manner by the one in authority. The translation [summoned](#) is an accurate reflection of the fact that Sergius Paulus was the man with authority and thus the verb would also include the sense of their being ordered to come to the proconsul's presence.

All of Luke's uses of **proskaleo**

Lk. 7:19; Lk. 15:26; Lk. 16:5; Lk. 18:16; Acts 2:39; Acts 5:40; Acts 6:2; Acts 13:2; Acts 13:7; Acts 16:10; Acts 23:17; Acts 23:18; Acts 23:23; Jas. 5:14

**John Piper** comments on the fact that this Roman ruler of Cyprus sought to hear the word of God writing "This is amazing. He is the ruler of all Cyprus. These missionaries are absolute nobodies in the Roman world. They have no human authority. They have no political standing. They have no world ecclesiastical body behind them. They are unknowns. But they are called by God, sent by God, and now it is God that, against all odds, has gotten them a hearing on their first mission with the governor of the whole island of Cyprus. It's like Cornelius all over again. A pagan who wants to hear the Word of God. And God—through worship and fasting—calls nobodies from Antioch to make the connection." (As an aside, the transcript is not verbatim and does not convey the passion Piper expresses in the audible proclamation (Listen at about 12 minutes in the audio = [The Straight Paths of the Lord: Acts 13:1–12](#))

**Kent Hughes** (and a number of other commentators) writes "Sir William Ramsay reports that inscriptions bearing Sergius Paulus' name have been found on Cyprus confirming that he was a Christian and that his entire family became Christians." (Preaching the Word - Acts)



**Acts 13:8 But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. (NASB95)**

KJV 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.

- **for so his name is translated** Acts 13:6; 9:36; John 1:41
- **was opposing them** Exodus 7:11-13; 1 Kings 22:24; Jeremiah 28:1,10,11; 29:24-32; 2 Timothy 3:8; 4:14,15
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SATANIC OPPOSITION TO THE GOSPEL NOT A POSSIBILITY BUT A CERTAINTY**

It bears repeating [Forewarned is forearmed!](#) Expect it. Be prayerfully prepared as these missionaries were by being Word centered and Spirit driven. As someone has well said "When you open heaven you also open hell!"

**Jack Arnold** - The church today is still in a battle for the minds and souls of men. The church has always faced, and will always face, Satanic opposition when the gospel is preached, for it is penetrating into Satan's kingdom of darkness. The enemies of the gospel try to keep the gospel away from people, and if they cannot keep it away, they try through ridicule and social pressure, to keep people from committing their lives to Christ. Satanic opposition is real, but God is greater than Satan and He will push back the forces of darkness. ([The Blessings, Burdens and Blunders of Missionaries](#))

**But** - An important term of contrast. What is Luke contrasting? In context it is the Word of God (Acts 13:7), the Gospel which is able to save the soul of Sergius and was proclaimed by Saul and Barnabas versus Elymas opposition to the Gospel and his attempts to dissuade Sergius Paulus. This is a classic battle of spiritual forces in the heavenlies. This is the classic clash of two kingdoms, and do not forget that it is a clash that repeats every time we share the Gospel!

**Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated)** - **Elymas the magician** (sorcerer, see magos). The name "**magician**" is somewhat misleading because this term does not refer to magicians as we normally think of today where magic is performed for entertainment. The magicians most Americans are familiar with are those that practice some form of illusion which has nothing to do with the supernatural world. As Wikipedia says this [form of magic](#) "is a performing art in which audiences are entertained by staged tricks or [illusions](#) of seemingly impossible feats using natural means." Wikipedia has a lengthy description of [Supernatural magic](#) which would be closer to what **Elymas the magician** practiced. For example, **Wikipedia** says that especially during the Middle Ages "Christian authors categorised a diverse range of practices—such as enchantment, [witchcraft](#), [incantations](#), [divination](#), [necromancy](#), and [astrology](#)—under the label *magic*." In fact, Dr John MacArthur feels that Acts 13:8 gives us virtually a descriptive definition of the "occult." ([Sermon](#))

**Translated** (3177) (**methermeneuo** from **meta** = after, with + **hermeneuo** = translate, interpret) means literally to translate with and thus to translate from one language to another. The KJV translates it as "interpreted" (or "interpretation") which is accurate.

**Methermeneuo** - 8x in 8v - Matt. 1:23; Mk. 5:41; Mk. 15:22; Mk. 15:34; Jn. 1:38; Jn. 1:41; Acts 4:36; Acts 13:8. No uses in the Septuagint.

**Was opposing them** - "**Opposing**" is the first word in the Greek sentence which emphasizes the intensity of Elymas' opposition and the **imperfect tense** signifies that Elmas kept up his attempts to oppose Barnabas and Saul. Yes, he was "**opposing**" these two men, but in actuality he as Satan's messenger was **opposing** God's messengers, God's Word (Gospel) and ultimately God Himself! Guess who wins this spiritual battle? It is interesting that Luke used the same word ([anthistemi](#)) to describe trying to argue with Stephen, Luke recording "they were not able **to resist** (anthistemi) the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke." (Act 6:10NET+)

The apostles had received the promise from their Lord before His crucifixion (and they surely passed this encouraging, soul strengthening truth to other believers including Barnabas, Saul and Stephen) "So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves, for (term of explanation) I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents ([antikeimai](#)) will be able (will absolutely not have the [dunamai](#), the supernatural power) to resist ([anthistemi](#)) or refute ([anteipon](#))." (Lk 21:14,15+)

Bar-Jesus saw the missionaries as a threat to his prestige and livelihood.

**Opposing** (436) ([anthistemi](#) from **anti** = against + **histemi** = to cause to stand) is literally to stand or set against. To set one's self against. **Anthistemi** means to arrange in battle against an opponent and thus pictures **a face to face** confrontation so to speak.

It resist by actively opposing pressure. It was used to refer to an army arranging in battle against the enemy force and so to array against. Paul uses *anthistemi* in the context of spiritual warfare like a commanding general calling the saints at Ephesus "Therefore, **take up** (aorist imperative - Do it now! It is urgent!) the full armor of God, so that (PURPOSE) you will be able (supernaturally) to **resist** (*anthistemi*) in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." (Eph 6:13-)

**THOUGHT** - It is well to remember the lesson of these verses. Leading someone to Christ is not merely an academic exercise, nor is it a matter of making a successful sales pitch. Rather, it involves all-out war against the forces of hell. Saul and Barnabas battled Bar-Jesus for the soul of Sergius Paulus. (MacArthur)

**Seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith-** **Seeking** is in the imperfect tense means **Elymas** was making repeated attempts to **turn** Sergius **away** from **the faith**, "the Gospel of (his) salvation" (cf Eph 1:13+). Is this not what Jesus alluded to in His Parable of the Soils, where He taught that the seed (the Word of God, Lk 8:11+) that fell beside the road (Lk 8:5+) would be taken away from the hearer's heart by the devil, so that the individual might not believe and be saved. (Lk 8:12+). Here, **Elymas, "the son of the devil"** (Acts 13:10) is seeking to do his father's work in the heart of **Sergius Paulus!**

**Seeking** (2212)(**zeteo**) implies giving attention and priority to pursuing after. This henchman of Satan was intentionally, deliberately seeking to disrupt the work of the Gospel in the heart of Sergius. Such is the continual activity of the Devil and his emissaries for as Peter warned the saints "**Be of sober spirit** (aorist imperative - It is urgent!), **be on the alert** (aorist imperative). Your adversary, the devil, prowls around (present tense = continually) like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8+)

**Polhill** points out that "One should not be all together surprised that a Roman official could be hoodwinked by such a figure. Romans put great stock in powers of divination and even had their own sacred oracles. Charlatans like **Bar-Jesus** were usually smooth and highly knowledgeable, practicing a sort of pseudo-science. His Jewish credentials did not hurt him either. The Jews had a reputation among the Romans for their antiquity and depth of religious knowledge (New American Commentary - Acts).

**Turn...away** (1294)(**diastrepho** from **dia** = separation, in two, throughout + **strépho** = turn, English = diastrophism = the process of deformation that produces in the earth's crust its continents and ocean basins) is literally to twist throughout or to distort. To turn different ways. **Diastrepho** conveys the basic idea of twisting or bending out of shape and was used in secular Greek in this literal sense to describe a piece of pottery that a careless craftsman had misshaped or that had somehow become distorted before being fired in the oven.

**Diastrepho** is used metaphorically in the NT meaning to pervert or to distort. The idea is to cause one to depart from an accepted standard of oral or spiritual values. Luke uses **diastrepho** in Acts 13:10 in Saul's accusation of Elymas asking "will you not cease to **make crooked** (**diastrepho**) the straight ways of the Lord?" Luke uses **diastrepho** for the third time in Acts in Acts 20:30 in Paul's parting warning to the elders at the Ephesian church that "from among your own selves men will arise, speaking **perverse** (**diastrepho**) things, to draw away (tear away, drag away into error) the disciples after them."

**The faith** - Faith can describe either (1) a person's trust in something (subjective sense) or (2) that thing in which the person trusts (objective sense). In the present context, Luke is describing that which the proconsul would put his trust or faith in, and thus describes the Gospel which is parallel with the phrase **the word of God** in Acts 13:7, the word that the proconsul sought to hear.

**The faith** (**pistis**) is a specific phrase (definite article "**the**" plus "**faith**") found some 38x in the NASB, some instances referring to saving faith in Christ exercised by an individual and necessary for salvation. Approximately **one-half** of the 38 occurrences of the specific phrase **the faith** refer not to the **ACT** of believing but rather to **WHAT** is believed, the latter being the usage that the present context favors.

**Robertson** remarks that here "**the faith**" means "the gospel, the faith system as in Gal 1:23; Jude 1:3, etc. Here the (phrase "the faith") means more than individual trust in Christ."

#### Related Resource:

- [How much power does Satan possess?](#)

Acts 13:9 But Saul, who was also [known] as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, (NASB95)

KJV Acts 13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

- who filled Acts 2:4; 4:8,31; 7:55; Micah 3:8
- set Mark Acts 3:5; Luke 20:17

- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## EVIL SPIRIT VS HOLY SPIRIT NO CONTEST!

**But** - Another important term of contrast.

**Saul, who was also known as Paul** - Luke changes names and hereafter refers to **Saul** as **Paul**, except when Paul recounts his original encounter with the risen Lord Jesus Christ (cf Acts 22:7, 13+, Acts 26:14+) Luke also begins to give Paul prominence in this missionary pair by changing the order from **Barnabas and Saul** (Acts 11:30, 12:25, 13:2, 13:7) to **Paul and Barnabas** (Acts 13:42, 43, 46, 50, 15:2, 22, 35 with exceptions in Acts 14:14, 15:12, 15:25).

**Marvin Vincent** on the name change - Various explanations are given of the change of name. The most satisfactory seems to be that it was customary for Hellenistic Jews to have two names, the one Hebrew and the other Greek or Latin. Thus John was also called Marcus; Symeon, Niger; Barsabas, Justus. As Paul now comes prominently forward as the apostle to the Gentiles, Luke now retains his Gentile name, as he did his Jewish name during his ministry among the Jews.

**Barclay** on **Saul to Paul** - In those days, nearly all Jews had two names. One was a Jewish name, by which they were known in their own circle; the other was a Greek name, by which they were known in the wider world. Sometimes the Greek name translated the Hebrew. So Cephas is the Hebrew and Peter the Greek for a rock; Thomas is the Hebrew and Didymus the Greek for a twin. Sometimes the name echoed the sound. So Eliakim in Hebrew becomes Alcimus in Greek, and Joshua becomes Jesus. So Saul was also Paul.

**Filled with the Holy Spirit** - Literally it readings "having been filled," conveying the truth that at some point in time in the past he had been "filled." Of course, no believer is ever devoid of the Spirit's presence and therefore completely "running on empty." However, not every believer has a "full tank" and is relying wholly on the Holy Spirit for their spiritual power to carry out their spiritual ministry. And remember that while there is only one [Baptism with the Spirit](#) (I realize that not everyone agrees), there can be many "fillings" with the Spirit. Paul's desire for the saints at Ephesus was to be continually filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18+) and this command in the present imperative applies equally to every disciple of Christ. Therefore in this passage Luke gives us the "secret" for all effective spiritual ministry. While Saul took action (as we see in subsequent passages), he did so in full reliance upon the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. (See [100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#))

The context of Saul's being filled with the Spirit suggests that the Spirit gave him spiritual discernment into the character of Elymas and also boldness to confront him without fear of the spiritual forces of darkness that "empowered" Elymas!

Notice that Paul's confrontation with the forces of evil is a model for every Christian to emulate. In a word, we must be filled! We must be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to confront the evil spirits. Paul was undoubtedly also filled with faith like Stephen who was **a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 6:5+) and who confronted evil spirits controlling the jealous Jews who stoned him to death. And why is faith so important in confrontation with evil forces? Because faith is the antithesis of fear. When one is full of faith and the Spirit, there is no reason to fear the forces of darkness. The apostle John reminds us "You are from God, little children, and **have overcome** (nikao = to conquer, prevail, be victorious in the perfect tense = enduring effect!) them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4+). In fact, in Romans 8:37+ Paul writes not only are believers **conquerors**, but "we are **more than conquerors** ([hupernikao](#) in present tense = "coming off constantly with more than the victory") through Him that loved us." Again John alludes to the victory Christ has once and forever won over the forces of darkness at Calvary writing that "the one who practices sin is of the devil (ELYMAS THE MAGICIAN); for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to **destroy** ([luo](#) - abolish, do away with, bring to an end) the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8+). In this section, Jesus used his Spirit filled man Paul to destroy the works of the devil who was seeking to destroy the budding faith of Sergius Paulus. Paul could confidently (and from experience) write that "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you." (Ro 16:20+).

**A T Robertson** on **filled with the Holy Spirit** - A special influx of power to meet this emergency. Here was a cultured heathen, typical of the best in Roman life, who called forth all the powers of Paul plus the special help of the Holy Spirit to expose the wickedness of Elymas Barjesus. If one wonders why the Holy Spirit filled Paul for this emergency rather than Barnabas, when Barnabas was named first in 13:2, he can recall the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in his choice of agents (1 Cor. 12:4-11) and also the special call of Paul by Christ (Acts 9:15; 26:17f.).

**Filled** (4092) ([pimplemi](#) from the obsolete **pláō** = to fill) to fill, to make full, to complete.

All of Luke's uses of **pimplemi** -

Lk. 1:15; Lk. 1:23; Lk. 1:41; Lk. 1:57; Lk. 1:67; Lk. 2:6; Lk. 2:21; Lk. 2:22; Lk. 4:28; Lk. 5:7; Lk. 5:26; Lk. 6:11;

## Related Resources:

- [Ephesians 5:18 Commentary](#)
- [Galatians 5:16 Commentary](#)
- [Our Anointing - The Holy Spirit](#)
- [Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells](#)
- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- [The Holy Spirit-2](#)

**Fixed his gaze on him** - NET is more picturesque = "Saul...stared straight at him." God's man looked intently at the Devil's man. Mano on mano (actually in Spanish not "man on man" as we usually think but "hand-to-hand" which is still a good picture of this face off)! Eyeball to eyeball! It was the spiritual equivalent of the famous "[Gunfight at the O.K. Corral!](#)" ([movie](#)) Guess who had the fastest draw on that fateful day? The "good" guys, just as Paul would also have the "fastest draw" on this fateful day -- certainly fateful for Sergius Paulus!

**Fixed...gaze** (816)([atenizo](#) from from **atenes** = strained, intent which in turn is from **a** = intensifies + **teino** = to stretch, to extend or to strain all of which help to paint a picture of the meaning of [atenizo](#)) means to look intently, to fix one's gaze on something, to stare at something, to gaze earnestly, to look straight at something, to fasten one's eyes upon. 2 Cor 3:13 speaks of God's people being denied the opportunity to "see" the fading glory on the face of Moses after his descent from Sinai. This verb describes the reaction of the Jews in the [synagogue](#) when Jesus had finished His message in Lk 4:20+ - "He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him."

All of Luke's uses of **atenizo**...

Lk. 4:20; Lk. 22:56; Acts 1:10; Acts 3:4; Acts 3:12; Acts 6:15; Acts 7:55; Acts 10:4; Acts 11:6; Acts 13:9; Acts 14:9; Acts 23:1

**Steven Ger** on **Saul...Paul** - Early on in his recounting of this first missionary journey, Luke ceases referencing Saul's Hebrew name, choosing instead from that point on in the narrative (Acts 13:9) to use Saul's Roman name, Paulus, or Paul. Luke's choice indicates Paul's adoption of the tactic, "when in Rome, do as the Romans," making a strategic adjustment to facilitate his ministry within the Gentile world. Although some might assume that Saul changed his name from a Jewish one to a Christian one, this is demonstrably false. "Paul" is not a "Christian name," but a fairly common Roman cognomen.

**Jack Arnold** - Paul and Barnabas were the best specimens God could set forth to be the bearers of the good news of Christ. Elymas was the best specimen Satan could offer to oppose the gospel of Christ. Sergi us Paulus was the best specimen the world could offer and his soul hung in the balance between heaven and hell. Paul, being filled with the Holy Spirit, felt constrained to sharply rebuke Elymas, who was filled with Satan. This confrontation was like a shoot out at high noon. It was a head to head, face to face, eyeball to eyeball confrontation. They were about to storm the trenches and do hand to hand combat. To say the least, this was a tense moment. Only one filled with the Holy Spirit is able to give this kind of strong denunciation of Satan's man who propagates false teaching. Paul knew Satanic opposition and false teaching when he saw it and his spirit was stirred with righteous indignation for the truth of Christ. ([The Blessings, Burdens and Blunders of Missionaries](#))

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## Robert Neighbour - The Strengthening Spirit

"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3:16).

There are many places in which the believer needs help. Until we have learned the lesson of our own impotence we are not even en route to the place of victory. The passage before us has more particularly to do with that strength which enables us to comprehend spiritual knowledge. We will never know the "breadth and length and depth and height" — of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, until we are strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man.

The Spirit will enable us, for He is the power that worketh in us, and He is able to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Some special "enablings of the Spirit" will prove helpful just here.

1. The Spirit enabled the disciples to speak the Word with boldness. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). The man who had trembled before a maid, when he stood in his own strength, is bold as a lion when strengthened by the Spirit.

2. The Spirit enabled Stephen to die a martyr's death, with a face shining as an angel's. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the Heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). What a holy boldness Stephen had! He knew no fear. He was strengthened by the Spirit until all that sat in the council, looked steadfastly on him, and saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. It was this shining testimony that had much to do with the "pricks" that goaded Saul of Tarsus.

3. The Spirit enabled Barnabas to rejoice greatly at the good work done by men of Cyprus and Cyrene, among the Grecians at Antioch. "For he (Barnabas) was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts 11:24).

4. The Spirit enabled Saul to rebuke Elymas the sorcerer (see Acts 13:9, 10). It was the same Spirit Who enabled Paul in all of his missionary journeys, to testify concerning his Lord; it was the Spirit Who gave him help to continue unto the end of his strenuous life of service (see Acts 26:22). It is impossible to follow out all the marvelous ways in which the Spirit strengthens saints, but we can assure our hearts that there is no place, whether in service, in our daily Christian work, or in our knowledge of Him, that the Spirit will not supply the needed help.

**Acts 13:10 and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?" (NASB95)**

KJV Acts 13:10 And said, O full of all subtilty 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?

NET Acts 13:10 and said, "You who are full of all deceit and all wrongdoing, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness— will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?"

- **full of all deceit and fraud** Acts 8:20-23; Ecclesiastes 9:3; Matthew 3:7; 15:19; 23:25-33; Luke 11:39; 2 Corinthians 11:3
- **you son of the devil** Genesis 3:15; Matthew 13:38; John 8:44; 1 John 3:8
- **will you not cease to make crooked** Acts 20:30; Jeremiah 23:36; Matthew 23:13; Luke 11:52; Galatians 1:7
- **the straight ways of the Lord** Acts 18:25,26; Genesis 18:19; 2 Chronicles 17:6; Hosea 14:9; John 1:23
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **A SPIRIT FILLED MAN CONFRONTS A DECEIT FILLED MAN**

What a striking contrast - Acts 13:9 "Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit" and Bar-Jesus "full of deceit and fraud!" Remember that some of the "fruit" of being filled with the Spirit is boldness of speech, which is dramatically exemplified in this passage. (cf Acts 4:31+).

**Tony Merida** - We should seek to boldly tell people the whole gospel, which includes sharing what the terrifying consequences will be should they refuse to bow the knee to Christ. Sharing this truth is an act of love! Notice Paul doesn't say, "Now, Elymas has his perspective, and I have my perspective. Both are acceptable." No! Paul challenges us to speak boldly in our tolerant, postmodern world. (Ibid)

When Spirit filled men and women proclaim the Gospel they have not only the supernatural power of the Spirit but the power of the Gospel! Be encouraged by this truth when you witness!

**And said** - After fixing his gaze to get Elymas' attention, Paul now makes a rapid-fire attack on this man's evil character and motives.

**G Campbell Morgan** asks regarding Paul's Spirit filling - "What was the result of this filling? Clear discernment; he knew this man through and through, not by his own cleverness, not by mere intuition, but by that immediate filling of the Spirit which became illumination, enabling him to see to the very heart of the man who stood confronting him. He described him in character, "Full of all guile and all villany, son of the devil, enemy of righteousness." Then he described his sin, "Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" So this sudden endowment of power meant discernment and speech, speech that was definite, attacking, vehement. We speak of the wooing winsomeness of the Spirit, and thank God., we cannot say too much thereof. "The fruit of the Spirit is love." The final and perfected issue of the work of the Spirit in the heart of man is love. But the Spirit of love is a Spirit of fire, and that for very love. Why the fierceness of this description? Why the blunt speech that fell like scorching fire upon the heart of the man who listened? For love of Sergius Paulus; because this man (Elymas) by his teaching, his greed, and by his endeavor to retain position at the court, would "pervert the right ways of the Lord," withstand the Word of God, attempt to prevent this man entering into the fullness of life. For the sake of Sergius Paulus this Spirit of God immediately equipped Paul, so that he

saw and knew and spoke, and became the instrument of judgment!

**You who are full of all deceit and fraud** - Elymas was "filled to the brim" with evil! In Paul's description note his triple use of **ἅλλ** indicating this man's total depravity in every sense!

**Full** (abounding) (4134)(**pleres** from **pleos** = full, **pletho** = to fill) means filled up as opposed to empty (as of a hollow vessel - Mt 14:20, 15:37, Mk 6:43). Of a surface, covering every part (leprosy in Lk 5:12). Figuratively, as used here in Acts 13 Paul uses **pleres** to characterize **Elymas** as full of, abounding in, thoroughly endowed with deceit and fraud! What a contrast with Luke's uses of the Son of God Who was "**full of (pleres)** the Holy Spirit" (Lk 4:1+) and His disciples like Stephen who was "**full of (pleres)** faith and the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5+, cf similar use in Acts 6:3), "**full of (pleres)** grace and power" (Acts 6:8+) and "**full of (pleres)** the Holy Spirit" (as he fell asleep in Jesus) (Acts 7:55+) and Barnabas who was "**full of (pleres)** the Holy Spirit and of faith." (Acts 11:24+) The last use by Luke is in Acts 19:28+ where the pagan idol worshipers were "**filled with (pleres)** rage" because of the denigration of Artemis. Here is one principle to take away from this survey of "pleres" - what fills a person controls a person - The Ephesian pagans were controlled by rage and wanted to kill Paul and Silas. Elymas was full of deceit and controlled by deceit. In short Elymas the deceiver was himself deceived! When a person is deceived by definition they don't even know it! Paul elaborates on this spiritual principle explaining to Timothy in his last letter that "evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, **deceiving** (active voice = their volitional choice) and being deceived (**passive voice** - indicating the effect comes from without - the end up deceiving their own heart! Woe! cf Jer 17:9)" (2 Ti 3:13+)

**Deceit** (1388)(**dolos** from **dello** = to catch with bait) literally refers to a fishhook, trap, or trick all of which are various forms of deception. **Dolos** is a deliberate attempt to mislead, trick, snare or "bait" (baiting the trap in attempt to "catch" the unwary victim, in this case Sergius Paulus) speaking lies (cf like father, like son = "father of lies" - Jn 8:44). It is a desire to gain advantage or preserve position by deceiving others. A modern term in advertising is called "bait and switch" where the unwary consumer is lured in by what looks like a price too good to be true!

**Dolos** - 11x in the NT - Mt. 26:4; Mk. 7:22; Mk. 14:1; Jn. 1:47; Acts 13:10; Ro 1:29; 2 Co. 12:16; 1 Th 2:3; 1 Pe 2:1; 1 Pe 2:22; 1 Pe 3:10

**John MacArthur** on **full of all deceit** - Like a cleverly disguised snare, Bar-Jesus was not what he appeared to be to his unsuspecting victims.

**Larry Richards** explains that **dolos** "picks up the metaphor from hunting and fishing. **Deceit** is an attempt to trap or to trick and thus involves treachery...Deception sometimes comes from within, as our desires impel us to deceive. But more often in the NT, deceit is error urged by external evil powers or by those locked into the world's way of thinking." ([Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

**Fraud** (4468)(**rhadiourgia** from **rhadiourgias** = ready to commit wickedness) is used only here in the Bible and means mischief, recklessness. **Gilbrant** notes that "The earliest attested meaning of **rhadiourgia** is "self-indulgence" (*Liddell-Scott*). It is from the root **rhadios** in the sense of "light or unburdened" (Bauernfeind, "rhadiourgia," *Kittel*, 6:972). The classical use is employed by Xenophon to also refer to the love of a lazy and effeminate life. By the Second Century B.C. the word had come to denote various acts of wrongdoing, mischief, and petty crime (*Liddell-Scott*). In the papyri it is used in the specific sense of theft but more generally of false pretenses or fraud (*Moulton-Milligan*)." The result of **rhadiourgía** is **rhadiourgēma** which describes wicked schemes or plots ("crime" in Acts 18:14).

**Marvin Vincent** on **rhadiourgias** - Only here in New Testament. Originally, ease or facility in doing; hence readiness in turning the hand to anything, bad or good; and so recklessness, unscrupulousness, wickedness. A kindred word ( δειούργημα, lewdness, Rev., villany) occurs at ch. 18:14.

**You son of the devil** - He is a good illustration of the parable of the tares for God sowed the good seed (thru Paul and Barnabas) and Satan sowed the bad seed. **Son of...** means Elymas was acting like the devil and undoubtedly controlled by either him or his henchmen. His name was a lie, a sham, a ruse, a counterfeit - The "Son of Jesus," "son of salvation" was actually a "son of the devil!" To call someone "**son of...**" was a Hebrew idiomatic way of saying that person had the characteristics of the one they were associated, in this case the devil (cf Mt 13:38 = " the **sons of** the kingdom; and the tares are the **sons of** the evil one;," Acts 3:25 "**son of** the prophets," and Acts 4:36 "**son of** encouragement.")

**Polhill** adds on **son of the devil** "No one familiar with Aramaic (as Elymas probably would have been) could have missed the pun. His name, Bar-Jesus (in Aramaic Bar-Jeshua), meant etymologically son of the Savior. He was no son of the Savior; quite the opposite, he was son of the devil." (NAC)

**Devil** (1228)(**diabolos** from **diá** = through, between + **ballo** = to cast, throw) means a **false accuser**, **slanderer** (one who utters false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation), **backbiting** (malicious comment about one

not present), one given to malicious gossip or a **calumniator** (one who utters maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about, this term imputes malice to the speaker and falsity to the assertions). Notice how the root words (**diá** = through + **bállō** = throw) picture what the devil does. He constantly throws between seeking to divide whether it be between a husband and wife, a child and parent, a church, etc. Resist his divisive, condemnatory accusations firm in your faith. **Wuest** has an interesting comment that the literal meaning of "to throw through" means "to riddle one with accusations." **Diabolos** is applied some 34 times to **Satan**, the god of this world, and in each case has the definite article in the Greek ("**the**" = defining a specific entity).

**You enemy of all righteousness** - Elymas was hostile to **all righteousness**, not just men's **righteousness** (which though relatively good is still flawed) but worst of all toward God's perfect **righteousness**, God's holy standard of behavior which is the only **righteousness** He will accept and allow into Heaven. Elymas was bitterly opposing the message of the Gospel in which Christ's **righteousness** (see 1 Cor 1:30+) is offered by grace through faith in Christ to unrighteous men like Sergius (Ro 3:21-26+, 2 Cor 5:21+). Uteley adds "All that is like God, this man was against."

**Enemy** (hostile) (2190)(**echthros** from **échtros** = hatred, enmity; noun = **echthra** = enmity, hostility) is an adjective which pertains to manifesting hostility or being at enmity with another, where enmity is a deep seated animosity or hatred which may be open or concealed or a "deep-rooted hatred."

In the active sense **echthros** means to be hateful, hostile toward, at enmity with or adversary of someone. In the passive sense **echthros** pertains to being subjected to hostility, to be hated or to be regarded as an enemy.

**Echthros** is one who has the extreme negative attitude that is the opposite of love and friendship. An enemy is one that is antagonistic to another; especially seeking to injure, overthrow, or confound the opponent. Scripture often uses **echthros** as a noun describing "the adversary", Satan! Like father like son!

**Luke's** uses of **echthros** - Lk. 1:71; Lk. 1:74; Lk. 6:27; Lk. 6:35; Lk. 10:19; Lk. 19:27; Lk. 19:43; Lk. 20:43; Acts 2:35; Acts 13:10

While the missionaries were proclaiming the Righteous One in Whom all men might be righteous, Elymas was proclaiming the antithetical message, seeking to draw Sergius away from saving faith in Jesus.

**Righteousness** (1343)(**dikaosune** from **dikaios** = being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified being or in accordance with what God requires) is the quality of being upright. In its simplest sense **dikaosune** conveys the idea of conformity to a standard or norm and in Biblical terms the "standard" is God and His perfect, holy character. In this sense **righteousness** is the opposite of hamartia (sin), which is defined as missing of the mark set by God.

**Dikaosune** is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through Christ ([Click here](#) to read Pastor Ray Pritchard's interesting analysis of **righteousness** in the Gospel of Matthew).

#### Related Resources:

- [What is righteousness?](#)
- [What does it mean to pursue righteousness?](#)
- Bob Uteley's lengthy discussion - [Righteousness](#)

**Will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways (hodos) of the Lord?** - A rhetorical question which expects a "Yes" response. What are the **straight ways of the Lord**? Surely they are the truths of the Gospel, that are like a pathway to salvation in Christ and entree into the presence of the Father. Jesus is "**the way**" (hodos) (Jn 14:6) and He warned that "**the way** (hodos) is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it...and **the way** (hodos) is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Mt 7:13-14+).

**Merida** comments "Paul is announcing the way of salvation (cf. Luke 3:4). Bar-Jesus is "perverting" the way of salvation. Instead of advocating real conversion, Bar-Jesus advocates spiritual perversion."

**Robertson** - The **ways of the Lord** the **straight** ones as opposed to the crooked ways of men (Isa. 40:4; 42:16; Luke 3:5). The task of John the Baptist as of all prophets and preachers is to make crooked paths straight and to get men to walk in them. This false prophet was making even the Lord's straight ways crooked. Elymas has many successors.

**Swindoll** explains that "Paul's question, "Will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?" draws from an old Hebrew expression to indicate a double meaning. The idea of making straight the way of the Lord recalls the exhortation of Isaiah to welcome the Messiah (Isa. 40:3; cf. Mal. 3:1). It was a cultural image the proconsul would have understood, though he would not likely have known the words of Isaiah. In ancient times, a city prepared for the arrival of a king or dignitary by upgrading the road

leading into town. Obstacles and debris were cleared away, potholes filled in, landscaping completed. Whereas John the Baptizer had prophesied to prepare others for the arrival of the Messiah (Luke 3:4), Bar-Jesus created obstacles. The expression also had a figurative element. The Hebrews often used "straight" and "crooked" to mean "righteous" and "unrighteous" or "moral" versus "immoral." God had sent Paul and Barnabas to clear the way for Christ to save the Gentiles, yet this Jewish false prophet littered His path with deception and unrighteousness. (Ibid)

**Cease** (3973)(**pauo**) means to cease (middle voice = oneself) from an activity in which one is engaged. **Pauo** in the active sense means to cause something or someone to cease from some activity or state. To make stop. To stop, restrain, refrain, quit, desist. To come to an end.

All Luke's use of **pauo** - Lk. 5:4; Lk. 8:24; Lk. 11:1; Acts 5:42; Acts 6:13; Acts 13:10; Acts 20:1; Acts 20:31; Acts 21:32

**Crooked** (1294)(See preceding discussion of **diastrepho**) Note the clear contrast between the straight ways of the Lord and the crookedness of Elymas

**Swindoll** sums up Paul's righteous and just defamation and vilification of Elymas - The word translated "deceit" comes from a Greek term describing the work of a con artist, someone who takes advantage of others using underhanded schemes. The Greek word for "fraud" is actually less severe than the English term. In the words of one dictionary, the expression "suggests an easygoing approach to things in contrast to serious acceptance of responsibilities: 'frivolity' (the trickery of slaves is a common theme in Greek and Roman comedy)." Taking all of these insults together, we see that Paul characterized the man as a villainous buffoon from a bad comedy. The charges "son of the devil" and "enemy of all righteousness," however, are much more serious. Bar-Jesus could be translated "son of salvation," so the epithet "son of the devil" is a deep, sarcastic dig at the man's identity. In terms of character, the man was a pathetic caricature of a "son of salvation"; in terms of morality, none could have represented evil more thoroughly.

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**Brian Bell** - In 1269 Kublai Khan sent a request from Peking to Rome for "100 wise men of the Christian religion...And so I shall be baptized, and when I shall be baptized all my baron and great men will be baptized, and their subjects baptized, and so there will be more Christians here than there are in your parts." The Mongols were then wavering in the choice of a religion. It might have been, as Kublai forecast, the greatest mass religious movement the world has ever seen. The history of all Asia would have been changed. But what actually happened? Pope Gregory X answered by sending 2 Dominican friars. They got as far as Armenia, could endure no longer and returned home. So passed the great missionary opportunity in the history of the church!4

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**Robert Morgan** tells the story that relates to Acts 13:10 - Missionary Isaac D. Colburn of Burma told of a group of Burmese Christians who gathered for an outdoor baptism. Many curious locals showed up to watch, and among them were two men, father and son, who detested the gospel.

As the Burmese pastor opened the poolside service, the father and son interrupted the proceedings with blasphemous words, curses, and obscene gestures. Just as the pastor was about to plunge his first disciple into the water, the two antagonists stripped and plunged naked into the water, where they conducted their own mock baptism, jeering and uttering profanities alongside the name of the Trinity.

Also present that day was a native evangelist named Sau Wah, who, before his conversion, had fiercely opposed the gospel. Now he rose and called to the men in the water, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?"

These words seemed to strike the two blasphemers like electrical bolts. They raced out of the water, but before going many yards they both fell to the ground. The father was found dead. The son recovered consciousness and was carried to the village, but within a few months he, too, died.

God is a God of love, but He's also a God of judgment. The Bible contains many warnings to the unrighteous, telling us that it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. He is to be feared, honored, revered, and obeyed. (Morgan obtained this story from Dr. A. J. Gordon, *The Holy Spirit in Missions*)

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**ILLUSTRATION** - When Spurgeon was preaching, Barnum and Bailey offered him a fat price to come over here and preach. And I know what we'd say today. We'd say, "Why don't you go? The devil's had the money long enough. Why don't you go over and preach?" But not Mr. Spurgeon. He answered with Acts 13:10, "O full of all subtilty 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?" But then, we don't have many Spurgeons.

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**Acts 13:11** "Now, **behold**, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand. (NASB95)



KJV 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.

- **the hand of the Lord** Exodus 9:3; 1 Samuel 5:6,9,11; Job 19:21; Ps 32:4; 38:2; 39:10,11
- **you will be blind** Acts 9:8,9,17; Genesis 19:11; 2 Kings 6:8; Isaiah 29:10; John 9:39; Romans 11:7-10,25
- **a mist** 2 Peter 2:17
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ELYMAS' SOVEREIGN BLINDING

The "proof is in the pudding" is an old saying. Paul would say that "The proof is in the power!" Elymas thought he had power, but it proved to be "pudding" up against God's power through God's man. And that principle still applies dear disciple of Christ. Daily seek God's filling with His Spirit so you are "armed" and enabled to confront the invisible forces of evil you will likely encounter during the day, especially if you seek to live for Christ and His glory!

There is a touch of irony here. What a contrast with Acts 13:8 where Elymas was seeking to turn the proconsul from the spiritual Light of the Gospel and here he is physically blinded to the light and is himself seeking guidance. The physical blindness was but a picture of his spiritual blindness (cf John 9:39 cf John 3:19-20) Merida adds that "This move was particularly fitting since the man was a proponent of darkness (Isa 5:20). His judgment was a foretaste of what will happen to all who fail to bow the knee to Jesus: they will be thrown into" "the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mt 8:12; cf Mt 25:30).

As Arnold says "Elymas, who was in spiritual darkness already, was put into physical darkness in order that he might turn to Christ." ([The Blessings, Burdens and Blunders of Missionaries](#))

**Now** - Paul, like Moses, began his public ministry confronting a false magician. Moses confined his miraculous activity to external nature, whereas Paul turned on Elymas himself, smiting him with blindness.

**Behold** (2400)(idou) is a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. **Idou** in the [middle voice](#) means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The [aorist imperative](#) is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" **Behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text and signifies in this context "Listen up, all ye who would come against **the straight ways of the Lord!**"

**The hand of the Lord** (see [kurios](#)) **is upon you** - **The hand of** someone speaks of their power exercised over others, as in Acts 12:11 when God's angel rescued Peter from **the hand of Herod**. In Acts 12 we encounter Herod, Satan's man in Jerusalem, his instrument to disrupt and destroy the growing Church in Jerusalem. In that encounter "an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died." (Acts 12:23+) So here we have a second "power encounter" so to speak., where it is **the hand of the Lord** who "strikes" Elymas, Satan's man on the scene in Perga. In Acts 11:21 the hand of the Lord was with the Jews who fled the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen (Acts 8:1-4) and went to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch speak the Gospel to Jews alone, with the result that "a large number believed and turned to the Lord." The "hand of the Lord" might be beneficent (Acts 11:21) or hostile (Heb. 10:31) and in this case speaks of divine judgment, because Elymas not failed to humble himself under the mighty hand of God but instead sought to exalt himself (1 Peter 5:6)!

**Utey on hand of the Lord** - This is a Semitic anthropomorphic phrase referring to the power and presence of YHWH (cf. Luke 1:66; Acts 11:21). In the OT it often refers to God's judgment (cf. Exod. 9:3; 1 Sam. 5:6; Job 19:21; 23:2; Ps. 32:4; 38:2; 39:10), as it does here.

**Related Resource:**

- [The Hand of the Lord](#)

**G Campbell Morgan** observes that in Paul's vehement rebuke of Elymas there is yet "a touch of wonderful tenderness discoverable at the heart of the fierce fire. Paul said to him, "The hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season." The blindness was the material symbol of the man's spiritual condition; and Paul, speaking not of his own will, or of his own choice, not pronouncing upon him a doom which he thought he deserved, but becoming the very voice of the Spirit of God speaking out of that sudden equipment, pronounced upon him that judgment of blindness "for a season." How long it lasted no one knows. What was the issue in the case of Elymas, no one can tell. We must leave it at the point where it is left in the narrative." (Acts of the Apostles)

At least Paul did not put a heavy millstone on his neck as Jesus had warned declaring "whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea." (Mt 18:6)

**And you will be blind and not see the sun for a time** - His physical blindness was but a picture of his spiritual blindness. The fact that it says **for a time** indicates this blindness is not permanent. This in turn reflects the mercy of the Lord, which would give this son of the devil to consider the claims of Paul. Could we see Elymas in Heaven? Clearly, that is possible.

**Blind** (5185) (**tuphlos** from **tuphlóo** = envelop with smoke, be unable to see clearly) can refer to literal blindness (Mt 9:27, 28; 11:5; 12:22; Lk 7:21, 22; Jn 9:1, 2, 3.; Acts 13:11; Lv 19:14; Job 29:15) but more often is used in the NT to describe spiritual blindness. Elymas was made physically blind because he was spiritually blind! As Furneaux put it "It was a judicial infliction; blindness for blindness, darkness without for willful darkness within"

**Robertson** - He was an example of the blind leading the blind that was to cease and Sergius Paulus was to be led into the light.

**For a time** (achri kairou) is literally "for a season," a specified period of time (See **kairos**). The identical Greek phrase (achri kairou) is used by Luke in Lk 4:13 "When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until **an opportune time** (achri kairou)."

**Jack Arnold** - This is the first time Paul used **the sign-gifts** of the first century Apostles. The sign-gifts gave the Apostles the authority they needed to be obeyed. Remember, only the Apostles had power to act in judgment like this. This is not something any Christian can do today or that any group of Christians can do. ([The Blessings, Burdens and Blunders of Missionaries](#))

**And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him** - As Herbert Lockyer said "Paul worked a wonder on the false wonderworker!" **Mist** is used by Galen of the opacity of the eye caused by a wound.

**Immediately** (at once) (3916) (**parachrema** from **pará** = at, and **chréma** = something useful or needed) means suddenly, immediately, at the very moment. Most of the uses are in the context of a miraculous event, in this case the appearance of blindness, and emphasize the absence of delay in the performance of the miracle.

**Parachrema** - 17x in the NT -

Mt. 21:19; Mt. 21:20; Lk. 1:64; Lk. 4:39; Lk. 8:44; Lk. 8:47; Lk. 8:55; Lk. 13:13; Lk. 18:43; Lk. 19:11; Lk. 22:60;  
Acts 3:7; Acts 5:10; Acts 12:23; Acts 13:11; Acts 16:26; Acts 16:33

**Marvin Vincent on mist** - Only here in New Testament. The word is used by medical writers as a name for a disease of the eyes. The mention of the successive stages, first dimness, then total darkness, are characteristic of the physician. "**The first miracle which Paul performed was the infliction of a judgment; and that judgment the same which befell himself when arrested on his way to Damascus**" (Gloag).

**Darkness** (4655) (**skotos** from **skia** = shadow thrown by an object. Skia it can assume the meaning of skotos and indicate the sphere of darkness) is literally that sphere in which light is absent. It is interesting that **skotos** in Acts 13:11 describes what happened to this "son of the devil" and the same word is used figuratively in Acts 26:18 to describe the effect of the Gospel "to open their eyes so that they may turn from **darkness** (skotos) to light and from the dominion of Satan to God."

Luke's uses of **skotos** - Lk. 1:79; Lk. 11:35; Lk. 22:53; Lk. 23:44; Acts 2:20; Acts 13:11; Acts 26:18;

**And he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand** - Interesting and ironic to see the one **seeking** (zeteo in Acts 13:8) to lead others from light into darkness is now in the literal darkness of blindness **seeking** for someone to lead him! The verb form of "lead him by the hand" (cheiragogos) was used in Acts 9:8 = "Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and **leading him by the hand** (cheiragōgēō), they brought him into Damascus."

All Luke's uses of **zeteo** -

Lk. 2:48; Lk. 2:49; Lk. 5:18; Lk. 6:19; Lk. 9:9; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 11:16; Lk. 11:24; Lk. 11:29; Lk. 12:29; Lk. 12:31; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:24; Lk. 15:8; Lk. 17:33; Lk. 19:3; Lk. 19:10; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:19; Lk. 22:2; Lk. 22:6; Lk. 24:5; Acts 9:11; Acts 10:19; Acts 10:21; Acts 13:8; Acts 13:11; Acts 16:10; Acts 17:5; Acts 17:27; Acts 21:31; Acts 27:30

**Moody Bible Commentary** has an interesting note - The blinding of Elymas and the conversion of Sergius Paulus demonstrated the beginnings of the change that would happen in the early church—Israel would more and more reject the gospel, while Gentiles would be increasingly receptive. Paul noted later in Romans 11 that the Jewish people were hardened by God to allow time for the gospel to be taken to the Gentile world, and the Gentiles would be the ones more inclined initially to embrace Messiah Jesus (cf. the comments on Romans 11:11-24+). Paul's experience at Paphos foreshadowed what he would experience throughout his life in

ministry to Jews and Gentiles. His gospel message would largely be rejected by Jews but accepted by Gentiles. From a theological perspective this event provided the historical background for Paul's discussion of Jewish unbelief in Romans 9-11. There Paul answered the question about Gentile responsiveness to the gospel and Jewish unbelief. Did it mean that God's plan of redemption for the Jewish people had failed? The answer is an emphatic, "No!" Rather, Paul explained, Jewish unbelief opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. Nevertheless, **the temporary blinding of Elymas cannot be cited to support the teaching that the church has replaced Israel in God's program.**

**Acts 13:12 Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord. (NASB95)**

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

- **Then the proconsul believed** Acts 13:7; 28:7
- **when he saw what had happened** Acts 19:7; Matthew 27:54; Luke 7:16
- **being amazed at the teaching of the Lord** Acts 6:10; Matthew 7:28,29; Luke 4:22; John 7:46; 2 Corinthians 10:4,5
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### ONE MAN'S EYES CLOSED ANOTHER'S OPENED

The blindness of one became light for another!

**Then** (5119)(**tote**) is an [expression of time](#). When **then** is used (as determined by the context) to be an **expression of time** or "time phrase", it usually indicates [sequence](#) and thus marks that which is next in order of time, soon after that, following next after in order of position, narration or enumeration

**The proconsul believed when he saw what had happened** - Notice what the proconsul **believed** was the Gospel which Luke had earlier referred to as the **Word of God** (Acts 13:7) and **the faith** (Acts 13:8). The supernatural blinding of Elymas was merely confirmation. In these early days of the spread of the Gospel, God often used miracles to confirm the authenticity of His messengers and His message. The miracles themselves were not intended to save, because one can be saved only by the Word of God, not by the miraculous works of God (albeit every individual salvation is an incredible miracle performed by God's Spirit in the hearts of sinners).

What Sergius witnessed was a confrontation of light and darkness, of two invisible kingdoms clashing, with the kingdom of light defeating the kingdom of darkness. Miracles never saved anyone! Only the Gospel saves men. God may use miracles to gain their attention and interest, but it is the "seed" of the Gospel ("the Word [[logos](#)] of God" in Lk 8:11+) which bears fruit when it contacts the soil of the good heart (Lk 8:15+).

**Tony Merida** writes that "In adversity we have the opportunity to advertise the power of the gospel. When some people see Christians standing firm in the face of demonic opposition, it affects them! We show the world the worth of Christ when we follow Jesus in the face of conflict. You're not alone when you face opposition for making the gospel known! The Lord of heaven and earth is with you and for you (Mt 28:16-20). It's important you don't assume you're in the wrong place when you face opposition. In fact, it may indicate that you're exactly where you should be! In this case the Spirit led the missionaries into a war zone, much like the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Luke 4:1). This passage, like others in Acts, helps us understand opposition....Let this conversion story encourage you as you seek to make the gospel known to unbelievers. Some people will repent and turn to Christ when a bold witness makes the good news clear to them. God is at work in the world, bringing all sorts of people to faith in Christ through the witness of faithful missionaries! Your Sergius Paulus is waiting!"

**Proconsul** (KJV = "deputy")(446)(**anthupatos** from **anti** = instead of + **hupatos** = highest, supreme, consul) literally means instead of a [consul](#). A **proconsul** was a governor of a senatorial province in the Roman Empire. The Greeks used to word consul because after the expulsion of the kings, the consuls had the supreme or highest authority in the Roman government. "A **proconsul**, a person sent as governor into a Roman province with consular power which was very intensive. Augustus, at the beginning of his reign, divided the provinces into two parts; one of which he gave wholly over to the people, and the other which he reserved for himself. After this, the governors who were sent into the first division bore the name of proconsuls though they were denied the whole military power, and so fell short of the old proconsuls." (Complete Word Study Dictionary)

**Wikipedia on proconsul** - Latin word *prōconsul* is a shortened form of *prō consule*, meaning "(one acting) for the consul."<sup>[2]</sup> It appears on inscriptions beginning in 135 BC. A **proconsul** was an official of [ancient Rome](#) who acted on behalf of a [consul](#). A proconsul was typically a former consul.

**Hastings Dictionary on proconsul** - Down to the time of Augustus this word had not become one, but was still two words **proconsule**, 'in place of a consul.' It signified a man with the rank and insignia of a consul, whether he had already held the office or not. In practice the title was conferred on certain governors of provinces, and only the Emperor possessed the power belonging to this office within the walls of the city of Rome. Nothing need here be said of such governors during the Republican period. By the arrangements of January, 27 b.c., all the provinces of the Roman Empire (see Province) were divided between the Senate and the Emperor Augustus. In conformity with his desire to keep all the real power in his own hands, while the semblance was left in the hands of the Senate, the governors of Imperial provinces were given humble titles such as *legati Augusti pro praetore*, etc., whatever had been their career, but all governors of senatorial provinces were called **proconsules**. The senatorial provinces were divided into two grades-the higher grade, open only to ex-consuls, comprising Asia and Africa; and the lower, open to ex-praetors, comprising all the other senatorial provinces. The governors of Asia and Africa were provided with three *legati* each. In the NT only three proconsuls are referred to-the proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7 ff.), the proconsul of Achaia, Gallio (Acts 18:12), and the proconsul of Asia (Acts 19:38, the plural is generalizing, and does not imply more than one at a time).

**Vine on proconsul** - "a consul, one acting in place of a consul, a proconsul, the governor of a senatorial province" (i.e., one which had no standing army). The "proconsuls" were of two classes, (a) exconsuls, the rulers of the provinces of Asia and Africa, who were therefore "proconsuls" (b) those who were ex-pretors or "proconsuls" of other senatorial provinces (a pretor being virtually the same as a consul). To the former belonged the "proconsuls" at Ephesus, Acts 19:38 (AV, "deputies"); to the latter, Sergius Paulus in Cyprus, Acts 13:7, 8, 12, and Gallio at Corinth, Acts 18:12. In the NT times Egypt was governed by a prefect. Provinces in which a standing army was kept were governed by an imperial legate (e.g., Quirinius in Syria, Luke 2:2) (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words)

**Anthupatos** - 5x in the NT - Acts 13:7; Acts 13:8; Acts 13:12; Acts 18:12 = the proconsul Gallio; Acts 19:38 = related to the riot in Ephesus proconsuls were available to hear the case

**Believed** (4100)([pisteuo](#) from [pistis](#)) means that Sergius considered **the teaching** to be true and therefore worthy of his trust. Sergius had a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of the Gospel to save him from the guttermost to the uttermost!

The fate of **Sergius Paulus** is in contrast to the fate of **Simon who practiced magic** in Samaria (Acts 8:9,10+). In Acts 8:13 Luke records "Even Simon himself **believed** ([pisteuo](#)); and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed." After Peter had come down from Jerusalem, and laid hands on the believers in Samaria they were receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17+). Simon the magician who had "believed" offered the apostles money to receive the same gift (the Spirit) (Acts 8:18, 19+). Peter responded by telling Simon "you have no part or portion in this matter for your heart is not right before God. Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you." (Acts 8:21-22+) In summary, while Simon had made a profession, his subsequent actions proved (to Peter) that he was not genuinely born again. Luke makes no statement regarding Sergius Paulus' subsequent behavior and thus all available evidence points to the authenticity of his conversion to Christ.

Keep in mind that **pisteuo** is used some 241 times in the NT but, as the preceding paragraph discusses, not every use of this verb speaks of genuine faith that will save a person's soul. In other words, in some contexts (such as here in Acts 13:12) **pisteuo** refers to a "heart belief" (saving faith, genuine belief that leads to salvation) or to merely an intellectual belief (mental assent, "head" knowledge). For example, **pisteuo** is used by James in his important discussion of the relationship of [faith and works](#) (James 2:14+) writing to the person who claims he has faith (or who makes a profession of faith) "You **believe** ([pisteuo](#)) that God is one. You do well; the demons also **believe** ([pisteuo](#)), and shudder." (James 2:19+). In this passage, James explains that not all believing is associated with salvation. The believing he is describing in this passage is a mental or intellectual belief not associated with a change in one's heart as shown by lack of a change in one's behavior or actions. Belief that brings about the [new birth](#) denotes more than a "demonic" like, intellectual assent to a set of facts or truths. The demons believe but they are clearly not saved. Genuine belief definitely involves an intellectual assent, but it also includes an act of one's heart and will. The respected Greek lexicon author W E Vine summarizes the belief that saves one's soul as having 3 general components...

- (1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (Contrast 2Th 2:11 -"in order that they all may be judged who did not **believe** [[pisteuo](#)] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")
- (2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** [[pisteuo](#)] in His name")
- (3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender (See the relationship of faith and obedience

- [obedience of faith](#) or [What is the relationship of faith, works, and security in salvation?](#) As the reformers said faith alone saves, but the faith that genuinely saves is not alone.

This pagan proconsul's belief was genuine saving faith in **the Word of God**, the **teaching** he heard.

All of Luke's uses of **pisteuo** in Acts -

Acts 2:44; Acts 4:4; Acts 4:32; Acts 5:14; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:13; Acts 8:37; Acts 9:26; Acts 9:42; Acts 10:43; Acts 11:17; Acts 11:21; Acts 13:12; Acts 13:39; Acts 13:41; Acts 13:48; Acts 14:1; Acts 14:23; Acts 15:5; Acts 15:7; Acts 15:11; Acts 16:31; Acts 16:34; Acts 17:12; Acts 17:34; Acts 18:8; Acts 18:27; Acts 19:2; Acts 19:4; Acts 19:18; Acts 21:20; Acts 21:25; Acts 22:19; Acts 24:14; Acts 26:27

**Being amazed at the teaching of the Lord**- **Being amazed** is in the present tense indicating Sergius Paulus continued to be amazed, in a virtual state of amazement! But notice what was most amazing to him, not the miracle but **the teaching**. As alluded to above, this description emphasizes that it was the Gospel not the miracle that Sergius believed. Indeed, the Gospel is "amazing" and too often we lose sight of that fact. In many churches today, the audience is more amazed at the supposed miracles (healing, etc), then they are at the supernatural Word of God! Of course, not all will be amazed by **the teaching of the Lord** as Paul explains in his second letter to the saints at Corinth writing "For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?" (2 Cor 2:15-16, cf 2 Cor 3:5-6) And notice the reaction of many of the Jews to the Gospel when Paul and Barnabas "spoke out boldly" in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:45-47+)

**Being amazed** (1605)(**ekplesso** from **ek** = out + **plesso** = strike) means literally strike out, expel by a blow, drive out or away. Figuratively as in this passage **ekplesso** means to drive out of one's senses by a sudden shock or strong feeling, or "to be exceedingly struck in mind". It means to cause to be filled with amazement to the point of being overwhelmed (struck out of one's senses). It encompasses the ideas of wonder, astonishment or amazement. **Ekplesso** expresses a stunned amazement that leaves the subject unable to fully grasp what is happening. While Sergius may not have been able to fully grasp the supernatural blinding, he was able to grasp the supernatural teaching of the Gospel.

**THOUGHT** - Do we really grasp the truth that the Gospel we have believed and are now privileged to proclaim is absolutely supernatural (**dunamis** = The Gospel has **INHERENT** power! cf Ro 1:16+)? We need to lay hold of that truth, for it will fortify us when we encounter spiritual resistance from the kingdom of darkness (and we will encounter it if we speak forth the Gospel!)

**The teaching of the Lord** - Not the "teaching of Paul" but the **"teaching of the Lord."** When we preach or teach, we need to make sure it is **"of the Lord,"** and not "of us." (remember Jn 15:5!) In context, this **teaching of the Lord** is the Gospel, also called in this section, **the Word of God** and **the faith** (Acts 13:7, 8).

**Teaching** (instruction) (1322)(**didache** from **didasko** = to give instruction in a formal or informal setting with the highest possible development of the pupil as the goal; English = didactic = intended to teach, particularly in having moral instruction as an ulterior motive) is a noun which describes the activity of teaching (instruction). **Didache** or **"the teaching"** was that instruction which elucidated the meaning of the facts which were proclaimed. The idea of **didache** then is to impart knowledge to or instruct someone, in this case instructing Sergius Paulus on the truth of the Gospel and the fact that the Gospel must be genuinely believed in order to result in salvation of one's soul. **Teaching** communicated to Sergius the knowledge that which heretofore he had been ignorant (cf Acts 13:7).

**Lord (master, owner)**(2962)(**kurios** from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, the one who is sovereign. This teaching is the teaching of the Lord Jesus and thus possesses absolute authority and uncontested power (the word of the power of darkness cannot match the power of the word of the Lord). **Kurios** also speaks of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28)

**Herbert Lockyer** on Paul's first miracle in Acts - The display of such power was not an act of Paul, but of God. This first miracle of his—one of judgment—corresponds to the first public miracle of Peter which was also a judgment-miracle (Acts 5:5, 10). Gloag, quoted by Vincent, says that, "The first miracle which Paul performed was the infliction of a judgment; and that judgment the same which befell himself when arrested on his way to Damascus." Because of His almightiness, God can instantly open blind eyes (John 9:32) and just as instantly can blind seeing eyes. Grace was mingled with judgment, for the sudden blindness was "for a season," suggesting that it was designed to be remedial and not simply retributive. God was desirous of delivering Elymas from "the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 11, 13). That opportunity was to be his to repent so that he could "recover himself out of the snare of the devil." (2 Ti 2:25-26) Luke, with the precision of the trained physician, adds the touch that Elymas sought the help of others "to lead him by the hand." Ellicott comments that, having used his knowledge to guide others to his own advantage, Elymas

now seeks for others to guide his own steps. This expositor also suggests that "the tense of the Greek verb—'he was seeking,' seems to imply that Elymas sought and did not find. He had no friends to help him and was left to his fate unpitied." Such blindness remained a terrible emblem of the blindness of his soul. The result of this miracle of judgment was the conversion of the deputy. Astonished as he looked upon blinded Elymas, he believed the doctrine of Christ which Paul preached. Disregarding the efforts of Elymas to pervert such teaching, Sergius became an avowed disciple of Christ. Had he put off his convictions, as Felix did, he would probably have been left to perish in his sins. But grace prevailed, and the physical blindness of one led to the spiritual sight of the other. For a lesson of the miracle, we turn to old **Charles Simeon**, who says: "Let those then who will not embrace the Gospel, beware how they labor to pervert the faith of others: if they must perish, they had better perish alone, than under the guilt of destroying the souls of others." (All the Miracles in the Bible)

While some writers have questioned whether Sergius Paulus was truly converted because Luke makes no mention of his baptism, Longnecker responds that "the statement that Sergius Paulus believed can hardly be read with any less significance than Luke's use of the same verb in Acts 14:1; Acts 17:34; and Acts 19:18, **where baptism also goes unmentioned** and yet where we may well assume that it was performed." (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**Jack Arnold** - Sergius Paulus had finally found the truth that set him free. He was overwhelmed with the fact that Christ died for sinners and rose from the dead to live His life again in every human being who has received Him as personal Lord and Savior. He also realized that the power of God's Spirit can conquer all Satanic opposition....

**THOUGHT** - Do you identify with Sergius Paulus? Are you seeking truth? Do you have position possessions and prestige, but no inward soul contentment, no peace of mind? If so, be like Sergius Paulus and give heed to Jesus Christ and His teachings. If God has revealed to you truth about Jesus Christ, act on that truth by accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. Act today on the truth of Jesus Christ. Tomorrow may be too late! ([The Blessings, Burdens and Blunders of Missionaries](#))

**John MacArthur** - There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of Sergius Paulus's belief (**ED: SOME QUESTION IT BECAUSE LUKE MAKES NO MENTION OF BAPTISM WHEN HE BELIEVED**). That he became a true Christian is suggested by some extrabiblical sources. The great nineteenth-century archaeologist Sir William Ramsay "argued from other literary sources that Sergia Paulla, the proconsul's daughter, was a Christian, as was her son Gaius Caristianus Fronto, the first citizen of Pisidian Antioch to enter the Roman senate" (Richard N. Longenecker, "The Acts of the Apostles," in Frank E. Gaebelin, ed. The Expositor's Bible Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981], 9:421; cf. E. M. Blaiklock, The Archaeology of the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977], 107; J. A. Thompson, The Bible and Archaeology [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 392). But apart from such external evidence, Luke's account is clear. The conversion of Sergius Paulus "has been the main point of the whole Cyprus narrative" (John B. Polhill, The New American Commentary: Acts [Nashville: Broadman, 1992], 295). As his erstwhile counselor was plunged into physical darkness, the proconsul emerged from spiritual darkness into the gospel's glorious light. (MacArthur NT Commentary - Acts Volume 2, page 11)

**Longnecker** - The conversion of **Sergius Paulus** was a turning point in Paul's whole ministry. In fact, it inaugurated a new policy in the Christian mission to Gentiles, namely, the legitimacy of a direct approach and acceptance of Gentiles apart from any distinctive Jewish stance. This

**Sir William Ramsay** has a chapter entitled "**SERGIUS PAULLUS AND HIS RELATION TO CHRISTIAN FAITH**" - Ramsey's discussion of Sergius Paulus and His Relation to Christian Faith goes on for some 22 pages! If you are interested see [Sir William Ramsay, The Bearing of Recent Discoveries on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament](#)).

(Here is the translation of the Latin in the engraving above)

"To L(ucius) Sergius Paullus the younger, son of Lucius,  
one of the four commissioners in charge of the Roman streets,  
tribune of the soldiers of the sixth legion styled Ferrata, quaestor, etc."

**Acts 13:13 Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; but John left them and returned to Jerusalem. ([NASB95](#))**

KJV 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.

- **put out to sea from Paphos** Acts 13:6; 27:13

- **Perga in Pamphylia** Acts 2:10; 14:24,25; 27:5
- **John left them** Acts 13:5; 15:38; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Red** = Paphos > Perga in Pamphylia  
**Green** = John Mark Departs for home in Jerusalem  
 Click to Enlarge

## JOHN MARK DESERTS THE MISSION

This verse should be like a flashing lighthouse beacon to all missionary minded churches seeking to penetrate the darkness - Be ready for relational conflicts! Not "if" but "when" they occur, because they will occur.

**Now Paul and his companions** - While this description clearly would include Barnabas and John Mark **companions** in the plural suggests that Paul had other traveling **companions**.

**Swindoll** goes on to add that "Paul rarely traveled or ministered alone. In fact, he almost always traveled with a fellow minister and a number of helpers, younger men we might today call interns. He did this for two important reasons. First, no one traveled between cities alone. Highway robberies were so common that even small groups of travelers would delay their itineraries to join larger caravans, which provided the greatest safety against bandits. Second, Paul—like all teachers of his era—selected and trained disciples to perpetuate his evangelistic and teaching ministry. Luke’s narrative style in Acts doesn’t make the presence of fellow travelers obvious; he typically mentions specific names only when the narrative makes them necessary. For example, in Acts 15:40, he begins his account of Paul’s second missionary journey by stating that “Paul chose Silas and left.” Then, because the narrative focuses on Paul, Luke refers to him in the third person singular as though he were alone. “And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches” (Acts 15:41). Luke does not mention Silas again until the two men are arrested in Philippi (Acts 16:19), even though Silas undoubtedly remained with Paul throughout the journey. The same is true of Timothy, who joined Paul in Galatia on his second journey but rarely appears in the narrative thereafter." (Ibid)

**Furneaux** remarks "In nothing is the greatness of Barnabas more manifest than in his recognition of the superiority of Paul and acceptance of a secondary position for himself"

**Put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia** (see map above) - They traveled about 160 miles from Paphos to the southern coast. Since Perga is not on the coast, they most likely arrived at the seaport town of **Attalia** and journeyed by land about 25 miles northwest to **Perga** (alternatively if they disembarked at the southern coast [which had no named seaport] they would have had to travel about 13 miles overland to **Perga**). Perga was the capital of Pamphylia and was located on the **River Cestrus** (modern name Asku), about 7 miles from the sea and 9 miles east of the seaport at Attalia. Today Perga is a large site of archaeological finds and thus is a tourist attraction, commonly called Eski Kalessi. It is notable that there was a temple to **Artemis** (aka **Diana**, the goddess of the hunt, the wilderness, wild animals and chastity - that last designation is difficult to believe considering her **horrid multi-breasted statue!**) stood on a hill outside Perga. On Paul's **Third Missionary Journey** (lasting from Acts 18:23 through Acts 21:26), he would visit Ephesus, the main center of worship of Artemis and the famous **Temple of Artemis** (cf Acts 19:24-28, 34-38+).

**Longnecker** on **Perga** - Pamphylia was a geographically small and economically poor province on the southern coast of Asia Minor, with the mountains of Lycia to the west, the foothills of Pisidia to the north, and the Taurus range to the east. It contained a mixed population and seems to have been as open to the gospel as any other province. (EBC)

**Pamphylia (3828)** (**Pamphuilia** from **pas/pan** = all + **phule** = tribe) means "all tribes." See [this map](#) for location on the southern coastal side of modern Turkey. **Swindoll** adds that Pamphylia was "a traditional haunt for pirates who preyed on merchant ships bound for Syria and Phoenicia. Before Pompey finally established control in 67 BC, piracy had become something of a cottage industry in Perga, creating a melting pot of cultural misfits and scoundrels. Even though Pamphylia no longer represented a significant threat to safety on the waters, land travel was another matter. A rim of high mountains isolated the coastal plain of Pamphylia from the interior. The plan of Paul and Barnabas to reach Pisidian Antioch presented the danger of robbery or a severe accident in the craggy terrain. In addition, the hot, humid climate in Pamphylia would have been miserable in early summer. All that to say: **The honeymoon was over!** The team had enjoyed great success on Cyprus, the very pleasant island known intimately by Barnabas. The large Jewish population had offered plenty of hospitality along the journey, which concluded with the dramatic conversion of a high-ranking Gentile. From Perga onward, the going would get tough."

**John Phillips** says "The coastline was infested with pirates; the mountains were the home of brigands; the way ahead was steep and rugged and full of wild beasts and lawless men. The going would be tough. But none of that deterred Paul. To quit a missionary

enterprise just because of some difficulties would mean to surrender all along the line." (see [illustration](#) below)

**Put out to sea** (321) (**anago** from **ana** = up, again, away + **ago** = to bring, lead) literally speaks of movement from a lower to a higher point (Lk 4:5) but was the nautical technical term in the passive voice meaning to put out to sea or set sail. (Luke 8:22; Acts 13:13; 16:11; 18:21; 20:3, 13; 21:1, 2; 27:2, 4, 12, 21; 28:10, 11).

All of Luke's uses of **anago** -

Lk. 2:22; Lk. 4:5; Lk. 8:22; Acts 7:41; Acts 9:39; Acts 12:4; Acts 13:13; Acts 16:11; Acts 16:34; Acts 18:21; Acts 20:3; Acts 20:13; Acts 21:1; Acts 21:2; Acts 27:2; Acts 27:4; Acts 27:12; Acts 27:21; Acts 28:10; Acts 28:11

**Marvin Vincent** on **anago** - The verb literally means to lead up; hence to lead up to the high sea, or take to sea; put to sea. It is the word used of Jesus' being led up into the wilderness and the mount of temptation (Matt. 4:1; Luke 2:22); also of bringing up a sacrifice to an idol-altar (Acts 7:41). Often in Acts in the accounts of Paul's voyages.

**But** - A sad **term of contrast**. As noted in the discussion of terms of contrast like but, yet, on the other hand, etc, they often mark a "**change of direction**" and in this case the **but** marks a literal change of direction for John Mark.

**John left them and returned to Jerusalem** - Luke does not say why John Mark left the missionary team and all explanations in the commentaries are merely speculation. We can say that whatever the reason, it clearly disappointed Saul for he "had deserted them in Pamphylia" (Acts 15:38+) who did not want to take him along again on his **Second Missionary Journey** which resulted in a disagreement with Barnabas and a splitting up of the team, Barnabas taking his cousin John Mark and Paul choosing Silas (Acts 15:36-40+). Notice John Mark did not return to Antioch but to Jerusalem which was where his mother **Mary** lived (cf Acts 12:12+). This is not the last we hear of John Mark and in his very last letter Paul mentions him in a positive description, writing from prison in Rome "Only Luke is with me. Pick up **Mark** and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service." (2 Timothy 4:11)

**Steven Ger** - Whatever the reason for John Mark's premature departure, we will later learn that Paul considered it invalid and an unacceptable abandonment of their mission (Acts 15:36-39).

**Warren Wiersbe** wrote that "During my years of ministry as a pastor and as a member of several mission boards, I have seen first-term workers do what John Mark did; and it has always been heartbreaking. But I have also seen some of them restored to missionary service, thanks to the prayers and encouragement of God's people. A.T. Robertson said that Mark "flickered in the crisis," but the light did not completely go out. This is an encouragement to all of us." (Bible Exposition Commentary)

**Left** (672) (**apochoreo** from **apó** = from, a marker of dissociation + **choréo** = to go from a place, give space) means to move away from a point, with emphasis upon separation and possible lack of concern for what has been left. To depart in the sense of desert or abandon (as in Ac 13:13). One of the uses by Jesus in those frightening words in Mt 7:23+ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART** (apochoreo) FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'"

**Returned** (Turned away from) (5290) (**hupostrepho** from **hupo** = under + **strepho** = to turn, to change) means to go back to a location, in this case Jerusalem.

**John Butler** writes that "Mark had failed (Acts 13:13) and this had not surprisingly alienated him from Paul (Acts 15:37-39) but he had evidently repented and became a good servant of Jesus Christ and a helper for the Apostle Paul as our text indicates. He even wrote a Gospel that we know by his name. Mark tells us what counts isn't how many times you are knocked down by Satan but how many times you get up. His failure at Perga of Pamphylia was a black mark on his Christian dedication but he got up from the canvas of this failure to later be of help to the Apostle he had justifiably alienated by his failure." (Sermon Starters)

**Tony Merida** - Ministry isn't for the faint of heart. Advancing the gospel will cost us. If you ever imagine that pioneer evangelism and church planting are glamorous, just read about some of Paul's afflictions in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. Then read about the church's larger history; you will find some of God's choicest servants like Charles Spurgeon, Martin Luther, and William Wilberforce suffering from all sorts of health problems. Others, like George Whitefield and David Livingstone, suffered under violent threats. Paul's desire to reach the Gentiles reminds us of part of the reason we have so many unreached people in the world: they live in extreme, hard-to-access places—on steep hillsides, in deserts, and out in the middle of nowhere. Many other unreached peoples live in dangerous places, in locations where society is violently hostile to Christianity. But here in Acts 13 we see an example of the type of grace-enabled endurance that must reside in the hearts of gospel-centered, Spirit-empowered, Christ-exalting missionaries. (Ibid)

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**ILLUSTRATION** - A friend of mine served the Lord for many years in the lonely outposts of northwestern Canada. His missionary journeys took him into logging camps, to construction crews, into mining villages, and among some of the toughest people to evangelize in the Canadian west. He was traveling north one day along the lonely Alaska highway. It was his policy to stop at every wayside cabin and leave a cheery greeting, a gospel paper, and a word of testimony.



On his journey he came at length to such a cottage, surrounded by a fence and barred by an iron gate that bore the warning "Beware of the dog." Nothing daunted, he unlatched the gate and the dog appeared. It was massive and fierce. It showed its formidable teeth and growled. The missionary paused and considered. Prudence told him to omit the house; conscience told him to go ahead and trust the Lord. At length, after a word of prayer, he carefully opened the gate and stepped inside. The dog menaced him. He ignored it and slowly but deliberately made his way to the house. The dog followed, snarling and threatening at his heels. He arrived at the door but before he could knock, it opened. A woman stood there with a loaded gun in her hands. The missionary greeted her and offered her one of his papers. She eyed him up and down as she took it.

"Mister," she said, "Can't you read?" He admitted that he could. "Didn't you see the sign 'Beware of the dog?'" she demanded. He confessed that he had. "Didn't you see the dog?" she inquired. He said he had hardly seen anything else.

"Mister," she said, "that dog is trained to kill. I live here alone when my husband is away. That dog is my protection. He's a killer. Only last week he killed a bear. I'll take one of your papers, mister, but next time, pay attention to the sign."

In telling me of the incident, the missionary said, "I had to go up to that house. If I'd backed down there, I'd have backed down everywhere—every time there was a difficult place."

Paul was made of the same kind of stuff. Difficulties did not deter him; they dared him. It is one of the marks of a pioneer. (Phillips - Exploring Acts)

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Get Mark, ... for he is useful to me (2 Timothy 4:11).

Although we can never undo a failure, we can learn from the experience and profit by it. A baseball pitcher who loses a game because he throws a fastball right where the batter wants it may come back four days later and hurl a shutout. He'll never erase the lost game from his record, but his failure can teach him valuable lessons that will help him to chalk up more wins than losses.

In Acts we read that John Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas when they started their first missionary journey (Acts 13:5), but he soon departed from them (Acts 13:13). While he was at home, he apparently regretted what he had done, so he asked to be included the next time his older friends set out. Barnabas wanted to give him another chance, but Paul didn't, so they parted company and formed two teams—Barnabas taking Mark, and Paul taking Silas. Young Mark couldn't erase his first failure, but he must have learned from it because he became a respected Christian leader of his day. Further-more, God used him to write one of the four gospels; and Paul, in his second prison epistle to Timothy, asked for Mark, saying, "He is useful to me for ministry."

It doesn't do any good to brood about what went wrong. Wishing we could do something over is an exercise in futility. Each day is new. With God's help we can succeed, if we learn from yesterday's failure.

Christians live in "the land of beginning again." —H.V.L.

Failure doesn't mean you'll never succeed; it will just take longer.

**Acts 13:14 But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. (NASB95)**

KJV 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

- A. M. 4050. A.D. 46. Antioch 14:19,21-24
- **went into the synagogue** Acts 13:5; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4; 19:8
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Perga>Pisidian Antioch](#)  
Click to Enlarge

## PAUL AND BARNABAS GO ON TO PISIDIAN ANTIOCH

**But going on from Perga** - This is an interesting description because Luke gives no record of Paul and Barnabas preaching the Gospel in Perga. Knowing Paul's passion for preaching this is somewhat surprising, but one has to assume the team was being guided by the Holy Spirit. In addition, a subsequent note by Luke records that when had circled back from Antioch, Lyconium, Lystra

and Derbe, they spoke "the word (GOSPEL) in Perga, (and then) they went down to Attalia." (Acts 14:25+).

Perga is in modern day Turkey and the missionaries were taking the Gospel there so one pastor has quipped they were "stuffing Turkey with the Gospel!"

#### Related Resource:

- Burdick, Donald W. "[Pioneering With Paul Part I — Perga to Athens.](#)" *Bible and Spade* 2, (Gives a first hand account of the significant archaeology that marked Perga as a significant ancient city).

**Tony Merida** quips "Someone once advised, "When traveling, you should lay out all your clothes and all your money. Then take half your clothes and twice the money!" That sounds pretty wise because traveling usually costs more than anticipated—and not just in terms of dollars spent. Murphy's Law often holds true on the road: Nothing is as easy as it looks; everything takes longer than you think; and if anything can go wrong, it will! (Especially if you're traveling with five kids in a minivan!)" (Ibid)

**They arrived at [Pisidian Antioch](#)** - This journey was long (and presumably on foot) with rugged terrain along a route that was barren, often flooded by swollen mountain streams. The Taurus mountains were on right side, and this area was known to be a haunt for robbers. **Perga** (at sea level) to **Pisidian Antioch** (elevation 3600 feet) is about 100 miles, a rugged and dangerous journey.

**THOUGHT** - One could read this verse and miss a very important point regarding missions. Here is the point - one needs to be ready for potentially extreme physical challenges and even danger in order to make the Gospel known. [Forewarned is forearmed](#). "The passage teaches an important missions law: "We won't reach the nations apart from personal sacrifice" (Azurdia, "Progression by Intention).

**Raymond L Cox** in "[Journey to Pisidia](#)" (Pisidian Antioch) writes...

Paul and Barnabas probably encountered "perils of waters, perils of robbers, perils in the wilderness," besides "weariness and painfulness," "hunger and thirst," and probably even excessive "cold" (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:26, 27) as they hiked from the **malarial coastlands** of Pamphylia to the highlands of Pisidia, but I have nothing but fond memories of my journey to Pisidia. "I drive today where apostles walked," the thought struck me as I steered my Hertz Volkswagen along the last 50 miles of roads and tracks which led to the ruins of Antioch. The highways Paul plodded likely were better than some of those I encountered in following his steps in modern Turkey, for he used Roman roads which were excellently engineered, well paved, and kept in good repair. But the difference between 40 miles an hour which I managed to drive and four miles an hour — the rate at which the apostles walked — more than made up for the dust and bumps of inferior tracks. "Throughout ancient history," wrote W.M. Calder, "we find the **Pisidian mountains described as the home of a turbulent and warlike people, given to robbery and pillage**" (p. 2400, vol. iv, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia). The Romans enlisted Galatian king Amyntas to subject the region, and when Amyntas died in 25 B.C. they annexed Pisidia, along with the king's other possessions, into their own province of Galatia. Pisidian Antioch was the westernmost of the churches planted by Paul that the apostle addressed in his **epistle to the Galatians. Here was territory with a real "wild west" atmosphere**. Throughout most of the region of Pisidia Roman occupation was strictly military. Numerous inscriptions attest to the presence of armed policemen and soldiers charged with keeping the peace in the area, and several mention **attacks by highwaymen or rescues from drowning in rivers**. Secular authorities confirm conditions to which Paul alluded, as both Conybeare and Howson and Sir William Ramsay point out....It was a thrill to walk in the very areas visited by Paul and Barnabas centuries before. But what a contrast! Today there is absolutely no one at the site of Antioch to resist or accept the message of Christ. The city has dissolved into a ghost of history. But the truths the apostles proclaimed there live on and continue to command devotion throughout the whole world.

**Pisidian Antioch** was an [architecturally impressive](#) Roman colony ([see note](#)) like Philippi and so a **free city**. **Utley** adds that Pisidian Antioch "literally means "Antioch towards Pisidia" because it was located in the ethnic area of Phrygia the Roman Province of Galatia." **Pisidian Antioch** was strategically located at the axis of Asia Minor's east-west traffic and thus was very [cosmopolitan](#). **Merrill Unger** adds that "In bringing the gospel to Pisidian Antioch, Paul and Barnabas were planting Christianity in the communication nerve center and heart of Asia Minor."

**Constable** writes that "Antioch of Pisidia was a Roman [colony](#), as were Lystra, Troas, Philippi, and Corinth. Roman [colonies](#) stood at strategic places in the empire along frequently travelled roads. As such Antioch would have been a good place to plant a church." ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**Hastings Dictionary** description of a [Roman Colony](#) - The careful reader of Acts 16:12, the only place in the

NT where the term 'colony' (κολωνία, a mere transliteration of the Latin original) occurs, sees at once that a Roman colony must have been very different from what we understand by the word 'colony.' Colonia (from colonus, 'settler,' 'husbandman,' from colere, 'to cultivate') was a word applied by the Romans to a body (usually 300) of their citizen-soldiers (in earlier days the two terms were convertible), transferred from the city of Rome itself to some outlying part of Italy or (later) to some other land. These men remained Roman citizens after transference, and were collectively, in fact, a portion of Rome itself planted amidst a community not itself possessed of Roman citizenship. The object of the earliest colonies was the holding in subjection to Rome of the particular country in which they were planted. It was not usually a fresh city that was thus founded. The rule was that a community was already resident there, and the body of Roman soldiers was stationed there, thus making the place into a garrison city. The colonies were connected by military roads, beginning at Rome, and troops could be marched along those roads to relieve the colonies in the shortest possible time, supposing a rising (tumultus) should occur, too powerful to be quelled by the local garrison. (A good example is the case of the Lombardy Plain and the Campaigns of Marius.) A Roman colony, then, means a garrison city, and implies the presence of Roman soldier-citizens.

This was the Roman colonia in origin and purpose. We find, however, that, after danger from the enemy had ceased, coloniae continued to be planted during the Empire in peaceful districts. This new style of colonia continued to mean a body of Roman citizens, but the military aspect was lost sight of. **It was an honour for a provincial city to be made into a colonia, because this was a proof that it was of special importance, specially dear to the Emperor, and worthy to be the residence of Roman citizens, who were the aristocracy of the provincial towns in which they lived.** (It was not till AD 212, the time of Caracalla, that all the subjects of the Roman Empire received the Roman citizenship.)

A number of towns mentioned in the NT were colonies at the time the events narrated there took place: **Corinth** (since 44-43 b.c.), **Puteoli** (since 194 b.c.), **Philippi** (42 b.c.), **Pisidian Antioch** (before 27 b.c.), **Syracuse** (21 b.c.), **Troas** (between 27 and 12 b.c.), **Lystra** (after 12 b.c.),† [Note: Not Iconium till the time of Hadrian.] **Ptolemais** (before a.d. 47). All these places are mentioned by the writer of Acts, and yet to one only does he attach the epithet 'colony,' namely Philippi. The whole manner in which he refers to his place shows personal pride in it, and it is hard to refrain from believing that he had a special connexion with it.

**The comparatively large proportion of places holding the dignity of colony, which were visited by St. Paul, illustrates very forcibly the plan of his evangelization. He aimed at planting the gospel in the leading centres, knowing that it would spread best from these.**

**Longnecker** has an informative note - [Pisidian Antioch](#) was in reality not in Pisidia but in [Phrygia](#) near Pisidia (cf. Strabo, Geogr. 12.577). To distinguish it from the other Antioch in Phrygia, however, the city was popularly called "Antioch of Pisidia." It was founded by [Seleucus I Nicator](#) about 281 BC as one of the sixteen cities he named in honor of either [his father](#) or his son, both of whom bore the name **Antiochus**. It was situated 100 miles north of Perga on a lake-studded plateau, some 3,600 feet above sea level. The foothills between Perga and Pisidian Antioch largely ruled out any extensive east-west traffic until one reached the plateau area, though following the river valleys one could move northward from the area of Pamphylia. On the plateau Antioch stood astride the [Via Sebaste](#) ([PICTURE](#) Greek word "Sebaste" = Latin "Augustus"), the Roman road from Ephesus to the Euphrates. The city had been incorporated into the expanded Roman province of [Galatia](#) in 25 BC by [Augustus](#), who imported into it some three thousand army veterans and their families from Italy and bestowed on it the title "Colonia Caesarea." Antioch was the most important city of southern [Galatia](#) and included within its population a rich amalgam of Greek, Roman, Oriental, and Phrygian traditions. Acts tells us that it also had a sizable Jewish population. (EBC)

**Barclay** writes that "One of the amazing things about Acts is the heroism that is passed over in a sentence. **Pisidian Antioch** stood on a plateau 3,600 feet above sea level. To get to it, Paul and Barnabas would have to cross the [Taurus range of mountains](#) (**ED: THESE WERE NOT JUST LITTLE HILLS - SEE [PICTURE](#)**) by one of the hardest roads in Asia Minor, a road which was also notorious for robbers and [brigands](#)." (Ibid)

**And on the Sabbath day** - From sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday because the Jews counted time from evening to evening, following Genesis 1. Luke does not state that they actually arrived on the Sabbath day, but that on that **day** they **went to the synagogue**.

**Moody Bible Commentary** - At Antioch, Paul established a pattern for ministry by preaching first to Jews and then to Gentiles. Paul followed this strategy in every city with a sizeable Jewish population. In Philippi, according to Acts 16:13, it seems Paul was seeking a "place of prayer," probably for Jewish people. So even in Philippi he sought out Jewish people first.

**Constable** has a quote from Levinskaya that "The massive influx of a Jewish population into Asia Minor took place at the end of the

third century BC, when Antiochus III settled two thousand Jewish families from Mesopotamia and Babylonia in Lydia and Phrygia, in order to maintain the security of his hold over this region." ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**They went into the synagogue** ([sunagoge](#)) - Paul's "modus operandi" when arriving in a town was to first go to the Jewish synagogue.

**Homer Kent** makes an excellent point about first going to the synagogues - "There was, of course, a practical matter involved. If they had begun evangelizing among gentiles first, the **synagogue would have been closed to them.**"

All of Luke's uses of **synagogue** in Acts -

Acts 6:9; Acts 9:2; Acts 9:20; Acts 13:5; Acts 13:14; Acts 13:15; Acts 13:43; Acts 14:1; Acts 15:21; Acts 17:1; Acts 17:10; Acts 17:17; Acts 18:4; Acts 18:7; Acts 18:8; Acts 18:17; Acts 18:19; Acts 18:26; Acts 19:8; Acts 22:19; Acts 24:12; Acts 26:11

**And sat down - Utley** has an interesting note that "This may be an idiom denoting someone who was to speak in the synagogue. Rabbis always taught while seated (cf. Matt. 5:1; Luke 4:20). The synagogues regularly allowed itinerant visitors speak if they wished (cf. v. 15)."

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**Jack Arnold** on Paul's first recorded sermon - Before we begin an analysis of Paul's sermon, several points should be brought out which are relevant to us today.

#### **First, Paul, when preaching evangelistically, taught doctrine.**

A quick scan of his message will show that the terms "Chose, savior, promise, repentance, purpose, forgiveness, justified, believe and perish" are all found in this sermon. Paul's message had biblical, doctrinal and theological content. His message was not some weak, emaciated evangelical appeal to come to Christ as one in need of a joy-giver, as we find so much of in the twentieth century. Paul does not present God as loving everybody and trying to save everybody but stymied because of man's unbelief. No, he preached a sovereign God who saves men through faith in Christ Jesus the Lord.

#### **Second, Paul did not adapt the gospel message to his age.**

All the doctrinal terms used in this message were terms found in the Old Testament. He did not use new terminology to meet the first century Greek and Roman mind but used biblical terminology which had been used for centuries by the Jews. There was no attempt to present the old message in new terms. Paul was quite unlike many evangelicals today, who refuse to use Old and New Testament terms like sin, justification, repentance, condemnation, election, and redemption, because they seem to have no meaning to the average person. The result is that a person may have changed his mind about Christ but not know he has repented, which means "to change one's mind." When that person then goes to his Bible, he cannot understand it.

#### **Third, Paul did not dilute his message in any way.**

He was direct, right to the point and was honest with his audience. He confronted his age with sin, rebellion, guilt and condemnation. Paul's goal was to preach to man's conscience and bring a sense of guilt so the sinner would repent and believe in Christ. **Arousing guilt is an important part of preaching the gospel, and we must never allow modern day psychology to take guilt away from our vocabulary.** There is guilt, and there is forgiveness for man's guilt. Paul's preaching was so different from the modern day evangelical who preaches to a man's emotions and will, neglecting almost totally his mind and conscience. ([Paul's First Recorded Sermon](#))

**Acts 13:15 After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it." ([NASB95](#))**

KJV 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.

- **After the reading of the Law and the Prophets** Acts 13:27; 15:21; Luke 4:16-18
- **the synagogue officials sent to them** Acts 18:8,17; Mark 5:22

- **Brethren** Acts 1:16; 2:29,37; 7:2; 15:7; 22:1
- **if you have any word of exhortation for the people** Acts 2:4; 20:2; Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 14:3; Hebrews 13:22
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL AND BARNABAS INVITED TO GIVE A WORD OF EXHORTATION

Little did these synagogue officials realize that this word of exhortation would turn the world upside down! Notice God's sovereignty (and providence) having His chosen men on the scene at the right place and the right time.

**After the reading of the Law and the Prophets - The Law and the Prophets** refers to the entire Old Testament (cf. Mt. 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Lk 16:16; Acts 24:14; 28:23; Ro 3:21)

A typical first-century [synagogue](#) service would have included

(1) **The Shema** (See [Schurer - History of the Jewish People](#)) - Means "Hear" or "Listen and do". The **Sh'ma** was the Jewish declaration of faith dramatically beginning with the call "**Hear O Israel! The Lord our God; the Lord is One!**" (See Dt 6:4–9; 11:13–21; cf. Nu 15:37–41),

(2) **The Shemoneh Esreh (Amidah)** ("Eighteen Benedictions," "Blessings," or "Prayers"), a corporate prayer

(3) **Reading from the Torah or Law**, first five books of Moses (following an annual cycle) (See [Schurer - History of the Jewish People](#))

**A T Robertson** - The law was first read in the synagogues till B.C. 163 when Antiochus Epiphanes prohibited it. Then the reading of the prophets was substituted for it. The Maccabees restored both. There was a reading from the law and one from the prophets in Hebrew which was interpreted into the [Aramaic](#) or the Greek [Koiné](#) for the people.

(4) **Reading from the Haftarah**, the prophets and the writings following the recitation of the Torah portion.

(5) **A short lesson or sermon was delivered**, often based on the contents of one of the recited Scriptures. **Ger** writes that "According to first century Jewish custom, if there was a distinguished guest present in the congregation that morning, a visiting rabbi or other Jewish authority, he might well be invited to preach as an expression of hospitality (and possibly to break the monotony of hearing from the same local rabbis week after week!) That morning, Paul and Barnabas received one such invitation, which Paul accepted. Later, in Paul's letter to the Galatian church, Paul indicates that he was ill during the period of his initial preaching in Galatia, perhaps referring to the occasion of this sermon (Gal. 4:13). If accurate, it must be acknowledged that for an infirm rabbi, he preached rather well. " (Twenty-First Century Commentary - Acts)

(6) **Closing blessing**

**Bruce Barton** - 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 often slam shut. They were usually not invited back by the religious leaders, and sometimes they would be thrown out of town! (LAC)

**Reading (320)** (**anagnosis** from **ana** = again + **gnosis** = knowledge) is related to **anagnosko** which means to know certainly and hence to read. There are only 3 uses in the NT and 2 refer to the reading of the OT in a Jewish context = Acts 13:15 and 2 Co. 3:14 = "the reading of the old covenant". The third use in 1 Ti 4:13 says "give attention to the public reading" which refers to reading of the Scripture in the context of the Church. There is one use in the Septuagint of Neh 8:8 "They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading" which God used to bring about revival (Neh 8:1-18).

**Zodhiates** notes that "In 1 Tim. 4:13, it refers to the public reading of the OT Scriptures or of the portion of Scripture appointed to be read in public which is called *anagnōsma*. The readers in the church upon whom originally devolved the duty of reading and expounding or application of that portion chosen were called *anagnōstai*, the public readers. (Complete Word Study Dictionary)

**Bultmann** writes that **anagnosis** "means "knowledge" or "recognition" and it is particularly used for reading or public reading (as in the pap.), esp. in law courts and other assemblies. In Judaism it was used for the public reading of the OT." (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament – Volume I)

**Gilbrant** on **anagnosis** - In the writings of Plato it means "reading," particularly when it involves a fondness for reading or studying. It is used most often for public reading, as in courts of law, and other gatherings. As compared to *gnōsis*, "knowledge," *anagnōsis* is

that which leads up to knowledge; consequently, it is reading and studying to acquire a knowledge of something. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**The synagogue officials sent to them, saying** - "the leaders of the synagogue sent them a message" (NET). Usually there was only one official but here clearly there were two (or more).

**Synagogue officials** (752)(**archisunagogos** from **archi** - denotes rank or degree + **sunagoge** - synagogue) was leader or president of a synagogue, a lay person whose duty it was to take care of the physical arrangements for the worship services.

**Gilbrant** - The term **archisunagōgos** (not found in the Septuagint) is virtually equivalent to the Hebrew *rō'sh hakkēnēseth* the "head" or leader of the synagogue. In later Judaism, in Palestine as well as in the Diaspora, there was usually a ruler of the local synagogue (Mark 5:35; Luke 8:49; 13:14; Acts 13:15; 18:8,17). In Greek, sometimes simply *archōn* (752) meant the same thing (Matthew 9:18) or *archōn tēs sunagōgēs* (Luke 8:41). Intertestamental Period = The duty of the ruler of the synagogue was to administer and lead the worship service. He invited members of the congregation to perform different tasks, like saying prayers, reading from the Scriptures, or speaking to the people. The ruler was responsible for making sure the worship service took place according to tradition. Furthermore, the ruler was obliged to lead discussions and debates and to make sure nothing took place apart from custom. He also had to oversee any construction in the synagogue. (See Schrage, "archisunagōgos," Kittel, 7:846.) By contrast, the duty of the servant of the synagogue was to sound the trumpet to signal the beginning and the end of the Sabbath. He also brought out the sacred scrolls containing the Holy Scriptures for use during the worship service; he would return them when it was over. He carried out the penalties and judgments which were rendered by the court of elders. New Testament Usage = Jesus came into contact with rulers of the synagogues on many occasions. On one of these a ruler named Jairus came and interceded with Jesus on behalf of his dying daughter (Matthew 9:18f.). Another synagogue ruler was upset with Jesus for disrupting the order of the service by healing a sick woman (Luke 13:14). From Acts we learn that the apostles also came into contact with the synagogue rulers from time to time. In Corinth the archisunagōgos, Crispus, together with his whole household, became believers (Acts 18:8). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Zodhiates** - As there were several elders in each synagogue, one of them was chosen, or appointed, ruler or rector of the synagogue. He governed all its affairs, such as preserving order, and selecting and inviting persons to read or speak in the assembly. The presiding elder was called archisunagōgos, though the name is sometimes applied to all elders (Matt. 5:22, 35, 36, 38; Luke 8:49; 13:14; Acts 13:15; 18:8, 17). We do not know how many such rulers were in each synagogue, but it seems that there were more than one. Multiple rulers of the synagogue are mentioned in Mark 5:22 (cf. Acts 13:15). (Complete Word Study Dictionary)

**Archisunagogos** - 9x in 9v (no uses in Sept) - leader of the synagogue(2), synagogue official(5), synagogue officials(2). - Mk. 5:22; Mk. 5:35; Mk. 5:36; Mk. 5:38; Lk. 8:49; Lk. 13:14; Acts 13:15; Acts 18:8; Acts 18:17

**Brethren** - The officials clearly recognized them and addressed them as Jewish **brethren**, not as brothers in Christ, but that would soon change for some in the audience as Paul preached the Gospel.

**Deffinbaugh** - The synagogues provided an ideal forum for preaching the gospel. Luke provides us with the most information about the synagogues and how they functioned (Luke 4:16-30; Acts 13:14-16). From Luke 4:16-30, we see that there was the reading of some portions of the Old Testament Scriptures (on this occasion, it included Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus was free to expound on that text, which He did, revealing that He was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. ([Sermon](#))

The phrase if you have any word of exhortation reminds me of Peter's charge to all believers to...

**Sanctify** ([aorist imperative](#)) Christ as Lord (FIRST WORD IN GREEK FOR EMPHASIS) in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense ([apologia](#)) to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; (1 Peter 3:15+).

Needless, to say Paul was ready to make a defense, and we too should always be ready, alert for opportunities to seize to share the Gospel.

**If you have any word** ([logos](#)) **of exhortation for the people** - Of course, Paul had a **word of exhortation**, but little did the officials know that the content would fall like a bolt of lightning in that synagogue, for "the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do (TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT)." (Heb 4:12-13). Paul's **word of exhortation** would divide the audience, afflicting the comfortable (in their practice of Judaism and their traditions) and comforting the afflicted (those whose hearts were pierced by the Word of God).

**Barton** - What an open invitation for the gospel! There can be no more encouraging word than the fact that God has come to earth and opened a door to heaven, providing an atonement for sin and offering new life in Jesus Christ!...Encouragement means "to call alongside." The idea is providing exhortation or consolation. Thus, encouragement is that process whereby we enter the lives of others and give them what they most need—a kind word of challenge or a compassionate word of hope. Who in your life needs a reminder to "keep doing right" or to "hang in there"? Perhaps someone needs to be consoled with the truth that God is in control and that he is faithful. If you have a message of encouragement, "please speak"! (LAC)

**Robertson** - Literally, if there is among you any **word of exhortation** for the people. It is a condition of the first class and assumed to be true, a polite invitation. (ED: WHAT A WORD OF EXHORTATION PAUL WOULD GIVE THEM AS HE SPOKE OF JESUS, "THE WORD [[logos](#)] OF GOD!" Jn 1:1)

**Jack Andrews** - When we preach we must exhort others! When the word of God is preached it is not given just for information, but for transformation.

**Exhortation** (3874)([paraklesis](#) from **parakaléo** = beseech <> **pará** = side of + **kaléo** = call) refers to calling to one's side or one's aid which can be for the purpose of giving assistance or providing comfort, consolation, exhortation, encouragement. Paraklesis was actually the "nickname" of Barnabas ("son of **encouragement**" - Acts 4:36). In Acts 9:31 paraklesis described "the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria...(was) going on in the fear of the Lord and in the **comfort** of the Holy Spirit." In Luke 2:25 **paraklesis** is used in the phrase "looking for the **consolation** of Israel" which in essence is a Person, Jesus Christ. In fact the NLT actually paraphrases it as "eagerly waiting for the Messiah." And so Paul was about to give this Jewish audience the ultimate **exhortation** (paraklesis) in his teaching about the Messiah! It is also worth noting that all of Scripture is in a sense a paraklesis (Ro 15:4)! **A T Robertson** suggests that **paraklesis** "may be a technical phrase used in the synagogue (Heb. 13:22; 1 Tim. 4:13)."

**Paraklesis** uses by Luke - Lk. 2:25; Lk. 6:24; Acts 4:36; Acts 9:31; Acts 13:15; Acts 15:31

**Say it** - This is a command in the present imperative which calls for ongoing action. Paul has in effect been given the "pulpit" to present his **word of exhortation** and little did the Jewish audience realize that his words would be recorded by Luke as the inspired Word of God.

#### Related Resources:

- [Daniel DeSilva - Paul's Sermon in Antioch](#) - Bibliotheca Sacra 151 (January-March 1994) 32-49.
- [John B Polhill - Evangelism in the Acts of the Apostles](#) - Southern Baptist Journal of Theology 5, no. 1 (Spring 2001)

**Acts 13:16 Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: ([NASB95](#))**

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

- **motioning with his hand** Acts 12:17; 19:33; 21:40
- **Men of Israel** Acts 13:26; 2:22; 3:12
- **you who fear God** Acts 13:42,43,46; 10:2,35; 1 Kings 8:40; Ps 67:7; 85:9; 135:20; Luke 1:50; 23:40
- **listen** Acts 2:14; 22:1,22; Deuteronomy 32:46,47; Ps 49:1-3; 78:1,2; Micah 3:8,9; Matthew 11:15; Revelation 2:7,11,17,29
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL'S FIRST RECORDED SERMON

I like Jack Andrews' title - "**Operation Proclamation!**" Ray Stedman's title is also excellent "**The Radical Word**"

This is Paul's first and longest recorded sermon of three evangelistic messages recorded by Luke - here in Pisidian Antioch, in Lystra (Acts 14:15–17), and in Athens (Acts 17:22–31). Most commentators agree that this "longest" message was a summary because it takes less than 60 seconds to read. It is difficult to imagine that Paul given the opportunity of a lifetime would have spoken for less than one minute! There are similarities with Peter's sermon in Acts 2:14-40 and Stephen's sermon in Acts 7:2-53.

**Stedman** says "the first recorded sermon of the Apostle Paul. This man has changed the course of world history by the power of his ministry in the Spirit of Christ. He did so by the preaching of the word of truth, and here we have a good example of how he did it. Paul had preached many messages before, but this is the first of which we have a record. It was a very powerful and shattering

message. **It was preached in a synagogue on a Sabbath morning and it shook a whole city**-- so much so that in Acts 13:44+ of this account we read, "The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered together to hear the word of God." That must have been a powerful message. We want to examine it in some detail to see what made it of such impact then, and what elements make it so radical and revolutionary yet today. If you do not think that it is significant today, you probably have never really heard it. This message is not preached as widely as it needs to be today. It is often somewhat difficult for people to hear the gospel presented as it is given in the Scriptures. ([Acts 13:13-52 The Radical Word](#))

**Larkin** observes that Paul "begins with what could be called the Old Testament **kerygma**: a rehearsal of four key events of God's gracious promise and liberating fulfillment, together with a declaration of the messianic promise to David (Deut 26:5–10; Josh 24:2–13, 17–18; Ps 68–72; 89:3–4, 19–37)." (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**John Stott** - Luke will later give two samples of Paul's sermons to Gentiles, that is, to the pagans of Lystra and the philosophers of Athens. But now the whole atmosphere is Jewish. The day is the Sabbath, the venue is the synagogue, the lessons are from the Law and the Prophets, the listeners are "men of Israel", and the theme is how the God of the people of Israel has brought to Israel the Saviour Jesus, as he promised. Luke is evidently anxious to demonstrate that Paul's message to the Jews was substantially the same as Peter's; that Paul did not turn to the Gentiles until after he had offered the gospel to the Jews and been rebuffed; and that, far from being an innovator, Paul was declaring only what God had promised in Scripture and had now fulfilled in Jesus. (Message of Acts)

**THOUGHT** - Do you have the Missionary Mindset? Are you actively looking for opportunities to present the gospel message? Look at how aggressive Paul was – not just relying on friendship evangelism – he found ways to make contact with new groups of people. Getting people to listen to the message is difficult; all we want is a hearing You can't start out condemning them

**Jack Arnold** adds that "There are three things to notice about this section of Scripture. First, Paul's message is very closely related to Peter's message in Acts 2, which shows that the Apostles preached the same message. Second, Paul's message, in content, greatly parallels the sage of Stephen in Acts 7. When Stephen preached his great sermon, Saul of Tarsus, the zealous, young Pharisee, undoubtedly heard it and never forgot it. As Stephen preached the history of Israel and accused the Jews of putting Messiah to death and also challenged them to repent, Saul was touched because this message cut through all his bigotry and egotism as a Jew. It was because of Stephen's message that Paul was finally converted to Christ. Third, this message is about God's working in history. It is not about some great personality like Hitler, Alexander the Great or Napoleon, but about God and His mighty workings in history through the nation of Israel. History is "HIS-story." It is God working out His plan in this world to bring about the return of His Son Jesus Christ. ([Paul's First Recorded Sermon](#))

**Paul stood up** - Luke records a similar description of Jesus when "He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the [synagogue](#) on the Sabbath, and **stood up to read**." (Lk 4:16) It is interesting that unlike the case with Paul, there is not record of the synagogue official asking Him to give a word of exhortation! So even as this sermon by Jesus marked the beginning of His ministry in Palestine, in much the same way, Paul's message marks the beginning of his mission to the Gentiles even though it was in a Jewish synagogue. The [synagogue](#) clearly had God fearing proselytes. As we shall see, although many Jews responded, the Gentiles were more responsive to his message.

**Swindoll** points out that "This is one of several Pauline sermons described by Luke in the book of Acts (cf. Acts 14:15-17; 17:22-31; 20:18-35). This is not a transcript of the apostle's address; it's an annotated outline summarizing his major points. Nevertheless, this discourse is the most detailed of all, providing a fairly complete look at his method of reasoning. He typically began by affirming points of agreement, creating intellectual and theological rapport with his audience. In this case, **he alluded to no fewer than twelve Old Testament books** as he recounted the story of the Lord's relationship with the nation of Israel, beginning with the patriarchs. **Paul followed the Jewish custom of remembering God's faithfulness to Israel during difficult times**" (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**Robertson on stood up** - The Jewish custom was to sit while speaking (Luke 4:20), but the Greek and Roman was to stand (Acts 17:22)....Paul is the leader now and the more gifted speaker (Acts 14:12+), so that he responds to the courteous invitation of the rulers.

**And motioning with his hand said** - Paul gives an attention commanding gesture and thus calls them to order. This recalls Peter's actions and words in Acts 12:17 "**motioning** to them with his hand to be silent." Can't you just picture Paul making this gesture to quiet the audience who had no idea regarding the life changing message they were about to hear! A man filled with the Holy Spirit expounding the Holy Word! O, for all pastors to emulate Paul's pattern (even motioning to the congregation with their hand!) One can just see Paul [gesticulating](#) throughout the entire message! It is fascinating to watch Jewish speakers as they (like Paul) almost always speak with considerable [gesticulation](#)!



Here is a background note on the geographical context - Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe were all towns in the region of the **Roman province of Galatia** ([see map](#) and [here for map of the Roman province of Galatia in green](#) see Peter's list of the Roman provinces in 1 Peter 1:1 beginning with Pontus and going clockwise). You are asking "So what is your point?" In his letter to the Galatian churches Paul made an interesting statement - "You know that it was because of a bodily illness that I **preached the gospel to you the first time.**" (Galatians 4:13) The implication is that on this first missionary journey Paul was not in perfect health as he preached the Gospel and yet we see no hint of complaints in Luke's record! William M. Ramsay's theory (St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen) was that Paul suffered from malaria, which he contracted on the lowlands of Perga. Whatever Paul's illness, it is very likely he was not in good health when he ministered in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Note that this first preaching tour was in the province of Galatia in approximately AD 47-48. This is important to keep in mind because the first recorded letter by Paul was addressed "**to the churches** (plural) **of Galatia**" (Gal 1:2+) in approximately AD 49-50. In other words, this important letter dealing with law and grace was addressed to the churches he is preaching to in Acts 13:14 through Acts 14:26.

**Motioning** (2678) (**Kataseio** from **kata** = down + **seio** = to move, shake) means to signal (with the hand), to make a sign or gesture, to motion, to signal. To make a sign by shaking (i. e. rapidly waving) the hand, where Alexander "beckoned" to the mob at Ephesus in his attempt to restore order. (Acts 19:33). **Zodhiates** - shake violently to and fro, move backward and forward, wave the hand, beckon as a signal for silence and attention. **BDAG** - to make rapid motions, shake, wave (rapidly) (Acts 19:33). No uses in the Septuagint.

**Men of Israel** - Paul is referring to ethnic Jews. Paul repeats this double address in Acts 13:26, "sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God," indicating that Paul clearly was conscious of his mission to the Gentiles even when preaching in the Jewish synagogue. In light of that fact, it seems that Paul spoke in Greek not Hebrew and in fact the language he uses in allusions to the OT Scriptures is highly influenced by the Septuagint, which is the Greek version of the OT.

**And you who fear God** - (NIV - you who worship God) Like Cornelius in Acts 10:2. Here Paul is referring to the Gentiles who had become affiliated with the Jews and who revered the God of Israel. (See also [note](#) on **proselytes** - Acts 13:43). That the Gospel was also for the Gentiles (even the God fearers) would have caused some stirring in the audience.

In Acts 10:35 Peter had declared that "in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him."

The Gentiles who were attending the synagogue had been exposed to the Old Testament passages and thus were prepared for Paul's presentation and arguments ([apologetic](#)) regarding Jesus in the [Messianic Prophecies](#). As an aside, Paul was practicing what he would later command his disciple Timothy to practice - **Preach** ([aorist imperative](#) = "Just Do It!") the Word! (2 Ti 4:2+).

Puritan **Charles Bridges** defines **fear of God** as "that affectionate reverence by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father's law. His wrath is so bitter, and His love so sweet; that hence springs an earnest desire to please Him, and—because of the danger of coming short from his own weakness and temptations—a holy watchfulness and fear, 'that he might not sin against Him.'" (**ED**: cf Joseph's attitude in Ge 39:7, 8, 9)

**NET Note on you who fear God** - this is practically a technical term for the category called God-fearers, Gentiles who worshiped the God of Israel and in many cases kept the Mosaic law, but did not take the final step of circumcision necessary to become a proselyte to Judaism.

**Listen** - The aorist imperative means "Just do it!" and calls for the congregation to listen even with a sense of urgency (Today is always "the day of salvation!" - 2 Cor 6:2). What follows is a message some might refer to as an [apologetic sermon](#) especially in the section where Paul uses [Messianic Prophecy](#) to point to the fact that the OT pointed to and was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ.

**William MacDonald** summarizes Paul's sermon - His general plan of attack was to lay a foundation of Jewish history, then to bring his hearers up to the events connected with the life and ministry of Christ, then to proclaim the resurrection of Christ with considerable emphasis, announce remission of sins through the Savior, and warn of the peril of rejecting Him. (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**Steven Cole** - The sermon falls into three parts, each beginning with Paul's direct address to the congregation:

1. The promise given (Acts 13:16-25);
2. the promise kept (Acts 13:26-37); and,
3. your response (Acts 13:38-41).

We have here only a synopsis of what undoubtedly was a much longer message. His main idea is: God's promise to send a Savior and His fulfillment of that promise in sending Jesus demands a response. ([Acts 13:13-41 The God Who Keeps His Promise](#))

**Gaebelein** - The discourse of the Apostle contains three parts.

1. A historical retrospect, which forms the introduction of his address. Acts 13:17-25.
2. The proclamation of the Gospel of the Son of God. Acts 13:26-39
3. The solemn warning. Acts 13:40-41.

**Daniel DeSilva** ([article](#)) has the following Outline of Paul's Sermon:

- THE HISTORICAL NARRATION (Acts 13:16–25)
- THE PRESENTATION OF THE KERYGMA (Acts 13:26–31)
- THE ARGUMENT FROM SCRIPTURE (Acts 13:32–37)
- THE CONCLUSION OF THE SPEECH (Acts 13:38–41)

**John MacArthur** comments that "Although this is the first of his sermons recorded in Acts, Paul was hardly a novice preacher. He had preached in Damascus immediately after his conversion (Acts 9:20), during his three years in Arabia (Gal. 1:15–18), and while serving as a pastor at Antioch (Acts 13:1). Indeed, he could not help but preach (1 Cor. 9:16), since it was for that purpose that the Lord had called him (Acts 26:15–20; 1 Cor. 1:17, 21–23; 2 Cor. 5:19–20; Rom. 15:19; Eph. 3:8; Col. 1:25, 28; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11). Paul's words to the believers at Rome reflect the importance he placed on preaching: "How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher" (Rom. 10:14)? His words to Timothy are the classic call to this responsibility: "Preach the word." (2 Tim, 4:2) To Titus he said, "Speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine," and, "Speak ... with all authority" (Titus 2:1, 15), emphasizing that preaching is to be doctrinal and authoritative." (Ibid)

In another place **MacArthur** wrote, "Sadly, many in the church today do not share Paul's commitment to preaching the Word. There is a dearth of biblically sound preaching, creating "a famine on the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11).

Pastor **Jack Andrews** adds "From today's pulpits come the uncertain sounds of psychology, relational chitchat, social commentary, storytelling, shallow homilies, and political rhetoric. Many view preaching as an anachronism in today's era of user-friendly, entertainment-oriented churches. Programs, intractable church members, and administrative details eat away at the preparation time of those pastors who do want to preach. While many downplay the significance of biblical preaching, it is nonetheless vital to a spiritually strong church. The preacher represents Christ to his people, reinforcing the concept of authority and submission within the body of Christ. Turning the church into a therapy group or entertainment center undermines that authority. Strong biblical preaching also upholds the authority of God's Word. How strange it is that many who affirm the inerrancy of the Bible fail to preach it expositionally." Thank God for fearless preachers of the word of God like Paul who would stand and say "Thus saith the Lord!" (The Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts - Volume 4)

**Rackham summarizes Paul's sermon** and compares it with that of Stephen in Acts 7:2-60 and Peter in Acts 2:14-40 - The sermon falls into three parts: I (Acts 13:17–25) the introduction; II (Acts 13:26–37) the gospel; III (Acts 13:38–41) the practical appeal.

I. Like Stephen Paul begins by giving a survey of the history of Israel. At the same time his originality and independence of mind is obvious. To Stephen the history gives the doctrine of the Messiah, contained in types: to Paul it is the actual preparation for the Messiah's coming. With Stephen the great prototype is Moses the mediator: with Paul it is David the king.

II. The gospel which Paul 'preached to the Galatians the first time' is the same as Peter's—a proclamation of the facts of the crucifixion and resurrection. The presentation of the facts is varied; thus mention of the burial is added. There is also an advance in the Christology. Jesus is Saviour (Acts 13:23) and King. But beyond this he is the Son of God. And sonship,—of Israel, of the Christ, of the believers,—is the thought which runs throughout.

III. The moral is the same—the offer of forgiveness of sins. Only here again there is a new application in the form which has ever since been specially associated with S. Paul, viz. the doctrine of justification by faith. Lastly the apostle concludes with the warning of judgement.

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**Spurgeon** - "PAUL'S mode of preaching, as illustrated by this chapter, [Acts 13] was first of all to appeal to the understanding with a clear exposition of doctrinal Truths of God and then to impress those Truths upon the emotions of his hearers with earnest and forcible exhortations. This is an excellent model for revivalists. They must not give exhortation without Doctrine, for if so, they will be like men who are content with burning powder in their guns, but have omitted the shot! It is the Doctrine we preach, the Truth we

deliver which God will make a power to bless men."

**Acts 13:17 "The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. ([NASB95](#))**

KJV 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.

- **The God of this people Israel chose our fathers** Acts 7:2-53; Genesis 12:1-3; 17:7,8; Deuteronomy 4:37; 7:6-8; 9:5; 14:2; Nehemiah 9:7,8; Ps 105:6-12,42,43; 135:4; Isaiah 41:8,9; 44:1; Jeremiah 33:24-26; 1 Peter 2:9
- **made the people great** Acts 7:17; Exodus 1:7-9; Deuteronomy 10:22; Ps 105:23,24
- **and with an uplifted arm** Acts 7:36; Ex 6:1-14; 15:1-21; Ex 18:11; Deut 4:20,34; 7:19; 1 Sa 4:8; Neh 9:9-12; Ps 77:13-20; 78:12,13,42-53; 105:26-39; 106:7-11; Ps 114:1-8; 135:8-10; 136:10-15; Isa 63:9-14; Jer 32:20,21; Amos 2:10; Micah 6:4; 7:15,16
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A RUN THROUGH THE BIBLE

Years ago I went to a [Walk Thru the Bible](#) course on the Old Testament that took most of a Saturday. Here Paul in his longest sermon in a Jewish [synagogue](#) does "walk" thru the OT. He "runs" through the OT, sprinting, flying over the high points of the history of the Jews. His goal is to get to David, Israel's greatest king, which he will use as a launching point to describe the One greater than David. Paul will build his case for Christ by establishing common ground using Old Testament Scriptures (which some such as [Andy Stanley say is no longer "relevant!"](#)) familiar to the Jews (and to some degree to the Gentile God fearers).

**Peterson** - Tannehill notes that, 'like Jesus (Luke 4:18–21) and Peter (Acts 2:14–40), Paul makes a major statement near the beginning of his new mission. His speech resembles that of Jesus in setting (a synagogue service with reading of Scripture) and resembles Peter's in points of content'. This sermon functions as a model of Paul's synagogue preaching, paralleling the preaching of Peter in some respects, but with its own distinctive emphases. As well as being evangelistic, it demonstrates how Christians engaged in a defence of their gospel from the Jewish Scriptures. (Pillar NT Commentary)

**Steven Ger** points out that "Initially, Paul's sermon bears resemblance to Stephen's trial speech. As had Stephen, Paul briefly presents a drastically summarized review of Israel's history to reinforce his main argument, that although God had always made awe-inspiring provision for His chosen people, they, nonetheless, were often unreceptive and even scornful of that provision.

**Ray Stedman** - Perhaps you have noticed that the introduction is of the same style as Stephen's great message, recorded in the seventh chapter of Acts (Acts 7:1, 2-60+). Stephen had stood before the Sanhedrin, of which Saul of Tarsus was a member, and had recounted the history of Israel in order to try to awaken these stubborn Jews to an understanding of God's love and concern, and of his sovereign direction of their nation. **Paul never forgot the power of that message.** It had reached to his own heart, had cut through all the bigotry and egotism, and had planted a seed of faith in his heart which was ultimately to result in his conversion. So here he is following the same tactics as Stephen. But notice that, though this introduction is history, **it is not history as we usually read it.** Most of the history books that I have read center upon certain men -- men who have done certain deeds, either great or foul. Men like Hitler, or George Washington, or Winston Churchill, outstanding personalities, men with what the world calls "charisma" -- they leave their mark upon an age. History, as we usually read it, is a study of the deeds and influence of men, but not this history. **You will notice that this history centers on God. It is God who is working.** Now, this is history as it ought to be written! If we could read history as it really was, it would read something like this. The apostle points out eleven different instances of what God did:

"God... chose our fathers, and made the people great, ... he led them out of Egypt." "God bore with them in the wilderness." "God destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, and gave them their land as an inheritance."  
"God gave them Judges..." "Then they asked for a king; and God gave them Saul." "And when he [God] had removed him, he raised up David." And finally, "God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised."

It all culminates in the coming of the Lord Jesus Himself. And then he cites John's testimony to the greatness of Jesus. This was a telling blow because, out in the provinces away from Jerusalem, John the Baptist was regarded as a great prophet. But here Paul quotes his testimony to the fact that the One who was coming after him was so great that John himself said he was not worthy to untie His shoe. That is the introduction. The second division is in Verses 26-31. Here you have the timeless facts of the gospel: the

ministry, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Jesus. ([Acts 13:13-52 The Radical Word](#))

## GOD IS THE GOD OF ISRAEL

**The God of this people Israel** - Note Paul's emphasis on **God** the Father (chose...made...led) in this verse, a focus which continues through the remainder of the sermon (see following passages for allusions to God the Father). **John Stott** adds that "Paul's emphasis is on God's initiative of grace. For he is the subject of nearly all the verbs."

**Jack Arnold** rightly says that "Because of his knowledge of Israel's history, Paul was able to gain the respect of the Jews he was addressing so they would listen to what he said. Paul did not jump right into the truth that "Jesus Christ is your Messiah" with the Jews. He was very tactful and scholarly and established rapport with his audience before he hit them squarely between the eyes with Christ." This is a good pattern for us as we present the Gospel ([Paul's First Recorded Sermon](#))

**David Jeremiah** wrote that "The 'big idea' of Paul's sermon is the sovereignty of God that God has been, and is, in charge of everything. His audience is Jewish—they know their Bible—and he is going to trace the sovereign actions of God through the history of Israel, culminating in God's sovereign provision of a Savior—Messiah."

**Spurgeon** speaking of God's sovereignty once said, "Men love God everywhere but on the throne."

### Related Resource:

- [What does it mean that God is sovereign?](#)

**Chose our fathers** - Paul alludes to the patriarchs in Genesis (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) and uses "our" to identify with his Jewish audience. They did not chose God. God chose them! Just as God chose the nation of Israel. They did not pick God, but the God of grace (undeserved favor) picked them!

Paul then moves to Exodus, as he focuses not on the individual patriarchs but on the entire nation of Israel. He emphasizes Israel's having been chosen by God which would recall to his Jewish audience the words from the Torah when Moses address the second generation of the nation as they were preparing to enter the "Promised Land"...

"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 **"The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you** because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers (ALLUDING TO THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT), the LORD brought you out (OF EGYPT) by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deut 7:6-8)

**Chose** (1586) ([eklego](#) from **ek** = out, out of, out from + **légo** = select, choose) (see also word study on related word [eklektos](#)) means literally to select out, single out or choose out of. The idea in **eklego** speaks of the sizable number from which the selection is made. It implies the taking of a smaller number out of a larger. For example, in secular use, Virgil's *Eclogues* (from eklego) are short, selected excerpts taken from a more larger collection of poems. Of course any mention of election or choosing stirs up all manner of emotions in many people. In the context of the present passage note that although Paul uses the verb which is central to the doctrine of election, he is not referring to that doctrine which deals with individuals. He is referring to His election of the nation of Israel, or stated another way to "national election." This clearly does not equate with salvation of the nation of Israel for even in this sermon Paul will explain to them the way of justification when an individual is saved by grace through faith. In addition, **eklego** means to choose out for oneself, **but does not** imply rejection of those not chosen. Thus in the present context the selection of Israel is the sovereign act of God of choosing out from among all of mankind a nation for Himself.

**Luke's** uses of **eklego** - Lk. 6:13; Lk. 9:35; Lk. 10:42; Lk. 14:7; Acts 1:2 ("the apostles whom He had chosen"); Acts 1:24; Acts 6:5; Acts 13:17; Acts 15:7; Acts 15:22; Acts 15:25

**And made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt**- He is referring to "great" in terms of numerous. Moses explains that "the sons of Israel were fruitful and **increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty**, so that the land was filled with them. 8 Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are **more and mightier** than we." (Exodus 1:7-9)

Notice that **made great** is more literal in the KJV (CSB, NAB, YLT) = God **"exalted"** them! He raised the nation of Israel in rank, character, and status, not because they deserved it but because it was His gracious desire to do so.

**Larkin** - Israel knew great blessing during its sojourn in Egypt, for God literally **"exalted"** them by greatly increasing their numbers (Ex 1:7) (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**MacArthur** on **made the people great** - The growth of the nation (cf. Ex 12:37) was phenomenal! It grew from 70 men to 603,000 males, 20 years of age and older, thus allowing for a total population of about 2 million (Nu 1:46) departing from Egypt. The seed of Abraham was no longer an extended family, but a nation. The promise that his descendants would be fruitful and multiply (Ge 35:11, 12) had indeed been fulfilled in Egypt.

**Exalted** (5312) (**hupsoo** from **hupsos** = height, elevation) means to lift up spatially, to raise high. Figuratively as used by Paul **hupsoo** describes lifting up to a place of honor, fame, power, or position, thus to exalt as in the KJV. In addition the verb **hupsoo** is related to "uplifted" (**hupselos**) used in Paul's next description.

**THOUGHT** - One has to wonder is intentionally using **hupsoo** to describe the nation's exaltation as a way of preparing for his presentation of Messiah. Why do I say that? Because John used this same verb **hupsoo** as a reference to the **crucifixion** in Jn 3:14, Jesus Himself declaring "'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.'" (cf similar uses of **hupsoo** in John 8:28, 12:32, 34. In addition **hupsoo** in other contexts describes Jesus' **ascension** to the right hand of His Father's throne in Acts 2:33 **"having been exalted** to the right hand of God" and in Acts 5:31 "He is the one whom God **exalted** to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

All uses of **hupsoo** -

Matt. 11:23; Matt. 23:12; Lk. 1:52; Lk. 10:15; Lk. 14:11; Lk. 18:14; Jn. 3:14; Jn. 8:28; Jn. 12:32; Jn. 12:34; Acts 2:33; Acts 5:31; Acts 13:17; 2 Co. 11:7; Jas. 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6

**Their stay** is more literally their **sojourn** which describes a temporary stay in a location.

**And with an uplifted arm He led them out from it** (Ex 6:6; Deut 1:31; 26:5, 8)- Notice Paul's emphasis on God's sovereignty by observing his repeated use of the little pronoun **"HE"** eight times in Acts 13:17-22 - Acts 13:17, 18, 19, 20, 22 (Beginning with a heavy emphasis on God is always a good way to begin!). **Uplifted arm** is an **anthropomorphism** of which points to His power over the nation of Egypt (and their false gods). Notice that Paul does not magnify Moses but the Master! It was God's "uplifted arm" that redeemed Israel out of slavery! Paul is building his case for the Messiah Who, by His body being lifted up on the Cross and then raised from the dead (Acts 13:34), would lead men, Jews and Gentiles, out of their miserable existence as slaves to their harsh taskmaster sin (cf forgiveness of sins - Acts 13:38, 39).

So God was the One behind Moses who literally lifted up his arm as when the nation crossed the Red Sea just as directed by God - "As for you (MOSES), **lift up your staff and stretch out your hand** over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land." (Ex 14:16). It is notable that Paul does not even mention the name of **Moses** until Acts 13:39, where he describes the superiority of Jesus the Mediator (1 Ti 2:5) of a better covenant (Heb 8:6).

**MacArthur** - The phrase **with an uplifted arm**, denoting His power (Ps. 89:10, 13, 21; 136:12; Isa. 40:10; 51:9; 62:8; Jer. 21:5; 27:5; 32:17, 21; Ezek. 20:33-34), became the common expression of God's deliverance of the nation from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 6:6; Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 9:29; 26:8; 2 Kings 17:36; Ps. 44:3). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**Uplifted** (5308) (**hupselos** from **hupsos/hypsos** = height, elevation) literally means high, raised, elevated. In Hebrews 7:26 Jesus the High Priest is described as **"exalted** above the heavens." In the Septuagint **hupselos** describes how God would redeem Israel from Egyptian bondage "with an outstretched (Lxx = **hupselos**) arm and with great judgments." (Ex 6:6, cf use of **hupselos** in Ps 136:12). **Hupselos** is used in the Septuagint of Dt 5:15

You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an **outstretched** (Lxx = **hupselos** = uplifted) arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day.

**Acts 13:18 "For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness.**

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

- **For a period of about forty years** Acts 7:36,39-43; Ex 16:2,35; Nu 14:22,33,34; Dt 9:7,21-24; Neh 9:16-21; Ps 78:17-42; Ps 95:8-11; Ps 106:13-29; Ezekiel 20:10-17; Amos 5:25,26; 1 Corinthians 10:1-10; Hebrews 3:7-10,16-19

- **He put up with them in the wilderness**, Dt 1:31
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD "PUT UP" WITH HIS REBELLIOUS NATION

Paul has described Israel as God's special people, God's strong power and now he emphasizes God's steadfast lovingkindness and patience with Israel.

**Steven Ger** - God had sovereignly chosen the Jewish patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, confirming with them an unconditional covenant (Gen. 12:1-7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-12; 26:3-5; 18:13-15). In fulfillment of promises He had made to the Jewish patriarchs, God miraculously delivered their children, the Israelites, from Egyptian bondage (Deut. 7:7-8; Ex. 6:6). However, continually scornful of their miraculous deliverance from Egypt and ungrateful for God's provision in the wilderness, the Israelites, through divine judgment, were condemned to wander for an additional forty years prior to entering the promised land, until the disdainful generation had died (Num. 14:34). Paul notes that God graciously demonstrated mercy by His "putting up" with them, *trophophoreō*, "to patiently bear with one's ill manners and foul moods" for forty years.

**For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness-** God put up with Israel's rebellion, apathy, complaining. God provided for them manna from heaven, water from the rock, shoes and garments that didn't wear out! God was patient with the people until the older unbelieving generation died off. Israel was punished for refusing to enter God's promise of the land of Canaan, their refusal to possess their possessions being an affront to God's power, faithfulness, etc. Israel sowed the wind (40 days), but they reaped the whirlwind (40 years) (Beloved, mark it down - the **deceitfulness of sin** [Heb 3:13+] usually gives us back considerably more grief, and for much longer than it gives when we experience passing pleasure! cf Hosea 8:7, Gal 6:7-8+). And so God decreed...

According to the number of days which you spied out the land, **forty days**, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even **forty years**, and you will know My opposition. (Numbers 14:34)

Sin will take you further than you ever wanted to stray!  
Cost you more than you ever dreamed you would pay!  
Keep you longer than you ever thought you would stay!

Here is a good "summary" verse of what God put up with (or "suffered" as in KJV) in the wilderness - "The whole congregation of the sons of Israel **grumbled** against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness." (Ex 16:2,35) For more details read Nu 14:22,33,34; Dt 9:7,21-24; Neh 9:16-21; Ps 78:17-42; Ps 95:8-11; Ps 106:13-29.

**THOUGHT - H. A Ironside** said, "How sad much of the history of the Church is, but God has borne with our manners in the wilderness when we have acted like fretful, irritable children (ED: DEAR READER - CAN YOU IDENTIFY! I CAN!). He has dealt with us in such loving kindness not only collectively but individually. Too many of us can look back over the years and see how we have failed the Lord (ED: TIMES WITHOUT NUMBER), but He has never failed us. He has undertaken for us so graciously. How our hearts ought to thank Him for His loving-kindness." (ED: AND ALL GOD'S PEOPLE SHOUT "AMEN!")

**Put up with** (5159)(*trophophoreo trophophoreo* from **tropos** = manner, way + **phoreo** = to bear constantly, to endure) means to be tolerant toward someone's disposition, manners, moods and to bear or put up with someone's manner, moods, etc. "To be patient with the difficult or idiosyncratic manners and conduct of others." (Zodhiates) The idea is to be very patient. **Alternatively**, Paul's statement is probably based on Dt 1:31 which says "in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God **carried** you (Dt 1:31NKJ) which could also be translated "fed as a nurse." ("He cared for them" - see "Technical Note" below) Most translations have the idea of "put up with," but both statements are true (cf (Deut. 2:7; 8:2, 4; 29:5; Neh. 9:21). In the final analysis it all boils down to a failure to trust the Lord! Here is Moses lament..

In the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place.' But **for all this, you did not trust the LORD your God**, (Deut 1:31-32)

**TECHNICAL NOTE** - Thayer also has the variant verb *Trophophoreo* (note the only difference is the addition of an "h") which he defines as "to bear like a nurse or mother, i. e. to take the most anxious and tender care of: Acts 13:18 - marginal reading "bear as a nursing-father").

The passage in Deuteronomy 1:31 ("how the LORD your God **carried** you, just as a man **carries** his son"), has the verb *trophophoreo* twice in the Septuagint and this verb is defined as "bear up or carry in one's arms as a nurse, i.e. take care of; metaphorically, of God's care of Israel in the exodus wanderings."

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## Acts 13:13-23 Tough To Love By Dennis Fisher

Now for a time of about forty years [God] put up with their ways in the wilderness. —Acts 13:18

Years ago I was a camp counselor for some rebellious boys. I found it challenging to deal with their behavior. They would mistreat the animals at the petting zoo and occasionally fight among themselves. So I adopted a calm and firm approach to leading them. And although they often exasperated me, I always made sure their physical needs were taken care of.

Even though I had a kind and loving exterior, I often felt on the inside that I was just "putting up with them." That caused me to prayerfully reflect on how a loving heavenly Father provides for His rebellious children. In telling the story of the Israelites during the exodus, Paul said, "For a time of about forty years [God] put up with their ways in the wilderness" (Acts 13:18). In Greek "put up with" most likely means to patiently provide for people's needs despite an ungrateful response.

Some people may not react favorably to our efforts to show care and concern. When this happens, it may help to remember that God is patient with us. And He has given us His Spirit to help us respond with love to those who are hard to love or who are ungrateful (Gal. 5:22-23).

Give us Your patience, Lord, for anyone in our lives who is difficult to love.

I want the love that sweetly bears  
Whate'er my Father's hand may choose to send;  
I want the love that patiently endures  
The wrongs that come from enemy or friend. —Anon.

Be as patient with others as God has been with you.

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**Acts 13:19 "When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance--all of which took about four hundred and fifty years. (NASB95)**

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

- **When He had destroyed seven nations** Acts 7:45; Deuteronomy 7:1; Joshua 24:11; Nehemiah 9:24; Ps 78:55
- **in the land of Canaan** Genesis 12:5; 17:8; Ps 135:11Canaan
- **He distributed their land as an inheritance** Numbers 26:53-56; Joshua 14:1; 18:10; 23:4; Ps 78:55
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### GOD GRANTED ISRAEL THEIR INHERITANCE

Paul now describes God's granting the second generation of Israelites possession of the land of Israel as their inheritance, in fulfillment of the promises contained in the Abrahamic Covenant. Keep in mind that Paul's basic thrust is to clearly show that God is sovereign, that **History**, including the History of Israel is "**His Story**." As **Gangel** says "The verbs attributed to God are crucial in the entire sermon: God chose, God prospered, God led, God endured, God overthrew, and God gave."

**When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan** - Yes, Joshua had to lead Israel to fight the battles, but Paul gives God the full credit for all their triumphs (WHICH IS ALSO TRUE OF ALL OUR "TRIUMPHS" BELOVED), for as Scripture says "The battle is the Lord's." (1 Sa 17:47) **Canaan** was not a single nation but stood for 7 nations in the geographic area of Palestine named "the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and stronger than you." (Dt 7:1, cf Josh 3:10; 24:11)

**Destroyed** (tore down)(2507)(**kathaireo** from **kata** = down + **haireo** = to take for oneself) means to cause something or someone to be lowered. To take or bring down (Of our Lord Jesus from the Cross - Mark 15:36, 46, Lk 23:53, Acts 13:29; of buildings - Lk12:18) or to bring something down from one point to another. Figuratively **kathaireo** speaks of bringing down rulers (Lk 1:52 - overthrowing them, taking away their power). In the presence context the idea is destroying, overthrowing, conquering evil nations (Acts 13:19, cf evil idols Acts 19:27)

**He distributed their land as an inheritance** - The idea is their promised possession was divided up and distributed by lot.

Note the Greek Textus Receptus has a different verb **kataklerodoteo** which means to distribute by, or according to lot or for an inheritance. The NA27 uses **katakleronomeo**.

**Distributed...as inheritance** (2624) (**katakleronomeo** from **kata** - down, according to, distributive, entirely + **kleronomeo** - to be an heir or obtain an inheritance by casting lots from **kleros** = lot) This verb teaches that the children of Israel cast lots for the promised land (Nu 26:55; 33:54; Josh. 14:1, 2; 16:4) **Gilbrant** adds that "God apportioned to each tribe in Israel their piece of real estate by lot. In so doing He made them temporary owners. God kept possession of the title to the land, as was evidenced when He evicted the Israelites during the Babylonian captivity. They could inhabit the land as long as they lived a life-style pleasing to God, the Holy One of Israel." (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

Only one use in NT but many uses in the Septuagint -

Num. 13:30; Num. 33:54; Num. 34:13; Num. 34:18; Deut. 1:38; Deut. 2:21; Deut. 2:22; Deut. 3:20; Deut. 3:28; Deut. 12:10; Deut. 12:29; Deut. 15:4; Deut. 18:14; Deut. 19:1; Deut. 19:14; Deut. 25:19; Deut. 26:1; Deut. 31:3; Deut. 31:7; Jos. 12:1; Jos. 13:32; Jos. 14:1; Jos. 19:51; Jos. 21:3; Jos. 21:43; Jos. 22:19; Jos. 23:5; Jos. 24:8; Jdg. 2:6; Jdg. 11:24; Jdg. 18:9; 1 Sam. 2:8; 2 Sam. 7:1; 1 Chr. 28:8; Ps. 37:34; Ps. 82:8; Isa. 14:2; Jer. 3:18; Ezek. 22:16; Ezek. 45:8; Ezek. 46:18; Ezek. 47:13; Ezek. 47:14; Amos 2:10; Obad. 1:17; Obad. 1:19; Hab. 1:6; Zech. 2:12; Zech. 8:12;

**All of which took about four hundred and fifty years** - There is some disagreement on the best explanation of this time period, but most commentators divide the 450 into 3 aliquots (1) Israel's 400 years in Egypt (cf Acts 7:6) (2) Israel's 40 years of wilderness wandering (3) About 10 years to conquer and settle the Promised Land (Approximate dates - 1845-1395 BC)

**Ger on 450 years** - In Acts 13:19, Paul mentions that these historical events took place over a 450 year period, which would include the four centuries during which the Israelites were in Egypt, from 1846 B.C. through the Exodus in 1446 B.C., the subsequent forty years of wilderness wanderings under Moses, from 1446 B.C. through 1406 B.C., and the seven years it took under Joshua's leadership to conquer the land of Canaan, from 1406 B.C. through 1399 B.C.. This creates a total of four hundred forty-seven years, rounded up by Paul to four hundred fifty years.

### Acts 13:20 "After these things He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet."

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

- **He gave them judges** Judges 2:16; 3:10; Ruth 1:1; 1 Samuel 12:11; 2 Samuel 7:11; 2 Kings 23:22; 1 Chronicles 17:6
- **until Samuel the prophet** 1 Samuel 3:20
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SUMMARY OF THE SHAMEFUL TIME OF THE JUDGES

**After these things** - Time phrase. When? After the second generation of Israel from Egypt had settled in Canaan. In the context of Israel's history, this time phrase marks the inception of a horrible period in the history of the nation as they began a shameful, downward, sin-filled spiral which was repeated many times as summarized in the "painful" book of Judges!

Paul is moving rapidly in his historical review section of this sermon. And as we can imagine, the Jews were for the most part enjoying this review of their nation's history. which may be why Paul summarizes Judges with only a short phrase **He gave them judges!** One could summarize Judges as "Failure Through Compromise."

**THOUGHT** - Remember that Israel's rebellion and sin in the Old Testament is a picture of every person's fallen flesh, our depraved nature which continually seeks to seduce us and ensnare us causing us to sin. "Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren!" (James 1:14-16+). And remember the remedial, judgmental actions God was forced to take regarding Israel, actions which should serve as a strong warning to us. May God's Spirit and Word grant us His power and grace in Christ so that it will not be written on our tombstone (so to speak) after our short sojourn on earth



## "Failure Through Compromise!"

While Paul's sermon bears some similarity to Stephen's sermon in Acts 7:1-60+, which was very historical, Stephen placed greater emphasis Israel's rebellion while Paul emphasized God's grace to the nation.

**MacArthur** points out that "After they took possession of the land, the people of Israel continued to be unfaithful, but God continued to be faithful. When they were oppressed by their enemies, **He gave them judges** (deliverers)." (Ibid)

(Judges 2:16+) Then (When? see Jdg 2:15) the LORD raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them.

**He gave them judges** - The **judges** were deliverers given by God to preserve Israel from destruction. The period of the Judges was summed up in Judges 21:25+ "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Notice that last phrase -- even though they were doing wrong, in their own eyes they thought they were doing right! This is a perfect illustration of the power of self-deception! And what many saints today do not realize is the period of Judges covers some 350 years or **25% of Israel's history in the OT!** (Click here to see a Timeline of major events). And Paul summarizes this period in 4 words!

As noted above this was a horrible time in Israel's history with repeated cycles of sin shown schematically below...



Click to Enlarge

Other ways to describe Israel's repeated cycle of sin and rebellion during the period of the Judges include...

- Rest > Rebellion > Retribution > Repentance > Restoration
- Sin > Suffering/Servitude > Supplication > Salvation
- Apathy > Apostasy > Affliction > Answered Prayer
- Disobedience > Desperation > Deliverance

**Until** - Time phrase. This one "until" for which Jews should shout "Hallelujah!" **Until** describes something happening or done up to a particular point in time, and then stopping. God brought an end to the shameful period of the Judges by raising up a prophet named Samuel who as the last judge would bring the period of the Judges to an end (the [terminus ad quem](#)).

**THOUGHT** - I was teaching a class on Judges and one of the young men (a good student) became very upset because the horrible events in Judges were so disturbing. This is a book the modern church would do well to become familiar. It would not be enjoyable but it would be eye opening and ultimately it would be a warning of what can happen when there is "no King!" If you have never taught it or preached it, you need to prayerfully consider it for such a time as this.

**Swindoll** summarizes the period preceding "**until**" - During this time, the Israelites followed a downward spiral marked by a repeating pattern: disobedience earned affliction, affliction prompted repentance, repentance brought rescue, rescue inspired revival, and then revival dissolved into deeper disobedience. Finally, the moral decay became so acute (**ED**: IF YOU NEED TO SEE HOW GREAT THE DECAY WAS TAKE A MOMENT AND READ Judges 17:1 thru Jdg 19:30) that God appointed the prophet Samuel to lead the nation (Acts 13:20). (Ibid)

**Samuel the prophet** - Samuel was the last judge and was also a prophet (Acts 3:24, 1 Sa 3:20) and formed the "bridge" to the period of the kings of Israel. As we see in Acts 13:21, it did not take the rebellious nation long to reject the leadership of God's prophet Samuel!

**Related Resource:**

- [Who was Samuel in the Bible?](#)

**Acts 13:21** "Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty

KJV 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.

- **Then they asked for a king** 1 Samuel 8:5-22; 12:12-19
- **God gave them Saul** 1 Samuel 10:1,21-26; 11:15; 15:1
- **the son of Kish** 1 Samuel 9:1,2; 10:21
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ISRAEL IS STILL NOT SATISFIED WITH GOD'S GIFTS

Keep the context in mind - God gave Abraham a covenant, delivered Israel from Egypt, miraculously destroyed seven nations and brought Israel into their land (even though they had rebelled against Him), and then gave them judges to help rule the land. And yet in spite of all the goodness and grace of God, Israel still was not content, and now demanded rule by a human king rather than a divine King. They were tired of a theocracy and desired a monarchy!

**Then** (KJV = and afterward)(2547)(akeithen from **kai** = and + **ekeithen** = adverb of place, from there) in Acts 13:21 denotes extension of time - and then, and afterward. More commonly it refers to an extension of place = and from there, and from that place.

**akeithen** - 11v - from there - Mk. 9:30; Lk. 11:53; Acts 7:4; Acts 13:21; Acts 14:26; Acts 16:12; Acts 20:15; Acts 21:1; Acts 27:4; Acts 28:15. Lxx - 2 Ki 2:25

**They asked for a king** - God is sovereign and as such was to be the "Sovereign" (King) of Israel. But they rejected God as their king and wanted an earthly king like all of the other nations. How sad when our sin so deceives our heart and blinds our spiritual vision that we cannot see God's best which is in plain sight, but we instead opt for something far less than His best, a choice that always leads to inferior results, and sometimes even has destructive consequences. Eventually Israel's decision would lead to her destruction (722 BC ten northern tribes taken into exile in Assyria and 586 BC Judah and Benjamin taken to Babylon and Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed!). It took a while for the consequences of Israel's rejection to bear their the rotten fruit, but God's justice always prevails. We too need to remember this principle in our lives!

Here is a summary of Israel's request for a king...

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; And they said to him, **Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.** 6 But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. 7 The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for **they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.** 8 "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. 9 "Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them." 10 So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had **asked** (Hebrew = [shaal](#), the root of [Shaul](#) = proper name "Saul") a of him a king. (1 Sa 8:4-10, see also 1 Sa 8:19, 10:20-21, 24, 11:15)

**Asked** (154)([aiteo](#)) means to ask for something or make petition. It can mean to ask with a sense of urgency and even to the point of demanding (which is a good description of Israel's request in the OT). Note that **asked** is in the reflexive middle voice, signifying they "asked **for themselves.**" In short, in their rebellious hearts, they took matters into their own hands!

**And God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years** (see 1 Sa 9:1-2 - note emphasis on external, not internal, not his heart! Contrast 1 Sa 16:7) - Israel asked for a king and God gave them Saul, whose name means "Asked (of Yah)." (see 1 Sa 8:10). Israel received what they wanted, but King Saul sinned and his dynasty was cut short by his death. God put up with Israel for 40 years in the wilderness (Acts 13:18) and He put up with King Saul for 40 years! Recall that Paul was not only of the same name, but the same tribe as King Saul. It is interesting that he does not allude to Saul's sin.

1 Sa 13:13-14 Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 "But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself **a man after**

**His own heart**, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.”

Recall that Paul's Jewish name was **Saul** and was most likely given to him in honor of Israel's first king, which is interesting as Saul had a generally dishonorable reign and demise. In fact, while Paul was obedient to the will of God, his "namesake" Saul was proud, self-willed and disobedient. The length of Saul's reign **for forty years** is another reflection of God's grace! Swindoll summarizes Saul's life as a man who started "out well and then became a megalomaniac" and "ended in failure and suicide." (cf 1 Chr 10:4)

**Utle** on **forty years** - This time phrase is not found in the OT unless the OT manuscript problem connected to 1 Sam. 13:1 includes "forty" (NIV). Josephus, Antiq. 6:14:9 also mentions "forty" years. The Septuagint just omits the entire sentence and starts with 1 Sam. 3:2. "Forty" was obviously a rabbinical tradition.

#### Related Resources:

- [Who was King Saul in the Bible?](#)
- [Was King Saul saved?](#)
- [Why did God send an evil spirit to torment King Saul?](#)

**Acts 13:22 "After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.' (NASB95)**

KJV 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.

- **After He had removed him** 1 Samuel 12:25; 13:13; 15:11,23,26,28; 16:1; 28:16; 31:6; 2 Samuel 7:15; 1 Chronicles 10:13; Hosea 13:10,11
- **He raised up David to be their king** 1 Samuel 16:1,13; 2 Samuel 2:4; 5:3-5; 7:8; 1 Chronicles 28:4,5; Ps 2:6; 78:70-72; Ps 89:19,20-37; Jeremiah 33:21,26; Ezekiel 34:23; 37:24,25; Hosea 3:5
- **concerning whom He also testified** Acts 15:8; Hebrews 11:4,5
- **I HAVE FOUND DAVID** Acts 7:46; 1 Samuel 13:14; 1 Kings 15:3,5
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART

**After He had removed him** - When Saul disobeyed God's command and sacrificed some of the spoil of the Amalekites, Samuel rebuked him declaring "you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." Samuel gave the pronouncement, but it was God Who removed Saul.

**THOUGHT** - God does remove men from positions in which He has placed them and allowed them to function. If you are in leadership, be aware that protracted, presumptuous and/or public sin may well incur God's hand of removal!

**Removed** (3179)([methistemi](#) from **meta** = denoting change of place or condition + **histemi** =place, stand) literally means to remove from one place to another and speaks of a change of situation or place. This is the verb Jesus used to describe the unjust steward who was "**removed** from the management." (Lk 16:4) uses **Methistemi** was used to signify deportation of men or a removal to form a colony of which the history of Oriental Kings gave many examples-- for example, the Assyrians "transferred" Israel out of the promised land (see 2Ki 17:23) and replaced them with substitutes. There are only 5 uses in the NT - Lk. 16:4; Acts 13:22; Acts 19:26; 1 Co. 13:2; Col. 1:13.

**Gangel** explains that now Paul lands on "David, the diving board he would use to plunge into the gospel pool about Jesus. Having told his listeners that God sent Moses, he now reminds them he also sent David. After establishing God's control of history, Paul wanted to define the line of Messiah. He chose to do so with apparent emphasis on 2 Samuel 7:6–16. **With the theme of sovereignty Paul coupled the theme of grace.** God in His graciousness has done all these things. Perhaps the most gracious act of the Old Testament (apart from the deliverance from Egypt) was raising up David as a king after God's own heart. This called up 2 Samuel 7:14, and Paul would make the sonship connection very shortly.

**Longenecker** explains that "By anchoring Israel's [kerygma](#) in the messianically relevant 'son' passage of 2 Samuel 7, Paul has

begun to build a textual bridge for the Christian [kerygma](#)—which kerygma he will root in the messianic 'son' passage of Psalm 2:7. By drawing these two passages together...he will draw together Israel's confession and the church's confession, thereby demonstrating both continuity and fulfillment (EBC).

**He raised up David to be their king** - This is a reflection of God's great lovingkindness for Israel. God's removal of Saul and raising up of David reminds us that God is in sovereign control of nations Daniel recording "It is He (God) who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding." (Da 2:21+). David in contrast to Saul was obedient.

**Raised up** (1453)([egeiro](#)) means to rise (stand up) from a sitting or lying position (Mt 8:26, 9:5), to awaken from sleep (Mt 8:25). Figuratively in this passage egeiro means to raise up David to a position as king. Using this verb Paul introduces an **interesting wordplay**, for "raised up" refers to God's bringing David onto the scene of history. The same verb ([egeiro](#)) is used two more times in this same sermon to describe **Jesus' being raised from the dead** (Acts 13:30, 37+ cf Jn 2:22, 1 Cor 15:12+).

**Concerning whom He also testified and said 'I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse A MAN AFTER MY HEART**- Note that God found David, a man his own father Jesse did not see as suitable to be a king of Israel.

When they (JESSE'S SONS OTHER THAN DAVID) entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Sa 16:6-7)

**"I have found David** My servant; With My holy oil I have anointed him, (Ps 89:20)

"But now your (SAUL'S) kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself **a man after His own heart**, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you." (1 Sa 13:14)

**THOUGHT** - Paul is quoting from Ps 89:20 and 1 Sa 13:14, which makes an important point - Paul clearly had MEMORIZED SCRIPTURE. Recall Jesus had memorized Scripture in Lk 4:4, 8, 12+. Paul imitated Jesus (1 Cor 11:1+) and he calls us to imitate his pattern beloved! If you are not memorizing Scripture, you are not imitating Paul! Of all the disciplines I have practiced over the past 35 years, the most profitable by far has been Scripture memorization. If you begin this practice and stick with it, you will never regret it and you will be greatly rewarded as God's Spirit will bring to your mind passages as you share the Gospel with others. Like the NIKE commercial used to say "**JUST DO IT!**" To help motivate you "**do it**" read the **overview on Scripture Memorization** and then jump in memorizing "key" passages in the **list of topical verses** (similar to the [list of Topical Verses](#) I first learned from the Navigators). Finally, don't stop with memorization. Begin to practice the lost art of **meditation** on the passages you are memorizing (see God's incredible promises linked to meditation - Ps 1:2+, Ps 1:3+, Joshua 1:8+), reading them in context and [interrogating the text \(for, therefore, but, so that, etc\) with 5W/H](#) questions such as "*What's the for explaining?*". You will be amazed and richly rewarded as the your Teacher, the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:13+, cf Jn 14:26) **illuminates passages** teaching you truths you heretofore had not seen. It will be your "adventure of a lifetime!" And remember "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away." (Lk 21:33+)

**A MAN AFTER MY HEART** - We are all sinners, but we are not all repenters! David was both! A man after God's heart is not a **sinless** man (cf. 2 Sa 11:1-4; 2 Sa 12:9; 2 Sa 24:10, cf 1 Chr 21:1), but he is a sinner who confesses and repents (and then **šins less!**). He does not try to hide sin under the rug, but puts it under the blood (cf 1 Jn 1:6,7+, 1 Jn 1:9+ - note that "**confess**" is in the present tense = is to be our habitual practice! Does this describe your spiritual life beloved?). **Saul** was man like the first phrase in the following proverb, while **David** was depicted in the last phrase...

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper,

**BUT**

He who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

(Pr 28:13-see commentary)

**After My heart** - When God takes the measure of a man, He does not put a tape measure around his mind to see how much he knows, but He puts it around his heart, to see how much he obeys (1 Sa 15:22). Reputation is what men think of you (Saul was tall and handsome), but character is what God knows to be true about you (David a man after God's own heart)! Indeed, "the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." (2 Chr 16:9)

**THOUGHT** - Is your (my) heart completely His?

**John MacArthur** comments that "Some may question the designation of David as a **man after God's heart**. After all, he was guilty of cowardice (1 Sa 21:10-22:1), adultery (2 Sa 11:1-4), and murder (2 Sa 12:9). **A man after God's heart**, however, is not a perfect man. He is a man who sees his sin for what it is and repents of it. That David did (Ps 32:1-5, Ps 38:1-22, Ps 51:1-19+); divine chastening had a perfecting work. David may justly be termed a man after God's heart because (unlike Saul) his greatest desire came to be the doing of God's will. It was from his line that Messiah came. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

The prophet Samuel addresses King Saul in face of his disobedience to God's commands declared "But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself **a man after His own heart**, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you." (1 Sa 13:14)

**Robertson** says "The words quoted by Paul as a direct saying of God are a combination of Ps. 89:20, 21 and 1 Sa 13:14 (the word of the Lord to Samuel about David)."

Saul was not a man after God's heart, because when confronted with his sin against God, he tried to rationalize his sin saying "but the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal." (1 Sa 15:21) Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams." (1 Sa 15:22)

**Who will do all My will** ([thelema](#)) - "who will accomplish everything I want him to do." (NET) In other words David's deepest desire was to do the will of God. David's heart was to obey God in contrast to Saul's heart.

**THOUGHT** - The application of Paul's words is simple but profound - Does this phrase define your (my) heart beloved? Is His will your (my) greatest desire?

**Bob Utley - I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART'** This is not a direct quote from the OT but it seems to be a combination of Psalm 89:20 and 1 Samuel 13:14. It needs to be remembered that this sermon by Paul follows the basic pattern of Stephen's historical rendition in chapter 7. That David can be called a man after God's heart, when he was such a notorious sinner (cf. Ps. 32, 51; 2 Sam. 11), is a great encouragement to all believers. This **combination quote** implies several things.

1. This was a standard practice with the rabbis, which explains many of the unusual OT quotes in the NT.
2. This was already a part of Christian catechism. Paul often quotes from early Christian hymns and possibly other literature.
3. This quote is unique to Paul and shows that Luke must have gotten his summary of this first recorded message of Paul in Acts from Paul himself.

**Charles Swindoll** observes that "Paul's short history of Israel highlighted three facts, each with an important implication:

- Fact 1: The Lord had been faithful to Israel despite the disobedience of the people.  
Implication: He would continue to be faithful to disobedient Jews.
- Fact 2: God's form of government over Israel had evolved over time, usually in response to Israel's disobedience.  
Implication: His administration of the nation would continue to evolve, and it was about to change again.
- Fact 3: The Lord had replaced a bad king, Saul, with a good king, David.  
Implication: The Lord was again about to present a new leader. (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Acts)

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**Gotquestions - Question: "How could David be considered a man after God's own heart?"**

**Answer:** To understand why David was a man after God's own heart, we need to see what characteristics he had to qualify for such an exalted description. In the book of Acts, the apostle Paul speaks of God's feelings about King David: "After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do'" (Acts 13:22). The answer to why David was considered a man after God's own heart is found right in the verse: **David did whatever God wanted him to do**. An obvious question is how could God still call David a man after His own heart when David committed such terrible sins, including adultery and murder?

We learn much of David's character in the book of Psalms as he opened up his life for all to examine. David's life was a portrait of success and failure, and the biblical record highlights the fact that David was far from perfect. But what made David a cut above the rest was that his heart was pointed toward God. He had a deep desire to follow God's will and do "everything" God wanted him to do. He was a man after God's own heart.

Let's look at some characteristics of David's life to discover what that entails:

**Part of why David is called a man after God's own heart is that he had absolute faith in God** Nowhere in Scripture is this point better illustrated than in 1 Samuel 17 where David as a young shepherd boy fearlessly slew the Philistine, Goliath. Shortly before the duel, we see direct evidence of David's faith when David says, "'The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.' And Saul said to David, 'Go, and the LORD be with you!'" (verse 37). David was fully aware that God was in control of his life, and he had faith that God would deliver him from impending danger. How else would one venture into a potentially fatal situation with such calm and confidence? David knew early on in life that God was to be trusted and obeyed. As we see in Scripture, David's faith pleased God, and God rewards David for his faithfulness.

**Another reason David was a man after God's own heart is that he absolutely loved God's Law** Of the 150 psalms in the Bible, David is credited for writing over half of them. Writing at various and often troubling times in his life, David repeatedly mentioned how much he loved God's perfect Word. We find a beautiful example of this in Psalm 119:47–48: "For I delight in your commands because I love them. I lift up my hands to your commands, which I love, and I meditate on your decrees." It is not hard to see his complete adoration for God's Word. Also notice how David "meditates" on God's statutes. God granted David understanding and wisdom through daily meditation. We would do well to not only read God's Word but also think about it throughout the day, for God loves us to think about Him. "Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways" (Psalm 119:2–3).

**David was a man after God's own heart in that he was truly thankful** "I wash my hands in innocence, and go about your altar, O LORD, proclaiming aloud your praise and telling of all your wonderful deeds" (Psalm 26:6–7). David's life was marked by seasons of great peace and prosperity as well as times of fear and despair. But through all of the seasons in his life, he never forgot to thank the Lord for everything that he had. It is truly one of David's finest characteristics. "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!" (Psalm 100:4, ESV). As followers of Jesus Christ, we would do well to follow David's lead of offering praise through thanksgiving to our Lord.

**After he sinned, David was truly repentant.** David's sin with Bathsheba is recorded in 2 Samuel 11:2–5. The mighty fall hard, and David's fall included adultery, lying, and murder. He had sinned against God, and he admits it in 2 Samuel 12:13: "David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.' And Nathan said to David, 'The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.'" But admitting our sin and asking for forgiveness is only half of the equation. The other half is repentance, and David did that as well. Psalm 51 is David's prayer of repentance to God: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!" (Psalm 51:1–2).

In conclusion, David was a man after God's own heart because he demonstrated his faith and was committed to following the Lord. Yes, his faith was tested on a grand scale, and he failed at times. But after his sin he sought and received the Lord's forgiveness. In the final analysis, David loved God's Law and sought to follow it exactly. As a man after God's own heart, David is a role model for all of us. ([Gotquestions](#) - highly recommended site)

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### Acts 13:22 The Heart Of The Matter By David C. Egner

Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. —1 Samuel 16:7

How often are we guilty of leaving God out of our decision-making? Sometimes when we're faced with a choice, the right answer may seem obvious to us and those around us. But if we fail to ask the Lord to help us get to the heart of the matter, we might jump to a wrong conclusion.

That's what Samuel did when he set out to anoint Israel's next king. When he saw Eliab, Jesse's oldest son, Samuel was sure he had his man. Wrong! In fact, God chose the least likely of Jesse's sons, the youthful David. He was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22), but Samuel saw only the outward appearance.

Including God in decision-making is a vital principle for churches too. When seeking a new pastor or someone to lead a church ministry, we're tempted to look only at externals. We're concerned with such things as speaking skills, friendliness, and ability to inspire—and we should be. But if we haven't asked God to get us past appearances to the heart, we haven't looked deep enough. We can't read hearts, but the Lord can. He knows when someone is closely following Him.

As you make your decisions today, be sure to include God.

Not mine—not mine the choice,  
In things both great and small,  
Be Thou my Guide, my Strength,  
My Wisdom, and my All. —Bonar

If you don't want to end in failure, be sure to begin with God.

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## David - Homiletic Monthly Acts 13:22-23

David is one of the grandest men in the Bible, and his character is more fully portrayed than that of any other with one exception. The sweet singer of Israel was royally dowered with charms of the person, with gifts of the mind, and with susceptibilities of the heart; and, from a youth up, he was as one who is well beloved, and therefore rightly named. He was great in all the faculties of his soul, and has not been placed higher in the esteem of the Church than his virtues have warranted. It has been questioned how he could be called a man after God's own heart, and his crimes have been sketched with nauseating fulness. But the Church no more defends them than he did or the Bible.

### I. WHY THEN ARE HIS SINS SO FULLY PRESENTED?

1. That we may see how full of infirmity are the best of men.
2. That we may see how efficacious grace is to overcome them.
3. That we may see how bitter is the sorrow of the truly penitent, and how wide is the door of mercy.

### II. WHY IS HE CALLED A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART?

1. David was chosen by God.
2. As thus chosen he would more strictly observe the revealed will of God.
3. David was a man of fervent piety, of swift repentance, and of the deepest spiritual aspirations.
4. He was large-hearted, true as a friend, affectionate as a father, and ever ready to be reconciled with his foes — to forgive and forget. In these attributes of a fatherly heart he resembled God.

### III. THREE INFERENCES FROM HIS HISTORY.

1. This life is not an encouragement to commit sin or to continue in sin, but an encouragement to those struggling to be delivered from their sins.
2. Any one may be called a man after God's own heart, if his life is marked by the same religious fervour, by the same sincere penitence, and by the same deep longings after God by day and by night.
3. We must seek after likeness to God in our moral nature — in our likes and dislikes.

**Acts 13:23 "From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, (NASB95)**

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

- **From the descendants of this man** Acts 2:30; 2 Samuel 7:12; Ps 89:35-37; 132:11; Isaiah 7:13; 11:1,10; Jeremiah 23:5,6; Jeremiah 33:15-17; Amos 9:11; Matthew 1:1; 21:9; 22:42; Luke 1:31-33,69; John 7:42; Romans 1:3; Revelation 22:16
- **God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus** Acts 2:32-36; Acts 3:26; 4:12; 5:30,31; Isaiah 43:11; 45:21; Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:10,11; John 4:42; Romans 11:26; Titus 1:4; 2:10-14; 3:3-6; 2 Peter 1:1,11; 2 Peter 2:20; 3:2,18; 1 John 4:14; Jude 1:25
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A GREATER KING IN LINE OF DAVID

**Barton** - A large jump over Old Testament history occurred here, as Paul went from King David directly to one of his descendants,

Jesus. (LAC)

**Cole** points out that Paul "starts with facts that every Jew would have known and agreed with: God chose the patriarchs; He delivered their descendants from Egypt; He gave them the land of Canaan; and, He chose David as their king (13:17-22). In all of this rehearsal of Israel's history, Paul's very words are almost taken directly from the Old Testament (F. F. Bruce). **Up through Acts 13:22**, every head in the synagogue was nodding in agreement with Paul. Then Paul skips the rest of Israel's history and jumps from David to David's descendant, Jesus, proclaiming Him to be the fulfillment of God's promise of a Savior (13:23). Perhaps observing a ripple of shock sweep through the room, Paul quickly goes back to John the Baptist, the forerunner of whom Malachi prophesied. Since John was highly regarded in most Jewish circles, Paul shows that John did not regard himself as Messiah, but rather affirmed that he was not worthy to untie the sandals of the one coming after him." ([Acts 13:13-41 The God Who Keeps His Promise](#))

Now Paul makes the transition from **David** to the "**son of David**," the "**greater David**," the greater King, the King of kings! God had promised that the Messiah would come from the root of Jesse, David's father, Isaiah recording...

Then (this follows Isa 10:33-34 with the Lord cutting down...the idea is one of progression...**THEN**...) a shoot (MESSIAH) will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch (MESSIAH) from his roots will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him (MESSIAH), The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD....10 Then in that day The nations (GENTILES) will resort to the root of Jesse (Will be fully fulfilled in the Millennium), Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.(Isaiah 11:1-2, 10+)

**From the descendants of this man, according to promise** - **This man** is emphatic (at beginning of the Greek sentence) and refers to King David. Thus we see that while Paul does not directly quote the passage in which God makes this **promise**, he clearly alludes to it. And what was the **promise**? God had promised King David "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, **I will raise up your descendant after you**, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom....Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."(2 Sa 7:12,16) This is referred to as the Davidic Covenant.

Paul jumps almost 1000 years forward to the first century. Paul's argument is that Jesus, the descendant of David, is the ultimate Davidic King, the prophesied Branch and Root of Jesse (Isa 11:1), the Savior of Israel.

**Steven Ger** writes that "Through the establishment of the Davidic covenant, God had prepared Israel for the Messiah's coming. In fact, the fifteenth of the eighteen benedictions contained in the [Amidah](#) (ED: The Shemoneh Esreh the "Eighteen Benedictions," "Blessings," or "Prayers"), corporately recited by the congregation earlier in the service, explicitly prays for the coming of this Messiah, reading,

Speedily cause the Branch of your servant David to flourish.  
Exalt his **horn** (ED: SYMBOLIZES POWER) by your **salvation**,  
Because we hope (ED: WAIT) for your **salvation** all the day.  
Blessed are you, O Lord, Who causes the **horn of salvation** to flourish.

**Comment:** See [the prayers of the Amidah on an orthodox Jewish site](#) and note Prayer 14. Notice also the repetition of the designation "horn." This is fascinating as Luke records an identical phrase in the declaration of Zacharias (Lk 1:67, 68) "And has raised up a **horn of salvation** for us In the house of David His servant." (Luke 1:69+) In context what is "a horn of salvation?" Without a doubt, this is the Messiah! In fact the well-done paraphrase, the New Living Translation actually reads "He has **sent us a mighty Savior** from the royal line of his servant David." And so the irony is that the Jews in the synagogue were in effect praying for the Messiah, the "Horn of Salvation," Who had already come!

**According to promise** (see 2 Sa 7:12,16 above) - God's Word is full of promises, but this **promise** is the apex of all of His promises, the gift of a Savior, Jesus. The word **promise** is a verbal commitment by one to another agreeing to do (or not to do) something in the future. Throughout the Old Testament God had spoken over 300 [Messianic Prophecies](#) each being a **promise** of the Messiah Who would come through the line of David (cf Mt 1:1 - The record of the genealogy of **Jesus the Messiah, the son of David**, the son of Abraham. see also Mt 1:20-21, Ro 1:3, 2 Ti 2:8).

Other **promises**...

Psalms 132:11 The LORD has sworn to David A truth from which He will not turn back: "Of the fruit of your body I will set upon your throne (fully fulfilled in the Millennium).

Jeremiah 23:5-6 "Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "**When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch**; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land. 6 "In



His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely (This fulfillment awaits the Millennium); And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness.'

Jeremiah 33:15+ 'In those days and at that time **I will cause a righteous Branch of David** to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth.

**Promise** (1860)(**epaggelia/epangelia** from **epí** = intensifies verbal meaning + **aggéllō** = to tell, declare) literally means to "tell at or upon" and originally referred to an announcement or declaration (especially of a favorable message) (Acts 23:21). In other words the first sense of **epaggelia** is that of a declaration to do something which came to be associated with the implication of obligation to carry out what is stated thus giving us the meaning of a promise or a pledge. **Walter Kaiser** makes the interesting statement that "Almost every NT use of the word **promise** (epaggelia) points back to the OT." In Scripture, **epaggelia** refers primarily to God's pronouncements that provide assurance of what He intends to do. Jesus used **epaggelia** of the Holy Spirit declaring " behold, I am sending forth the **promise** of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (Lk 24:49+)

Luke's uses of **epaggelia** - Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4; Acts 2:33; Acts 2:39; Acts 7:17; Acts 13:23; Acts 13:32; Acts 23:21; Acts 26:6;

**God has brought (ago) to Israel a Savior, Jesus** - Note the first word is **God**. Just as Paul has been describing God's sovereignty over the events in the nation of Israel, now he reaches the climax in God's gift of Jesus. Notice that he says God **brought** Jesus to you, to the nation of **Israel!** Here Paul does not say **God has brought** Jesus to the world (which of course He did - cf John 3:16, etc), but to Israel. Further, Paul describes His function for Israel, to be their Savior. The same God Who saved Israel out of bondage in Israel, is the same God Who sends a Savior to rescue Israel out of their bondage to sin. The argument is somewhat of a lesser (saved from Egypt) to a greater argument (saved from sins).

This passage fulfills a similar promise in Zechariah 3:8 "Behold, I am going to bring (Lxx = **ago**, same "brought" in Acts 13:23) in My Servant the Branch (Messiah)."

And so here Paul proceeds to identify the "**descendant**" of David (2 Sa 7:12), declaring that God kept His**promise**. The promise was a **Savior** and His Name was **Jesus**. Notice "**has brought**" is past tense, so that Paul is saying in essence that the prophecy God promised to **David** has now been fulfilled in **Jesus**, Whose very Name means the One Who saves.

**Larkin** - Paul both tempers and heightens the Jewish hope. He avoids the use of Messiah, with its connotations of a purely political deliverer. He indicates that the liberation is much greater, for God is its source, bringing the final salvation according to the Old Testament (Is 49:6, 8; 45:21–22; compare Ps 27:1; 89:26; Lk 1:69; 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:26). (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**Paul Apple** rightly says "It's all about Jesus – that is who we are presenting to people This is what Paul wants to drive home."

**Savior** (4990)(**soter** from **sozo** = rescue from peril > from **saos** = safe; delivered) refers to the agent of salvation or deliverance, the one who rescues, delivers, saves and preserves. It is somewhat surprising that this is the only place recorded in Acts where Paul called Jesus "Savior." Luke's only other use of soter in Acts is Acts 5:31 "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a **Savior**, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins".

Greeks used **soter** as a title of divinities such as Asclepius, the god of healing. Soter was used by the mystery religions to refer to their divinities. At an early date **soter** was used as a title of honor for deserving men, e.g., Epicurus (300BC) was called "soter" by his followers. The Romans looked upon their emperor as a "**savior**" in that he held mankind together under the great Roman power, providing peace and order, prosperity and protection. In the Cult of Caesar, the state religion of Rome, the emperor was actually known as the "**Saviour of the world**" (at least 8 Roman emperors carried this title)! In contrast was the Lord Jesus Who was worshiped as the Saviour God. The Caesars ruled over the temporal affairs of their subjects and were one of their gods. The latter was Savior who saved the believer's soul from sin and exercised a spiritual control over his life. To recognize Jesus as the Saviour of the world instead of the Emperor was a capital offense and a blow at the very heart of the Roman Empire and explains the reason for the bloody persecution of Christians.

**Willard Hotchkiss**, pioneer missionary in Africa said "I have dwelt forty years practically alone in Africa. I have been thirty-nine times stricken with the fever, three times attacked by lions, and several times by rhinoceri; but let me say to you, I would gladly go through the whole thing again, if I could have the joy of again bringing that word "Savior" and flashing it into the darkness that envelops another tribe in Central Africa." That is what I call "devotional zeal!"

**From the descendants of this man (David)...Jesus** - Historically speaking Jesus was the descendant or offspring of King David. Prophetically, Jesus was the fulfillment of all the OT prophecies of the coming Messiah.

**Jesus** (2424)(**lesous**) is **transliteration** of the Greek Iesous, which in turn is the transliteration of the Hebrew

name [Jehoshua \(Yehoshua\)](#) or [Jeshua \(Yeshua\)](#) which mean *Jehovah is help* or *Jehovah is salvation*. Stated another way the Greek **iesous** corresponds to the OT [Jehoshua \(Yehoshua\)](#) which is contracted as [Jeshua\(Yeshua\)](#). We see the meaning of Jesus clearly in the first use in the NT where the angel says to Joseph ""She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name **Jesus**, for He will **save** His people from their sins." (Mt 1:21) In Acts 13:6 we met "**Bar-Jesus**" (Son of Jesus, Son of salvation), which emphasizes an important point - Satan is a counterfeiter and he is good at what he does, which is why saints need to know the Word of Truth in order to discern error (cf Heb 5:14). Are you letting the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, daily (Col 3:16, Mt 4:4)?

**Bob Utley** writes that Acts 13:23 "is parallel to Acts 7:52. It points back to all the OT promises.

1. a redemption through the seed of a woman, Gen, 3:15
2. a ruler from Judah, Gen. 49:10
3. a coming leader like Moses, the Prophet, Deut. 18:15, 18
4. a leader from David, 2 Sam. 7; Ps. 132:11; Isa. 11:1, 10; Matt. 1:1
5. a suffering servant, Isa. 52:13–53:12
6. a savior, Luke 2:11; Matt. 1:21; John 1:29; 4:42; Acts 5:31

**Acts 13:24 after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ([NASB95](#))**

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

NET Acts 13:24 Before Jesus arrived, John had proclaimed a baptism for repentance to all the people of Israel. (Act 13:24 NET)

- Acts 1:22; 10:37; 19:3,4; Matthew 3:1-11; Mark 1:2-8; Luke 1:76; 3:2,3-20; John 1:6-8,15-18; 3:25-36; 5:33-36
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL CITES TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

John's testimony pointed to Jesus in the same manner as the OT prophets. Does your testimony point to Jesus?

**Warren Wiersbe** writes that "Every pious Jew knew that the Messiah would come from David's family, and that a prophet would announce His coming beforehand. John the Baptist was that prophet." (BEC)

This is the first prophecy Paul alluded to in describing John the Baptizer, the forerunner to Messiah. The prophecy of course to which Paul alludes is Isaiah 40:3-5 which described the ministry of John...

A voice is calling (Mt 3:1-3), "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. 4 "Let every valley be lifted up ([Listen to this verse in Handel's Messiah](#)), And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; 5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; **For the mouth of the LORD has spoken** (AND THAT SETTLES IT!)." (cf Lk 1:76–77+).

Paul could also have been alluding to the prophecy in Malachi...

"**Behold**, I am going to send My messenger (JOHN THE BAPTIZER), and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord (MESSIAH), whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:1+)

**John MacArthur** points out that "John's ministry was well known to Paul's hearers, since he had followers in Asia Minor then (Acts 19:1-3). All in the audience must have known of John's identification of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah (John 1:29, 36). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**Jack Andrews** - John the Baptist's mission was to be the forerunner of the Messiah. His mission was to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus Christ. He came on the scene before Jesus and he preached what the Lord called him to preach. His ministry was that of breaking up the fallow ground. Israel had not had a word from God in 400 years when John the Baptist had come on the scene. The religious landscape in Israel was a shell of what it was supposed to be. The ground was hardened, the land was parched, the people were far from God. Then John the Baptist burst on the scene to usher in the King! God's plan for John was to preach (Mt 3:2) and prepare the way before the coming of the Messiah (Mt 4:17).

**After John had proclaimed before His coming** - "Before Jesus arrived, John had proclaimed" (NET). **Proclaimed before** is used only here and is derived from **pro** meaning before and **kerusso** (from **kerux/keryx** = a herald) which means to proclaim publicly, to **herald**, to act as a public crier. **Kerusso** was used of the official in secular Greek whose duty it was to proclaim loudly and extensively the coming of an earthly king, even as **John the Baptist** had the charge to announce the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The OT predicts a forerunner to Messiah, and John was the fulfillment of these OT prophecies in Isaiah 40 and Malachi 3...

A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. 4"Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; 5Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (Is 40:3-5)

"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. (Mal 3:1)

**A baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel** - This was John's message before Messiah came on the scene. Luke describes John's baptism writing

And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Lk 3:3+)

The **baptism** Paul alludes to is not Christian baptism, for that had not yet been instituted. As the Jews came to him at the Jordan River, John would baptize them as they confessed their sins (Mt 3:6) and repented. And although they repented, they were not saved because they had not yet placed their faith in Messiah (cf Acts 4:12+). Matthew goes on to record that "when he (JOHN) saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for **baptism**, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? "Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance (A CHANGE OF BEHAVIOR IS FRUIT [cf examples of "fruit" in Lk 3:11, 13, 14] THIS "FRUIT" MARKS A GENUINELY REPENTANT HEART - cf Paul's charge to King Agrippa in Acts 26:20+); and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, '**We have Abraham for our father**'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham." (Mt 3:7-9 - Paul also alludes to Abraham in Acts 13:26)

**MacArthur** explains "John's **baptism** was not, of course, Christian baptism, which had not yet been instituted. It was a Jewish ceremonial cleansing, symbolizing true, heartfelt repentance. John called upon all the people of Israel to repent and prepare their hearts for the coming of Messiah. Repentance has always been a necessary element of salvation."

In Acts 19:4+ Paul repeats that

"John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus."

**Baptism** (908)(**baptisma** from **bapto** = dip as in dye to color - see study of verb **baptizo**) is the result of the act of dipping, plunging, immersing, washing. something or someone. As Larkin says this was "a ritual washing as a visible sign of repentance in preparation for the Messiah's coming holy kingdom."(IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**Jack Andrews** on John's call to repent (Mt 3:1,2) - His message was repentance! John didn't water the message down. John didn't conduct seminars on how to be a better you. John didn't have a conference on how to grow your synagogue. John didn't hold luncheons and have giveaways. John didn't say all is right with the world. John didn't say that I'm okay and you're okay. John didn't preach a feel good or seeker sensitive message

**Repentance** (3341)(**metanoia** from **meta** = after + **noéo** = to understand) literally means "afterthought" or "to think after" and implies a change of mind. From the NT uses, it is clear that **metanoia** means however much more than merely a change of one's mind but also includes a complete change of heart, attitude, interest, and direction. **Metanoia** is a conversion in every sense of the word. Jesus' teaching would support this conclusion for our Lord declared...

I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who **repents** (**metanoëo**), than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no **repentance** (**metanoia**). (Luke 15:7+)

And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? "I tell you, no, but unless you **repent**, you will all likewise **perish**. (Lk 13:2-3+)

All 22 uses of **metanoia** -

Matt. 3:8; Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3; Lk. 3:8; Lk. 5:32; Lk. 15:7; Lk. 24:47; Acts 5:31; Acts 11:18; Acts 13:24; Acts 19:4; Acts 20:21; Acts 26:20; Rom. 2:4; 2 Co. 7:9; 2 Co. 7:10; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 6:1; Heb. 6:6; Heb. 12:17; 2 Pet. 3:9

**David Jeremiah** wrote, "It has always been true that until a person is brought face-to-face with his sin, he has no basis for repentance. You can't repent of something you don't think exists! It may be that we have shallow conversions and shallow Christians today because we don't talk enough about repentance."

**Bishop Ryle** offers this descriptive definition of repentance...

**Repentance** is a thorough change of man's natural heart, upon the subject of sin. We are all born in sin. We naturally love sin. We take to sin, as soon as we can act and think—just as the bird takes to flying, and the fish takes to swimming. There never was a child that required schooling or education in order to learn deceitfulness, selfishness, passion, self-will, gluttony, pride, and foolishness. These things are not picked up from bad companions, or gradually learned by a long course of tedious instruction. They spring up of themselves, even when boys and girls are brought up alone. The seeds of them are evidently the natural product of the heart. The aptitude of all children to these evil things is an unanswerable proof of the corruption and fall of man. Now when this heart of ours is changed by the Holy Spirit, when this natural love of sin is cast out, then takes place that change which the Word of God calls "**repentance**." The man in whom the change is wrought is said to "repent." ([Repentance](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Great articles on repentance primarily from Puritan writers](#)
- [What is repentance and is it necessary for salvation?](#)
- [Who was John the Baptist in the Bible?](#)
- [Was John the Baptist really Elijah reincarnated?](#)
- [Did John the Baptist lose his faith in Jesus as the Messiah \(Matthew 11:3; Luke 7:19\)?](#)
- [In what way was John the Baptist the greatest \(Matthew 11:11\)?](#)
- [Why did John the Baptist refer to the Pharisees as a brood of vipers?](#)

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**Gotquestions** answers the question - [What was the meaning and importance of the baptism of John the Baptist?](#)

Though today the word **baptism** generally evokes thoughts of identifying with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, **baptism** did not begin with Christians. For years before Christ, the Jews had used **baptism** in **ritual cleansing ceremonies of Gentile proselytes**. **John the Baptist** took baptism and applied it to the Jews themselves—it wasn't just the Gentiles who needed cleansing. Many believed John's message and were baptized by him (Matthew 3:5–6). The baptisms John performed had a specific purpose. In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist mentions the purpose of his baptisms: "I baptize you with water for repentance." Paul affirms this in Acts 19:4: "John's baptism was a **baptism of repentance**. He told the people to **believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus**." John's baptism had to do with **repentance**—it was a symbolic representation of changing one's mind and going a new direction. "Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River" (Matthew 3:6). Being baptized by John demonstrated a recognition of one's sin, a desire for spiritual cleansing, and a commitment to follow God's law in anticipation of the Messiah's arrival. There were some, like the Pharisees, who came to the Jordan to observe John's ministry but who had no desire to step into the water themselves. John rebuked them sternly: "When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance'" (Matthew 3:7–8). Even the religious leaders needed to repent of their sin, although they saw no need of it. Christian baptism today also symbolizes repentance, cleansing, and commitment, but Jesus has given it a different emphasis. Christian baptism is a mark of one's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is representative of a cleansing that is complete and a commitment that is the natural response of one who has been made new. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross completely washes away our sins, and we are raised to new life empowered by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17–21; Romans 6:1–11). **With John's baptism, a person repented of sin and was therefore ready to place his faith in Jesus Christ. John's baptism foreshadowed what Jesus would accomplish, much as the Old Testament sacrificial system did. John prepared the way for Christ by calling people to acknowledge their sin and their need for salvation.** His baptism was a "purification ceremony" (**ED**: it was an external act symbolizing an internal change and) meant to ready the peoples' hearts

to receive their Savior.

**Acts 13:25** "And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not He. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.' ([NASB95](#))

KJV 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.

NET Acts 13:25 But while John was completing his mission, he said repeatedly, 'What do you think I am? I am not he. But look, one is coming after me. I am not worthy to untie the sandals on his feet!'

- **And while John was completing his course** Acts 13:36; 20:24; Mark 6:16-28; John 4:34; 19:28-30; 2 Ti 4:7; Rev 11:7
- **What do you suppose that I am** Acts 19:4; Mt 3:11; Mk 1:7; Lk 3:15,16; Jn 1:20-23,26,27,29,34,36; Jn 3:27-29; 7:18; 2 Cor 4:5
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE HERALD OF MESSIAH JOHN THE BAPTIST

**And while John was completing his course - Completing** is in the imperfect tense, which depicts vividly how the actions of John were repeated (e.g., repeatedly crying out as a herald, repeatedly baptizing, repeatedly warning, cf Mt 3:2). But in the end his repeated calls cost him his life!

**John Butler** said, "John the Baptist completed his work. Many start but few finish. It takes dedication and character to finish." (ED: AND DAILY RELIANCE ON THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD!)

**Was completing** ([4137](#))([pleroo](#)) means to make complete in every particular, to finish, to bring to an end. BDAG says in this context it means "to bring to completion an activity in which one has been involved from its beginning." The idea is that John was accomplishing (finishing) the task God had given him. Other similar uses by Luke include Acts 12:25 "Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they **had fulfilled** their mission." After the first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas "sailed to Antioch, from which they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that **they had accomplished**." (Acts 14:26)

**THOUGHT** - This description of John finishing what God had assigned him is a model we should all (enabled by the Spirit) seek to imitate. What task has God assigned to you dear reader? Finishing cost John his head. We all need to count the cost because in some way (probably not martyrdom like John though) it quite likely will be costly to finish but the reward is "out of this world!" Paul had this attitude which is one reason God used him so mightily - "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may **finish** ([teleioo](#)) my (his, the one God had assigned) **course** (same word of John - [dromos](#)) and the ministry which I received (MINISTRY IS A DIVINE GIFT BY THE WILL OF GOD, NOT A WILLFUL CHOICE! cf 2 Ti 1:1) from the Lord Jesus (BELOVED, WE HAVE RECEIVED A MINISTRY OF SOME SORT), to testify solemnly of the Gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:24+, cf 2 Ti 4:7+).

**Course** ([1408](#))([dromos](#) from **dramein**, the aorist infinitive form of **trecho** = to run; English [hippodrome](#)) refers to the course that one follows in a race, the racecourse or the place of running and figuratively refers to one's purpose in life and obligations in relation to it. In John's case his race was "cut short" by a wicked king who had him beheaded! Paul would later use this very word to describe his mission declaring to Timothy "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the **course** (dromos), I have kept the faith." (2 Ti 4:7+) Note that the root verb trecho is used in Hebrews 12:1 "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and **let us run** with endurance the race that is set before us."

**THOUGHT** - Are you running "the race" (like John and like Paul)? Or are you on the sidelines? Or are you spiritually lame? Only one race, it will soon be past, only what's done in Christ will last! Run to win beloved! (1 Cor 9:24-27+).

**Jack Andrews** has some interesting comments on completing one's course - Why do people give up on the work of the Lord? Why do people drop out in the service of the Lord? Distraction—Love for the world; Discouragement—see no fruit, no appreciation, no applause; Depleted—ministering for the Lord without being ministered to by the Lord (cf Jn 15:5, 1 Cor 15:10+, 2 Cor 3:5-6).

**He kept saying 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not He - Kept saying** is in the Imperfect tense indicating that John was

repeatedly (over and over) denying he was the expected One, the Messiah. In the Gospels

Now while the people were in a state of expectation and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ, 16 John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 "His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." 18 So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people. (Luke 3:15-18+, cf John 1:19-23)

**But** - Term of contrast. I am not the "I Am!" A striking contrast between the creature and the Creator, the herald and the One being heralded.

**Behold** (2400)(idou) is strictly speaking a command (aorist imperative) which especially calls attention to what follows. Think of it as an "attention grabber" in the Greek language. The idea would be to "Listen up" or "Pay careful attention" to what follows. John the Baptist was seeking to focus the attention of the Jews away from himself (he did attract attention with "a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist" - Mt 3:4) and instead direct the laser pointer to the coming Messiah.

**Gangel** - John was the last of the Old Testament prophets, commissioned to proclaim repentance and baptism. That work ended when the actual Savior came on the scene, and John himself was the first to acknowledge that (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:7; Luke 3:15-16; John 1:27). (Ibid)

**One is coming after me** - Jesus, the "Coming One." Zechariah had prophesied of the "Coming One" - "your king is **coming** to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a donkey, Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (Zech 9:9) Malachi described His coming "the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly **come** to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, **He is coming**," says the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 3:1+)

## **THE GREAT HUMILITY OF JOHN THE BAPTIZER**

**The sandals** (hupodema) **of whose feet I am not worthy to untie** (repeated in every Gospel - Mt 3:11; Mk 1:7; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:27) - **NLT** paraphrases it "I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the sandals on his feet." Worthy is a Greek word axios which conveys the picture of having equal weight or worth, and therefore of being appropriate. John is saying the Messiah is so much greater ("weightier" and of more worth) than he a mere herald that it would not even be appropriate for him (John) to do even the most this task which would have been relegated to the lowest of the low. John is saying he cannot get low enough when compared to the worth of Jesus. He alluded to this idea in his famous statement in John 3:30+ declaring "He must (a necessity in the present tense) increase and I must (present tense) decrease!"

Keep in mind Jesus' assessment of John the Baptizer as the greatest man who had lived up to this time - "'Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he " (Mt 11:11). Surely John's remarkable humility was related to why Jesus made this declaration, for he was the prototypical "receptable" for God's grace, James writing that God "gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." (James 4:6+, cf James 4:10+, 1 Peter 5:6+)

**Spurgeon** on John's humility - Remember that John was by no means an inferior man; among all who had been born of women before his time, there had not been one greater than he. He was the subject of many prophecies, and his office was a peculiarly noble one. He was the friend of the great bridegroom and introduced him to his chosen bride. He was the morning star of the gospel day, but he counted himself no light in the presence of the Sun of righteousness whom he heralded. John wasn't one to be shaken by the wind. No man of courtly habits fitted for a king's palace, we see in him an Elijah, a man of iron, a son of thunder. He roared like a young lion on his prey and feared the face of none. His great soul bowed only before what was worthy of worship. He was, in God's strength, as an iron pillar and a bronze wall. He was a hero for the cause of the Lord, and yet he sat down in the presence of Jesus as a little child sits on a stool at his master's feet, and he cried, "I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals."

**Guzik** on untying **sandals** - In that day, it was not uncommon for a great teacher to have disciples follow him, and it was expected that the disciples would serve the teacher in various ways. This arrangement came to be abused, so the leading rabbis established certain things that were too demeaning for a teacher to expect of his disciple. It was decided that for a teacher to expect his disciple to undo the strap of his sandal was too much; it was too demeaning. Here, John insisted he wasn't even worthy to do this for Jesus. ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))



**Worthy** (514) (**axios** from **ágō** = to weigh) strictly speaking means bringing up the other beam of the scales. Having the weight of another thing of like value, worth as much. Counterbalancing - weighing as much (of like value, worth as much). John was saying with Christ on one side of the scale, he would be like a fleck of dust on the other side, so great is the infinite difference between Creator and creature!

**Acts 13:26 "Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. (NASB95)**

KJV 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.

- **Brethren, sons of Abraham's family** Acts 13:15,17,46; 3:26; 2 Chronicles 20:7; Ps 105:6; 147:19,20; Isaiah 41:8; 48:1; 51:1,2; Matthew 3:9; 10:6; Luke 24:47
- **and those among you** Acts 13:16,43; 10:35
- **to us the message of this salvation** Acts 16:17; 28:28; Isaiah 46:13; Luke 1:69,77; Romans 1:16; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Ephesians 1:13; Colossians 1:5
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD MESSAGE OF SALVATION FOR JEW AND GENTILE

Paul now begins the Second Division of his sermon which focuses on Salvation (Acts 13:26-39) followed by the Solemn Warning (Acts 13:40-41)

**Ray Stedman** says that "Just this last week I read an article written by a very prominent liberal theologian of our day, along with several surveys of religious developments in the country. In every one of them it was pointed out that the gospel was rather hard to define. The liberal theologian said it was almost impossible to define the gospel clearly. Paul did not have any such trouble. To him the gospel was very clear. It consisted of the great acts of God in history -- the coming of the Lord Jesus, his ministry among men, his crucifixion because of the sins of men, and his resurrection as the Scriptures had promised (see 1 Cor 15:1-4+). ([Acts 13:13-52 The Radical Word](#))

**Brethren** - The KJV is more accurate here than most of the modern translations as it has "men and brethren," as both words are present in the Greek text.

**Brethren** (80)(**adelphos** from **a** = denotes unity + **delphus** = a womb) is literally of the same womb and in Jewish usage fellow countryman (Acts 3.22). Paul is giving his Jewish **brethren** the opportunity to be "First Responders" to the Gospel message.

**Sons of Abraham's family** - Paul appeals to the ethnic heritage of the Jewish audience, a paternity of which they were very proud, making this very claim to Jesus (Jn 8:33, 39). Paul identified himself as a Jew who shared their concerns as Jews.

**Swindoll** writes "He said, in effect, "I am one of you, and I have great news concerning the Messiah we have all anticipated." He did, however, separate himself from the religious leaders in Jerusalem, accusing them of ignoring the very Scriptures the synagogue had just read aloud and of killing their Messiah (Acts 13:27-28). (Ibid)

**And those among you who fear God** - Gentile God fearers. Paul "flings" open the door of salvation to EVERYONE who would believe the Gospel, not just the Jews. NET Note adds that **you who fear God** "is practically a technical term for the category called God-fearers, Gentiles who worshiped the God of Israel and in many cases kept the Mosaic law, but did not take the final step of circumcision necessary to become a **proselyte** to Judaism."

**Fear** (5399)(**phobeo**) not a shaking fear, but a **reverential**, respectful fear, a fear of offending or displeasing God. This same verb phobeo is used by Luke recording that "HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO **FEAR HIM**" (Lk 1:50+).

**To us the message (logos) of this salvation has been sent - The message of this salvation** is synonymous with the "the Gospel" which brings salvation and which Paul later described as "the Gospel of your salvation." (Eph 1:13+).

**William Arnot on the word of this salvation (KJV)-** Even in the ordinary experience of life men are saved by words — the words of their fellows. When a blind man avoids a precipice, and turns into a path of safety at the warning voice of a benevolent passenger, he has been saved by words. When the various portions of an army make a combined movement by orders of its chief, they are saved from ruin, and placed in safety, by words. Words, false and meaningless, however reverently they may be received, will not save, and on the other hand, words true and Divine will not save those who despise and neglect them.

**Salvation (4991)(soteria** from **soter** = Savior in turn from **sozo** = save, rescue, deliver) describes the rescue or deliverance from danger, destruction and peril.

**Has been sent (1821)(exapostello** from **ek** = out, forth + **apostello** = to send away) means sent away or (as in the present context) sent forth (cf Peter understanding that God had "**sent forth** His angel and rescued" him from jail = Acts 12:11+). **Exapostello** is the verb used when Jesus promised the Spirit (and spiritual power) to His disciples in Luke 24:49+ declaring "**behold**, I am **sending forth** the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed (**enduo**) with power (**dunamis** - inherent power to accomplish supernaturally what is impossible to accomplish naturally - same word of Gospel in Ro 1:16+) from on high." Paul used **exapostello** explaining to the Galatians (some of whom may have been listening to this sermon in Acts 13!) "when the fullness of the time came, God **sent forth** His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law." (Gal 4:4).

**Spurgeon on KJV rendering "To You is the Word of Salvation"** - I remember when Mr. Richard Weaver preached at Park Street Chapel, in his younger days, he came down from the pulpit, and ran over the pews to get at the people, that he might speak to them individually, and say, "you," and "you," and "you." I am not nimble enough on my legs to do that, and I do not think I should try it if I were younger: but I wish I could, somehow or another, come to each one of you, and press home these glad tidings of great joy. You, my dear old friend, it means you! You, young woman, over there to the right, it means you! You, dear child, sitting with your grand-mother, it means you! "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

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**Words of Salvation Providentially Sent - Acts 13:26KJV** - the word of this salvation sent.

A young man in America was once at work upon his farm. He was careless about religion — indeed nobody had ever said a word to him about it; and as he had no Bible and only worldly friends, there seemed little chance of his ever hearing of Christ and salvation, and of heaven and hell. On this particular day, it was a bright morning in early summer, he had to take his cart, drawn by oxen, along the high road. He was thinking of nothing except his daily work and his daffy bread. A gentle breeze was blowing, and as he went along it stirred a little piece of paper which had been lying by the roadside, so that it fluttered in front of him. But on went the young man, the oxen and the cart, all the same. When he had gone a short way farther, however, a thought came over him, "I wonder what that bit of paper was — I've a great mind to go back and see." And, stopping his team, he did go back. He picked it up and read it as he walked along. It was a leaf out of the Bible. The summer passed away with its flowers and sunshine, and the corn grew ripe, and was gathered into the garner; there was another harvest, too, standing ready for the sickle. The young man who had found the leaf lay upon a sick and dying bed. A sore disease had smitten him, and his parents knew there was no hope of his life. They were stricken with grief, but he — oh, he was rejoicing! And now his lips were open to tell them what he had never told before. The leaf out of the Bible had brought to him first the sense of sin and then the knowledge of a Saviour. He sought for a whole Bible, and ever since it had been his constant companion, and now, though called almost suddenly away from life with all its happiness, he knew whom he had believed, and he was ready. He had an anchor, sure and steadfast, for the Lamb that was slain to take away sin had taken away his sin. And without a doubt or a fear he entered into rest.

**Acts 13:27 "For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him. (NASB95)**

KJV 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.

- **For those who live in Jerusalem** Acts 3:17; Lk 22:34; Jn 8:28; 15:21; 16:3; Ro 11:8-10,25; 1 Cor 2:8; 2 Cor 3:14; 4:4; 1 Ti 1:13
- **nor the utterances of the prophets** Mt 22:29; Lk 24:25-27,44,45
- **which are read every Sabbath** Acts 13:14,15; 15:21
- **fulfilled these by condemning Him** Acts 26:22,23; 28:23; Ge 50:20; Mt 26:54-56; Lk 24:20,24; Jn 19:28-30; Jn 19:36,37



- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM: FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE MESSIAH

Paul gives two reasons why the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah - (1) They did not recognize Him and (2) they did not recognize the fact that their own prophets had described Him.

**For those who live ([katoikeo](#)) in Jerusalem, and their rulers** - The Jews in Jerusalem and their rulers, especially their religious leaders. For example, in Luke 23:35 as "the people stood by, looking on....even the **rulers** were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself **if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One**" Their spiritual eyes were blinded to the truth that Jesus was their Messiah.

**Rulers (758)**([archon](#) from present participle of **archo** = to rule) describes one who has eminence in a ruling capacity, Jewish leaders (Acts 23:5 = reference to the high priest, Lk 8:41 = "an official of the synagogue;" Mt 9:18, 23 = ruler over a synagogue), members of the Sanhedrin (Lk 18:18, 23:13, 35, 24:20)

John 1:11 speaks of Jesus' rejection by His people "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him."

**Ray Stedman** - Just last week a man said to me, "How is it, if Jesus was the Messiah predicted by the Old Testament Scriptures, and if he fulfilled these when he came, that the Jews did not recognize him when he came?" Paul gives the answer. There were two reasons, he says: **First, they did not recognize him, i.e., they did not pay attention to him.** They did not really see Jesus. They were misled by superficialities about him. They looked at his trade, his background, and saw that he was but a carpenter's son. They saw that he had no money and no influence or standing in society. They saw that he had no prestige. He had never been to school, had been taught at no great scholar's feet, and so they wrote him off and paid no attention to him. They did not hear his words, and they did not see his miracles -- or, if they did, they immediately forgot them. They put no stock in them. And thus he lived the most magnificent life that had ever been lived before men, but his contemporaries never saw it. They did not recognize him. **A lot of people are blind in that way today, like the Jews, because of the second reason:** They did not understand the Scriptures. Here were people who had heard the utterances of the prophets every Saturday, read to them in the synagogue. They knew many of them by heart, but they did not understand them. The reason they did not understand is that they never asked any questions. They did not take them seriously. The reading of the Scriptures had become just a **religious rite, a perfunctory performance** gone through automatically every Sabbath. People went and did their thing in synagogue, and then went home again. That was all there was to it. **And there are people like that in church today.** But, you see, that was the reason why they missed the coming of the Son of God and did not recognize Him as the Messiah: They did not understand their own Scriptures. And so, as Paul says, they fulfilled the prophecies by condemning Him and turning Him over to Pilate. ([Acts 13:13-52 The Radical Word](#))

**Recognizing neither Him** - They did not recognize Jesus as the one the prophets had spoken about. Paul echoes the words of Jesus Who said "while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand," (Mt 13:13) which is what Isaiah had prophesied would occur (Isaiah 6:9-10). Isaiah 42:20 says "You have seen many things, but you do not observe them; Your ears are open, but none hears."

**Steven Cole** explains why the Jews did not recognize Jesus as their Messiah - They were looking for a political Messiah who would deliver them from Rome's domination. Surely, he would be a great soldier or statesman. He would be trained in the rabbinic schools. He would come from a prominent family and have prestige and influence in society. Jesus had none of these and so they did not recognize Him. ([Acts 13:13-41 The God Who Keeps His Promise](#))

**Recognizing neither** (did not recognize)(50)([agnoeo](#) from **a** = not + **noéo** = perceive, understand) not have information about, to not know, to not understand (Mk 9:32, Lk 9:45), to be unaware of, to not recognize (Ac 13:27), to be ignorant of (to lack information concerning something). Agnoeo conveys the nuance of lacking the ability to understand in He 5:2 and of inexcusable moral/ethical ignorance (even disregard) in Ro 10:3).

**Jack Arnold** explains **why they did not recognize Jesus but actually rejected Him**- **First**, they rejected Him because they did not recognize Him. He had no money, no influence: no standing in the community. He was not formally educated in the university and was only a carpenter's son. The Jews were looking for a great political deliverer as Messiah, and Christ did not meet their requirements. Even when he performed miracles and spoke great words never seen or heard before in Israel, they would not recognize Him. They had a moral problem and they hated the truth of Christ. Sin blinded their eyes to the truth of Messiah. **Second**, they rejected Christ because they did not understand the Scriptures. Every Sabbath they heard the Scriptures taught from the Old Testament but did not grasp the spiritual meaning of them (**ED**: Read Lk 16:29, Jn 5:45, 46, Lk 24:27, Lk 24:44. Some Jews did recognize Him - Jn 1:45). The reading and listening to the Bible had become mere ritual for these people; there was no heart in it at all. Had the Jews understood the Bible, they would have accepted Christ as Messiah ([Paul's First Recorded Sermon](#))

ED: ARNOLD MAKES AN INTERESTING STATEMENT. I AM NOT SURE I TOTALLY AGREE. IT WAS NOT JUST A PROBLEM OF THEIR MINDS - FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE, BUT EVEN MORE A PROBLEM OF THEIR HEARTS - FAILURE TO RECEIVE. cf Jn 1:11, notice the parable Lk 20:14,15 - **John MacArthur** wrote "They never denied one miracle. It just was not acceptable to them to believe in Him because they loved their own religion and the praise that it brought them more than they loved God. **It was not a head issue, it was a heart issue.**" MacArthur's [Sermon](#)

**John MacArthur** - Paul now anticipated and answered two questions that might have arisen in the minds of his hearers, a technique he employed frequently in his writings (Rom. 3:3, 7-9, 21; 6:1, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1 Cor. 15:35; Gal. 3:21). The first question was one Jewish people have wrestled with from apostolic times until now: If Jesus is the Messiah, why did the Jewish leaders fail to recognize Him as such? Paul gave the same answer Stephen did: because of their hardened, sin-darkened hearts. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**MacArthur** adds, "Those who are ignorant of the written Word will inevitably be ignorant of the living Word."

**Barton** - It is possible to read the truth, hear the truth preached "every Sabbath," even see the truth—and still miss it. This is what happened to the Jews in A.D. 29 who had been waiting for the Messiah. He came—right into their midst—and they not only "didn't recognize him," but they condemned him to death! Jesus warned of this tendency to be spiritually deaf (Matthew 13:14–15). Ask yourself: Is my heart really open to the truth? Do I let God's Word penetrate deep into my soul and change the way I think and live? Ask God to help you take out any spiritual earplugs you might be wearing so that you will have "ears to hear" (Matthew 13:43 NKJV). (LAC)

## FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND THE OT PROPHECIES

**Nor the utterances** (literally "voices") **of the prophets** ([prophetes](#)) **which are read** ([anaginosko](#)) **every Sabbath** ([sabbaton](#)) (cf Lk 24:46+, Acts 3:18+. cf Acts 15:21+) - What is Paul saying here? The idea is that they Jews attended the synagogue every Sabbath and every Sabbath heard messianic prophecies (in a sense the entire OT points to Jesus!) but they failed to grasp the fact that the messianic prophecies they heard in the [Torah](#) and [Haftorah](#) readings each Sabbath (see [synagogue service](#)) pointed to and were fulfilled by Jesus. As Jesus Himself said to the Jews who were seeking to kill him (Jn 5:17)...

"Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses **ED: IN EFFECT,** THE the [Torah](#)), in whom you have set your hope. **'For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.** "But if you do not **believe** his writings, how will you **believe** My words?" (John 5:45-47 - Note Jesus' repeated emphasis on their absolute need to "believe!")

The tragedy is that the Jews heard the words of the OT prophets and even memorized great portions of Scripture, and yet failed to understand what they heard spoken and even memorized. This is frightening -- you can know the Word of God by heart, and yet miss the God of the Word and never believe in your heart! (cf Ro 10:9-10).

In another place Jesus made a similar accusation against the Jewish leaders...

You search ([ereunao](#) = describes a careful and thorough effort to learn) the Scriptures (WHICH IS TANTAMOUNT TO THE OLD TESTAMENT - that is all that was recorded at this time) because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me (cf John 1:45, Lk 24:27); and you are unwilling (HERE IS THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM = THE PROBLEM OF THEIR HEART! - cf Jn 1:11, Jn 3:19) to come to Me so that you may have life. (Jn 5:39-40)

**John MacArthur** explains that "Merely knowing the facts of Scripture, without fully embracing them in the heart (Josh. 1:8; Ps 1:2; 119:11, 15, 97) and acting on them, will not bring the blessings of salvation. In the words of Aelfric, a tenth-century English theologian, "Happy is he, then, who reads the Scriptures, if he convert the words into actions. Jesus was not commanding them to search the Scriptures, but noting that they were already doing so in a desperate and futile search for the key to eternal life (cf. Matt. 19:16; Luke 10:25). Ironically, with all their fastidious effort they utterly failed to grasp that **it is** those very Scriptures **that testify about** Jesus (Jn 1:45; Luke 24:27, 44; Rev. 19:10). The Pharisees in particular were fanatical in their preoccupation with Scripture, studying every **line**, every **word**, and even the **letters** in an empty effort to understand the truth!" The Bible cannot be properly understood apart from the Holy Spirit's illumination or a transformed mind. The Jews' zeal for the Scripture was commendable (cf. Ro 10:2), but because they were unwilling to come to Jesus (cf. Jn 1:11; Jn 3:19), the sole source of **eternal life** (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12), it did not result in salvation. Clinging to their superficial system of self-

righteousness by works, in their stubborn unbelief, they became ignorant of "God's righteousness and [sought] to establish their own" (Ro 10:3). But self-righteousness cannot save anyone, since "all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment" (Isa. 64:6) and because "whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all" (James 2:10). Thus, salvation comes not from "having a righteousness of [one's] own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Phil. 3:9; cf. Rom. 3:20-30). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – John)

In another exchange Jesus quoted Isaiah

"In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; 15 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.' (Mt 13:14-15)

**Larkin** - Though the Jews were immediately culpable, ultimately God ordained it. He had planned it long ago and declared it through the prophets (Acts 2:23; 4:28; 3:17–18). It came to a complete fulfillment (Lk 12:50; 18:31; 22:37; 24:44).

**THOUGHT** - One of the great ironies of our sinful human existence is that religion can make us blind to the true way of salvation. Even years of studying the Bible can leave us without understanding of the liberation Christ desires to bring. The experience of the people of Jerusalem in Jesus' day must ever stand as a warning to the religious. (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**Fulfilled these by condemning Him - Fulfilled** is the same verb ([pleroo](#)) used of John completing his course, but here speaks of the OT messianic prophecies which were fulfilled by the Jews when they called for Jesus' crucifixion. One might say when Jesus came on the scene, the Messianic prophecies "completed their course" (albeit there are glorious, awesome prophecies yet to be fulfilled at the Second Coming). To which prophecies does Paul refer? What should the Jews and their rulers have known? There are **MANY** OT prophecies that speak of the suffering of the Messiah. Below are a few examples the Jews would have read in the synagogues but which they failed to understand...

Genesis 3:15+ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Isaiah 53:3+ He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people (THE NATION OF ISRAEL), to whom the stroke was due?

Psalms 22:12 Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. 13 They open wide their mouth at me, As a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; It is melted within me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me in the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; **They pierced my hands and my feet.** 17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; 18 **They divide my garments** among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.

Psalms 118:22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner stone. (Quoted in Mt 21:42, Acts 4:11, Eph 2:20 & 1Pe 2:7 )

Daniel 9:24+ "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. **25+** "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until **Messiah the Prince** there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks (BECAUSE OF THE DATING, THE JEWS COULD HAVE KNOWN THE TIME OF MESSIAH'S ARRIVAL! - See Jesus' words in Lk 19:42-44+); it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. **26+** "Then after the sixty-two weeks **the Messiah will be cut off** (CRUCIFIXION) and have nothing, and the

people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

Zechariah 12:10+ "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that **they will look on Me whom they have pierced**; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

**Condemning** (2919) (**krino** is root of English critic, critical) meant originally to **separate**, then to **distinguish**, to pick out, to be of opinion, and finally, to **judge**. The act of judgment was therefore that of forming an accurate and honest opinion of someone, thus, appraising his character, and placing him in a certain position with respect to the law of God. The result of such a judgment as in the present context is **condemnation**. Paul in his sermon is clearly inditing the Jewish leaders for they were neither accurate nor honest in their judgment of Jesus and condemned him without justification. In a bitter irony, Luke uses this same word **krino** in Acts 13:46 to describe the Jews in essence "condemning" (judging) themselves because they rejected the Gospel. The Jews condemned the very One (the only One) Who was able to keep them from being eternally condemned!

This verb **krino** is used in John 18:31 describing the acts of the Jews against Jesus "So Pilate said to them (THE JEWS), "Take Him yourselves, and **judge** (KRINO) Him according to your law." The Jews said to him, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death,"

**Jack Andrews** on the Jewish leaders not knowing the Messiah - It was just a show for them. It was all a farce.

- They were familiar with the words in the Scripture, but they had no faith in the Lord in the Scripture.
- They knew where to find a text, but they didn't know have faith in the text.
- They read the Prophets, but they didn't allow the Prophets to read them.
- They studied about the rebellion of their people in the past, but they did not recognize their rebellion in the present.
- They read about the promise of the coming of the Messiah, but they did not respond properly to the coming of the Messiah.

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That the Jews did not recognize the Messiah is amazing as their writings frequently spoke (and continue to speak) about Him

**Rambam** (1135–1204), one of their most-read sages, wrote, "Whoever does not believe in him [the Messiah], or does not await his coming, denies not only the other prophets but also the Torah and Moses, our teacher, for the Torah attests to his coming." "

**The New Jewish Encyclopedia** defines the MESSIAH as "a modified form of the Hebrew word Mashiah meaning 'anointed,' applied in the Bible to a person appointed for special function, such as High Priest or King. Later the term Messiah came to express the belief that a Redeemer, that is a divinely appointed individual, will in the end bring salvation to the Jewish people and to the entire human race" (p.317).

**The Dictionary Of Jewish Lore And Legend** encapsulates the term MESSIAH a bit more succinctly: "The anointed king of the House of David of Bethlehem who will be sent by God to inaugurate the final redemption in the end of days" (p.132).

**Acts 13:28 "And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. (NASB95)**

KJV Acts 13:28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

- Acts 3:13,14; Matthew 27:19,22-25; Mark 15:13-15; Luke 23:4,5,14-16,21-25; John 18:38; 19:4,12-16
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE GUILT OF THE JEWS IN JERUSALEM

**John MacArthur** comments that "Paul then answered a second question that would have arisen: If Messiah was rejected, does that nullify God's plan? Far from it, replied Paul. Isaiah 53:3 foresaw that Messiah would be "despised and forsaken of men." They hated Jesus without cause....They thus unwittingly fulfilled Psalm 69:4, "**Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head**" (cf. John 15:25).(MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

In Matthew 27: 25 the Jews told Pilate "His blood shall be on us and on our children!"

**And though they found no ground for putting Him to death-** Luke gives us an excellent commentary on this passage...

Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, **"I find no guilt in this Man."** But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place."....14 and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, **I have found no guilt in this Man** regarding the charges which you make against Him. 15 **"No, nor has Herod,** for he sent Him back to us; and behold, **nothing deserving death** has been done by Him. 16 "Therefore I will punish Him and release Him."....21 but they kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!" 22 And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? **I have found in Him no guilt demanding death;** therefore I will punish Him and release Him." 23 But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices began to prevail. 24 And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted. 25 And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will. (Luke 23:4-5,14-16,21-25+)

**They asked Pilate that He be executed-** Under the Roman rule, the Jews could not carry out the execution themselves. In their rejection, the Jews were only fulfilling biblical prophecy. In the cross reference above, the Jews "kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!" (Lk 23:21) and "they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified." (Lk 23:23+).

In his second sermon Peter spoke a similar message about the Jewish rejection of Jesus

But when Peter saw this, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? 13 "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified **His servant Jesus, the One Whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate,** when he had decided to release Him. 14 "But **you disowned the Holy and Righteous One** and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 but **put to death the Prince of life,** the One Whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses. 16 "And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all. 17 "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. 18 "But **the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.** (Acts 3:12-18+)

**Acts 13:29 "When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. (NASB95)**

KJV 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.

- **When they had carried out** Acts 13:27; 2:23; 4:28; Luke 18:31-33; 24:44; John 19:28,30,36,37
- **they took Him down from the cross** Matthew 27:57-60; Mark 15:45,46; Luke 23:53; John 19:38-42; 1 Corinthians 15:4
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **JESUS: CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED**

The word [crux](#) means the most important point and is from the Latin word *crux* which means "cross". Indeed, Paul now comes to the most important point, the Cross, the death, the burial and the resurrection.

**When they had carried out** - Paul alludes to fulfilled prophecy. Paul avoids the specific word crucified Him, but clearly that was what they **carried out**.

**All that was written concerning Him** - Not some but **all!** This is further validation that Jesus is the Messiah. Paul emphasizes that every "jot and tittle" of the [Messianic Prophecies](#) dealing with Messiah's suffering were perfectly fulfilled. Numbers 23:19 emphasizes that all that was said by God in the Old Testament would be completed by God for "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (Rhetorical - Answer - Resounding "YES!")" (cf Josh 23:14)

**MacArthur** explains that "Among the prophecies fulfilled on the cross were that Messiah would be a reproach, one at whom the people wagged their heads (Ps. 109:25; cf. Matt. 27:39); that the crowds at the crucifixion site would stare at Him (Ps. 22:17; cf. Luke 23:35); and that His executioners would divide His clothing among themselves by lot (Ps. 22:18; cf. John 19:23-24). Psalm 69:21 predicted He would be given vinegar and gall for His thirst, Matthew 27:34 records the fulfillment of that prediction. Jesus' cry from the cross "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46) was the fulfillment of Psalm 22:1, and His words "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46) were foretold in Psalm 31:5. His executioners did not break any of His bones (John 19:33), just as Psalm 34:20 predicted would happen. Zechariah 12:10 foretold the piercing of His side with a spear, recorded in John 19:34." Beside those prophecies, the very fact that the Old Testament predicted that Messiah would be crucified is amazing. Crucifixion was not a Jewish form of execution, if indeed it was even known to them in Old Testament times. Yet Psalm 22:1-31 and Numbers 21:1-9 (ED: SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS) picture such a death (cf. Jesus' words in John 3:14 "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;"). (Ibid)

**They took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb**- KJV is more literal = "Took Him down from the tree." **They** indicates more than one person which included "a rich man from Arimathea, named **Joseph**, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus" (Mt 27:57-60) and "**Nicodemus**, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. So **they** took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews." (John 19:39-40) Paul's phrase **laid Him in a tomb** is another way of saying Jesus truly died!

Note that this passage at first glance is somewhat confusing because of the two uses of the pronoun **they**. Both refer to Jews, but the first use of **they** refers to the role of the Jews in Jesus' trial and crucifixion, while the second **they** refers to the dispensation of His body after crucifixion by different Jews (Joseph and Nicodemus as described above. **Darrell Bock** summarizes the two **they's** - "This "**they**," then, includes those who **rejected** Jesus (Jewish leaders and Pilate) (FIRST "THEY") and those who **respected** Jesus (Joseph of Arimathea with Pilate's permission), (SECOND "THEY" TO WHICH I WOULD ADD NICODEMUS) depending on the act in view." (Baker Exegetical Commentary - Acts)

**Wiersbe** has a play on words writing that "The "**virgin tomb**" (John 19:41) was like a "**womb**" that gave birth to Jesus Christ in resurrection glory." (BEC)

Even Jesus' burial fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy

His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. (Isaiah 53:9+)

And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man 51 (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God; 52 this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb ("his own tomb" Mt 27:50) cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain. (Lk 23:50-53+)

It is interesting that Paul does not use the more common NT word for **cross**" which is **stauros**, but instead uses **xulon** which would have been more familiar to the Jews who knew the **Septuagint (Lxx)**, for the same word for "**cross**" ("tree") was used in the Greek translation of the passage in Deuteronomy.

If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on **atree** (Lxx = **xulon**) his corpse shall not hang all night on the **tree** (Lxx = **xulon**), but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is **accursed** of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.(Deut. 21:22,23)

Messianic Jew **Steven Ger** comments that "Paul studiously avoids using the word for cross, stauros, an offensive word, particularly within the context of public synagogue discourse, choosing instead the euphemism xulon, meaning, "tree, wood, or stake." (Ibid)

Later Paul in his letter to the Galatians (Antioch is in Galatia) would add a "commentary" on the **tree**" explaining that Christ became a "curse" in our place. In other words, Christ became a curse that we might be blessed! [Hallelujah, What a Savior!](#)

Christ redeemed us from the **curse** of the Law, having become a **curse** for us—for it is written, "**CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE** (**xulon**, quoting Dt 21:23)"— (Gal 3:13+)

**Peter** wrote that

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the **cross** (**xulon**), so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed (spiritual healing NOT physical healing!). (1 Peter 2:24+)

**Cross** (tree) ([3586](#)) (**xulon** from **xuo** = to scrape) is literally wood and refers to anything made of wood, including a tree or other

wooden article or substance. In Ac 5:30, 10:39, 13:29, 1Pe 2:24 and Gal 3:13 xulon refers to the old rugged Cross. The NT idea of xulon/xylon as a cross is related to Dt 21:22, 23 which emphasizes the shame that befalls the one who is exposed and punished in such a way. The more common NT Greek word for "cross" is [stauros](#) which described an instrument of capital punishment, an upright pointed stake often with a crossbeam.

Luke used **xulon** earlier describing the crucifixion of Jesus:

Acts 5:30+ "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a **cross**."

Acts 10:39+ "We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a **cross**."

**Richards** records that "In the Roman world the cross was used to execute only slaves and foreigners. Those with Roman citizenship were protected from the shame and the pain associated with crucifixion. As practiced by the Romans, crucifixion involved either tying or nailing the convicted person to a crossbeam, which was attached to the **stauros** (4716) ("pole"). The cross might be in the form of a **T** or, as it is more traditionally represented, as a **t**. Death came slowly to a crucified person, through exhaustion or by suffocation. And it came with great pain. Death by crucifixion was also considered a great disgrace. It is the theological implications of Jesus' crucifixion, however, that are of most concern to the Christian (Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency

**Jack Arnold** - We know that Christ had to die in order to save sinners. His death was an atoning death, a substitutionary sacrifice, a death under the curse of God for our sins. He was innocent, yet God cursed Him and punished Him in our place, laying our guilt upon Him so we could be forgiven of all our sins. ([Paul's First Recorded Sermon](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Was Jesus crucified on a cross, pole, or stake?](#)
- [What is the meaning of the cross?](#)
- [Why is there a curse associated with hanging on a tree?](#)
- [What is the curse of the law?](#)

#### Acts 13:30 But God raised Him from the dead; (NASB95)

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

- Acts 2:24,32; 3:13,15,26; 4:10; 5:30,31; 10:40; 17:31; Mt 28:6; Jn 2:19; Jn 10:17; Heb 13:20
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### BUT GOD! RESURRECTION!

**But God** - This is one of those great contrasts, one of those "but God's" that should make us shout "Hallelujah!" Death could not hold Him down!

**Jack Andrews** - Thank God for this conjunction. They did their worst to Him, but God did their best for them!

**David Guzik** on **but God** - These are wonderful words. Man did his best to fight against God—even to kill Him—but **God** was greater than man's sin and rebellion, and Jesus rose from the grave, winning over sin and death. ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - Now the apostle has reached the heart of his sermon. He has come to the great cornerstone of the Christian faith. There are no embellishments here—not even an anecdote or an illustration—but just a plain declaration of the great facts of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are the backbone of the gospel, and the more we dwell on these facts, the better. Let us preach the doctrines that grow out of these facts, for facts are stubborn things, and if they are backed by the Spirit of God, they will carry all before them. Exhortation is well enough in its place, but you must not have only powder in your gun—there must be some shot, also. The apostle has solid facts here which he drives home to the heart and conscience of his hearers. He does not forget that the weight and forge of a sermon must lie in the distinct truth of God it teaches.

**Raised Him from the dead** - The Father resurrected His Son Jesus. The Spirit also raised Jesus " he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 1:4NLT+)

**Raised** (1453)([egeiro](#)) means to rise (stand up) from a sitting or lying position (Mt 8:26, 9:5), to awaken from sleep (Mt 8:25), and

figuratively as in the present passage to "awaken" from death (rise up). Paul used **egeiro** earlier in this sermon to describe David's "promotion" to king (Acts 13:22). Here he describes the "promotion" of Jesus as King of kings who has defeated the last enemy death (cf 1 Cor 15:26, 54-55+).

Luke repeatedly attests to the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead which is described by Luke using two verbs = [anistemi](#) and [egeiro](#)

Acts 2:24 "But **God raised Him up again** ([anistemi](#)), putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

Acts 2:32 "**This Jesus God raised up again** ([anistemi](#)), to which we are all witnesses.

Acts 3:15 but put to death the Prince of life, **the One Whom God raised** ([egeiro](#)) **from the dead**, a fact to which we are witnesses.

Acts 3:26 "For you first, **God raised up** ([anistemi](#)) **His Servant** and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways."

Acts 4:10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom **God raised** ([egeiro](#)) **from the dead**—by this name this man stands here before you in good health.

Acts 5:30 "The God of our fathers **raised up** ([egeiro](#)) Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross.

Acts 10:40 "**God raised Him up** ([egeiro](#)) on the third day and granted that He become visible,

**Richards** on **anistemi** and **egeiro**: In the NT, two families of words are used to express this basic doctrine (RESURRECTION). The verb **anistemi** means "to raise" or "to arouse [from sleep]." In this word group are also [anastasis](#), exanastasis("resurrection") and exanistemi ("to raise," "to arouse"). The NT uses all of these words in ordinary senses as well as in the context of resurrection from the dead. These words, almost never used in Greek thought of a recall to life, are used in the NT both of Jesus' resurrection and of the believer's resurrection. [Egeiro](#) is a transitive verb meaning "to wake up," "to rouse." Both these groups of words are used when NT writers turn their attention to what happened to Jesus and to what will happen to those who are His. ([Expository Dictionary of Bible Words: Regency](#))

See also Rom 10:9; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:20; Col 2:12; 1 Thess 1:10

**Jack Arnold** exhorts us - Christians today must preach the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is the only message that can challenge, confront, counter, defeat and destroy the humanistic, anti-supernaturalistic spirit of this age. The resurrection is the key to Christianity and those who study it objectively fall down and worship Jesus Christ. ([Paul's First Recorded Sermon](#))

**ILLUSTRATION** - An English lawyer, named Frank Morrison, set out to disprove the resurrection of Christ. He was convinced that Christianity was false and that Jesus was an imposter. He realized that the whole truth of Christianity hinged on the resurrection of Christ, so he set out to write a book to disprove the resurrection of Christ. As a lawyer would, he began to do research. He analyzed the documents and testimonies of the eyewitnesses. The more he studied, the more doubts began to come into his mind. Finally, he accepted the resurrection of Christ as a fact and bowed his will to Christ as Lord and Savior. He then wrote the book, [Who Moved the Stone? \(ONLINE\)](#) which is a strong defense of the resurrection of Christ.

#### Related Resources:

- On Site Article - The Resurrection of Christ
- Verse by verse commentary on 1 Corinthians 15 the "Resurrection Chapter"
- [John MacArthur's sermon refutation of theories of the resurrection](#) - (1) swoon theory, (2) no-burial theory (3) Hallucination theory(4) telepathy theory (5) seance theory (6) mistaken identity (imposter) theory (7) the most popular, the theft theory
- [Who Moved the Stone? \(ONLINE\)](#) by Frank Morrison - Here is the preface of the book - This study is in some ways so unusual and provocative that the writer thinks it desirable to state here very briefly how the book came to take its present form. In one sense it could have taken no other, for it is essentially a confession, the inner story of a man who originally set out to write one kind of book and found himself compelled by the sheer force of circumstances to write another. It is not that the facts themselves altered, for they are recorded imperishably in the monuments and in the pages of human history. But the interpretation to be put upon the facts underwent a change. Somehow the perspective shifted --not suddenly, as in a flash of insight or inspiration, but slowly, almost imperceptibly, by the very stubbornness of the facts themselves. The book as it was



originally planned was left high and dry, like those Thames barges when the great river goes out to meet the incoming sea. The writer discovered one day that not only could he no longer write the book as he had once conceived it, but that he would not if he could. To tell the story of that change, and to give the reasons for it, is the main purpose of the following pages. (Click for [index of the 15 chapters](#))

- [What Good is a Dead Messiah?](#) (Chapter 6 from [Josh McDowell's classic "More than a Carpenter"](#))
- [Where do the Hebrew Scriptures prophesy the death and resurrection of the Messiah?](#)
- [Why is the truth of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ so important?](#)
- [Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ important?](#)
- [Why should I believe in Christ's resurrection?](#)
- [When will the Resurrection take place?](#)
- [What is the first resurrection? What is the second resurrection?](#)
- [Is the resurrection of Jesus Christ true?](#)
- [What is more important, the death of Christ or His resurrection?](#)
- [Can the various resurrection accounts from the four Gospels be harmonized?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" \(John 11:25\)?](#)
- [John MacArthur's sermon](#) refutation of theories of the resurrection.

**Acts 13:31 and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. (NASB95)**

KJV 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.

- **for many days He appeared** Acts 1:3,11; 10:41; Matthew 28:16; Mark 16:12-14; Luke 24:36-42; John 20:19-29; John 21:1-14; 1 Corinthians 15:5-7
- **the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people** Acts 1:8,22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39; Luke 24:48; John 15:27; Hebrews 2:3,4
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **JESUS' RESURRECTION AUTHENTICATED BY HIS APPEARANCES**

**And for many days** - Forty days as Luke says in Acts 1:3+ "To these (To whom? see Acts 1:2+) He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them **over a period of forty days** and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God."

**James M Boice** comments that "We should not miss an emphasis on events in Paul's preaching here; it is so evident that it can be missed. He focused on things that actually happened, not on philosophy or even theology. "Christianity is not just a philosophy or a set of ethics, though it involves these things. Essentially Christianity is a proclamation of facts that concern what God has done." As Luke had written earlier

Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us—beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us—one of these **must become a witness with us of His resurrection**" (Acts 1:21-22+)

**Larkin** comments that "Theophilus (Lk 1:3+, Acts 1:1+) and inquirers into Christianity's credibility in any time or place are given assurance once again that the central events of its saving message can stand, indeed invite, the test of public scrutiny." (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem**- The verb **appeared** highlights the supernatural character of the resurrection (compare Ge 12:7; Jdg 6:12; Lk 1:11; 24:34; Acts 2:3; 7:2; 9:17; 26:16). The phrase **those who came up with Him from Galilee** is another way of describing the 11 (12 minus Judas) disciples, who clearly were in a good position to identify Jesus, since they had been part of His ministry band.

Paul summarizes these appearances what I think is the single best Scriptural "definition" of the Gospel

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5

and **that He appeared** to Cephas (PETER), then to the twelve. **6 After that He appeared** to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now (~AD 56 which was about 8 years after Paul's sermon in Acts 13), but some have fallen asleep; **7 then He appeared** to James, then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, **He appeared to me also.** (1 Corinthians 15:3-8+ - see also verse by verse comments on 1 Cor 15:1-58)

**The very ones who are** (continually - present tense) **now His witnesses to the people** - Paul is referring to himself (cf 1 Cor 15:8+), to whom the resurrected and ascended Jesus had appeared on the road to Damascus (read Acts 9:3-9+). Paul is saying that he has seen the One who fulfills all the OT prophecies. One has to wonder what was going through the minds of his Jewish audience! One can see the crowd beginning to fidget and become uneasy (aka "convicted" of Jesus' words in Jn 16:7-11, especially Jn 16:9)!

See [John MacArthur's sermon](#) refuting the various theories attempting to explain the resurrection.

**Witnesses** (3144)(**martus/martys** gives us our English **martyr**) describes one who remembers something and testifies concerning what they remember. In other words, a **martus** is one who attests to a fact or event, one who gives evidence (testifies in a court to the truth), one who has seen or has personal knowledge of something or someone, and especially one who was an "eye witness" as in this passage where Paul relates his personal knowledge of Jesus' post-resurrection appearance. A witness is one who furnishes evidence or proof, confirming the truth by verbal testimony.

**Luke's** uses of **martus** -

Lk. 11:48; Lk. 24:48; Acts 1:8; Acts 1:22; Acts 2:32; Acts 3:15; Acts 5:32; Acts 6:13; Acts 7:58; Acts 10:39; Acts 10:41; Acts 13:31; Acts 22:15; Acts 22:20; Acts 26:16;

## JESUS' APPEARANCES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

1. Mary Magdalene Mark 16:9–11; John 20:10–18
2. The other women at the tomb Matthew 28:8–10
3. Peter in Jerusalem Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5
4. The two travelers on the road Mark 16:12–13; Luke 24:13–35
5. Ten disciples behind closed doors Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–25
6. All eleven disciples (including Thomas) Mark 16:14; John 20:26–31; 1 Corinthians 15:5
7. Seven disciples while fishing on the Sea of Galilee John 21:1–14
8. Eleven disciples on a mountain in Galilee Matthew 28:16–20; Mark 16:15–18
9. A crowd of 500 1 Corinthians 15:6
10. Jesus' brother James 1 Corinthians 15:7
11. Those who watched Jesus ascend into heaven Mark 16:19–20; Luke 24:50–53; Acts 1:3–9
12. Saul/Paul - Acts 9:3-6

**Acts 13:32 "And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, ([NASB95](#))**

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

- **And we preach to you** Acts 13:38; Isaiah 40:9; 41:27; 52:7; 61:1; Luke 1:19; 2:10; Romans 10:15
- **of the promise made to the fathers** Acts 3:19; 26:6; Ge 3:15; 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 49:10; Dt 18:15; Isa 7:14; Isa 9:6,7; 11:1; Jer 23:5; Ezek 34:23; Da 9:24-26; Mic 5:2; Hag 2:7; Zech 6:12; 9:9; 13:1,7; Mal 3:1; 4:2; Lk 1:54,55,68-73; Ro 4:13; Gal 3:16-18
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL PREACHED THE GOSPEL

**And we preach to you the good news** (2097) ([euaggelizo/euangelizo](#) from **eu** = good, well + **aggéllo** = proclaim, tell; English = evangelize) means to announce good news concerning something. **Euaggelizo** was often used in the [Septuagint](#) for preaching a

glad or joyful message (cf. 1Sam. 31:9; 2 Sa 1:20; 4:10). **Euaggelizo/euangelizo** in its original sense could be used to refer to a declaration of any kind of good news, but in the NT it (with 2 exceptions discussed below) refers especially to the glad tidings of the coming kingdom of God and of salvation obtained through Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection.

**Euaggelizo** is a favorite verb of Luke - notice the concentration of of euaggelizo in the Book of Acts (15/52 NT uses)

Lk. 1:19; Lk. 2:10; Lk. 3:18; Lk. 4:18; Lk. 4:43; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 8:1; Lk. 9:6; Lk. 16:16; Lk. 20:1; Acts 5:42; Acts 8:4; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:25; Acts 8:35; Acts 8:40; Acts 10:36; Acts 11:20; Acts 13:32; Acts 14:7; Acts 14:15; Acts 14:21; Acts 15:35; Acts 16:10; Acts 17:18

**Of the promise made to the fathers** (our Jewish ancestors, our Jewish forefathers) - The **promise** is identical to the message of salvation in Acts 13:26. The **promise** is ultimately that God would send the Messiah and He would be a Redeemer (cf Ps 19:14, Ps 78:35, Isaiah 41:14, 43:14, 44:6, 24, 47:4, 48:17, 49:7, 49:26, 54:5,8. See especially Isa 59:20, 60:16). Paul again alludes to **Messianic Prophecies**. In Romans Paul wrote "that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision (JEWS) on behalf of the truth of God to confirm **the promises given to the (JEWISH) fathers.**" (Ro 15:8)

The word **promise** is a verbal commitment by one to another agreeing to do (or not to do) something in the future. Throughout the Old Testament God had spoken over 300 **Messianic Prophecies** each being a **promise** of the Messiah Who would come through the line of David (cf Mt 1:1).

**Promise** (1860) (see **epaggelia/epangelia**) indicates God made a verbal commitment (recorded in the inspired Scripture = When Scripture speaks, God speaks!).

**Acts 13:33 that God has fulfilled this [promise] to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.'** ([NASB95](#))

KJV 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.

- **YOU ARE MY SON** Ps 2:7; Hebrews 1:5,6; 5:5
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **CHRIST'S RESURRECTION PROPHESED IN PSALM 2**

**That** - This continues the thought from the previous sentence. Paul will proceed to conclude this review of the resurrection by appealing to three **of the promise (s) made to the fathers** quoting from **Psalm 2:7 (Acts 13:33)**, **Isaiah 55:3 (Acts 13:34)**, and **Psalm 16:10 (Acts 13:35)**. As an aside, Paul is clearly focusing his main argument on his Jewish audience, for they would have been the ones who were familiar with the preceding history of Israel, the allusions to John the Baptizer and now the allusions to three OT prophecies that predicted Messiah would be resurrected from the dead. While some of the God fearing Gentiles may have had some understanding of the significance of the OT prophecies, they would not be nearly as familiar with them as the Jews who had heard them read in the synagogue all their lives. Now Paul is helping them understand what they had been reading and had failed to understand.

**God has fulfilled this promise** - "**Promise**" is added by the translators but is clearly implied. **Fulfilled** is in the perfect tense indicating the **promise** was **fulfilled** at a point in time in the past and has continuing effect or efficacy in the present (and throughout the eternal future in this case!) What **promise**? The **promise** is explained as the resurrection of the Messiah Jesus, which in turn is the foundational truth of the Gospel, for without the resurrection, there would be no good news! (read 1 Cor 15:12-19+)

**Jack Arnold** - God made a **promise** to King David. God's promise to David was kept through the Messiah Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead. All the promise made to David is fulfilled in Jesus Christ ([Paul's First Recorded Sermon](#))

**To our children** - **Our children** refers to the Jewish offspring all those related to **'the fathers.'**

**Children** (5043) (**teknon** from **tikto** = bring forth, bear children, be born) is strictly a child produced, male or female, son or daughter. In the plural as here in Acts 13:33, **teknon** is used generically of descendants or posterity.

**In that He raised up Jesus** - This is the "promise of promises" that God would raise Jesus from the dead.

**Raised up** (450) see [anistemi](#) below.

The Jews and the early church held that Psalm 2 was clearly a Messianic Psalm.

**As it is also written** - The verb **written** ([grapho](#)) like the verb **fulfilled** is in the perfect tense indicating the **Messianic** Psalm 2 was written down or inscribed at a point in time in the past and continues to be true and valid in the present (and throughout eternity!) As Jesus (the Living Word) affirmed "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away." (Lk 21:33+, read also Ps 119:89)

**In the second Psalm, 'YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU-** In the NAS all caps signifies a direct OT quote. Paul confirms that Psalm 2 is clearly a prophecy of the Messiah. He equates "You" with "My Son" in essence saying that the Son is also deity. Jesus is God's Son in the fullest sense of the word, for He shares God's very nature.

Here is the full passage Psalm 2:7...

"I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, **You are My Son, Today I have begotten You**

Paul quotes this passage as an allusion to the **resurrection** (in that He raised up Jesus as it is also written), but in the NT is also quoted in reference to the **incarnation**, the birth of Jesus (Heb 1:5+ = "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU")

**Henry Morris** explains Paul's intended meaning in the present context in quoting Psalm 2:7 - There are several senses in which Christ is the only **begotten** Son of God (cf Heb 1:5+), but the emphasis here is on **His resurrection from the dead**, as evident from the quotation of this verse in Acts 13:33. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power,...by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4+). He was also called the "firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:18) and the "first begotten of the dead" (Revelation 1:5+; Hebrews 5:5KJV). (Defender's Study Bible Notes)

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**Norman Geisler** on how the cults misinterpret Psalm 2:7

**MISINTERPRETATION:**

Psalm 2:7 says, "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee'" (NASB). Mormons think this verse supports the idea that Jesus was born as a spirit child (by procreation), the offspring of heavenly parents (Gospel Principles, 1986, 9).

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:**

The Mormon view on this text is not supported by it or the rest of Scripture. Two things should be kept in mind.

First, the context here is not speaking about a spirit being born in the spirit world but of the "kings of the earth" who "plot" against God's "Anointed" (the Messiah) to rid themselves of him (i.e., kill him). Hence, the most natural sense of his being "begotten" of God to reign over the nations (vv. 7-8) is that he was resurrected from the dead.

Second, a basic principle of biblical interpretation is that the Old Testament should be interpreted according to the greater light of the New Testament. Acts 13:33-34 indicates that the Father's resurrection of Jesus from the dead is a fulfillment of the statement in Psalm 2:7, "Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee." The verse thus has nothing to do with the alleged procreation of Christ.

Other Scriptures make it clear that Christ never came into existence at a point in time but is rather an eternal being. Jesus is as eternal as God the Father (John 1:1) and existed as the eternal "I AM" (cf. Exod. 3:14) before Abraham (John 8:58). He was not "born" as a spirit being at any time. He was only born as a man in Bethlehem, even though he had been eternal (cf. Micah 5:2). ([Correcting the Cults](#))

Does "**only begotten Son**" indicate that Jesus Christ is a created being? John 3:16

**MISINTERPRETATION:**

This verse refers to Jesus as God's "only begotten Son." The Jehovah's Witnesses tell us that Jesus is God's only begotten son in the sense that he was directly created by the hand of God (Aid to Bible Understanding, 1971, 918). He is thus a lesser god than God the Father.

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:**

The words only begotten do not mean that Christ was created but rather mean "unique" or "one of a kind" (Greek: monogenēs). Jesus was uniquely God's son by nature—meaning that he has the very nature of God. It is significant that when Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, his Jewish contemporaries understood him to be claiming deity in an unqualified sense and sought to stone him: "We have a law, and according to that law

he [Jesus] ought to die, because he made himself out to be the Son of God" (John 19:7 NASB, insert added). They thought Jesus was committing blasphemy because he was claiming deity for himself. Many evangelicals believe that Christ's sonship is an eternal sonship. Evidence for Christ's eternal sonship is found in the fact that he is represented as already the Son of God before his human birth in Bethlehem (John 3:16-17; cf. Prov. 30:4). Hebrews 1:2 says God created the universe through his "Son"—implying that Christ was the Son of God prior to the Creation. Moreover, Christ as the Son is explicitly said to have existed "before all things" (Col. 1:17; compare with Col 1:13-14). As well, Jesus, speaking as the Son of God (John 8:54-56), asserts his eternal preexistence before Abraham (Jn 8:58). Seen in this light, Christ's identity as the Son of God does not connote inferiority or subordination either of essence or position. ([Correcting the Cults](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [What does it mean that Jesus is God's only begotten son?](#)
- [What is the doctrine of eternal Sonship and is it biblical?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus is the 'first-born' over Creation?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of God?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus is the son of David?](#)
- [Was Jesus created?](#)

**Acts 13:34 "As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE blessings OF DAVID.' (NASB95)**

KJV 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.

- **no longer to return to decay** Romans 6:9
- **'I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE blessings OF DAVID'** 2 Sa 7:14-16; 23:5; Ps 89:2-4,19-37; Jer 33:15-17,26; Ezek 34:23,24; Ezek 37:24,25; Hos 3:5; Amos 9:11; Zech 12:8
- **SURE blessings OF DAVID** Isa 55:3
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### CHRIST'S RESURRECTION PROPHESED IN ISAIAH 55

**As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay-** Paul continues his description of the resurrection of Jesus using Scripture to buttress his claim.

**Raised** (450)([anistemi](#). from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = stand, to cause to stand) means literally to get up, to stand up, to stand again, Anistemi is used to describe the resurrection of Jesus - Mt. 17:9; Mk 9:9, 10; Jn 20:9; Acts 17:3, Mt. 20:19; Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; Lk 18:33. Paul uses the other NT verb for resurrect ([egeiro](#)) in Acts 13:30 and Acts 13:37.

**Decay** (corruption)([1312](#))(see [diaphthora](#) below)

**He has spoken in this way: 'I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE [blessings] OF DAVID** - Literally it reads "the holy, sure of David." The word "blessings" is not in the original Greek and is added by the translators of the NAS, ESV, CSB. What are the holy and sure (blessings or mercies) of David? Paul is referring to God's promise to David that from him the Messiah would come (2 Sa 7:12-17), a promise which was an "everlasting covenant" that included the promise of a throne to be established forever (2 Sa 7:13, 16). Paul's logic is if Jesus is truly the Messiah, and He died and remained in the grave, than this covenant would never have been fulfilled. It follows that Jesus had to be resurrected or the covenant would have proven to be false. But we know from Titus 1:2 that "God...cannot lie!" In fact as Paul would later write "For all the promises of God in Him (JESUS) [are] yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor 1:20KJV). In other words, all the promises of God find their certain fulfillment, their **Yea**, in Christ. In Jesus all Old Testament promises find their fulfillment! Amen and Amen!

Paul is quoting in from the last part of Isaiah 55:3 which translated from the Hebrew reads

"the faithful mercies shown to David."

Note that Paul quotes not from the original Hebrew translation but from the Greek, the Septuagint.

"the **holy** ([hósios](#)) **sure** ([pistos](#)) [blessings] of David."

As alluded to above, although the prophecy in Isaiah 55:3 is not a direct statement that Jesus would be resurrected, it is clear that a dead Messiah could hardly be named as the recipient of these blessings God had promised to David and his descendants. And so by simple logic, this promise is an indirect or implicit promise of the resurrection of Christ, the Son of David.

**Holy** ([3741](#))([hósios](#)) generally speaks of what is sanctioned by the law of God and describes persons (being without fault relative to deity = devout - Titus 1:8), holy hands lifted in prayer (1 Ti 2:8), the inherent nature of God (Heb 7:26), and in this present context to promises which are holy or divine. Paul uses this same word **hosios** in the following verse describing Jesus as the "**Holy One**."

The "**holy and sure blessings of David**" are the promises contained in the Davidic Covenant. In short, **holy promises** are given by God to **His Holy One**.

**Sure** (trustworthy)([4103](#))([pistos](#)) means that these blessings promised to David and his posterity are dependable and worthy of one's trust.

### [What is the Davidic covenant?](#)

The Davidic Covenant refers to God's promises to David through Nathan the prophet and is found in 2 Samuel 7 and later summarized in 1 Chronicles 17:11–14 and 2 Chronicles 6:16. This is an unconditional covenant made between God and David through which God promises David and Israel that the Messiah (Jesus Christ) would come from the lineage of David and the tribe of Judah and would establish a kingdom that would endure forever. The Davidic Covenant is unconditional because God does not place any conditions of obedience upon its fulfillment. The surety of the promises made rests solely on God's faithfulness and does not depend at all on David or Israel's obedience.

The Davidic Covenant centers on several key promises that are made to David. First, God reaffirms the promise of the land that He made in the first two covenants with Israel (the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants). This promise is seen in 2 Samuel 7:10, "I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore." God then promises that David's son will succeed him as king of Israel and that this son (Solomon) would build the temple. This promise is seen in 2 Samuel 7:12–13, "I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name."

But then the promise continues and expands: "I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (verse 13), and "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever" (verse 16). What began as a promise that David's son Solomon would be blessed and build the temple turns into something different—the promise of an everlasting kingdom. Another Son of David would rule forever and build a lasting House. This is a reference to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, called the Son of David in Matthew 21:9.

The promise that David's "house," "kingdom," and "throne" will be established forever is significant because it shows that the Messiah will come from the lineage of David and that He will establish a kingdom from which He will reign. The covenant is summarized by the words "house," promising a dynasty in the lineage of David; "kingdom," referring to a people who are governed by a king; "throne," emphasizing the authority of the king's rule; and "forever," emphasizing the eternal and unconditional nature of this promise to David and Israel.

Other references to the Davidic Covenant are found in Jeremiah 23:5; 30:9; Isaiah 9:7; 11:1; Luke 1:32, 69; Acts 13:34; and Revelation 3:7.

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### **D L Moody - God's Promises Fulfilled**

Acts 13:32-34 And we declare to you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made to the fathers,...

God is always true to what He promises to do. He will fulfil every word of what He has promised; yet how few take Him at His word! When I was a young man I was clerk in the establishment of a man in Chicago, whom I observed frequently occupied sorting and marking bills. He explained to me what he had been doing; on some notes he had marked B, on some D, and on others G; those marked B he told me were bad, those marked D meant they were doubtful, and those with G on them meant they were good. "And,"

said he "you must treat all of them accordingly." And thus people endorse God's promises, by marking some as bad, and others as doubtful; whereas we ought to take all of them as good, for He has never once broken His word, and all that He says He will do will be done in the fulness of time.

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### Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook - More than Mere Words

"I will give you the sure mercies of David" (Acts 13:34).

Nothing of man is sure; but everything of God is so. Especially are covenant mercies sure mercies, even as David said "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." We are sure that the Lord meant His mercy. He did not speak mere words: there is substance and truth in every one of His promises. His mercies are mercies indeed. Even if a promise seems as if it must drop through by reason of death, yet it never shall, for the good LORD will make good His word. We are sure that the LORD will bestow promised mercies on all His covenanted ones. They shall come in due course to all the chosen of the LORD. They are sure to all the seed, from the least of them unto the greatest of them. We are sure that the LORD will continue His mercies to His own people. He does not give and take. What He has granted us is the token of much more. That which we have not yet received is as sure as that which has already come; therefore, let us wait before the LORD and be still. There is no justifiable reason for the least doubt. God's love, and word, and faithfulness are sure. Many things are questionable, but of the LORD we sing...

*For his mercies shall endure*

*Ever faithful, ever sure.*

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### Acts 13:35 "Therefore He also says in another Psalm,' YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.'

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

- **in another Psalm** Acts 2:27-31; Ps 16:10
- **TO UNDERGO DECAY** Acts 13:36,37; Ps 49:9; 89:48; Luke 2:26; John 3:36; 8:51; Hebrews 11:5
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### CHRIST'S RESURRECTION PROPHESIED IN PSALM 16

**Therefore He also says in another Psalm** - Paul is on a roll now! Here is another Messianic Psalm with which the Jews were familiar. And so Paul uses it to defend his premise that the Messiah's resurrection had been prophesied in the Old Testament. The Jews (for the most part) simply missed these OT prophetic truths!

**YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY** - Paul is quoting the Messianic passage penned by David in Psalm 16:10

"For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."

**Peter** also appealed to this prophecy in his great Pentecostal sermon

BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY. (Acts 2:27+)

David wrote these words but, his body did decay after he died and was buried. The body of Messiah did not **undergo decay**. Jesus was in the tomb three days and yet experienced no **decay**.

**John Phillips** - Many a time the Old Testament saints must have puzzled over Psalm 16 with its reference to death and preservation from corruption in the grave. How could the **Holy One** of the psalm, the Beloved One, the Messiah, possibly die, and how could He possibly escape the inevitable corruption of the grave if He did? As with so many other prophecies, suddenly all was clear (**ED: PETER HAD EXPLAINED IT TO THE JEWS IN JERUSALEM AND NOW PAUL EXPLAINS THE FULFILLMENT OF PSALM 16 TO THE JEWS AT ANTIOCH**).

**Your Holy One** - The title **Holy One** is a messianic title. Clearly David had the Messiah, not himself, in view in Ps 16:10! The Jews for the most part did not recognize Jesus as the **Holy One**, but the demons did! (Mk 1:24, Lk 4:34). When most of the "disciples" of Jesus departed after His "hard" teaching on the Bread of Life (Jn 6:66), Peter, speaking for the other 11, declared "Lord, to whom

shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We (EXCEPT JUDAS) have believed and have come to know that You are the **Holy One** of God." (Jn 6:68, 69).

**Holy One** (3741)(see [hósios](#) above). The most important use of **hosios** is as a title for the Messiah as the **Holy One** three times in the NT - Acts 2:27, Acts 13:35 and Rev 16:5+.

**Decay** (corruption)(1312)([diaphthora](#) from [diaphtheiro](#) = to corrupt, destroy, perish) refers to the decay or decomposition of the physical body. It is used only in Acts and always in reference to bodily decay after death (Acts 2:27; Acts 2:31; Acts 13:34; Acts 13:35; Acts 13:36; Acts 13:37). All of these uses in Acts are in the context of the a description of the resurrection of Christ. In the [Septuagint](#) [diaphthora](#) often translates the Hebrew word for **pit** ([shachath](#)) (Ps 9:15, 30:9, "destructions" in Ps 107:20) or another word for **pit** ([beer](#) Ps 55:23)

**William Larkin** writes that "If we would receive the divinely intended spiritual good from the Old Testament, **we must fix our eyes firmly on the fulfillment, Jesus Christ**, and ask of each passage of promise, What does it teach us of Christ? What can we learn about the salvation that is appointed for the last day?"(IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**Acts 13:36 "For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay;**

KJV 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:

- **For David, after he had served the purpose of God** Acts 13:22; 1 Chronicles 11:2; 13:2-4; 15:12-16,25-29; 18:14; 22:1-29; Ps 78:71,72
- **fell asleep** Acts 7:60; 2 Samuel 7:12; 1 Kings 2:10; 1 Corinthians 15:6,18; 1 Thessalonians 4:13
- **and was laid among his fathers** Acts 2:29; 1 Chronicles 17:11; 2 Chronicles 9:31; 12:16; 21:1; 26:23
- **underwent decay** Genesis 3:19; Job 17:14; 19:26,27; 21:26; Ps 49:9,14; John 11:39; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44,53,54
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## COMPARISON OF THE FATE OF JESUS VERSUS DAVID

**For** - Term of explanation. Here Paul is explaining that even though David wrote Psalm 16:10, he did undergo decay so Psalm 16:10 could not refer to him. As Paul explains in the next verse (Acts 13:37) Jesus did not undergo decay. The upshot is that Psalm 16:10 was written by David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and was a prediction that the Messiah would be resurrected.

**David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation-** David served the purpose of God in his lifetime.

**THOUGHT** - To serve the purpose of God should be the goal of every follower of Jesus. One is reminded of Paul's words in Ephesians 2:10+ that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." David was God's OT workmanship, created for "good works" and he walked in them. Did David walk perfectly? Of course not! And it is for that very reason that all of us should be rejoicing, that if God could use a man like David who fell into terrible sin, He can use any of us (for most of us have "blown it" one time or another!) for His purpose in our own generation! So even as David did, we need to "walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, (and we will) have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses (present tense - continually) us from all sin" as we "confess (continually - present tense) our sins." (1 John 1:7+, 1 John 1:9+)

**Served** (5256)([hupereteo](#) from [huperetes](#) = an attendant or assistant <> from [hupo](#) = under, beneath + [eretes](#)= a rower = an "under rower" ~ a subordinate who waits to carry out a superior's commands) means to serve as a rower (see [huperetes](#) below), to do service on board the ship and then came mean simply to serve, render service or assistance or be helpful to someone. The root word [huperetes](#) was used in everyday Greek to describe sailors who were down in the ship's hull doing one thing -- rowing with their eyes focused on one man standing at the front shouting "Row, Row, Row!" In classic Greek [hupereteo](#) meant to serve as an assistant to another as the instrument of his will. In the NT use [hupereteo](#) came to mean to serve under the direction of someone else, to act for someone or to minister. So in this context Paul us using this verb to picture David as a man who served under the direction of God, seeking to carry out His will in his life. This description fits perfectly with Acts 13:22 in which God describes David as a man "**who will do all My will.**" In the present context David fulfilled God's purpose to be a human king who would give a faint shadow of the divine King Jesus. And he did so by penning the Messianic prophecy in Psalm 16 (in addition to other Messianic



prophecies).

**Purpose (plan)** (1012)([boulē](#)) that which one which one decides. There is an element of planning in the concept of *boulē*. In this context the **boulē** was of **God**, so the picture is of David doing what God had purposed for him to do. This is similar to Paul's description of John the Baptizer that he "was completing his course." (Acts 13:25)

**THOUGHT** - Would God grant that each of us that when we lie down and fall asleep on that final day of our life that we might be fully confident that we had **completed our course** and that we had **served the purpose of God in our own generation**. Yes, Lord by the transformative infusion of Thy Word and the enabling power of Thy Spirit let it be true in our lives, that we might **fight the good fight, finish the course, keep the faith** (2 Ti 4:7+) and thereby our short lives would greatly glorify the Name of Jesus Christ forever and ever. Amen.

**David... fell asleep** - In short, he died. In the NT when a saint dies, Scripture usually uses the euphemism of "sleep." (cf 1 Th 4:13+, Jn 11:11-14). The sleep, however, applies only to the body, for the soul and spirit are with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). Sleep is a pleasant gift from God and a saint's death is a pleasant gift from God for it ushers them immediately into the presence of their Lord Jesus Christ. Not so with those who die without Christ. For a saint, this life is as bad as it gets! For an unsaved man or woman, this life is as good as it gets! The saint falls asleep in Jesus and enters bliss forever. The unsaved soul dies and enters into eternal torment! (Eternal punishment).

**And was laid among his fathers and underwent decay** - I am reminded of Psalm 116:15 "Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His godly ones."

**Decay** (corruption)(1312)see [diaphthora](#)

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## The Work Of Our Hands

One reason we're left here on earth and not taken to heaven immediately after trusting in Christ for salvation is that God has work for us to do. "Man is immortal," Augustine said, "until his work is done."

The time of our death is not determined by anyone or anything here on earth. That decision is made in the councils of heaven. When we have done all that God has in mind for us to do, then and only then will He take us home—and not one second before. As Paul put it, "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep" (Acts 13:36).

In the meantime, until God takes us home, there's plenty to do. "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day," Jesus said. "Night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). Night is coming when we will once for all close our eyes on this world, or our Lord will return to take us to be with Him. Each day brings that time a little closer.

As long as we have the light of day, we must work—not to conquer, acquire, accumulate, and retire, but to make visible the invisible Christ by touching people with His love. We can then be confident that our "labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). By David H. Roper

If you rely upon God's strength And live a life that's true, Then what you do in Jesus' name Will be His work through you. —D. De Haan

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**Acts 13:37 but He whom God raised did not undergo decay.**

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

- Acts 13:30; 2:24
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## RESURRECTION AGAIN REITERATED

**But** - Striking term of contrast. David's body decayed. Jesus' body did not decay.

**He whom God raised** (see [egeiro](#)) **did not undergo decay** - It is almost as if Paul is saying "Now just so you do not misinterpret what I meant by "decay" (Acts 13:35, 36), it means His body was resurrected from the grave, where bodies (like David) normally,

naturally decay."

**Undergo decay** (corruption)(1312)(see [diaphthora](#))

**Swindoll** comments that "Those who expected the Christ to be a political and military leader naturally believed that death invalidated any claim to be the Messiah. Paul argued the contrary. Each messianic prophecy he quoted finds fulfillment in the resurrection of the Messiah. By that line of reasoning, only someone who died and rose from the grave could claim to be the Christ. To make his point clear, he compared King David with Jesus. King David, acknowledged by all to be a great king died after a long life of obedience, and then his body rotted in a grave. Clearly, his death didn't invalidate his life. Jesus, on the other hand, was bodily and miraculously resurrected by the Father and continues to live. Therefore, He must be greater than David." (Ibid)

**Acts 13:38 "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you,**

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

- **Therefore let it be known to you** Acts 2:14; 4:10; 28:28; Ezekiel 36:32; Daniel 3:18
- **that through Him forgiveness of sins** Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; Ps 32:1; 130:4,7; Jeremiah 31:34; Daniel 9:24; Micah 7:18-20; Zechariah 13:1; Luke 24:47; John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Ephesians 1:7; 4:32; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 8:6,12,13; 9:9-14,22; 10:4-18; 1 John 2:1,2,12
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE APPEAL: FORGIVENESS IS FOR YOU

**Therefore** - Based on all of the Scriptural evidence Paul has just presented, it is time to draw a conclusion. These truths were not given to make the Jews "more righteous" sinners, but to make them truly righteous like the Savior!

**Let it be known to you brethren** - **Let it be** (esto from eimi = to be, to exist) is a command in the [present imperative](#), to continually **let it be** to which Paul adds gnostos which means "**known**." (see [gnostos](#)) Let what be known? Paul is glad one would ask, as it indicates they are engaged in the flow of his argument. Paul now provides to give the culmination of the Gospel, the good news that sin can now once and for all be forgiven. Even with all the OT daily sacrifices and the annual day of Atonement, the only thing the Jews could hope for was that the sin would be covered. Of course all of these sacrifices and days were but a faint shadow that pointed to a perfect fulfillment in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, through Whom forgiveness would be available. The OT shadows never cleansed one's conscience, for only complete and total forgiveness can cleanse one's conscience (read Hebrews 9:8-9+ and Hebrews 9:13-14+ and then the incredible gracious invitation in Hebrew 10:19-22+).

Notice that Paul uses **brethren** without adding and you who fear God, suggesting that with laser-like precision he is honing down on the hearts and minds of his Jewish **brethren** in the synagogue.

**That through Him** - **Through** ([dia](#)) Christ (See simple study on phrase "through Him"). Jesus is instrumental Cause, the effecting Agent, or better the [efficacious](#) Agent! Not **through** the the blood of bulls and goats (Heb 9:12+), not **through** the solemn annual Jewish feast of the [Day of Atonement \(Yom Kippur\)](#), but **through** the One Who made the final atonement. Prior to this message, the Jews only knew about [the scapegoat](#), who each year carried their sins into the wilderness (Lev 16:7, 8, 9, 10+), but which was always meant to be "**a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ**" and His better sacrifice (cf Col 2:17+, Heb 9:23+). In the OT sins were only temporarily "covered," but here Paul uses a word [aphesis](#) which means they are sent away forever!

**Forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you** - **Forgiveness of sins** is found 4 times in Acts, 3 by Peter, 2 by Paul (Acts 2:38; Acts 5:31; Acts 10:43; Acts 13:38; Acts 26:1) In context **to you** seems to focus primarily on the Jewish hearers, but in the following verse he opens the offer up to **everyone who believes**. Jesus saves us from: the penalty of sin (past), the power of sin (present), and one day (future) from the presence (and pleasure) of sin.

**Forgiveness** (859)([aphesis](#) from [aphiemi](#) = action which causes separation and is in turn derived from **apo** = from + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) literally means to send away or to put apart, a letting go, a leaving behind, a removal. **Aphesis refers to a remission** as when one remits (pardons, cancels) a debt, or releases then from an obligation. To release from captivity. **Remission** (see [definition of English word](#)) of sins means once and for all taking them away, removing the guilt, punishment and power of sin. And so to release one's sins, is not just release from the ("legal" or forensic) charge and the just

penalty of sin but also release from the power and dominion of sin (and in Heaven the release from the presence of sin and the pleasure of sin).

Given the fact that Paul's audience was predominantly Jewish, the Septuagint version may be the OT Scriptures they used. With that thought it is interesting that the OT gives us a beautiful picture of the meaning of **aphesis** in the celebration of the **Year of Jubilee**. In fact there are 11 uses of **aphesis** in the **Septuagint** translation of Leviticus 25 (Lev 25:10-13, 28, 30-31, 33, 40, 41, 50, 52, 54) where **aphesis** is frequently substituted for the Hebrew word **Jubilee**, so that instead of the phrase **Year of Jubilee** the Lxx translated into English reads "**Year of the Release**" in Lev 25:13 (or "Jubilee of Release in Lev 25:11). One aspect of the Year of Jubilee involved the setting free of indebted servants or slaves (cf Lev 25:10). It is interesting that the OT release from debts was associated with a time of celebration.

**THOUGHT** - How much more should NT saints daily celebrate and revel in the truth that we have been released from our sin debt! I fear I do not ponder this profound truth often enough and begin to take it for granted and become complacent and even indifferent which makes me vulnerable to committing sin! We need to remember that the Year of Jubilee was an OT picture which pointed to and was fulfilled in the crucifixion of the Messiah Whose fully atoning, substitutionary death made release from sin, Satan and death possible for all who receive this truth by grace through faith.

**Sins** (266) (**hamartia**) literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). Later **hamartia** came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. **Hamartia** in the Bible signifies a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It pictures the idea of missing His appointed goal (His will) which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to Him. In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is the Triune God Himself. As **Martin Luther** put it "*Sin is essentially a departure from God.*"

**Forgiveness of sins** - praise God this phrase is repeated 9 times in the New Testament...

1. Matthew 26:28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for **forgiveness of sins**.
2. Mark 1:4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the **forgiveness of sins**.
3. Luke 3:3 And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the **forgiveness of sins**;
4. Luke 24:47 and that repentance for **forgiveness of sins** would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. (cf Acts 1:8)
5. Acts 5:31 "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and **forgiveness of sins**.
6. Acts 10:43 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives **forgiveness of sins**."
7. Acts 13:38 "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him **forgiveness of sins** is proclaimed to you,
8. Acts 26:18 ( to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive **forgiveness of sins** and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'
9. Colossians 1:14 in whom we have redemption, the **forgiveness of sins**.

**Proclaimed** (2605) (**kataggello** from **kata** = an intensifier, down + **aggelos** = messenger and **aggello** = to declare, report) literally means to "declare down". It means to announce, with focus upon the extent to which the announcement or proclamation extends and so to proclaim throughout. It means to declare plainly, openly and loudly! It was used of solemn religious messages.

**Kataggello** - 18x in 18v - announced(1), proclaim(7), proclaimed(5), proclaiming(5).

Acts 3:24; Acts 4:2; Acts 13:5; Acts 13:38; Acts 15:36; Acts 16:17; Acts 16:21; Acts 17:3; Acts 17:13; Acts 17:23; Acts 26:23; Rom. 1:8; 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 9:14; 1 Co. 11:26; Phil. 1:17; Phil. 1:18; Col. 1:28

**Related Resources:**

- [What is forgiveness?](#)
- [Got Forgiveness? How can I receive forgiveness from God?](#)
- [What is the relationship between salvation and forgiveness?](#)
- [Do Christians have to keep asking for forgiveness for their sins?](#)
- [In regards to forgiveness, is there a difference between willful sin and ignorant sin?](#)
- [I have committed \\_\\_\\_\\_\\_ sin. Will God forgive me?](#)
- [If the Jewish people do not offer animal sacrifices, how do they believe they can receive forgiveness from God?](#)
- [Will God forgive me?](#)

- [Why do we need to confess our sins if they have already been forgiven \(1 John 1:9\)?](#)

**Acts 13:39 and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.**

KJV 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.

NET Acts 13:39 and by this one everyone who believes is **justified** from everything from which the law of Moses could not **justify** you. (Act 13:38 NET)

- **and through Him everyone who believes is freed** Isaiah 53:11; Habakkuk 2:4; Luke 18:14; John 5:24; Romans 3:24-30; 4:5-8,24; 5:1,9; Romans 8:1,3,30-34; 10:10; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 2:16; 3:8
- **from which you could not be freed** Job 9:20; 25:4; Ps 143:2; Jeremiah 31:32; Luke 10:25,28; John 1:17; Romans 3:19; Romans 4:15; 5:20; 7:9-11; 8:3; 9:31; 10:4; Galatians 2:16,19; 3:10-12,21-25; 5:3; Philippians 3:6-9; Hebrews 7:19; 9:9,10; 10:4,11
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **THE BEDROCK OF SALVATION: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH**

Remember that Paul is preaching in Pisidian Antioch which is in the province of Galatia and it is here that his message begins to address **justification by faith**, the very doctrine that became a major theme in his epistle to the Galatians. (written not long after this sermon if you favor as I do the "Southern Galatian Theory").

**Stanley Toussaint** in fact feels that "Acts 13:39 gives the thesis of Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, which was probably written shortly after his first missionary journey and before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)." (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**TECHNICAL NOTE ON THE TWO "GALATIAN THEORIES"** - Toussaint's comment indicates he favored the "Southern Galatian theory" which holds that Galatians was Paul's first epistle and was written about AD 48-49 before the Jerusalem Council. Others hold the "Northern Galatians theory" which dates the writing later, in the mid 50's during Paul's second or third missionary journey. Evidence is divided ([See Utley's summary](#) on these two theories at top of his comments on Acts 14). Note that these two theories account for the considerable difference in dating of the Epistle to Galatians in different resources - those who favor the Southern theory date Galatians at 48-49, before the Jerusalem Council: Northern theory adherents date it at from 55-57).

**And-** The "and" clearly links forgiveness with justification. "God not only forgives our sins, but He also gives us the very righteousness of Christ and puts it on our account!" (Wiersbe)

**Through Him** - Literally in Him (IN CHRIST). Only **through** (in) **Him** as Peter said in Acts 4:12. All grace that flows to sinners is **through** Christ, Who is also the Source of that grace and the power of grace, for as Paul commanded Timothy **be strong** ([endunamoo](#) in the [present imperative](#) - be continually empowered) in the **GRACE** that is **IN CHRIST JESUS**." (2 Ti 2:1).

**Everyone who believes** - **Everyone** would include Jews and Gentiles (read Lk 24:47+; Acts 2:38,39+; Acts 10:43+). The only qualification is that they believe in Jesus. Justification is by believing, not by doing, as the Jews had been trying to do for centuries!

**Believes** (4100)(**pisteuo**) describes not just an intellectual reception of the Gospel (obviously we do need to first hear it "intellectually"), but is also a firm conviction in one's heart that the Gospel is true, and which results in a change of one's behavior. And notice that the verb **pisteuo** is in the present tense which speaks of continuous belief. Yes, there must be a single moment in time in which one initially places their faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but that belief continues throughout the person's life of **progressive sanctification**, for just as we were [justified by faith alone](#), we are daily sanctified by faith alone (by the work of the Spirit and the Word - cf Jn 17:17, 2 Cor 3:18+). To be sure, faith alone saves, but the faith that genuinely saves a soul is never alone, but is shown to be genuine faith by one's works (Eph 2:10+, James 2:14-26+), one's changed life (a manifestation of repentance).

Here is **W E Vine's** description of saving belief - (1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth (2) a personal surrender to the Truth (3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender.

**Is freed** - More literally is justified or declared righteous which describes a saved sinners standing before the throne of God.

**Guzik** - Jesus does not only forgive us, but we are also justified by Him. **Forgiveness** takes care of the debt of sin, but **justification** puts a positive credit on our account before God. ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**Larkin** - The law could never "justify from"—that is, acquit of sin—since it could not produce perfect obedience in the one who observed it (compare Acts 7:53; Jer 31:32–34; Lk 18:14; Acts 15:7–11; Gal 2:16; 3:11). Do we know this liberation? (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**Spurgeon** said, "We are now - even now pardoned; even now are our sins put away; even now we stand in the sight of God accepted, as though we had never been guilty. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.' (Ro 8:1) There is not a sin in the Book of God, even now, against one of His people."

**Freed** (1344) (**dikaioo**) in this context speaks of being justified and refers to [Christ's imputed righteousness](#), so that this person is declared righteous before God because they are now IN CHRIST ("through Christ") the Righteous One, "Who became to us wisdom from God, and **righteousness** and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor 1:30+) for the Father made the Son "Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the **righteousness** of God in Him. (IN CHRIST)." (2 Cor 5:21+) Justification is a legal term that implies full acquittal. And once you are acquitted before God, you do not to be acquitted again. Your record is wiped clean, even of the sins you will commit today! Amazing grace indeed!

**Dikaioo** describes the act by which a man is brought into a right state of relationship to God. **Dikaioo** is a legal term having to do with the law and the courtroom, where it represented the legally binding verdict of the judge. This is the sense in which Paul uses **dikaioo** in this section of his sermon as he does in Romans (Ro 3:21-5:11) in which he unfolds the [doctrine of justification](#).

**Jack Arnold** - Christ not only negatively removes sin, but positively imparts perfect righteousness to all who believe. He forgives sin and grants perfect righteousness to all who accept, by faith, Christ as Lord. What this is saying is that God has solved the problem of guilt which plagues every human being. Christ will not only remove guilt, He will make one perfectly righteous in the sight of God. ([Paul's First Recorded Sermon](#))

**John Phillips** on the **Law of Moses** - "The law could not justify the guilty person. The law could corner him, convict him, condemn him, but it could never cancel his sin."

**Ray Stedman** on Paul's statement **from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses** - That was a shattering statement (TO THE JEWISH HEARERS). Here were men who honored the Law of Moses, who thought the Ten Commandments were the greatest word that God had ever given to men. They were trying their best to live up to them, in one way or another, and many of them realized that they were failing. But they still thought that the way to God was to obey the Ten Commandments -- to do good, in other words, to **try their best to be good**. But now Paul comes to declare to them that **they will never make it on those terms. They will never find acceptance by God in that way**. You cannot be accepted by God on the basis of trying to be good. The Ten Commandments will not help you a bit; they will condemn you, because you will not fulfill them -- no matter how hard you try! Rather, Paul tells them, God has found a way to accept mankind even though man cannot be good enough in himself, and that way is through this Man, Jesus Christ. Now, we are accustomed to hearing that. That does not shake us. But you can imagine how it shook these (JEWISH) people. They had never heard anything like this before -- this amazing news that God would accept them! Unfortunately our version somewhat diminishes its impact because it uses the term "**freed**" where Paul said "**justified**"; he really says, "**Every one that believes is justified from everything from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses**" This is the first occasion that we have recorded of Paul's using that great word which is so frequent in the book of Romans, "justification by faith." ([Acts 13:13-52 The Radical Word](#))

**Steven Ger** gives an interesting insight on things from which they would **not be freed through the Law of Moses** - Paul revealed that forgiveness of sins is now available through Messiah, **even those sins for which the Torah made no provision** (Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18). Specifically, Jewish law, as contained in the [Mishnah](#), lists thirty-six transgressions for which, if executed intentionally and defiantly, i.e., "with a high hand" (Num. 15:30), the [Torah](#) provides no means of forgiveness; for example, bestiality, incest, idolatry, blasphemy, violating Sabbath, Passover, the Day of Atonement, etc. As repeatedly emphasized in the gospel accounts, the only one with the authority to forgive sin is God himself (Matt 9:5-6; Mark 2:7-10; Luke 5:21-24; 7:49), yet every condemnation in **the Law of Moses** can now be forgiven through the Messiah. This assertion in Acts 13:39 is Paul's unambiguous affirmation that the Messiah shares the very authority of God.

Paul explains **freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses** in Romans 3

By the **works of the Law** no flesh will be justified ("freed") in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. 21 But now **apart from the Law** the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets (Read Jesus' words - "it is these that testify about Me" = Jn 5:39, 40), even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction (Ro 3:20-22+)

**John MacArthur comments:** In other words, **the Law and the Prophets** did not show men how to achieve their own righteousness but pointed to the coming Messiah, the Savior and Son of God, who Himself would provide the righteousness that God demands of men (Jer 23:6, 1Cor 1:30). Although the full revelation of salvation through Christ was not given in the Old Testament, that had always been the way of salvation to which that testament pointed. ([Romans 1-8. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**From all things from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses-** In other words the Law of Moses could never bring justification. The Law cannot justify the sinner; it can only condemn him (Ro 3:19–20; Gal. 2:16) The Law could never set one free from bondage to sin and the penalty of sin. Only Christ can, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness (Christ has accomplished the whole purpose of the Law) to everyone who believes." (Ro 10:4)

**Gaebelein** - As we have seen Peter's preaching was addressed to the Jews and he offered forgiveness of sins to them who repent and are baptized. But Paul utters a truth for the first time, which Peter did not declare. He said: "By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." It is justification by faith he now preaches.

**Ray Stedman** explains what it means to be **justified** - Most people think it means to have your sins forgiven. **It does mean that, but it means a great deal more than that. Justification means to have your sins forgiven in such a way that God's honor and integrity are preserved by it.** Let me use a term which explains this very well and yet is not theological. I served in the Navy for two years and then was honorably discharged. When I was discharged it meant that I was separated from the Navy. They were through with me, and I was through with them. They had no further claim on me, nor I any relationship to them. But what I liked about it was the word "**honorable**." It was an honorable discharge. I could freely show my discharge papers to anyone. There was no blot on my discharge, no stain. As far as the Navy was concerned I had behaved well (there were some things they didn't know) and was honorably discharged. But I knew certain men in the Navy, because I worked in the legal office, who were dishonorably discharged. They were just as separate from the Navy as I. The Navy was just as through with them as it was with me. But, **there was a blot on their discharge, a stain on it.** They did not like to show their discharge papers to anyone. In fact, it could even affect their employment to have others see that they were dishonorably discharged. So what Paul is really saying here is that -- if you merely had your sins forgiven, if God forgave in the way that most people think He does: i.e., you just come to Him, and He is such a great, loving God that He says, "Oh, forget about it, that's all right, don't worry about it; you're such a great fellow and I love you so much that I'm just going to ignore it" -- if that were the case, then **God's honor would be impugned. His character would be defiled by that kind of forgiveness.** He could no longer be regarded as the God of justice and truth; He would be a partaker in my sins and yours. But God has found a way, through Jesus, to lay the guilt of our life and heart upon His own Son. Thus He can preserve His honor and character and integrity while at the same time **He is rendered free to show His whole love to us. That is justification** You see, because of the cross, nobody will ever be able to point to God and say, "Oh, you let people off who are guilty!" In the cross of Jesus, God poured out all His justice upon Him. And in that cross, in the agony and the anguish of it, the world can see a picture of how faithfully God does obey His own laws, and does carry out justice to the nth degree. And yet, the wonder of it is that, because of it, **God's love is freed to be poured out to us Therefore the result of justification is full acceptance. If you accept the death of the Lord Jesus on your behalf, and His life is given to you, you are justified from all things. Is that not a great word? It means that God's unqualified love is poured out toward you. There is no rejection whatsoever, for any cause. And that love begins to heal all your scars and hurt and anguish, and you start becoming a whole person -- on the basis of being justified by faith.** You know, that is incredible to people! Again and again I run across people who shake their heads and say, "That can't be, I've got to do something. The only way God can find me acceptable is that I must make myself acceptable." But it will never be that way. No one can ever make themselves acceptable to God by trying to live a good life. I said that this morning (in the 8:30 a.m. service), just as I am saying it now. At the end of the service a young man came up to the platform and said to me, "*You know, I don't quite understand what you're saying. I find it incredible that God could accept me on the basis of some one else. As one who is trying to live a good life himself, I find it very difficult to understand.*" **Many people find it difficult. But that is the radical character of this great word! And it shook this city when they heard it.** ([Acts 13:13-52 The Radical Word](#))

**Guzik** notes that "Only a few months after this Paul, wrote a **letter to these churches in Galatia**, dealing with these same themes of being justified by God's grace, and not by keeping the law." ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Why is justification by faith such an important doctrine?](#)
- [What is justification? What does it mean to be justified?](#)
- [How do God's mercy and justice work together in salvation?](#)
- [What is righteousness?](#)

The believer in Christ receives a present justification. Faith does not produce this fruit by-and-by, but now. So far as justification is the result of faith, it is given to the soul in the moment when it closes with Christ, and accepts him as its all in all. Are they who stand before the throne of God justified now?—so are we, as truly and as clearly justified as they who walk in white and sing melodious praises to celestial harps. The thief upon the cross was justified the moment that he turned the eye of faith to Jesus; and Paul, the aged, after years of service, was not more justified than was the thief with no service at all. We are to-day accepted in the Beloved, to-day absolved from sin, to-day acquitted at the bar of God. Oh! soul-transporting thought! There are some clusters of Eshcol's vine which we shall not be able to gather till we enter heaven; but this is a bough which runneth over the wall. This is not as the corn of the land, which we can never eat till we cross the Jordan; but this is part of the manna in the wilderness, a portion of our daily nutriment with which God supplies us in our journeying to and fro. We are now—even now pardoned; even now are our sins put away; even now we stand in the sight of God accepted, as though we had never been guilty. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." There is not a sin in the Book of God, even now, against one of his people. Who dareth to lay anything to their charge? There is neither speck, nor spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing remaining upon any one believer in the matter of justification in the sight of the Judge of all the earth. Let present privilege awaken us to present duty, and now, while life lasts, let us spend and be spent for our sweet Lord Jesus.

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### Acts 13:39 "I'm Justified!" By Henry G. Bosch

By Him everyone who believes is justified from all things. —Acts 13:39

One day Bible teacher and evangelist R. A. Torrey spoke with a woman who lacked assurance that her sins were forgiven. He told her to read aloud Acts 13:39, "By Him everyone who believes is justified from all things."

Then Torrey inquired, "Who does God say is justified?"

"Everyone who believes," she replied.

"Believe on whom?" he asked.

"Believe on Christ," she said.

"Have you accepted Him as your Savior and Lord?" asked Torrey.

"Yes," replied the woman.

"Then what does this verse promise?" he prodded.

The doubting woman could not say, "I'm justified from all things." So Torrey went over that Scripture again and again. At last the simple meaning of the words dawned on her. "Praise God!" she exclaimed. "I'm justified from all things!" She finally experienced the peace that comes from knowing complete forgiveness.

Self-effort, religious ritual, or agonizing prayer cannot take away sin. But when we trust in Christ for salvation, we are justified—declared righteous by God. Then, as we lose our burden of guilt and experience total justification, we will have real peace.

Justification: Our guilt gone, Christ's goodness given. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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### Acts 13:40 "Therefore **take heed**, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon you:

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

- **Therefore take heed** Malachi 3:2; 4:1; Matthew 3:9-12; Hebrews 2:3; 3:12; 12:25
- **spoken of in the Prophets** Isaiah 29:14; Habakkuk 1:5
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **A SOLEMN WARNING**

This is the third and concluding section of Paul's sermon which closes with a Solemn Warning (Acts 13:40-41).

Obviously the Gospel is good news to all who believe, but it is "bad news," very bad news to all who reject it! As Jack Arnold says "A basic part of proclaiming the gospel is to warn men of the certain judgment to come if one does not have a Savior. We have not really preached a full gospel until we have preached judgment." ([Paul's First Recorded Sermon](#))

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion. The offer of forgiveness of sins and justification calls for a "conclusion," or more specifically in this case a decision to either accept or reject. And so Paul issues a sobering warning to his listeners.

**Ger - Therefore**, since Jesus is superior to and more powerful than the Torah, Paul encouraged the congregation to adjust their life perspectives accordingly.

**Take heed** (991)(**blepo**) primarily refers to the sense of sight and thus means to see or to look at. In this passage blepo speaks of directing one's attention to something, and so to watch out, see to it or beware. In English **beware** means to be on one's guard; to be cautious or wary about; to be alert to. The **present imperative** is a command by Paul calling for his hearers keep on taking heed. They would be wise to not let what he has just explained go in one ear and out the other!

Psalm 2 warned against rejecting the Good News of Jesus...

Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Ps 2:12)

**So that** - Term of purpose. Paul gives the purpose the hearers need to take heed.

**The thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon you** - Paul does not quote a specific prophet. One prophet to whom he could have been referring is the prophet Malachi who gave strong warnings related to the coming Messiah.

Malachi 3:1-2 "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant (MESSIAH), in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. "But who can endure the day of His (MESSIAH'S) coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap.

Malachi 4:1 "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch."

**Acts 13:41 'BEHOLD, YOU SCOFFERS, AND MARVEL, AND PERISH; FOR I AM ACCOMPLISHING A WORK IN YOUR DAYS, A WORK WHICH YOU WILL NEVER BELIEVE, THOUGH SOMEONE SHOULD DESCRIBE IT TO YOU.'**"

KJV 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.

- **You scoffers** Proverbs 1:24-32; 5:12; Isaiah 5:24; 28:14-22; Luke 16:14; 23:35; Hebrews 10:28-30
- **For I am accomplishing** Acts 13:47; 3:23; 6:14; 22:21; Isa 65:15; Dal 9:26,27; Mt 8:10,11; 21:41-44; Mt 22:7-10; 23:34-38; Lk 19:42-44; 21:20-26; Ro 11:7-14; Eph 3:3-8; Col 1:26,27; 1 Th 2:16; 1 Pe 4:17
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **HABAKKUK'S WARNING OF IMPENDING JUDGMENT**

Paul recalled a passage he had memorized from Habakkuk which was a warning to Judah of old that judgment was coming. He applies this warning to the Jews (and the Gentiles) in his day. The point is that if God judged Judah, He will also judge those who refuse and reject His offer of forgiveness through the work of Jesus.

**Ray Stedman on you will never believe** - That is the incredibility of the gospel. I do not think those words were spoken in sharpness; I think they were spoken in sadness. The apostle is saying here that when you hear this incredible word of grace -- that God has found a way to love you, and love you unqualifiedly, by virtue of nothing that you have done, but by what Christ has done for you -- that is a moment of crisis in your life. You can either accept it and live in the glory of that love, or you can reject it and turn away. But, if you reject it and turn away, you will find yourself tremendously in danger: You are in danger of destroying yourself, and of being destroyed, because only God's love can rescue man!

**ILLUSTRATION** - This was sharply underlined for me a few years ago. Sitting in my study one weekday



morning I suddenly heard, out here in the auditorium, a woman's voice shouting and crying out. I came out to see what was wrong. I found a young married woman whom I recognized, for she had been in my study just a week before, walking up and down in front of our cross here. She was looking up at the cross and crying, "Yes, there is a God; yes, there is a God, and he will forgive me -- I know he will! I know he will!" She was in torment of spirit. I did not know what to make of it for a moment. I listened to her, and then I moved to speak to her. When she saw me she just crumpled and fell on her face to the floor. I picked her up and helped her to a pew, and we talked together. She told me what had happened. The previous week she had told me that, though she was married and though she professed to be a Christian, she was having an affair with an older man. She had justified it, thinking it was something that would contribute to her happiness. I had tried to help her gently and patiently and lovingly. I did not condemn her, but I tried to help her see what she was doing to herself. Then, this day, the man had called her and told her he was through. It shattered her, and she came, crushed with guilt, trying to find release. Suddenly it dawned on her what she had done to her family, what she had done to her husband, what she had done to herself, how she had hurt everyone. She came trying to find forgiveness, crying out to God. But I could see as I talked with her that she did not really believe the forgiveness that was offered. I went through the Scriptures with her, but she refused to accept it. She felt that somehow she must do something, she must atone. She would not believe what God had said -- that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, that he would freely forgive and wash it all away, and that then, in the strength of his healing, wholeness would follow. Finally she calmed down a bit. She called her husband and he came over. I talked with them, then he took her home. But she was still distressed, so her husband took her to the hospital. Two days later I got a phone call -- in her distress of mind she had thrown herself from the tenth floor of the hospital and her body was crushed on the pavement below. That is the awful pressure of guilt. If you do not find a way to relieve it, it will destroy you! And that is why this message hit with such power in this city. Paul laid out before them the fact that the only way, the only way, there is to be freed from guilt is by the acceptance of the work of Another on your behalf. God's love is unqualifiedly poured out on that basis, and that alone. ([Acts 13:13-52 The Radical Word](#))

**Boice** reminds us that "Although ours is an age of great grace, God is nevertheless also a God of great judgment, and sin must be judged if it is not atoned for by the work of Christ."

**Behold** (2400)(**idou**) is an [aorist imperative](#) command emphasizing calling for immediate attention to what follows!

Paul us quoting Habakkuk 1:5+, not from the Hebrew but from the Septuagint translation which gives the following rendering in English. God was speaking through His "mouthpiece" Habakkuk to warn the rebellious nation of Judah ...

**Behold**, ye despisers (ED: scoffers ~ those who think lightly of), and look, and wonder marvelously, and (vanish or) faint with fear: for I work a work in your days, which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it to you.

In Habakkuk 1:5+ God warned that He would use the wicked Babylonians to destroy wicked Judah! Paul takes this same warning and in the context of Acts 13, applies it as a warning to his Jewish audience in essence not to reject the Gospel, for their fate would be far worse than a Babylonian invasion. Rejection of the Gospel would result in their everlasting death and separation from the presence of God! The Lord stirring up the Babylonians to discipline Judah was a great work, but the saving work of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was an even more incredible work "**which you will never believe.**" While the Babylonians would bring temporal judgment, the rejection of the Messiah would bring eternal judgment!

**You scoffers, marvel and perish** - Paul issues two commands to scoffers (1) marvel or be astonished and (2) perish or be destroyed. Those who despise the word of God will one day marvel at the work of God!

**Scoffers** (mockers)(2707) (**kataphrontes** from **kataphroneo** = to think little of, to despise, look down, think lightly) means scoffer, despiser, scorner. **Kataphrontes** is used 3x in the Septuagint - Hab. 1:5; Hab. 2:5; Zeph. 3:4 ("profaned [despised] the sanctuary")

**Marvel** (2296)(**thaumazo** from **thau** [from **thaomai** = to wonder] = wonder, admiration) means to wonder, marvel, be struck with astonishment. **Thaumazo** describes the human response when confronted by divine revelation in some form (Mt 9:33) and denotes incredulous surprise. The aorist imperative (USED 3X IN THIS SHORT SENTENCE!) calls for an urgent, immediate response and is the same command given for **perish**.

**Perish** (853)(**aphanizo** from **a** = without + **phaino** = to appear) means to cause to vanish, make disappear. Metaphorically, the idea of **aphanizo** is to destroy the value or use of something. The process does not result in annihilation but changes whatever is affected from one state to another. The upshot is that that which "perishes" ceases to be useful. The verb is in the aorist imperative, so it is not a suggestion, but a command for **scoffers** to "vanish." This recalls a similarly frightening command by Jesus in Mt 7:23

"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART** (aorist imperative) FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE (present tense = habitually, as their lifestyle) LAWLESSNESS."

To reject the Gospel is to perish eternally in torment in Hell. This is why the write of Hebrews gave a similar warning...

For this reason **we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.** 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, 3 **how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?** (Rhetorical question - There is NO OTHER ESCAPE!) After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, (Hebrews 2:1-3+)

**For** - Term of explanation. He explains why they need to marvel and why they will be destroyed.

**Jack Arnold** points out that "Man's rejection of Christ is also somehow in God's plan. "for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed" (1 Peter 2:8+). God will not be defeated if men reject Him. You do not have to be appointed to doom. You must accept Jesus Christ as King, Messiah and Savior if you are to be saved and go to heaven." ([Paul's First Recorded Sermon](#))

**Jack Andrews** - God told the people in the days of Habakkuk that the people would not believe the mighty work of God that will be done in their days! They will not believe even in the midst of the work of God! How is it that God can work in a place or in people and some people never get it! The prophet said that God would do a work which they would by no means believe. That means that they will not be convinced of the truth, they will not conform to the truth, they will not be corrected by the truth! We live in a generation that will by no means believe the work of God! We live in the midst of scoffers, unbelievers, and doubters!

**I am accomplishing a work in your days** - In the original context, as noted above God through His prophet Habakkuk was warning the nation that Babylon would ascend to power and would be His instrument for judgment on the nation, destroying the city of Jerusalem and the Temple.

**Steven Ger** explains that "The **work** which God had accomplished was the Messiah's resurrection, Paul was providing the "description," and the people were left with the responsibility of "believing" the message. Just as the prophet of old had warned Israel of impending disaster, so, too, Paul warned this people to prepare for imminent judgment. It was high time to break Israel's cycle of scorning God's provision." (Ibid)

**Accomplishing** (2038)(**ergazomai** from ergon = work) means to bring about a result by effort. The verb **accomplish** stresses the successful completion by God. Ergazomai is in the present tense which indicates God's work continues to be accomplished through the proclamation of the Gospel.

**A work which you will never believe** - The negative **never** is actually a double negative (2 negatives together - ou me) which signifies the strongest negation possible.

**Wiersbe** - "In Habakkuk's day, the "unbelievable work" God was doing was the raising up of the Chaldeans to chasten His people, a work so remarkable that nobody would believe it. After all, why would God use an evil pagan nation to punish His own chosen people, sinful though they might be? God was using Gentiles to punish Jews! But the "wonderful work" in Paul's day was that God was using the Jews to save the Gentiles!" (BEC)

**Believe** (4100)(**pisteuo**) means they would never (present tense - continually) consider Paul's description of the Messiah to be true and worthy of their trust.

**Though someone should describe it to you** - Notice the dramatic irony, for Paul has just described in detail the **work** God was **accomplishing** in the **days**, by sending the Messiah to be crucified, buried and resurrected in order that through His fully atoning death those who believe might receive forgiveness of sins.

**NET Note** - So the call in the warning is to believe or else face the peril of being **scoffers** whom God will judge. The parallel from Habakkuk is that the nation failed to see how Babylon's rising to power meant perilous judgment for Israel.

**Describe** (1555)(**ekdiegeomai** from **ek** - out + **diegeomai**) is used only here and Acts 15:3 and means to tell or describe in detail (exactly what Paul has just done in his sermon!) There are 4 uses in the Septuagint - Job 12:8; Ps. 118:17; Ezek. 12:16; Hab. 1:5. The present tense pictures the continual telling in detail the story of the Messiah!

**Larkin** comments on the use of the Habakkuk quote Acts 13:41 - Understood typologically, the spiritual pattern seen in God's surprise move of raising up the evil Chaldeans to punish Judah, even to the point of exile, could well be repeated in Paul's day and ours. The difference is that then God's work was judgment, whereas now it is salvation. But the warning is the same: Take heed lest you miss what God is doing. And the remedy is still the same: repentance. The warning was necessary, and is necessary today for

those of a legalistic mindset to whom the "good news" of Jesus' offer of salvation by faith alone is unbelievable. (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**Steven Cole** - We live in a day that scoffs at the thought of God's judgment. Even many who profess to know Christ say, "My God is a God of love, not a God of judgment." But what matters is not how you speculate God to be, but rather, how He has in fact revealed Himself in His Word. Some who claim to be evangelical theologians argue that hell will not be eternal punishment. Rather, they say that God will annihilate the wicked after they have served an appropriate sentence. While appealing to the flesh, that view contradicts the very words of Jesus, who quoted Isaiah, that hell will be a place "where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched" (see Mark 9:42-48). Just as eternal life is forever, so eternal punishment is forever (Matt. 25:46). The God who keeps His promises is also the God who carries through with His warnings! Paul's sermon gives abundant evidence that God faithfully kept His gracious promise to send Jesus as the Savior of all who will believe in Him. The word of this salvation is sent to you (13:26). Through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you (13:38). Through Him everyone who believes is justified in God's sight (13:39). But also, all who scoff at Him or ignore Him "will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1:9). Remember, Paul was speaking here to a religious audience. Everyone present believed in God. But they needed personally to put their trust in His promise of salvation through Jesus Christ so that the words of His warning did not come upon them. ([Acts 13:13-41 The God Who Keeps His Promise](#))

**Acts 13:42 As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath.**

KJV 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 people kept begging** Acts 10:33; 28:28; Ezekiel 3:6; Matthew 11:21; 19:30
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

Larkin summarizes Acts 13:42-52 as "The Aftermath: Division, Rejection, Withdrawal, Progress."

**As Paul and Barnabas were going out** - What a scene as the two missionaries exited the synagogue.

**Going out** (1826) (**exeimi** from **ek** = out + **eimi** = to go) means to go out of a place (Acts 13:42, Acts 27:43). In the sense of to go away, depart out of a place (Acts 17:15; 20:7).

**Exeimi** - 4x - Acts 13:42; Acts 17:15; Acts 20:7; Acts 27:43. In Septuagint only in Ex 28:35.

**The people kept begging** - Interesting that in Acts 13:15 it was **the synagogue officials** who "invited" but now it is the **people**. The imperfect tense gives a vivid picture of the people asking again and again -- they begged and begged Paul to share more about the forgiveness of sins which is in Jesus. They were heathens who had become sick of the immoralities and injustices of their society, for their empty religions had left them empty. And now their hearts had been touched by the Gospel Paul proclaimed and the Holy Spirit was working in their hearts (cf Jn 16:7-11), stirring them to crave **forgiveness of sins** (Acts 13:38) and being **freed from all things** (Acts 13:39).

**Begging** (imploring) (3870) (**parakaleo** from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. **Parakaleo** can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action. They were hungry for God desired to hear more. They were too convicted, too drawn to Christ and the hope of forgiveness. They had to hear.

**That these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath** - What things? The "Words of eternal life" that he had learned from Jesus (cf Jn 6:68).

**THOUGHT** - There are many who are ignorant of the Scriptures, who know little about what we preach. They did not have Christian parents, nor have they ever been exposed to genuine Christian believers. They just have never had the opportunity and exposure to the gospel that some of us have had. Because of this, their hearts are fertile and soft to the gospel. When they hear the truth, the Holy Spirit is able to convict and convert them much more easily than He is a gospel-hardened heart.

**THOUGHT** - This is great encouragement to the witnessing believer. It should challenge every one of us to get to the task, for the world is full of such people. They may be steeped in religion, but they are ignorant of the truth about Christ. They are soft and ready to respond, to hear more and more of the glorious truth that Jesus saves, forgives, and justifies (Acts 13:23, 38, 39). (POSB)

**Acts 13:43** Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God. (NASB95)

KJV 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.

- **the God-fearing proselytes** Acts 2:10; 6:5
- **followed** Acts 17:34; 19:9
- **were urging them** Acts 11:23; 14:22; 19:8; 28:23; John 8:31,32; 15:5-10; 2 Corinthians 5:11; 6:1; Galatians 5:1; Philippians 3:16; 4:1; Colossians 1:23,28; 1 Thessalonians 3:3-5; Hebrews 6:11,12; 12:15; 2 Peter 3:14,17,18; 1 John 2:28; 2 John 1:9
- **to continue in the grace of God** Acts 14:3; Romans 3:24; 5:2,21; 11:6; Galatians 5:4; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; Hebrews 13:9; 1 Peter 5:12
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## EXCITEMENT OVER THE GOOD NEWS

**Now when** *the meeting of the synagogue had broken up* - **Broken up** is the first word in the sentence for emphasis.

**Broken up** (3089) (**luo**) has the basic meaning of loose and in this context clearly is figuratively describing the "breaking up" of the crowd which was dismissed or dispersed.

**Many of the Jews** - Note **many** but not all.

**And of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them** - Clearly they followed not to persecute Paul and Barnabas but because they had begun to trust in the word of God, the Gospel that Paul had proclaimed.

**God-fearing** (4576) (See also discussion of [sebo](#) below) - The addition of the term **proselytes** would identify these Gentile God-fearers as those who had taken the next step and been circumcised and baptized and made sacrifices. Some Gentiles such as Cornelius (Acts 10:2) were God-fearers but not **proselytes**. **Robertson** adds that "Many (Gentiles) remained uncircumcised and were called **proselytes of the gate**." ([Word Pictures in the New Testament - Acts 2](#))

**Proselytes** (4339) (**proselutos** from **proserchomai** to come near to join) describes a stranger, foreigner, one who comes from his own people to another. In the NT **proselutos** is a technical term for a Gentile who has come over into Judaism usually won over from paganism by Jewish missionary efforts. These Gentiles then submitted to circumcision (males), self-baptism before witnesses (The Talmud adds that Gentile conversion must be supervised by three Jews - *The Talmud of Babylonia*) and offering of a sacrifice. Not all Gentiles who came to the synagogue became full-fledged proselytes. Those who came short of becoming proselytes were referred to by terms such as *those reverencing God* (Acts 13:43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7) or *those fearing God* (Acts 10:2; 13:16, 26).

**Proselutos** - 4x in 4v - Mt. 23:15; Acts 2:10; Acts 6:5; Acts 13:43

**Followed** is used several times in Acts (Acts 12:8, 9, 21:36) of literal following, but only here in a figurative sense indicating Christian commitment (cf following Jesus in Lk 5:27; 9:23, 59; 18:22).

**Followed** (190) (**akoloutheo** from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?) Literally to follow as in the present context where the crowds followed Paul and Barnabas (much like they had followed Jesus). Note that this verb has an important figurative sense meaning to follow Jesus as a disciple.

**THOUGHT** - Early in the history of the Greek language **akoloutheo** came to mean to imitate or follow someone's example. This dual meaning colored the New Testament use **akoloutheo**. **Akoloutheo** is a technical term in Hebrew and Greek for the reactions and relationships of a disciple to his teacher. The essence of Christianity in fact lies in the words "to follow Jesus." When we walk with Him, He promised we would never

walk in darkness! (Jn 8:12). He is our Lamp wherever we walk, always walking with us, His Spirit within us enabling us to "Walk by the Spirit." (Gal 5:16) Paul expressed walking after Jesus as being His imitator (1 Cor 11:1+) When He says go, I go. When He says stop, I stop. His sheep know His voice and follow Him (Jn 10:27) Sadly , some declined to follow (Mt 19:21-23). Dear reader, would you call yourself a "follower" of Jesus?

**Were urging them** - The verb urging is peitho which carries the idea of convincing or persuading, the imperfect tense describing the repeated **urging** by Paul and Barnabas.

**Robertson** notes that "Paul had great powers of persuasion (Acts 18:4; 19:8, 26; 26:28; 28:23; 2 Cor. 5:11; Gal. 1:10). These Jews "were beginning to understand for the first time the true meaning of their national history" (Furneaux), "the grace of God" to them."

**Larkin** comments that "in light of his exhortation (Acts 13:38–39) and the parallel thought at Acts 11:23, they are to remain in the salvation offered in the Gospel (Acts 13:23, 26, 38–39) and not return to the performance way of obedience of the Old Testament law and Jewish tradition. This encouragement was well placed when we remember the attacks that these churches subsequently sustained from Judaizers (compare Gal 1:6–7; 3:1–6; 5:7–12; 6:11–13). (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**To continue in the grace (charis) of God** - This implies that they had begun to accept or receive the Gospel of grace. And how important is this phrase "continue in the grace of God," because too often we are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Eph 2:8,9) and then we fall back into our graceless works mentality! Grace is not just the way we enter into our personal relationship with Jesus, but is it the ONLY way to continue in intimate relationship with Him. Shortly after Paul left Galatia (where Pisidian Antioch was located), he was forced to write a letter asking questions like "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Gal 3:3+) and "You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?" (Gal 5:7) The truth is the Spirit says us and enables sanctification. The truth is that grace saves us and enables progressive sanctification.

**THOUGHT** - Have you fallen for the (fallen) [flesh](#) initiated subtle snare of trying to live your **Christian** life without the "**Christ**" of "**Christian**?" Have you begun to try to keep rules to merit God's favor? Are you neglecting your daily need for the Spirit's enabling (to give you both the desire and the power - Php 2:13NLT+) to live this Christian life? If so, Paul would speak into your life and whisper "Dearly beloved of God, you began this race by grace, now continue in dependence on His grace."

**The grace of God** - While this phrase could refer simply to grace per se, in the context, it also likely includes the idea of continuing in the Gospel, because the same Gospel that saved us, is the same Gospel that daily sanctifies us. In Acts 20:24+ Luke calls it "**the Gospel of the grace of God**." Paul described the grace of God as the key to his ministry writing "But by the **grace of God** I am what I am, and His **grace** toward me did not prove vain; but I labored (kopiao - to point of exhaustion - NB: PAUL DID NO PREACH NOT "LET GO, LET GOD" but "LET GOD, LET'S GO!") even more than all of them, yet not I, but the **grace of God** with (SYN NOT META - SYN SPEAKS OF INTIMACY, META IS BESIDE OR "NEXT TO" AND NOT AS INTIMATE) me.." (1 Cor 15:10+)

## PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD TO YOURSELF!

One of my favorite Christian writers (read anything he has published!) is [Jerry Bridges](#) and he speaks to our need to "preach the Gospel" to ourselves daily...

**To preach the gospel to yourself** means that you continually face up to your own sinfulness and then flee to Jesus through faith in His shed blood and righteous life. It means that you appropriate, again **by faith**, the fact that Jesus fully satisfied the Law of God. In both its precepts and penalty, He fulfilled the Law of God in its most exacting requirements. And He did this in our place as our representative and our substitute. He is your [propitiation](#), so that God's holy wrath is no longer directed toward you. **To preach the gospel** to yourself means that you take at face value the precious words of Romans 4:7–8: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin." You believe on the testimony of God: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). You believe that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13). You believe He forgave you all your sins (Colossians 2:13), that He reconciled you "to

present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him" (Colossians 1:22). To **preach the gospel** to yourself means you appropriate by faith the words of Isaiah 53:6: "The LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." It means you dwell upon the promise that God has removed your transgressions from you as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12), that He has blotted out your transgressions and remembers your sin no more (Isaiah 43:25). (ED: I WOULD ADD ONE MORE [THE LIST COULD GO ON AND ON] - That you believe and practice Romans 8:13 that "if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.")

In the his book **What is a Healthy Church Member**, pastor **Thabiti Anyabwile** writes

DESIRE TO HEAR THE GOSPEL AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO YOURSELF - We must cultivate and protect a ravenous desire for this message. Regularly hearing and plumbing the depths of the gospel increases our knowledge of the message, our affection for the Savior, and our skill in sharing the message. So we should listen actively for the gospel and gospel implications in sermons. Don't turn off your ears when the pastor begins to appeal to non-Christians with the gospel message. Listen to it afresh. Reaffirm your belief in its truth, promises, and power in your life. Appropriate it for any sins that you become conscious of through the sermon or self-examination. See your sins nailed to the cross as you hear the good news. Consider whether there are any new promises or aspects to the gospel included in the sermon. How will you hold onto those truths? **Listen so actively and longingly for this news that you feel your poverty and malnourishment when it's missing in a sermon.** And when you find yourself dissatisfied or longing, **preach the gospel** to yourself. It's a message that comes to you, for you. Own it. Rather than merely listening to others, or listening to that voice that plagues you with doubts, worries, and fears, listen to the voice of God in the gospel by proclaiming it to yourself when the need arises. C. J. Mahaney, in his excellent and helpful book *Living the Cross Centered Life: Keeping the Gospel the Main Thing*, suggests that we memorize the gospel, pray the gospel, sing the gospel, review how the gospel has changed us, and study the gospel.

#### Acts 13:44 The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. ([NASB95](#))

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

- **The next Sabbath nearly** Genesis 49:10; Ps 110:3; Isaiah 11:10; 60:8
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### ANTIOCH SEEKS TO HEAR THE GOSPEL

**The next Sabbath** - During the week, the news had spread that a little Jewish man had a "big" message of good news. Paul's message had an obvious impact.

**Guzik** comments that "On one Sabbath Paul and Barnabas preached in the synagogue and there was a wonderful response. The following Sabbath there was a mixed response, some very hostile and some very receptive. They took the receptive ones and started a church that was lasted for hundreds of years and through that church." ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**Antioch** was no small village but a substantial city, so this was quite a gathering!

**James M Boice** comments that ""In our day, people are overwhelmed with information. We have radio, television, newspapers, magazines. People did not have any of this in that day. So when somebody came through from another city, the person was a source of precious information and people naturally thronged about him. The missionaries were proclaiming something new. (ED: AND SOMETHING "GOOD" - GOOD NEWS!)"

**Ray Stedman** - Jesus had said to his disciples, "If they have received me, they will receive you; and if they have rejected me, they will reject you..." (John 13:20). Everywhere Paul went he found this to be true. The gospel is like a knife cutting its way through society, through men's hearts. It awakens, it hits with impact, and it divides -- men have to decide one way or another. Some decide for, some against. Some want God and cry out to him, and are relieved and delivered; others refuse, turn away and harden their hearts, and destroy themselves. This is what we see here. Certain Jews and devout converts (i.e., Gentile converts to Judaism) followed Paul and Barnabas who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. ([Acts 13:13-52 The Radical Word](#))

**Nearly the whole city assembled** - It was sold out show (was it still at the synagogue? certainly they could not seat **nearly the whole city** - [? hyperbole](#)), a packed house, "standing room only!" The phrase **nearly the whole city** indicates that many if not most

of those who had come to hear Paul were pagans, not even Gentile proselytes (see [note](#) on **proselytes**).

Clearly many of these people were those who had never attended the synagogue and did not hear Paul's sermon the prior week. The question then arises why did they come this Sabbath? What brought them? Luke does not explain but clearly the news of these men with good news had spread throughout the city. In addition Paul and Barnabas had 7 days in Antioch and they were not likely taking sight-seeing excursions to the beautiful lakes around the city! Clearly they would have been witnessing as would have any others who might have become genuine believers. One is reminded of the words of Peter when the Jewish leaders "**commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus**" (Acts 4:18+) Peter and John responded boldly declaring "**Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.**" (Acts 4:19-20+) Paul and Barnabas were of the same steeled mold and solemn mindset!

**Robertson** - The **whole city** could hardly all gather in the synagogue. Perhaps Paul spoke in the synagogue and Barnabas to the overflow outside (see verse 46). It was an eager and earnest gathering "to hear ([akousai], first aorist active infinitive of purpose) the word of God" and a great opportunity for Paul and Barnabas.

This description of the large crowd reminds me of George Whitfield who without amplification preached to massive crowds often in open venues (fields, etc).

America's Great Awakening was sparked largely by Whitefield's preaching tour of 1739–40. Though only 25 years old, the evangelist took America by storm. Whitefield's farewell sermon on Boston Common drew **23,000 people—more than Boston's entire population. It was probably the largest crowd that had ever gathered in America.** ([Christianity Today](#))

**To hear the word of the Lord** - Luke does not say they came to see or hear Paul but to **hear** from God! This is always the best desire! While the **word of the Lord** in context is the Gospel.

**THOUGHT** - This passage gives us a good principle to remember - We should always go to church with the desire that we will hear from God. We should go expecting to hear from Him. We should go open to hearing from Him (even if it hurts or especially if it hurts!) I fear too many go to hear their favorite eloquent pastor speak (I CONFESS THAT I HAVE BEEN GUILTY SAYING "I DON'T THINK I WILL GO TODAY BECAUSE SO AND SO IS SPEAKING AND HE IS NOT ELOQUENT, ETC. AS I WRITE, I ALSO REPENT OF THIS WRONG HEART ATTITUDE!). Of course is not bad to desire to hear an eloquent pastor, if he is speaking the pure milk of the Word of God! Our goal should be like these Pergan unbelievers who **assembled to hear the word of the Lord**. The corollary for pastors is to **preach** (**aorist imperative** = "Just Do It!" 2 Ti 4:2-4+) of the Lord, the word you have received from God the previous week as you read, studied, prayed and meditated on the passage. Pastors, you do study during the week don't you? I surveyed a number of pastors who I respect as Bible preachers asking them how long they worked on their Sunday message and the range was 15-30 hours, which helped me understand why I enjoyed their messages so much. To conclude this thought, below are 3 audio messages from Dr Steve Lawson that would be worth your time to hear if you are a pastor who desires to preach the Word...

1. [Expository Preachers](#) (61 min)
2. [Energetic Students](#) (65 min)
3. [Effective Evangelists](#) (69 min)

## **THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF GOD**

David Guzik astutely observes that "there was not merely the power of novelty (THAT DREW THE LARGE CROWD); there was more notably **the power of the word of God**. This was the primary power that attracted people, and Luke emphasized it in his account.

1. The whole city came together to hear **the word of God** (Acts 13:44)
2. Paul and Barnabas spoke **the word of God** to them first (Acts 13:46)
3. The Gentiles responded to **the word of the Lord** (Acts 13:48)
4. **The word of the Lord** spread through the region (Acts 13:49) ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - Guzik's observations beg the question - What **MUST** be our focus, our emphasis, our [warp and woof](#), our [pièce de résistance](#), our [showpiece](#), when we are preaching or teaching? Recall the promise of the non-lying God (Titus 1:2) in Isaiah 55:11 "So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return

to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

**Acts 13:45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. ([NASB95](#))**

KJV 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.

- **when the Jews saw the crowds** Acts 5:17; 17:5; Genesis 37:11; Numbers 11:29; Ecclesiastes 4:4; Isaiah 26:11; Matthew 27:18; Luke 15:25-30; Romans 1:29; 1 Corinthians 3:3; Galatians 5:21; James 3:14-16; 4:5
- **began contradicting the things spoken by Paul** Acts 6:9,10; 18:6; 19:9; Matthew 23:13; 1 Peter 4:4; Jude 1:10
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **JEWISH JEALOUSY LEADS TO OPEN VERBAL OPPOSITION**

**But when the Jews saw the crowds** - Either a large turnout in general or possibly a large turnout of Gentiles stirred up the **Jews**. These **Jews** would be those to whom the warning passage of Acts 13:41<sup>+</sup> would apply (unless they repented and believed at some future time). The magnitude of the crowd stirred their jealousy because they had never had such large crowds attend their synagogue.

**POSB** says they were filled with jealousy because "The place was filling up with people who were different, who were thought unclean and dirty, who were sinful and unjust and derelict, who were outsiders to the regular congregation, who usually did not attend or show interest in attending and therefore did not support the permanent priests and their ministry

**Robertson** rightly remarks that "Envy and jealousy arise between people of the same calling (doctors towards doctors, lawyers towards lawyers, preachers towards preachers). So these rabbis boiled with jealousy when they saw the crowds gathered to hear Paul and Barnabas."

**THOUGHT** - Do you ever deal with a spirit of jealousy over the church down the street that always has a packed parking lot? "We can't all be popular to the same degree, but we can all serve and please God to the same degree in Jesus Christ." ([Guzik Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**They were filled with jealousy** - Their reaction illustrates the principle that what fills you will control you (as when one is filled with the Holy Spirit). Here the Jews were clearly filled with an "unholy spirit" so to speak. They did not have an unclean demon, but were reacting from their fallen flesh with an attitude of jealousy. And while Luke does not specifically state it, there is undoubtedly another reason for the hostile Jewish reaction - Paul had just proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah through Whom belief would bring forgiveness of sins, which was a message diametrically opposed to their mindset that held stubbornly, foolishly and in vain to the deceptive belief that their keeping of the law of Moses would "save" them. The concluding climax of Stephen's sermon gives us an apt description of these legalistic Jews in Antioch...

"You men who are stiff-necked ([sklerotrachelos](#)) and uncircumcised in heart (see circumcision of the heart) and ears are always resisting ([antipipto](#) in present tense) the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did (AND SO ARE JEWS TODAY AND ALL WHO SEEK TO KEEP THE LAW - SEE ["HEBREW ROOTS MOVEMENT"](#)). "Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; **you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.**" (Acts 7:51-53+)

Luke described a similar reaction of the Jewish leaders to Peter and the apostles as people in Jerusalem were being healed (Acts 5:16+) which caused the high priest to rise up "along with all his associates (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they **were filled with jealousy.**" (Acts 5:17+) And in light of the principle that what fills one, controls them, the religious leaders "laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail." (Acts 5:18+).

**THOUGHT** - As you read this note, what "spirit" fills your heart?

**Were filled** ([4092](#))([pimplemi](#)) has the basic idea of to fill (e.g., a full moon, a full/swollen stream, a full assembly) and is one of Luke's favorite verbs. The idea in many of these uses and in the present passage is that one is wholly imbued, affected, influenced with or by something with the result that what fills a person, "controls" (or dominates) a person. So here in Acts 13:46 **the Jews were filled with jealousy** (envy) which "controlled" them causing them to begin contradicting Paul. Luke uses this verb frequently to



describe filling with the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:15, Lk 1:41, Lk 1:67, Acts 2:4, Acts 4:8, Acts 4:31, Acts 9:17, Acts 13:9). Luke also uses it to describe one filled with wrath (Lk 4:28), filled with fear (Lk 5:26), filled with rage (Lk 6:11), filled with wonder and amazement (Acts 3:10), filled with jealousy (Acts 5:17), filled with confusion (Acts 19:29). Study of most of the uses of "positive" and "negative" filling demonstrate that the filling usually resulted in some reaction or response.

**Utley - Jealousy** is attributed to Jewish leadership both in Jerusalem and the Diaspora. (cf. Mt. 27:18; Mk 15:10; Acts 17:5).

**Frederick Buechner** - Envy is that consuming desire to have everybody else as unsuccessful as you are!

**F F Bruce** makes an interesting suppositional comment - "Knowing (as we unfortunately do) how pious Christian pew-holders can manifest quite un-Christian indignation when they arrive at church on a Sunday morning to find their places occupied by rank outsiders who have come to hear a popular visiting preacher, we can readily appreciate the annoyance of the Jewish community at finding their synagogue practically taken over by a Gentile congregation on this occasion. (NINCT - Acts)

**Barton** - When we see others succeeding where we haven't or receiving the affirmation we crave, it is hard to rejoice with them. In fact, jealousy is a more common reaction. But how tragic it is when our own jealous feelings cause us to try to stop God's work. If a work is God's work, and lives are being impacted for Christ, rejoice—no matter who is in the spotlight. (LAC)

**Jealousy** (2205)(**zelos** from **zeo** = to be hot, fervent) can describe a positive emotion like zeal (Jn 2:17, Ro 10:2) or a **negative emotion of jealousy** as in this passage (Acts 5:17+, Acts 13:45, Ro 13:13, 1 Cor 3:3+, Gal 5:20, et al) The old "**green eyed monster**" of envy had laid hold of the hearts of these Jews! As Shakespeare said in Othello "O! beware, my lord, of jealousy; it is the **green-eyed monster** which doth mock the meat it feeds on." **A T Robertson** comments that **zelos** "means only warmth, ardour, zeal, but for a bad cause or from a bad motive, jealousy, envy, rivalry results." **Jealousy** is a resentment towards someone for a perceived advantage or superiority they hold. Another dictionary says jealousy is "an unhappy feeling (**ED: THAT'S A BIT EUPHEMISTIC!**) because someone has something that you would like or can do something that you would like to do."

**Robertson** writes that "Nothing is specifically stated here about the rabbis, but they were beyond doubt the instigators of, and the ringleaders in, the opposition as in Thessalonica (See Acts 17:5 below).

Paul would encounter **Jewish jealousy** again in Thessalonica on his second missionary journey...

Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a **synagogue of the Jews**. 2 And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and **for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures**, 3 explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." 4 And **some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas**, along with a **large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women**. 5 **BUT THE JEWS**, becoming **jealous** and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. (Acts 17:1-5+)

**And began contradicting the things spoken by Paul**- The imperfect tense gives us a vivid picture of the opposition of the Jews to Paul's sermon. One can picture them addressing one person, then another and another, speaking against the Word of truth with their blasphemous words.

**Guzik** comments that "It seems strange that these religious people who waited so long for their Messiah would now reject Him when Jesus was presented to them. One great reason was they wanted to keep the division between Jew and Gentile, and if Jesus was to be the Messiah of all men, they wanted no part of Him. "They simply could not accept a teaching that opened such floodgates. For themselves and their adherents they could accept a message as God-sent and tolerate some change in their teaching and practice, but they could not endure that the Gentiles should be made equal with God's ancient people." (Williams) "The Jews could not endure that the Gentiles should be equal to them, being as much concerned against the Gentiles being exalted, as against their own being depressed." (Poole) Some people end up rejecting Jesus because of the way He changes our relationship with other people. Some would rather hold on to their bitterness and animosity towards others than turn to Jesus and be reconciled. ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**Contradicting** (speak against, oppose) (483)(**antilego** from **anti** = opposite, idea of "face to face" + **lego** = speak) means literally to say against or to speak against and so to **contradict** (take issue with, implying open or flat denial), to speak in opposition to or to **oppose**, to refute (to deny the truth or accuracy of). In secular Greek antilego was used to mean **reject** a writing as spurious". In Acts 28:22 the Jews in Rome desired "to hear from you what your views are; for concerning this sect, it is known to us that it is **spoken against** everywhere.

**And were blaspheming** (present tense - continually)(987)(**blasphemeo**) means literally speaking injurious and harmful things, seeking to bring into Paul and Banabas and their words about Jesus into ill repute. These jealous Jews were blaspheming saying that Paul's assertion that Jesus was the Messiah was not true!

All Luke's uses of **blasphemeo** - Lk. 12:10; Lk. 22:65; Lk. 23:39; Acts 13:45; Acts 18:6; Acts 19:37; Acts 26:11;

**Utley** adds that "As these Jews defended their traditions and attacked Paul's preaching, they themselves were guilty of blasphemy. **There is no middle ground here.** Either Judaism or Christianity is a true reflection of God's will. They are exclusive!"

**THOUGHT** - Mark it down that the servant of the Lord can expect rejection and opposition, just as he can expect openness and reception to the Gospel. Jesus had warned His followers

Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. (Jn 15:20).

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### Acts 13:44-52

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy (Acts 13:45).

Envy and jealousy are feelings of discontent and resentment aroused by thinking about another person's desirable qualities or possessions and wanting them for ourselves. Here are some classic examples: Rachel envied Leah because she bore children (Gen. 30:1); Joseph's brothers resented him for his dreams (Gen. 37:11); Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and two hundred fifty princes envied Moses (Num. 16:1-3); Saul was jealous of David because the women praised him (1 Sam. 18:7-9); and in Acts 13:45, the Jews opposed Paul's preaching for the same reason—envy.

Any advantage held by another—intelligence, good looks, a slim figure, popularity, a good job, or even a person's spiritual insight—may trigger this feeling. The most devout Christian is not immune to its subtle attack. When F. B. Meyer first held meetings at Northfield, Massachusetts, large crowds thronged to hear his stirring messages. Then the great British Bible teacher G. Campbell Morgan came to Northfield, and the people flocked to hear his brilliant expositions of Scripture. Meyer confessed that at first he was envious.

He said, "The only way I can conquer my feeling is to pray for Morgan daily—which I do."

A negative reaction toward anyone who possesses what we lack quenches the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts. That's why we must root out all envy and jealousy from our lives. We know we are gaining victory when we desire good for the one we envy. —R. W. De Haan

A daily dose of Christlike love will heal the disease of jealousy. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

## A FEW QUOTES ON ENVY AND JEALOUSY

- He that looks through a green glass sees no other colour. Thomas Adams
- Envy eats nothing but its own heart. Anon.
- A person is truly great when he is not envious of his rival's success. Anon.
- Envy never enriched any man. Anon.
- Envy provides the mud that failure throws at success. Anon.
- Don't envy the man who has everything: he probably has an ulcer too. Anon.
- Every time you turn green with envy you are ripe for trouble. Anon.
- If envy were a fever, all the world would be ill. Anon.
- Jealousy is a blister on the heels of friendship. Anon.
- Jealousy is the raw material of murder. Anon.
- A jealous man's horns hang in his eyes. Anon
- Love is blind; jealousy sees too much. JEWISH PROVERB
- Jealousy sees too much. Anon.
- Many lovely things pass out of life when jealousy comes in. Anon.
- As rust corrupts iron, so envy corrupts man. Antisthenes
- If there is any sin more deadly than envy, it is being pleased at being envied. Richard Armour
- Envy is a coal that comes hissing hot from hell. Philip James Baily
- Love looks through a telescope, envy through a microscope. John Billings

- An envious man is a squinty-eyed fool. H. C. Bohn
- Envy, it tortures the affections, it vexes the mind, it inflames the blood, it corrupts the heart, it wastes the spirits; and so it becomes man's tormentor and man's executioner at once. Thomas Brooks
- Jealousy never thinks itself strong enough. John Bunyan
- Envy is a denial of providence. Stephen Charnock
- As a moth gnaws a garment, so doth envy consume a man. Chrysostom
- Envy is the sign of a nature that is altogether evil. Demosthenes
- Envy is the greatest of all diseases among men. Euripides
- Envy shoots at others and wounds herself. Thomas Fuller
- It is as hard to keep our hearts and envy asunder as it is to hinder two lovers from meeting together. William Gurnall
- If we love our neighbour we shall be so far from envying his welfare, or being displeased with it, that we shall share in it and rejoice at it. Matthew Henry
- The prosperity of those to whom we wish well can never grieve us; and the mind which is bent on doing good to all can never wish ill to any. Matthew Henry
- Envy is its own punishment. William Jenkyn
- Too many Christians envy the sinners their pleasure and the saints their joy because they don't have either one. Martin Luther
- Envy is a rebellion against God himself, and the liberty and pleasure of his dispensations. Thomas Manton
- Envy is a settled, crooked malice. Thomas Manton
- There are two sins which were Christ's sorest enemies, covetousness and envy. Covetousness sold Christ and envy delivered him. Thomas Manton
- The envious man is an enemy to himself, for his mind is always spontaneously occupied with his own unhappy thoughts. Menander
- Envy of another man's calling can work havoc in our own. Watchman Nee
- The jealous are troublesome to others; a torment to themselves. William Penn
- Envy always implies inferiority, wherever it resides. Pliny
- There is no worse passion than envy. William S. Plumer
- There is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy. Richard Brinsley Sheridan
- Envy and malice are quicksighted. Richard Sibbes
- In spiritual things there is no envy. Richard Sibbes
- The cure for envy lies in living under a constant sense of the divine presence, worshipping God and communing with him all the day long, however long the day may seem. C. H. Spurgeon
- Envy does nothing with reason. John Trapp
- Envy is a self-murder, a fretting canker. Thomas Watson

**Acts 13:46 Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. (NASB95)**

KJV 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.

- **Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly** Acts 4:13,29-31; Proverbs 28:1; Romans 10:20; Ephesians 6:19,20; Philippians 1:14; Hebrews 11:34
- **It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first** Acts 13:26; 3:26; 18:5; 26:20; Matthew 10:6; Luke 24:47; John 4:22; Romans 1:16; 2:10; Romans 9:4,5
- **since you repudiate it** Acts 7:51; Exodus 32:9,10; Deuteronomy 32:21; Isaiah 49:5-8; Matthew 10:13-15; 21:43; 22:6-10; Luke 14:16-24; John 1:11; Romans 10:19-21; 11:11-13
- **we are turning to the Gentiles** Acts 18:6; 28:28; Isaiah 55:5
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **PAUL AND BARNABAS ACCEPT THE RABBIS CHALLENGE!**

**Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly** - NET = "replied courageously." Now Barnabas joins Paul in addressing the opposition. The fact that they spoke out boldly indicates that they were both filled with the Spirit (cf Acts 4:31+, Acts 14:3+, cf Paul in Acts 9:17+ and

Acts 9:27-28+). They responded just as the Spirit filled saints (Acts 4:23) had in Jerusalem declaring "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." (Acts 4:29-30+).

**Spoke out boldly** (3955)([parrhesiazomai](#) from **parrhesia** = freedom or frankness in speaking or confident in spirit and demeanor <> **pas** = all + **rheis** = speech) means literally speaking out every word and conveys the idea of freedom to say all and thus means to speak freely, openly, boldly, fearlessly, without constraint. The Greeks used this word for speaking in a democratic assembly. Parrhesiazomai is fearless and frank speaking with the freedom to speak openly even in the face of opposition. **Rogers** adds that this verb "also suggests abnormal eloquence and emotion." (cf Acts 9:27+)

All 9 uses of **parrhesiazomai** in the NT - Acts 9:27; Acts 9:28; Acts 13:46; Acts 14:3; Acts 18:26; Acts 19:8; Acts 26:26; Eph. 6:20; 1 Th 2:2

**Constable** - It was necessary for the gospel to go to the Jews before the Gentiles not only because Jewish acceptance of Jesus is a prerequisite to the messianic kingdom (cf. 3:26). It was also necessary because Jesus was the Messiah whom God had promised to deliver the Jews. The gospel was good news to the Jews in a larger sense than it was to the Gentiles. Paul consistently preached the gospel to the Jews first in the towns he visited (cf. 13:50–51; 14:2–6; 17:5, 13–15; 18:6; 19:8–9; 28:23–28; Rom. 1:16). The Jews' rejection of the gospel led him to offer it next to the Gentiles. ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**And said, "It was necessary that the word (logos) of God be spoken to you first** - As Paul said in Romans "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, **to the Jew first** and also to the Greek." (Ro 1:16).

**Robertson** writes that **Paul and Barnabas** "had done their duty and had followed the command of Jesus (Acts 1:8). They use the very language of Peter in Acts 3:26 (humin prōton) "to you first." This position Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles will always hold, the Jew first in **privilege** and **penalty** (Ro 1:16; 2:9,10)."

**Necessary** (compelling, pressing, urgently necessary)(316)([anagkaios](#) from **anagke** = necessity, compulsion) describes that which compels or makes something needful or necessary (as meeting a need). That which is indispensable, pressing, what one cannot do without. In Acts 10:24 it describes those who are intimate (friends, relatives). Necessary, intimate, close. "Being necessary and indispensable to the occurrence of some event" (Louw-Nida)

**Since** (1894)(**epeidē** from **epei** = as, because + **dē** = indeed, particle of affirmation or emphasis) can have a causal sense meaning because, seeing that, since (Mt 18:32; Mk 15:42; Lk 1:34; Jn 19:31; 1 Cor 14:12+); 2 Cor 13:3; Heb 5:2, 11). It can also have a temporal sense (Lk 7:1). Regardless of how **epeidē** is translated, it carries this twofold sense: the reader should assume what precedes is factual (emphatically true); and therefore embrace what should ("must") follow as its necessary (corresponding) conclusion.

**Gary Hill** - Example of use of epeide: 1 Cor 1:22+): "**Because indeed** (epeidē) Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom." **Epeidē** ("indeed something must follow") points to the inevitable follow-up to seeing signs and wisdom as an end in themselves – namely missing out on God's free gift of salvation through Christ (1 Cor 1:23+)! ([Discovery Bible](#))

**Epeide** - 8v - because(2), since(5), when(1).

Lk. 7:1; Acts 13:46; Acts 14:12; Acts 15:24; 1 Co. 1:21; 1 Co. 14:16; 1 Co. 15:21; Phil. 2:26

**Zodhiates** on **epeidē** - As indeed, as now, spoken in the NT only of a ground or motive, meaning since indeed, since now, because now, inasmuch as, and always in the apodosis (the conclusion of a hypothesis) which, however, may stand first, followed by the indic. (Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament)

What a picture Luke presents using the "vigorous verb" **apothéo**, which depicts the Jews continually (present tense) "pushing away from themselves" both the messengers and their Gospel message! In fact, later in this chapter we see that they literally "pushed" them out of town! Woe!

**You repudiate** (683)([apothéo/apothéomai](#) from **apó** = from + **othéo** = push away, thrust, drive) means literally to push aside, thrust way (from) or push off. Figuratively as used here it means to reject, repudiate, refuse to listen to, to cast away or to put away (from). Used from Homer onward meaning "to repel," "to reject." It is notable that 5/6 uses of apothéo are found in the context of the relationship between Israel and God (Acts 7:27; 13:46; Ro 11:1,2). Stephen used this strong verb twice in his powerful message to the religious Jews, which resulted in his martyrdom. In the present case it will result in Paul and Barnabas only being driven out of town! In the Septuagint it is frequently used in the context of God's rejection of His people (Jdg 6:13; 1 Sa 12:22 Ps 44:9; 60:1,10; 74:1) or as here in Acts 13:46 of His people rejecting Him and His law (Jer 6:19; Ezekiel 5:6; 20:13,16). It seems that the heart of most of the Jews had not changed that much over the centuries!

There is an ironic use of **apotheo** in Romans 11:1,2 which twice emphasizes that "**God has not rejected (apotheo) His people**" whereas here in Acts 13:46 His people have rejected His Word (**word of God**), His Gospel and His Son!

All uses of apotheo in NT - Acts 7:27; Acts 7:39; Acts 13:46; Rom. 11:1; Rom. 11:2; 1 Tim. 1:19

**And judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life** - Their rejection was in effect their judgment, even if it was not done consciously, for no one would want to judge themselves guilty of eternal death in Hell! But remember that although most of the Jews rejected the Gospel and thereby in effect judge themselves worthy of eternal death, throughout the record of Acts (and throughout history) there was always a **remnant of Jews** who received and believed the Gospel of salvation.

**Robertson** on the reaction of most of the Jews - By their action and their words they had taken a violent and definite stand.

**Judge** (present tense = continually judging yourselves)(2919)(**krino**) signifies to distinguish, to decide between two or more things and reaching a decision. In the present context the Jews decide between holding fast to the Law of Moses versus choosing the Gospel of grace, the former condemning them to eternal death, the latter gifting them with eternal life. The irony is that their choice is as if it is their judge sentencing them to a death sentence! When a heart is hardened by sin, the mind is unable to think logically.

**Unworthy** is literally "not worthy" (ou = absolutely not + axios - [see above](#)).

**John MacArthur** - They brought the verdict on themselves by their own choice. After centuries of waiting for Messiah, His own people rejected Him and the salvation He brought (John 1:11). They would pay a fearful price for such nationalistic pride and love of self-righteousness (**ED: TEMPLE DESTRUCTION AD 70, DISPERSION, ANTI-SEMITISM THAT LED TO THE HOLOCAUST, ETC**). This passage teaches the important biblical truth of human responsibility. Like all who go to hell, the unbelieving Jews at Antioch judged themselves unworthy of eternal life by their unbelief. John 3:18 reads, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." People perish because they choose to reject and refuse to believe, and their choice shuts them out of eternal life. Jesus once said to the unbelieving Jews, "You are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life" (John 5:40). Later He said, "Unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins (John 8:24). Damnation is the result of rejection and unbelief, for which each faithless soul is utterly responsible. That truth of personal volition must be held in tandem with the equally biblical truth that God is absolutely sovereign in salvation and saves whomever He wills to save. The resulting antinomy (an apparent incompatibility between two undeniable truths) is beyond the ability of our finite minds to resolve. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**J. I. Packer writes:**The particular antinomy which concerns us here is the apparent opposition between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, or (putting it more biblically) between what God does as King and what He does as Judge. Scripture teaches that, as King, He orders and controls all things, human actions among them, in accordance with His own eternal purpose. Scripture also teaches that, as Judge, He holds every man responsible for the choices he makes and the courses of action he pursues. Thus, hearers of the gospel are responsible for their reaction; if they reject the good news, they are guilty of unbelief. Man without Christ is a guilty sinner, answerable to God for breaking His law. That is why he needs the gospel. When he hears the gospel, he is responsible for the decision that he makes about it. It sets before him a choice between life and death, the most momentous choice that any man can ever face... When we preach the promises and invitations of the gospel, and offer Christ to sinful men and women, it is part of our task to emphasize and re-emphasize that they are responsible to God for the way in which they react to the good news of His grace. ([Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God](#), pages 22, 25-26)

**Neil** explains that ""Now for the first time Dispersion Jews follow the example of their Jerusalem counterparts in rejecting Christ, and for the first time Paul publicly announces his intention of turning his back on them and concentrating on the purely Gentile mission [cf. Acts 18:5–6; 28:25–28].""

## **THE REJECTERS ARE REJECTED!**

**Behold** (2400)(**idou**) is an **aurist imperative** command given to arrest someone's attention "Pay attention!" These words mark the changing of the missionary movement from the Jews primarily now primarily to Gentiles.

**We are turning to the Gentiles** - "Lo, we are turning ourselves!" The Jews rejected the Gospel offered to them, so the missionaries will now offer it to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas rejected the rejecters! The Jews did not reject Paul and Barnabas. What they really rejected was the Gospel and in so doing they rejected God and His gracious offer! Then notice the striking contrast for while the Jews **rejected** the Gospel, the Gentiles **rejoiced** over over the Gospel! (Acts 13:48)

**THOUGHT** - Recall that Jesus had instructed His followers to turn away from rejecters (Lk 10:10-16). This principle still hold for us beloved. As the Spirit leads there are those to whom we are to cease sharing the Gospel after being rejected so often and so vociferously or even violently. I had an uncle who was almost like a father to me, a man I loved dearly and when I came to Christ at age 39, I began to share the Gospel with him over and over. Then one day (and 30+ years later I remember this day as if it was yesterday), my uncle's face and voice turned angry and he told me that if I ever tried to tell him again about "my Jesus," I just needed to stay away from his home. So I stopped sharing. My family continued to visit over the years, but I never mentioned the Gospel again. To this day my heart is broken over his rejection for I fear that he died and entered a Christ-less eternity (he died suddenly and no one was around). Many of you can probably identify with my story.

**Robertson** - It is a dramatic moment as Paul and Barnabas turn from the Jews to the Gentiles, a prophecy of the future history of Christianity. In Romans 9-11 Paul will discuss at length the rejection of Christ by the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles.

**NET Note** - This **turning to the Gentiles** would be a shocking rebuke to 1st century Jews who thought they alone were the recipients of the promise.

**We are turning** (present tense indicates an action in progress)(4762)(**strepho**) means to turn, to turn about, to turn aside. In Acts **strepho** is used twice by Stephen, first to describe when Israel "in their hearts (THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM IS THE PROBLEM OF THE JEWS' HEART!) turned back to Egypt," (Acts 7:39+) and then "God turned away and delivered them up (delivered them over to the power of idolatry!) to serve the host of heaven." (Acts 7:42+). In a similar way we see God's missionaries, turning away and in effect delivering them up to their own fleshly desires and their futile attempts to try to attain righteousness by keeping the Law (cf Ro 10:3-4+).

This statement does not mean that Paul would thereafter cease to first enter Jewish synagogues (e.g., compare Acts 18:6 with Acts 19:8), because they were still generally an excellent site to first address the Gentiles, because here the Gentiles would be familiar with the OT Scriptures which Paul could then effectively use in his presentation. Totally pagan Gentiles would be completely ignorant of the OT Scriptures.

**Stanley Toussaint** writes that "This pattern was repeated in city after city until Paul reached Rome (cf. Acts 13:50-51; 14:2-6; 17:5, 13-15; 18:6; 19:8-9). There for the final time in the book the Apostle Paul turned from Jews to Gentiles (Acts 28:23-28). (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

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**Mark Noll** makes several cogent observations related to the shift of Christianity which we see occurring in Acts 13 -

Christianity has maintained a special relationship with Judaism. That relationship would later lead to tragic consequences, especially in circumstances where Christians dominated a local culture or nation and where Jews were regarded as second-class citizens. In those circumstances the near kinship of the two religions raised Christian ire, which all too often flamed into violence when Jewish communities went about the practice of their ancestral faith.

Viewed from another perspective, however, the links between Judaism and Christianity can be seen in a more positive light. Although the church would go on to break from Judaism, it is a remarkable fact that the main problems of the church's early centuries were problems shaped by Judaism. First, Christians asked, What is truth? If the church went beyond Judaism in finding ultimate truth in a personal revelation from God—that is, in the life and work of Jesus Christ—still, the church drew upon its Jewish heritage in believing that divine revelation held the key to life's most important realities.

Second, Christians asked, How do we know the truth? Again, if in answering this question the church went beyond Judaism to rely on the writings of the New Testament and the testimony of the apostles to Christ, still that trust in a written revelation from God and reliance upon leaders who provided authoritative interpretations of that written revelation followed the Jewish pattern of honoring sacred books and studying them diligently.

Third, Christians asked, How do we put the truth into action? If the church went beyond the organization of life around the ritual year of the temple and the activities of local synagogues, still the church's own development of bishops and the planting of new churches under the leadership of local elders, priests, or ministers expanded upon what had been a Jewish way of nurturing the faithful and organizing to face the world.

The early church benefited from its ties to Judaism in one other important way. For several decades after AD 70, the church continued to enjoy the legal status that the Jews had won through hard and difficult trial. Normally in the Mediterranean world of that time, nations conquered by Rome were forced to adapt local

religions to Roman religion; they had to recognize Rome's gods along with their own. The fierce monotheism of the Jews had therefore been a source of ceaseless conflict from the first century BC, when Rome reached out to enfold Judea. Eventually Rome came to recognize Judaism as a legal religion, despite Jewish refusal to acknowledge the Roman gods. This status as a *religio licita* protected the Christian church through its association with Judaism, even after the destruction of Jerusalem had in fact driven the two religions apart.

As the Christian church moved out into the Roman world, its Judaic roots would be obscured, but even beneath the surface those roots remained a critical part of what Christianity had been and what it would become. ([Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity, 3rd Edition](#))

**Acts 13:47 "For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.'"**

KJV 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.

NLT Acts 13:47 For the Lord gave us this command when he said, 'I have made you a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth.' "

- **For so the Lord has commanded us** Acts 1:8; 9:15; 22:21; 26:17,18; Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47
- **I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES** Acts 26:23; Isaiah 42:1,6; 49:6; 60:3; Luke 2:32
- **THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION** Acts 15:14-16; Ps 22:27-29; 67:2-7; 72:7,8; 96:1,2; 98:2,3; 117:1,2; Isaiah 2:1-3; 24:13-16; 42:9-12; 45:22; 52:10; 59:19,20; Jeremiah 16:19; Hosea 1:10; Amos 9:12; Micah 4:2,3; 5:7; Zephaniah 3:9,10; Zechariah 2:11; 8:20-23; Malachi 1:11
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **GOD'S WORLDWIDE MISSIONARY MANDATE**

**For (gar)** - Term of explanation. What has Paul just stated? "**We are turning to the Gentiles.**" He is explaining why he and Barnabas are now turning to the Gentiles. The explanation is that "God told them" so to speak. In another sense their turning to the Gentiles was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 49:6.

**So the Lord has commanded us** - God commanded the missionaries to turn to the Gentiles. Paul then proceeds to quote from the Old Testament to underscore why he his turning to the Gentiles. One can imagine the Jews really beginning to revile him and scoff at him now that he was turning to the unclean Gentile "dogs."

**Has commanded** (1781)(**entellomai** from **e n** = in, upon + **tellomai** = to accomplish) means to enjoin, charge, command, commission. The idea of commission recalls Jesus' last commissions - Mt 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8.

**Friberg on entellomai** - (1) give orders to, command, enjoin (Mt 17.9); (2) commission, direct (Mk 13.34); (3) of a covenant ordain, make (Heb 9.20)

**Gilbrant** - In Herodotus (Fifth Century B.C.), for example, **entellomai** refers to the commission of a king or a ruler. At a later time (Fourth Century A.D.) the word meant "to invest with legal powers" and "to authorize to act" (Liddell-Scott). The word occurs over 400 times in the Septuagint, most frequently translating the Hebrew word *tsāwāh*, "to command." In every use of this verb in the New Testament (except Mark 13:34) there is reference to an authority, either a divine (God, angels) or a pivotal figure (Joseph, Moses) in Jewish history, behind the command. The most significant use is in Matthew 28:20 where the resurrected Christ told His disciples to teach "them (nations) to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." From this comes the phrase "the Great Commission" (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Entellomai** - 15x in 15v - command(6), commanded(7), gave orders(1), given orders(1).

Matt. 4:6; Matt. 17:9; Matt. 19:7; Matt. 28:20; Mk. 10:3; Mk. 13:34; Lk. 4:10; Jn. 8:5; Jn. 14:31; Jn. 15:14; Jn. 15:17; Acts 1:2; Acts 13:47; Heb. 9:20; Heb. 11:22

Because there are over 400 uses in the Septuagint only a sampling of uses are listed below...

Gen. 2:16; Gen. 3:11; Gen. 3:17; Gen. 6:22; Gen. 7:5; Gen. 7:9; Gen. 7:16; Gen. 12:20; Gen. 21:4; Gen. 27:8; Gen. 28:1; Gen. 28:6; Gen. 32:4; Gen. 32:17; Gen. 32:19; Gen. 42:25; Gen. 44:1; Gen. 45:19; Exod.

4:28; Exod. 7:2; Exod. 7:6; Exod. 7:10; Exod. 7:20; Exod. 12:28; Exod. 12:50; Exod. 23:15; Exod. 23:22; Exod. 25:22; Exod. 29:35; Exod. 31:11; Exod. 32:8; Exod. 34:11; Exod. 34:18; Exod. 34:32; Exod. 34:34; Exod. 40:16;

Ps. 7:6; Ps. 33:9; Ps. 42:8; Ps. 44:4; Ps. 68:28; Ps. 78:5; Ps. 78:23; Ps. 91:11; Ps. 105:8; Ps. 111:9; Ps. 119:4; Ps. 119:138; Ps. 133:3; Ps. 148:5; Prov. 5:2; Prov. 6:3; Isa. 5:6; Isa. 13:4; Isa. 13:11; Isa. 23:11; Isa. 34:16; Isa. 45:11; Isa. 45:12; Isa. 48:5; Jer. 1:7; Jer. 1:17; Jer. 7:22; Jer. 7:23; Jer. 7:31; Jer. 11:4; Jer. 13:5; Jer. 13:6; Jer. 14:14; Jer. 17:22; Jer. 19:5; Jer. 23:32; Jer. 32:23; Jer. 35:6; Jer. 35:10; Jer. 35:14; Jer. 35:18; Jer. 36:5; Jer. 36:8; Jer. 36:26; Jer. 38:10; Jer. 38:27; Jer. 47:7; Jer. 50:21; Jer. 51:59

## **I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH** - Paul justifies his (and Barnabas) turning from the Jews to the Gentiles by quoting from Isaiah 49:6 which reads

He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (cf Isa 42:6b "I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, **as a light to the nations**")

**Toussaint** points out that "This Old Testament passage has at least three applications—to Israel (Isa. 49:3), to Christ (Luke 2:29-32+), and to Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Have placed** is perfect tense and signifies that God placed Jesus as a Light which was His fixed, enduring purpose. And in the context of Acts 13, God's Spirit had placed Paul and Barnabas as His vessels of honor (2 Ti 2:21) to bring the Gospel "**Light for the Gentiles**", bringing **salvation to the end of the earth** (which recalls Jesus' charge in Acts 1:8+ - "you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and **even to the remotest part of the earth**")

**Gentiles** (nations) ([1484](#))([ethnos](#) gives us our word "ethnic") in general refers to a multitude (especially persons) associated with one another, living together, united in kinship, culture or traditions and summed up by the words nation, Gentiles (especially when ethnos is plural), people (much like "people groups" in our modern missionary vernacular).

**Salvation** ([4991](#))([soteria](#) from [soter](#) = Savior in turn from [sozo](#) = save, rescue, deliver) describes the rescue or deliverance from danger, destruction and peril, and is a broader term in Greek than we often think of in English. Other concepts that are inherent in [soteria](#) include restoration to a state of safety, soundness, health and well being as well as preservation from danger of destruction. **William Barclay** - In classical Greek [soteria](#) means 'deliverance' or 'preservation'. It can be used for a man's safe return to his own home or his own country after an absence and a journey. It can mean a 'guarantee of safety' or a 'security against danger'. In the papyri by far the commonest meaning of [soteria](#) is 'bodily health'. For instance, a member of the family writes home, 'Write me a letter about your [soteria](#),' or, as we would say, 'Let me know how you are.' ([New Testament Words](#))

All of Luke's uses of [soteria](#) - Lk. 1:69; Lk. 1:71; Lk. 1:77; Lk. 19:9; Jn. 4:22; Acts 4:12; Acts 7:25; Acts 13:26; Acts 13:47; Acts 16:17; Acts 27:34

**Robertson on to the end of the earth** - It is a long time from Paul to now, not to say from Isaiah to now, and not yet has the gospel been carried to half of the people of earth. God's people are slow in carrying out God's plans for salvation.

In the original context of Isaiah 49:6 God the Father is addressing God the Son, the Messiah, Who is the One appointed as a Light to the Gentiles (cf Jn 1:9, Jn 8:12) And how does Jesus now get to the Gentiles? How is this prophecy to be fulfilled? Clearly it will be fulfilled as Paul and Barnabas proclaim Christ, the Light of the world, to the Gentiles. God's will was salvation not just for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles. And so in turning to the Gentiles, Paul and Barnabas are obeying the will of God. In one sense all those who have followed after Paul are playing a role in fulfilling this commission from God, as we seek to take the Gospel of salvation to the unreached people groups ([see note](#)) who are at **the end of the earth**.

**THOUGHT** - In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus, the Light of the world, the Light for the Gentiles, gave His followers a command to "**Let your light shine** (aorist imperative - Do this now! Don't delay! Just do it!) before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven." (Mt 5:16+). This begs the question - Are you letting your light shine? Are you allowing God's Spirit to use you to bring salvation to the end of the earth, either by considering going as a missionary yourself or by supporting those who are going?

As **MacArthur** says "The narrow-minded view of salvation as an exclusively Jewish possession is even foreign to the Old Testament, which clearly taught that Messiah would be sent to the Gentiles as well (see also Isa. 42:1, 6; cf. Acts 26:22-23). There was no justification for the hostile, negative response of the Jewish people to Gentile salvation. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)



When **Simeon** (Lk 2:25+) saw Jesus in the Temple he quoted from the same passage (Isa 49:6) which Paul had used to affirm Christ's Messianic task of universal redemption, describing Messiah as "A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel." (Luke 2:32+).

**Brian Bell** applies this passage - **Purpose:** I have set you as a light – Let's take this personal! 3.2.1. He has called us to be "Salt" (make em thirsty); and To be "a light" (may they see the lack of darkness in your life). **Reason:** For salvation to the ends of the earth – Let's take this personal!. Like an old Standard Oil slogan (made John D. Rockefeller a billionaire), "Get the Light into Every Dark Corner of the world." [Their goal, multitudes of towns and villages lit with the kerosene oil of the West] Well we've gotten oil and gas into most all parts of the world...but have been a lot slower to bring them the light of the gospel! ([Sermon](#))

**Acts 13:48 When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**

KJV 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.

- **they began rejoicing** Acts 13:42; 2:41; 8:8; 15:31; Luke 2:10-11; Romans 15:9-12
- **glorifying the word of the Lord** Ps 138:2; 2 Thessalonians 3:1
- **and as many** Acts 2:47; John 10:16,26,27; 11:52; Romans 8:30; 11:7; Ephesians 1:19; 2:5-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13,14
- **appointed to eternal life believed** Acts 15:2; 20:13; 22:10; 28:23; Matthew 28:16; Luke 7:8; Romans 13:1; 1 Corinthians 16:15
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JOY OVER THE PROMISE OF SALVATION

**When the Gentiles heard this** - Heard what? Paul's quote from Isaiah 49:6! The way of salvation would be presented to them. They would be saved! Is there any greater cause for joy in the entire world? I think not!

**Guzik** - The Gentiles responded to Paul's invitation with enthusiastic belief, learning with joy that God does not hate Gentiles, but offered them salvation in Jesus. Paul showed wisdom in not spending all his time trying to persuade hardened hearts. We know that even after he made Gentiles the focus of his evangelistic efforts, he still prayed earnestly for the salvation of Israel (Romans 10:1), but he spent his missionary time ministering to more open hearts. ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**They began rejoicing** - The imperfect tense pictures the Gentiles as continuing to express joy, over and over, again and again. You can picture the joyful tumult!

**Steven Cole** - Sinners who have been saved by God's grace are filled with the joy of salvation. They extol Him for His goodness and love. His praises are continually in their mouths, as they sing, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together" (Ps. 34:3). "Exalted be the God of my salvation" (Ps. 18:46). Paul exults in God's salvation in Ephesians 1:3-6. God's glory is the beauty of His perfect attributes, and that glory shines supremely at the cross, where His perfect love and justice meet. Thus as we glory in His salvation, we will be filled with joy and want others to know and glorify Him. God's glory should be our supreme motive in sharing the gospel.

**Robertson** - The joy of the Gentiles increased the fury of the Jews. "The synagogue became a scene of excitement which must have been something like the original speaking with tongues" (Rackham). The joy of the Gentiles was to see how they could receive the higher blessing of Judaism without circumcision and other repellent features of Jewish ceremonialism. It was the gospel of grace and liberty from legalism that Paul had proclaimed. Whether Gal. 4:13 describes this incident or not (the South Galatian theory), it illustrates it when Gentiles received Paul as if he were Christ Jesus himself. It was triumph with the Gentiles, but defeat with the Jews.

**Rejoicing** (5463)([chairo](#)) means to be "cheer" full, calmly happy or well-off. **Chairo** implies and imparts joy. **Chairo** is used in a whole range of situations in which the emotion of joy is evoked. To be in a state of happiness and well being (often independent of what is happening when the Source is the Spirit!). **Chairo** means to enjoy a state of gladness, to be delighted.

**Chairo** in Acts - Acts 5:41; Acts 8:39; Acts 11:23; Acts 13:48; Acts 15:23; Acts 15:31; Acts 23:26;

**And glorifying the word of the Lord** - They did not practice "Bibliolatry" but they did praise God for provision of His Gospel. As

the NLT paraphrases it (and I agree) they "thanked the Lord for his message."

**Glorifying** (1392) (**doxazo** from **doxa** = glory) has a secular meaning of to think, suppose, be of opinion, (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Xenophon, Plato, Thucydides) but generally is not used in this sense in Scripture. **Doxazo** means to praise, honor or magnify (Mt 5:16; 6:2; Lk 5:25f; Acts 11:18;) and to clothe in splendor, glorify (Jn 8:54; 13:31f; 17:1, 4) A simple definition of glorify is to give a correct opinion or a correct estimate of something, in this case the Word of the Lord, the Gospel of grace. The imperfect tense pictures the Gentiles as doing this over and over. One can imagine the exhilarating conversations that were being exchanged.

**Doxazo** in Acts - Acts 3:13; Acts 4:21; Acts 11:18; Acts 13:48; Acts 21:20;

## THE DIVINE SIDE OF EVANGELISM

**And as many as had been appointed to [eternal life](#) believed** - Notice God's sovereignty in salvation. God had **appointed** them to [eternal life](#), but they still had to make the volitional choice to believe. And in the mystery of salvation, even the faith that they exercised was a gift from God. As John Calvin said "He chose us, and to those He has He gives the power to believe." Amazing mysterious grace!

**Steven Cole** writes that when people see many as had been appointed they often "draw an erroneous conclusion. They say, "If God elected some to salvation, then they're going to get saved no matter what. So why should we have to share the gospel with them?" The answer is, Because God ordained that the means by which His elect get saved is the preaching of the gospel. In 2 Timothy 2:10, Paul says, "For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen [the elect], so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory." Paul suffered all of the beatings, imprisonments, hardships, and abuse that he went through so that God's elect would obtain salvation. The message that we proclaim is the gospel."

**Eternal life** (cf Acts 5:20; 11:18) - What a striking contrast with Acts 13:46 where the "Gospel rejecters" judged themselves "unworthy of eternal life. In a sense they will experience eternal life, but tragically it will be in Hell not Heaven, and it will be eternal ruin and loss in contrast to eternal reward and bliss for believers!

**Homer Kent** on **appointed** and **believed** - "Once again the human responsibility of believing is shown to coincide exactly with what God in his sovereignty had planned."

**Robertson** on **appointed** and **believed** - It was saving faith that was exercised only by those who were **appointed** unto eternal life, who were ranged on the side of eternal life, who were thus revealed as the subjects of God's grace by the stand that they took on this day for the Lord. It was a great day for the kingdom of God.

**Ray Stedman** exhorts us "Now do not turn that around. That does not say, "and as many as believed were ordained to eternal life." You see, Paul began this message by showing them that God was active, trying to reach out to men. It is not men who are trying to find God; it is God who is trying to find men. And when men believe, they are simply responding to the activity of God who is already reaching out to them. Here were many who were ordained of God, and when they were thus ordained, they believed, they responded to God. You can never get away from this wonderful, mysterious combination of divine sovereignty and human responsibility."

As Stanley Toussaint writes "It is difficult to miss the doctrine of God's election here."

**THOUGHT - C H Spurgeon** made the following statement that applies to the **doctrine of election** - We all have one blind eye, and too often we are like Nelson in the battle, we put the telescope to that blind eye, and then protest that we cannot see. I have heard of one man who said he had read the Bible through thirty-four times on his knees, but could not see a word about election in it; I think it very likely that he could not; kneeling is a very uncomfortable posture for reading, and possibly the superstition which would make the poor man perform this penance would disqualify him for using his reason; moreover, to get through the Book thirty-four times, he probably read in such a hurry that he did not know what he was reading, and might as well have been dreaming over "Robinson Crusoe" as the Bible. He put the telescope to the blind eye. Many of us do that; we do not want to see a truth, and therefore we say we cannot see it. (From [God's Will and Man's Will](#))

**Jon Courson** adds an interesting thought - Election makes me a little bit wiser as a worker. It is the wise servant who prays, "Lord guide me to those You have already elected. Guide me to the place where You have already put it in someone's heart to turn to You."

**Appointed** (KJV = ordained) (5021) (**tasso**) means to bring about an order of things by arranging or putting in place (Acts 15:2). In Classical Greek **tasso** was a military term to place in orderly arrangement, to "enroll" or "appoint." It came to have a variety of

meanings such as, to appoint or order someone to a task, to put into proper order. Priests were appointed as supervisors and judges. Clearly in the present context **tasso** refers to the doctrine of [predestination](#). In this verse, the [perfect tense](#) pictures a past completed action with present ongoing effect or result and so could be translated "Have been appointed and the appointment remains in force." Or perhaps better "those who were in a state of appointment to eternal life believed."

**Wiersbe** - The word translated ordained means "enrolled," and indicates that God's people have their names written in God's book (Luke 10:20+ = "rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.;" Phil. 4:3+ = "whose names are in the book of life" A book which retains the names of all who have eternal life.). (BEC)

**Larkin** - Using predestination terminology, Luke is careful to point out here, as elsewhere, that this faith is above all God's work (2:41, 47; 5:14; 6:7; 11:21, 24; 21:19–20; compare Is 4:3; Dan 12:1; Lk 10:20; Phil 4:3; Rev 20:12–15; 21:27; Jubilees 30:20; 1 Enoch 104:1). We too must always keep before us the antinomy of faith as a personal human decision and as a divine gift according to God's election. (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [What is predestination? Is predestination biblical?](#)
- [How are predestination and election connected with foreknowledge?](#)
- [Unconditional election - is it biblical?](#)
- [What does Peter mean when he tells us to make our calling and election sure in 2 Peter 1:10?](#)
- [Who are the elect of God?](#)
- [How can I know if I am one of the elect?](#)
- [Bob Utley's Special Topic: Election/Predestination and the Need for a Theological Balance](#)
- [Is there a difference between the book of life and the Lamb's book of life?](#)
- [What is the Book of Life?](#)
- [Tony Garland's summary - Book of Life](#) - - Its Ultimate Purpose When are Names Written? Names Blotted Out
- [Is it possible for a person's name to be erased from the Book of Life?](#)
- [Is eternal security biblical?](#)
- [What is eternal life?](#)

**POSB** - Acts 13:48 shows both God's part and man's part in salvation. Jesus Himself had said:""No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day." (Jn. 6:44). The man who comes to Christ is a person who has been drawn by God, a person who has experienced the divine initiative. A man does not act alone and come to Christ by his own effort or energy, nor by his own works, whether mental (thought or will, Jn. 1:13) or physical (good deeds, Eph. 2:8–9). A man is a dead spirit; therefore, he can do nothing spiritually just as a dead body can do nothing physically. The natural man prefers self and sin; therefore, if a man with a dead spirit is to come to Christ, he has to be acted upon and drawn by God. Both God and man have a part in salvation. God's part is to draw men. Man's part is to believe.

As **Brian Bell** says "Don't trouble yourself with election, encourage yourself in it."

**ILLUSTRATION** - There was a Puritan who was presenting his views on strict predestination in old Puritan New England. He had a friend who was not convinced of that doctrine, so as they walked through the woods on their way to church one Sunday morning, his friend, sort of baiting him a little said, "Say, do you really believe that business about everything in the world being predestined by God and God being in sovereign control of every little detail?" The Puritan answered, "That's correct." "You mean you believe that nothing could happen to you unless God willed it to happen?" said the friend. "That's right," said the Puritan. The friend went on to say, "You mean, as we are walking through this forest towards Church, that if God did not want an Indian to shoot us, no Indian could shoot us?" The Puritan replied, "I believe that." "Well, then," the friend said, "why is it then you are carrying that gun over your shoulder?" The old Puritan thought about it a moment and said, "Well, my brother, you never know when you may meet an Indian whose appointed time has come."

**Acts 13:49 And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region.**

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

- **was being spread through the whole region** Acts 6:7; 9:42; 12:24; 19:10,26; Philippians 1:13,14
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE PROPAGATING POWER OF THE GOSPEL

**And** - Note this connective conjunction. Luke has just described the birth of disciples, and now links them ("and") with the spreading of the Word. Undoubtedly these new believers were spreading the good news. I remember when I was first saved and I was sharing the Gospel with everyone I met. What I had experienced was so amazing, I simply could not keep it in, but had to let it out. That is very likely the same spiritual dynamic that drove these joyous, Spirit filled (empowered) believers (Acts 13:52) to spread the good news!

Talk about "church planting movement!" It's remarkable to think that this church was "planted" in a little more than a week.

**Wiersbe** points out that while Acts 13:48 is the "divine side of evangelism", Acts 13:49 "is the human side of evangelism: if we do not preach the Word, then nobody can believe and be saved. It takes both (see 2 Th 2:13-14 and Ro 10:13-15)." (BEC)

**The word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region**- The **Word of the Lord** is the Gospel. **Was being spread** is in the imperfect tense, signifying again and again, over and over the Gospel was being "published" (KJV rendering), being spread far and wide. The passive voice pictures the Word, the Gospel, being carried, which begs the question being carried by whom? Clearly these new believers were "carrying" the Gospel, spreading the "Seed" ("the Seed is the Word of God" - Lk 8:11+) casting it out in hopes of it landing in "good soil." (those "appointed to eternal life") (Lk 8:15+). Just as ancient farmers would **broadcast** their seed over the furrowed rows, so too these "freshly minted" disciples were casting their seed **through the whole region**. "Wheat" was being harvested from "the fields, that (were) white for harvest." (Jn 4:35, cf Mt 9:37-38) The energetic activity of these "Seed sowers" recalls Psalm 126:6 which says "He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a **shout of joy** (cf rejoicing over salvation in Acts 13:48), bringing his sheaves with him (cf "sheaves" of "spiritual fruit" in 1 Th 2:19-20+)."

**THOUGHT** - Are you a "Seed Sower," broadcasting the Word of the Lord, the Gospel, through the whole region which is your sphere of influence and contact? (Meditate prayerfully on the following passages - 2 Cor 6:2, Eph 5:16+, James 4:14) And remember fruitful sowing is not left in hands, for the Gospel has the inherent "power ([dunamis](#)) of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Ro 1:16).

Joy-filled, Spirit-filled, Gospel-filled disciples were taking the "[dunamis](#)-filled" Word of God, "far and wide." And keep in mind that these young disciples had a first hand witness of what it had cost Paul and Barnabas to share the Gospel, so they were not naive. All though Acts we see that one of the great effects of being filled with the Spirit is boldness and confidence. These freshly birthed disciples had already morphed into missionaries **through the whole region**.

**Was being spread** (1308)([diaphero](#) from **dia** = through + **phéro** = carry, bear) means literally to carry or take something through an area or structure or to carry in different directions. In Classical Greek [diaphero](#) was used meaning to carry over or across, to go through, to bear, endure, spread, separate. [Zodhiates](#) says that in Acts 13:49 [diaphero](#) is used "metaphorically of doctrine in the passive voice meaning to be divulged, published abroad."

**Longnecker** suggests that ""This spreading of the word, along with the apostles' own outreach to the cities named in chapters 13 and 14, probably led to the agitation of the so-called Judaizers that resulted in the problem Paul dealt with in Galatians!" (EBC) (**ED**: THIS PROBLEM LIKELY PROMPTED HIS EPISTLE TO GALATIANS - Since most scholars date the Jerusalem Council alluded to in Gal 2:1 at about A.D. 49, the most likely date for Galatians is shortly thereafter.)

**Robertson** on throughout the whole region - Antioch in Pisidia as a Roman colony would be the natural centre of a Roman Regio, an important element in Roman imperial administration.

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### ADVERTISING THE GOSPEL Acts 13:44-49

And daily . . . they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. Acts 5:42

According to a recent newspaper article the ten top advertisers in the United States spent more than \$1.3 billion in one year alone for the promotion of their products. How much more is spent annually by thousands of other firms I don't know, but the total must reach astronomical proportions.

Webster's New American Dictionary defines the word "advertise" as follows: "To make public by a printed notice, broad-cast message, or any means of publicity. To give warning or in-formation." As believers-we too have an obligation to "advertise." It is our duty to "make public" the good news of God's Word by every means available. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

J. I. Rodale, in his book *The Synonym Finder*, gives the following substitutes for the word "advertise": "To make a public announcement of, to circulate, post, blazon, propagate, disseminate, trumpet, proclaim, or make known." This is what we should do with the message of God's saving grace. To send forth the Gospel is "advertising" in the best sense of the word without any of its distasteful connotations.

When we consider the tremendous effort and huge expenditures being made today to promote the material things of this world, with their temporary worth and shallow satisfaction, how much more diligent we should be in "telling the story of Jesus"! Let's not be stingy in the work of "advertising" the Gospel!

Tell it out among the highways and the lanes at home;  
Let it ring across the mountains and the ocean's foam!  
Like the sound of many waters let our glad shout be,  
Till it echoes and re-echoes from the islands of the sea!  
-- Havergal

It is a solemn responsibility to have in one's possession a reprieve for men under condemnation and then not to deliver it!

No cloud comes into our life but God has put a rainbow in it!

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### **Acts 13:44-52 Witnessing Smarter By Dave Branon**

The word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. —Acts 13:49

Joyce Gleave, an art teacher from Mustang, Oklahoma, had a burden for the spiritual welfare of the 600 students she taught in the public school. So while on a trip to the Holy Land, she purchased 600 tiny wooden crosses. But when she discovered that she would not be allowed to give the crosses to her students in the classroom, her witnessing opportunity seemed doomed.

Instead of giving up, Joyce embarked on an ambitious project. Armed with her crosses and gospel tracts, she visited every one of her students in their homes—all 600 of them! "Many parents were moved to tears that I cared for their child," she said of her visits.

The life of the apostle Paul points out that witnessing for Jesus Christ is neither easy nor popular. In his case, he was sometimes told by city officials or opposing groups to get out of town. Yet Paul still found a way to tell the story of Jesus—even at the loss of his freedom.

A world trying to eliminate Christianity is one that needs Jesus Christ more than ever. As we face obstacles in our efforts to tell others about our faith, let's look for new ways to spread the gospel. We may need to witness smarter.

Lord, give us wisdom from above  
To share the message of Christ's love;  
And help us always persevere  
To make that message loud and clear. —DJJ

The rewards of witnessing are worth the risks.

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**Acts 13:50 But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.**

KJV 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.

- **But the Jews** Acts 13:45; 6:12; 14:2,19; 17:13; 21:27; 1 Kings 21:25
- **the devout women** Acts 13:43; 2:5; Romans 10:2
- **of prominence** 1 Corinthians 1:26-29; James 2:5,6
- **instigated a persecution** Acts 8:1; Matthew 10:23; 2 Timothy 3:11
- **drove them out of their district** Acts 16:37-39; Isaiah 66:5; Amos 7:12; Mark 5:17
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JEWS INCITE AND INSTIGATE PERSECUTION OF MISSIONARIES

**But** - A sad term of contrast. "Wherever there is revival, the second group to be revived is the Devil. **ED**: OR THOSE "AROUSSED" BY THE DEVIL!) Jewish opposition was strong enough to force Paul and Barnabas to leave the area." ([Guzik](#)) Once again, many Jews reacted negatively to the Gospel message (cf Acts 5:17; Acts 5:33; Acts 6:11; Acts 13:45).

**Ray Stedman** rightly observed that "One of the marks of true evangelism is always that those who are being affected by it are divided. They are either for it or against it. No neutrality is possible when the gospel is preached in the power of the Holy Spirit."

**Barclay** - "The Jews saw the heathen as chaff to be burned; Jesus saw them as a harvest to be reaped for God." And his Church must have a like vision of a world for Christ."

**The Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city**- In the present context presumably the "**devout** (sebo) **women**" were God-fearers but if so they were easily influenced by the Jews. These women are in striking contrast to Lydia "a **worshiper** (sebo) of God," and who was saved by the Gospel as God opened her heart ( Acts 16:14+).

**Robertson on devout women** - The Jews were apparently not numerous in this city as they had **only one synagogue**, but they had influence with people of prominence, like "the devout women of honourable estate" (tas sebomenas gunaikas tas euschēmonas), the female proselytes of high station, a late use of an old word ([euschemon](#)) used about Joseph of Arimathea (Mark 15:43). The rabbis went after these Gentile women who had embraced Judaism (cf. Acts 17:4 = "a number of the leading women" in Thessalonica) as Paul had made an appeal to them. The prominence of women in public life here at Antioch is quite in accord with what we know of conditions in the cities of Asia Minor. "*Thus women were appointed under the empire as magistrates, as presidents of the games, and even the Jews elected a woman as Archisynagogos, at least in one instance at Smyrna*" (Knowling). In Damascus Josephus (War II. 20, 21) says that a majority of the married women were proselytes. Strabo (VIII. 2) and Juvenal (VI. 542) speak of the addiction of women to the Jewish religion.

**Incited** ([3951](#))(**parotruno** from **pará** = intensively + **otrúnō** = to spur, exhort, urge, incite) means to stir up (as in stirring up a strong emotion against), agitate, arouse, incite.

**Gilbrant** adds that In classical Greek parotrúnō means "to urge on." Among other uses it is found with the idea of stirring up anger and, in medical contexts for example, the use of medicine and fluids to "stimulate" sluggish digestion. The word is absent from the Septuagint. However, the Jewish historian Josephus (Antiquities 7.6.1) used the word in relating how the Ammonite princes stirred up their ruler to spurn King David's ambassadors

**Devout** ([4576](#))(**sebo**) refers God-fearers, worshipers of God, unconverted Gentiles who were attracted to the legacy of Israel but did not assume all the obligations of the Jewish law. **Friberg** adds that **sebo** is found "only middle in the NT and always of the worship of a deity worship, venerate, adore (MK 7.7); as a religious technical term applied to Gentiles who accepted Judaism's belief in one God and attended the synagogue but did not become Jewish proselytes by undergoing male circumcision." (Analytical Lexicon)

**Sebo** - 10x - devout(1), God-fearing(3), worship(4), worshiper(2).

Matt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7; Acts 13:43; Acts 13:50; Acts 16:14; Acts 17:4; Acts 17:17; Acts 18:7; Acts 18:13; Acts 19:27

**Prominence** ([2158](#))(**euschemon** from **eu** = good + **scheme** = figure, shape, appearance) means comely (in accord with propriety), prominent (having a quality that thrusts itself into attention, conspicuous in position or importance). Respected - Receiving deferential regard. Five uses in the NT - Mk. 15:43; Acts 13:50; Acts 17:12; 1 Co. 7:35; 1 Co. 12:24.

**Robertson on leading men of the city** - Probably city officials (the [Duumviri](#), the [Praetors](#), the First Ten in the Greek Cities of the east) or other "foremost" men, not officials. The rabbis were shrewd enough to reach these men (not proselytes) through the women who were proselytes of distinction

**And instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas** - "they incited a mob against Paul and Barnabas" (NLT) This is likely what Paul mentions in 2 Ti 3:11+ where he describes "persecutions ([diogmos](#)) and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch."

This **persecution** (aka "tribulation") would surely serve as an object lesson to the disciples in Iconium when Paul and Barnabas returned for their follow-up visit "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "**Through many tribulations** we must enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22+) The disciples would know that Paul and Barnabas were preaching what they had practiced, which always undergirds the sobriety and sincerity of one's sermon message!

**Instigated** ([1892](#))(**epegeiro** from **epi** = upon + **egeiro** = to raise) means to wake up, awaken or arouse and in the only 2 NT uses

(Acts 13:50; Acts 14:2) figuratively means to incite, stir up, instigate. **Epegeiro** is used widely in the Septuagint where it means to "be aroused against someone" or "rise up or revolt against someone."

**Epegeiro** - 16x in the Septuagint.

1 Sam. 3:12; 1 Sam. 22:8; 2 Sam. 18:31; 2 Sam. 22:49; 1 Chr. 5:26; 2 Chr. 21:16; Isa. 10:26; Isa. 13:17; Isa. 19:2; Isa. 42:13; Isa. 43:14; Jer. 47:7; Amos 6:14; Mic. 5:5; Nah. 1:8; Zech. 9:13;

**Persecution** (1375)(**diogmos** from **dioko** = to chase, to pursue) literally refers to a chase or pursuit and figuratively means to put to flight or to pursue with repeated acts of enmity. One can almost picture the scene, as the mob was chasing Paul and Barnabas, who were trying to run and at the same time shake the dust off of their sandals. .

**Robertson on drove them out** - forcible expulsion plainly as public nuisances. Just a few days before they were the heroes of the city and now! (cf Jesus hailed with Hosannas on His "Triumphal Entry" and then only a few days later with cries "Crucify! Crucify!" - Paul was practicing 1 Cor 11:1+!)

**Larkin** comments that "The magistrates banish them from the municipality. Since the magistrates' tenure was only for a year, the banishment is in effect temporary. Though the church's battle is for human hearts and minds and its weapons are spiritual, Christians must be prepared to face governmental attempts to restrict their evangelizing activities. Today, with the militant advance of Islam, the revival of traditional religions tied to resurgent nationalism, and secular humanism's systematic attack on religious faith expressions in public life, Christians have many opportunities to encounter the tactics employed against Paul and Barnabas at Pisidian Antioch." (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**And drove them out of their district** - "and ran them out of town" (NLT). **Drove out** is **ekbállō** which pictures them as being thrown out or expelled. It is interesting that in secular Greek ekballo was used to describe "the pushing back of invading enemies, of expulsion from government, and casting out of demons." (Gilbrant) I like those uses for Paul and Barnabas were God's militia-men" invading the domains of darkness, but in this case the power of darkness influenced the Jews, who influenced the Gentiles and served to "push back" further intrusions of the Gospel message (but as we see in Acts 13:52), God's Gospel and God's Spirit, rescued some "from the domain of darkness, and transferred (them) to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Col 1:13). The Gospel Paul proclaimed opened "their eyes so that they (turned) from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God" to "receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in" Jesus (Acts 26:18).

At the end of his life, Paul gives a reminder to Timothy that persecutions were to be expected in ministry but that God provides deliverance...

Now you (TIMOTHY) followed (THIS IS A PERFECT "DESCRIPTIVE DEFINITION" OF DISCIPLESHIP) my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at **Antioch** (THE VERY TOWN HE OUT OF WHICH HE IS RUN), at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all (HOW MANY?) **the Lord rescued (rhuomai) me!** (AND HERE IS A PROMISE NOT FOUND IN MOST COLLECTIONS OF GOD'S PROMISES) Indeed, all (ALL) who desire (THE QUALIFIER - IF YOU DON'T DESIRE TO LIVE GODLY IT IS NOT LIKELY THE UNGODLY WILL PERSECUTE YOU!) to live godly (HOW IS THIS EVEN POSSIBLE? ONLY...) in Christ Jesus (IN HIM, IN DEPENDENCE ON HIS SPIRIT) **will be persecuted** (THE WORD MEANS CHASED LIKE A PACK OF HOUNDS CHASING THE FOX!) (2 Timothy 3:10-12+)

**Acts 13:51 But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.**

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

- **But they shook off the dust** Acts 18:6; Matthew 10:14; Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5
- **Iconium** Acts 14:1,19,21; 16:2
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Pisidian Antioch > **Iconium** > Lystra > Derbe  
Click to Enlarge

**MISSIONARIES SHAKE DUST  
CUT COMMUNICATION**

**But** - Term of contrast.

**They shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them** - Paul and Barnabas responded just as Jesus had instructed the 12 disciples (Mt 10:5) to preach that the "Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 10:7), telling them "Whoever does not receive ([dechomai](#) = favorable reception - put out the welcome mat for) you, nor heed (akouo - listen and obey) your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet." (Mt 10:14, cf Mk 6:11)

**Robertson** - The sandal was taken off and the dust shaken out as a symbolic token that the very soil of the country was defiling.

**Guzik on shook off the dust of their feet** - In doing this, Paul and Barnabas treated the city as if it were a God-rejecting Gentile city. If Jewish people had to go in or through a Gentile city, when leaving the city they shook the dust off their feet as a gesture saying, "We don't want to take anything from this Gentile city with us." In this sense, Paul said "I don't want to take anything with me from you Jesus-rejecting religionists.". This rejection did not make Paul and Barnabas think there was anything wrong with themselves. They knew the problem is with their opposition, not themselves. ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**Larkin on shook off the dust of their feet** - according to the Lord's instruction, as a sign of disassociation from a community doomed to destruction (Lk 9:5; 10:10–11; compare Acts 18:6). Such destruction will be so complete that if one is to avoid it, one must remove from oneself the very dust of the place. Because the disassociation is from the persecutors, Paul can later return to the city and work there. Sometimes people reject the gospel so decisively that the only way to speak "the good news" is to inform the opponents of "the bad news" of the eternal judgment that they continue to face, in the hope that this "shock therapy" will lead to repentance (compare Rev 9:20–21; 16:9, 11, 21). (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**NET Note** says this action "shows a group of people as culpable before God."

Paul responded with a similar reaction (dust off his garments not their feet) to the Jews who resisted his proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah, Luke recording

But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia (Context = Second Missionary Journey = Corinth Acts 18:1-17), Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But when they resisted and blasphemed, **he shook out his garments** and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." (Acts 18:5-6+)

**Shake off** ([1621](#))(**ektinasso** from **ek** = from, and **tinássō** = to shake) means to shake from or off, as the dust of one's feet (Mt. 10:14; Acts 13:51, Mk 6:11) or dust from garments (Acts 18:6) to symbolize the breaking off of further communication. We need to qualify this statement by noting that the breaking off of communication in Antioch was not with the disciples who had placed their faith in the Messiah, for as Paul and Barnabas circled back on their way home, they entered Pisidian Antioch again (Acts 14:21+) and Luke records that they were "strengthening the souls of the **disciples**, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22+) This latter "promise" would have been especially poignant to the disciples in Antioch who had witnessed their persecution and being driven out of town on their first visit.

**Ektinasso** - 17 uses in the Septuagint - Gilbrant notes that "In the Septuagint ektinassō means "to shake off," as dust or leaves, or just "to shake" oneself (as Samson in Jdg 16:20). It also often means "to cast out, drive forth, displace, [discomfit](#)" (Neh 5:13; Job 38:13; etc.)." (Ibid)

Ex 14:27; Jdg 7:19; Jdg 16:20; 2 Sa 22:33; 1 Ki. 5:9; Neh. 4:16; Neh. 5:13; Neh. 5:15; Job 38:13; Ps. 109:23; Ps. 127:4; Ps. 136:15; Isa. 28:27; Isa. 52:2; Dan. 4:14; Dan. 7:20; Nah. 2:2

**Larkin** - In an initial but decisive withdrawal from the Jews, Paul and Barnabas set forth the divine priority of Christian mission: "to the Jew first." Although Paul consistently spoke of himself as "apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom 11:13; 15:16; Gal 1:16; 2:9), his mission was always to be carried out by going to "the Jew first" (Rom 1:16–17). This priority was a matter of theological necessity, and it applies to the conduct of Christian mission today. We must make sure Jews are not overlooked but are a priority in any evangelistic thrust into an unreached-peoples area. (IVP Commentary - [Acts 13:1--21:16 Paul's Missionary Journeys](#))

**And went to Iconium** - They trekked off to Iconium, a major city of Lycaonia, located in the Roman province of Galatia and lay about 80-90 miles SE from Pisidian Antioch and directly north of Lystra. See map above ([path in red](#)). They evidently took the paved highway, [Via Sebaste](#) ([PICTURE](#) Greek word "Sebaste" = Latin "Augustus"), the Roman road from Ephesus to the Euphrates.

M R De Haan - When Paul and Barnabas were driven out of one city, they did not lose heart and quit. They didn't go back home, but just moved on to the next place. They meant business and nothing could deter them. How we need men of that caliber today, who will not be discouraged by persecution and suffering, but who are strengthened by it instead and go on more determined than ever. Paul was not a quitter, ready to resign when the going became rough. How few there are who can meet problems head on, and face



up to opposition and persecution without yielding to the temptation to quit. (Pentecost and After)

**Guzik** makes a good point - They carried on the work, going next to Iconium. All too often, rejection and opposition for the sake of the gospel makes us want to give up. But Paul and Barnabas responded with appropriate determination. ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**Robertson** - Strictly speaking at this time Lystra and Derbe were cities of Lycaonia-Galatica while Iconium was in Phrygia-Galatica (all three in the Roman Province of Galatia). It was at the meeting place of several Roman roads and on the highway from east to west. It is still a large town [Konieh](#) with 30,000 population (Wikipedia says that in 2016 the population was 2,161,303)

**Constable on Iconium** - Iconium was a Greek city-state in the geographic region of Phrygia. "While Rome chose Antioch of Pisidia and Lystra as bastions of its authority in the area, Iconium remained largely Greek in temper and somewhat resistant to Roman influence, though Hadrian later made it a Roman colony." "**Iconium**" comes from **eikon**, the Greek word for "image." According to Greek mythology, Prometheus and Athena recreated humanity there after a devastating flood by making images of people from mud and breathing life into them (ibid., pp. 431-32). (Longnecker)...In Iconium Paul and Barnabas followed the same method of evangelizing that they had used in Antioch (Acts 13:14). They visited the synagogue first. They also experienced the same results: many conversions among both Jews and Gentiles but also rejection by some of the Jews (cf. Acts 13:43). These unbelieving Jews stirred up unbelieving Gentiles who joined them in opposing the missionaries (Acts 13:50). ([Acts 13 Commentary](#))

**Merrill Unger** says Iconium was "a garden spot, situated in the midst of orchards and farms, but surrounded by deserts....Iconium, too, owed its bustling business activity to its location on the main trade route connecting Ephesus with Syria and the Mesopotamian world, as well as its orchard industries and farm produce."

#### Related Resource:

- Wikipedia note on [Ancient History of Iconium](#)

### Acts 13:52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

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

- **were continually filled with joy** Acts 2:46; 5:41; Matthew 5:12; Luke 6:22,23; John 16:22,23; Romans 5:3; 14:17; 15:13; 2 Corinthians 8:2; 1 Th 1:6; James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:6-8; 4:13
- **and with the Holy Spirit** Acts 2:4; 4:31; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:18-20
- [Acts 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DISCIPLES FILLED WITH JOY AND THE SPIRIT

**And the disciples** - These are those who had believed (Acts 13:48). The **disciples** were believers. They were not a elite or special group which sadly what is sometimes taught (as a young believer this is what I was taught in a Bible church and it left me very confused for a number of years!). No, the Bible teaches that **all believers are disciples** and **all disciples are believers**. To say otherwise is to twist the Scriptures and to invent different classes of Christians. Obviously some believers are more spiritually mature than other believers, but both are still disciples in the eyes of God. Both are still "learners" because both will always have more to learn about the infinite God they worship and serve. Some teach there are "carnal" Christians and then there are those who are disciples. This is not what Scripture teaches. Sure, some disciples make act and live fleshly for a time, but that is never their lifestyle or habitual status. In a sense every time we sin we are acting "carnally" and this can and does occur in the lives of even the most mature saints because we still have bodies indwelt by the fallen flesh, the sin nature inherited from Adam.

**Ray Stedman on were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.** - There is no mention of the gift of tongues in connection with the filling of the Holy Spirit, but there is mention of the **fruit of the Spirit**. (Gal 5:22) They were filled with the joy of the Lord and the love of God. This is the great sign of the Spirit of God in the human heart -- it floods the heart with love and joy. If we are Christians our hearts cannot help but be moved at the mercy of God toward us, who deserve nothing at his hands. Yet how much he has given! It would be fitting if we would join together in a prayer of thanksgiving.

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, our hearts are stirred as we think again of the mercy that you show to us, this marvelous justification by which all that has lain heavily upon our hearts and our consciences has been washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. And his life is given to us so that by it we may live on a totally different basis than we ever lived before. How wonderful this is, Lord; teach us never to forget that we

have been justified, and that whenever we fail or falter, that justification is there again, ready to wash us and cleanse us, to free us and restore us. How thankful we are for this. If any here have not yet entered into the glory of this relationship we pray that, right now, they will say, "Lord, I want to be justified. Thank you for doing so in the death of Jesus. I believe it. I receive him as my Lord and Savior." We ask in his name, Amen.

**Robertson** quips that "Persecution had precisely the opposite effect to the intention of the Jews for they "were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit""

**Constable** observes "It is interesting that two references to **joy** (Acts 13:48, 52) bracket the one mention of **persecution** in this passage (Acts 13:50) suggesting that the missionaries' joy overrode the discomforts of persecution (cf. Acts 16:24–25)." ([Acts 13 Commentary](#)) (Supernatural joy trumps natural tribulations)

**Rackham** comments - We are reminded how once Stephen had been cast out of the gates of Jerusalem and Saul had raised up a persecution against the Nazarenes. As before, however, the effect of the persecution was the contrary to what the persecutors intended. In spite of the departure of the apostles, who were apparently the main objects of the persecution, the disciples continued to be filled with joy and the Holy Ghost. Joy generally followed upon the first reception of the gospel: such we had in verse 48. But as S. Paul taught the Galatians, joy, the true and deepest joy, is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22+); and the mention of the Spirit here adds what was lacking in the sermon (ED: OR AT LEAST NOT RECORDED BY DR LUKE).

**Utley** - Only the Holy Spirit can give joy amidst persecution (cf. James 1:2ff; 1 Peter 4:12ff).

**Adam Clarke** says that "The happiness (ED: I PREFER "JOY" BECAUSE "HAPPY" CONNOTES THE IDEA THAT IT IS BASED ON WHAT "HAPPENS") of a genuine Christian lies far beyond the reach of earthly disturbances, and is not affected by the changes and chances to which mortal things are exposed. The martyrs were more happy (JOY FILLED) in the flames than their persecutors could be on their beds of down."

#### Related Resource:

- [John Foxe and the Joy of Suffering](#) by John R. Knott - Sixteenth Century Journal XXVII/3 (1996) (A sobering, fascinating read) - Excerpt below

NEAR THE END of his massive [Acts and Monuments](#), John Foxe interrupts an account of the "shameful lives and desperate ends" of persecutors "stricken with God's hand" (8:668) **to praise the English Protestant martyrs with whom he contrasts them:**

Let us now enter the consideration of the blessed martyrs, who although they suffered in their bodies, yet rejoiced they in their spirits, and albeit they were persecuted of men, yet were they comforted of the Lord with such inward joy and peace of conscience, that some, writing to their friends, professed they were never so merry before in all their lives, some leaped for joy, some for triumph would put on their scarfs, some their wedding garments, going to the fire; others kissed the stake, some embraced the faggots, some clapt their hands, some sang psalms; universally they all forgave and prayed for their enemies; no murmuring, no repining was ever heard amongst them.

**Were continually filled with joy** - Were continually filled is in is in the imperfect tense. **Robertson** adds "imperfect passive, they kept on being filled. It had been so before (Acts 4:31; 8:4; 9:31; 12:24). The blood of the martyrs is still the seed of the church."

Psalm 16:11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

True joy, supernatural joy, joy that the world does not give nor even comprehend, is not merited or earned but is a gift dispensed by the Holy Spirit to the children of God, to disciples who obey His commandments and precepts, and who then bear spiritual fruit, which includes the fruit of joy (Gal 5:22). The world gives happiness, which is dependent on what happens and is fleeting and not fulfilling to one's soul, but the Spirit gives joy that is independent of one's feelings or circumstances and which satisfies the deepest innermost recesses of one's soul.

Paul links **joy** with the **Holy Spirit** in his prayer in Romans 15 (a good prayer to pray for yourself, your family, your fellow saints, your missionaries!)

Now may the God of hope **fill** ([pleroo](#)) you with all **joy** and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the **power of the Holy Spirit** (Ro 15:13+)

**ILLUSTRATIONS** - (1) As a 3rd century man was anticipating death, he penned these last words to a friend: "It's a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who

have learned a great secret. They have found a **joy** which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people are the Christians - and I am one of them." When you are experiencing this joy...don't forget to tell your face, Smile!

(2) A conference at a certain church in Omaha. People were given helium-filled balloons and told to release them at some point in the service when they felt like expressing the joy in their hearts. This church wasn't normally free to express themselves w/an "Hallelujah or a Praise the Lord." All through the service balloons ascended, but when it was over 1/3 of the balloons were unreleased. Let your balloon go!

**Filled** (4137) (**pleroo**) means to be filled (passive voice = disciples were acted on by "outside force," the Holy Spirit, Who of course indwelt them) to the brim (a net, Mt 13:48, a building, Jn 12:3, Acts 2:2, a city, Acts 5:28, needs Phil 4:19), to make complete in every particular, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally, to flood, to diffuse throughout, to pervade, to take possession of and so to ultimately to control. In Acts 5:3 describes Satan "filled" Ananias' heart to lie to the Holy Spirit. Pleroo is used in the classic passage on Spirit filling in Eph 5:18+ "And **do not get drunk** (**present imperative with a negative**) with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled** (**present imperative; passive voice**) with the Spirit."

All of Luke's uses of **pleroo** -

Lk. 1:20; Lk. 2:40; Lk. 3:5; Lk. 4:21; Lk. 7:1; Lk. 9:31; Lk. 21:24; Lk. 22:16; Lk. 24:44; Acts 1:16; Acts 2:2; Acts 2:28; Acts 3:18; Acts 5:3; Acts 5:28; Acts 7:23; Acts 7:30; Acts 9:23; Acts 12:25; Acts 13:25; Acts 13:27; Acts 13:52; Acts 14:26; Acts 19:21; Acts 24:27

**NET Note** - The citizens of Pisidian Antioch were not discouraged by the persecution, but instead were filled with joy.

One recalls Paul's similar description of the believers in Thessalonica

You (DISCIPLES IN THESSALONICA) also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word (THE GOSPEL) **in much tribulation** (CF PERSECUTION IN ANTIOCH) with **the joy of the Holy Spirit** (AS IN Acts 13:52), 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything (cf "The word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region" - Acts 13:49) . (1 Th 1:6-8+)

**Joy** (5479) (**chara**) is a feeling of great pleasure, of inner gladness, or of delight. **Joy** is an emotion evoked by a sense of well-being. **Joy** in the NT is virtually always used to signify a feeling of "happiness" that is based on spiritual realities (independent of what "happens").

Joy is a condition, a state of the soul due to being right with God. **Happiness** is different from joy, it is dependent on happy circumstances! **Joy** is independent of these. . We may long for a change in our circumstances, and sometimes that's what we get. But a changed life is our deepest need. Changed circumstances may make us happier, but a changed life will make us better, for it will make us like Christ. **Happiness** is affected by what one has! **Joy** by what one is. **Happiness** comes from experience of good, as distinct from evil! **Joy** from experience from God, apart from good or evil. **Happiness** comes through things outside, which stir feelings within! **Joy** leaps within, from God in the heart & soul. **Happiness** is like the changing surface of the ocean; **Joy** like the ocean bed, untouched by change of wind or atmosphere.

**Chara** in Luke's writings -Lk. 1:14; Lk. 2:10; Lk. 8:13; Lk. 10:17; Lk. 15:7; Lk. 15:10; Lk. 24:41; Lk. 24:52; Acts 8:8; Acts 12:14; Acts 13:52; Acts 15:3;

**And with the Holy Spirit**- True joy, supernatural joy, joy that the world does not give nor even comprehend, is not merited or earned but is a gift dispensed by the Holy Spirit to the children of God, to disciples who obey His commandments and precepts, and who then bear spiritual fruit, which includes the fruit of joy (Gal 5:22+). The world gives happiness, which is dependent on what happens and is fleeting and not fulfilling to one's soul, but the Spirit gives joy that is independent of one's feelings or circumstances and which satisfies the deepest innermost recesses of one's soul.