**Paul Gives A Word of Encouragement**

**Introduction:**

After their work on the isle of Cyprus, Barnabas and Saul sail northwest to Perga, the capital city of Pamphylia [which is in modern-day Turkey]. Acts 13:13 “Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.” NKJV From now on, Paul is mentioned first in Scripture possible to show that he is taking the lead. For some reason, John Mark leaves their company and returns to Jerusalem. Whatever the reason was, Paul did not think it was a good one. See Acts 15:37-39. “Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; NKJV From Perga they travel north to Antioch of Pisidia, which involved a difficult climb over the Tarsus Mountains. 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.” NKJV Since there was a synagogue in Antioch, they went there first. The synagogue officials invited Paul to give a word of encouragement. Acts 13:15 “And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, ‘Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.’ ” NKJV They might have heard he was a former student of Gamaliel. So Paul stands up and motions to the audience to get their attention. He instructs them to listen! Acts 13:16 “Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, ‘Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:’ ” NKJV

**Text:** Acts 13:13-52

**Body:**

1. **Paul’s Sermon** Acts 13:17-41

Acts 13:17-22 “The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David a king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’ ” NKJV

* Verses 17-22 emphasize God’s mercy in the provision for His chosen people Israel. He multiplied their numbers while in Egyptian bondage and miraculously brought them out of this slavery. He put up with their murmuring and complaining for forty years in the wilderness. He destroyed seven nations so they could receive their inheritance in the Promised Land. (Joshua 4:1-2) “And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying: ‘Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe.’ ” NKJV The four hundred fifty years covers the period from Israel’s time in Egypt [400 years] through the wilderness [40 years] and conquest of Canaan [10 years]. God then gave them judges and a king [Saul] when they asked for one. God removed Saul because he rebelled and replaced him with David, a man after God’s own heart. (I Samuel 13:14) “But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.” NKJV

Acts 13:23-37 “From this man’s seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior – after John had first preached before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.’ Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we declare to you glad tidings – that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption,’ He has spoken thus: ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’ Therefore He also says in another Psalm: ‘You will not allow Your Holly One to see corruption.’ For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; But He whom God raised up saw no corruption.” NKJV

* Verses 23-37 describe how God provided for man’s salvation through a descendant of David, Jesus Christ. This Jesus was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament Scriptures. (Psalm 132:11) “The Lord has sworn in truth to David; He will not turn from it: ‘I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body.” NKJV John the Baptist, a forerunner of Christ, was not the Messiah. (John 1:19-20) “Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’ ” NKJV The prophecies concerning the Messiah were ignored by the Jewish rulers and by condemning Him, they fulfilled those very prophecies! (Luke 24:25-27, 44) “Then He said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. 44 Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me.’ ” NKJV God then raised Jesus from the dead which was the fulfillment of a promise given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

(Genesis 12:1-3) “Now the Lord had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ ” NKJV Paul then quotes several Old Testament passages concerning Jesus. (Psalm 2:7) “I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, You are My Son. Today I have begotten You.” (Isaiah 55:3) “Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you – The sure mercies of David.” (Psalm 16:10) “For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.” NKJV Paul ends this section by contrasting David and Christ. David’s reign and work was for a specific time and purpose. Christ’s reign was to last until the end of time. Acts 13:38-41 “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: ‘Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.’ ” NKJV

* Verses 38-41 constitute an invitation to Paul’s listeners in the synagogue. Forgiveness of sins in only through Jesus Christ. (Acts 4:12) “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” NKJV It’s only in Christ that one can be freed, justified, declared innocent. It’s clear that the Law of Moses was no longer in effect. Paul then quotes Habakkuk 1:5 “Look among the nations and watch – Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you.” to remind his listeners that those who scoff and reject Christ will indeed perish. This will happen whether people believe it will happen or not.
1. **The People’s Response** Acts 13:42-52 Acts 13:42-43 “So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.” NKJV
* Many of the listeners begged Paul to come on the next Sabbath to preach again. Paul and Barnabas urged them to continue in God’s grace – to listen and believe. Acts 13:44-45 “On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.” NKJV
* On the next Sabbath a very large crowd shows up to hear the Word of the Lord. The Jews were envious because large crowds never came to hear them teach. They try to undermine Paul’s preaching by contradicting what Paul had been saying. Acts 13:46-47 “Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, ‘It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles’; For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ” NKJV
* The Jews had the privilege of hearing the gospel first. (Romans 1:16) “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” NKJV By their stubborn resistance to the gospel message, they were declaring by their lack of obedience that they were unworthy of the gospel. Paul cites Isaiah 49:6 “Indeed 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 give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth’ ” to prove that salvation was to come to the Gentiles also. The aged Simeon had also quoted this verse in Luke 2:32 while holding the baby Jesus. “A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.” NKJV

 Acts 13:48-49 “Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.” NKJV

* The Gentiles were ecstatic at the good news! In God’s plan of redemption, He determined that only obedient believers would be saved. This is how He “appointed” [ordained – disposed] people. (John 5:39-40) “You search the Scriptures, for to them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.” NKJV Acts 13:50-52 “But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” NKJV
* Not everybody thought Paul’s sermon was good news. The Jews stirred up some of the prominent men and women of the city against Paul and Barnabas. They were expelled from the city, shook the dust off their feet, and went ninety miles south east to Iconium.

**Conclusion:**

How would you have responded to the gospel message that Paul presented?

* With joy and obedience?

OR

* With anger and rebellion?

Bobby Stafford January 3, 2016 [Evening} Acts: Lesson 30 Acts 13:13-52