

Acts of the Apostles – 13

I. The Inspired History

- A. Paul and Barnabas Are Called to Evangelism (1-3).
- B. Cyprus – the Conversion of Sergius Paulus (4-13).
 - 1. They first preach in Salamis, Cyprus (4-5).
 - 2. They then preach in Pathos, Cyprus (6-12).
 - 3. They travel to Perga in Pamphylia (13).
- C. Antioch of Pisidia – Paul Preaches in the Synagogue (14-41).
 - 1. Review of Jewish History (14-22).
 - 2. Life and Death of Jesus Christ (23-29).
 - 3. Resurrection of Jesus Christ (30-37).
 - 4. Exhortation to Believe (38-41).
- D. Antioch of Pisidia – Response to the Gospel (42-52).
 - 1. Some Jews and Gentiles Were Converted (42-43).
 - 2. Other Jews Rebel in Envy at Gentile Enthusiasm (44-45).
 - 3. Paul Turns the Gospel from Jews to Gentiles (46-48).
 - 4. The Lord Overrides Jewish Persecution (49-52).

II. The Sense and Meaning

- A. Paul and Barnabas are called to a special work of evangelism by the Holy Ghost (1-3).
 - 1. Let us first observe that the congregation at Antioch in and of itself is called a church.
 - 2. The church at Antioch was loaded with prophets and teachers from which to draw.
 - a. Prophets and teachers are different gifts (Rom 12:6-7; I Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11).
 - b. Prophets were inspired teachers and foretellers (I Cor 13:2,8-9; 14:29-32).
 - c. Teachers were natural teachers dependent upon study (I Timothy 2:15; 6:12).
 - d. Prior to perfect Scripture being completed (II Pet 1:19-21), prophets revealed.
 - e. This great church was the first Gentile church of “Christians” (11:19-26).
 - f. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost (4:36-37; 9:27; 11:22-26).
 - g. Simeon was also called Niger, which is Latin for Negro and one of several spelling variations in the English i.e. niger, nigre, neger, nigger, niggar.
 - h. Lucius of Cyrene was not Luke, for he still uses the third person; but he may have been Paul’s kinsmen (Ro 16:21) and an early convert (2:10; 11:19-20).
 - i. Manaen was trained with Herod the tetrarch (Herod Antipas) of John fame.
 - j. Saul of Tarsus we have already met, and his name is about to be changed (9).
 - 3. While ministering and fasting, the Holy Ghost called Barnabas and Saul for a work.
 - a. A bishop’s ministerial labors are to the Lord, so he ought never to tire of them.
 - b. Note that this special call for Gentile laborers began with fasting and prayer.
 - c. We cannot properly emphasize the importance of fasting (Mat 17:21; I Co 7:5).
 - d. Holy Ghost leading in all matters is both prudent and essential (Zechariah 4:6).
 - e. Saul had already been told of his call to labor among the Gentiles (9:15-16).
 - 4. Upon receiving Divine direction, they yet fasted and prayed again for God’s blessing.
 - a. Laying on of hands was more symbolic than potent, for it was by God’s call.
 - b. Having further prayed and fasted, they sent them away in strict obedience.
 - c. They sought no other ecclesiastical structure for authority or approval.

- B. Paul and Barnabas first preach in the synagogues of the Jews in Salamis of Cyprus (4-5).
1. With Holy Spirit leading, they travel to Seleucia and depart by ship for Cyprus.
 2. As Paul's manner would be (17:1-3), they located and preached in Jewish synagogues.
 - a. He would open the Jewish Scriptures and confirm prophecies about Jesus.
 - b. The gospel was to first go to the Jews before the Gentiles (1:8; 11:19; 13:46).
 - c. Gentiles who feared the true God worshipped with Jews (8:27; 13:16,26,43).
 - d. Paul did not preach in jails or on street corners like modern "soulwinners."
 3. John Mark, son of Barnabas's sister Mary (12:12,25; Col 4:10), traveled with them.
- C. Paul and Barnabas traveled to Pathos in Cyprus and converted the Deputy of the island (6-12).
1. Travelling west to the other end of Cyprus, they come to a city named Pathos.
 2. Sergius Paulus, the Roman-appointed deputy of the country of Cyprus, was a reasonable man, whom the Lord moved to desire hearing the Word of God.
 3. This deputy had there a Jewish false prophet and sorcerer named Bar-jesus or Elymas, who was intent on hindering Paul and Barnabas from preaching to the deputy.
 4. Apostolic Christianity rejects any use of Ouija boards, horoscopes, planetary signs, palm readers, psychics, Jeanne Dixon, Houdini, fortune cookies, and other witchcraft.
 5. Though initiated directly by the Holy Ghost, Satan was moving against Paul already.
 6. Paul curses him in the name of the Lord with blindness, which immediately occurs.
 7. We last see Bar-jesus or Elymas groping around and needing someone to lead him.
 8. This mighty sign was sufficient to confirm Paul's word, and the deputy believed.
 9. He was astonished at the doctrine of the Lord for authority and power (Matt 7:28-29), which was not the milquetoast, effeminate form of godliness so popular today.
 10. Here Luke stops using "Saul" (his Jewish name) and uses "Paul" (his Roman name).
- D. Paul and Barnabas travel from Cyprus to Perga in Pamphylia, and Mark deserted them (13).
1. Leaving the island of Cyprus, they sail to Pamphylia and reach the city of Perga.
 2. John deserts in Perga and returns to Jerusalem, where his mother lived (12:12,25).
 3. This desertion will cause contention between Paul and Barnabas later (15:36-41).
- E. Paul's sermon in Antioch of Pisidia begins with a review of Jewish history (14-22).
1. As their usual manner, they waited for the sabbath day and went into the synagogue.
 2. For unknown reasons hid in the Providence of God, the rulers of the synagogue request them to address the people. This would have given Paul no small pleasure.
 3. Paul reviews Jewish history in a very concise form to lay an agreeable foundation.
 - a. He addresses the audience as Men of Israel and Gentiles who feared God.
 - b. He teaches 450 years of judges from Joshua to Samuel, which period of time is falsely applied to conquering Canaan in modern versions. It is easy to see that Canaan was conquered and divided in five years (Joshua 14:7,10; 24:29).
 - c. He teaches Saul was king 40 years, which modern versions corrupt variously.
 - d. He gives David as the man after God's own heart with God's will to perform.
- F. Paul's sermon in Antioch, Pisidia continues by reviewing the life and death of Jesus (23-29).
1. God promised David's Son to be a Saviour, and Jesus fulfills the promise (Je 33:15).
 2. John the Baptist was the chosen vessel to present the Messiah to Israel (John 1:29-36).
 3. The Jews rejected God and His Word, so they fulfilled it by killing Him (I Cor 2:6-8).
 4. Their murder of Jesus Christ was without just cause, further aggravating their error.
 5. And further fulfilling Scripture by all deeds in the crucifixion, they buried Him.

- G. Paul's sermon in Antioch now moves to Scriptural proofs of the resurrection of Jesus (30-37).
1. Paul plainly announces that this manifested Son of David was raised from the dead.
 2. Paul confirms the resurrection by the numerous eyewitnesses (apostles and disciples).
 3. Paul enthusiastically announces the gospel of glad tidings based on God's promises.
 - a. By raising up Jesus Christ, He fulfilled the promise of "begotten" in Psalm 2:7.
 - (1) Jesus was "declared" to be God's Son by the resurrection (Rom 1:4).
 - (2) Do not forget that Jesus Christ is the first begotten of the dead (Re 1:5).
 - (3) And the passage in Psalm 2 is describing His glorious exaltation.
 - (4) Heretics advocating an eternal generation in the Godhead quiver here.
 - b. By raising up Jesus forever, He fulfilled the promise of Isaiah 55:3.
 - c. By delivering Jesus from the grave, He fulfilled the promise of Psalm 16:10.
 - d. He reasons quickly, as Peter did in 2:24-32, that this could not apply to David.
- H. Paul concludes his sermon in Antioch with a powerful appeal to believe on Jesus (38-41).
1. The message Paul brought was one of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.
 - a. What glad tidings for Jews bound up in the law for righteousness (Rom 10:4)!
 - b. Forgiveness of sins is a blessing of election and predestination (Eph 1:3-7).
 - c. Paul had the honor of announcing the **word** of reconciliation (II Cor 5:19).
 - d. Rather than keeping the law of Moses, I declare full forgiveness by Christ!
 - e. Be ye reconciled unto God (in your minds): your sins are forgiven (II Co 5:20).
 2. The message Paul brought was one of free justification personally claimed by faith.
 - a. The law of Moses cannot justify any, but Christ has justified (Gal 3:10-29).
 - b. Justification is a sovereign act of the predestinating God (Rom 8:29-30; 5:18).
 - c. All that "believe" (present tense) are "justified" (perfect tense; passive voice).
 - d. There is certain knowledge of full justification by trusting Christ (Gal 5:1-6).
 - e. We believe in Christ to assure ourselves of justification by Him (Gal 2:16).
 - f. Yet without works, our faith is nothing more than a devil's faith (Jas 2:14-26).
 3. Paul warns them of the danger of unbelief taken from a prophecy in Habakkuk 1:5.
 - a. God had warned many years earlier of the preaching of the gospel by men.
 - b. Even though God miraculously did His great work, many would not believe it.
 - c. These despisers would wonder with unbelief and would consequently perish.
- I. Some Jews and Gentiles believed from this short but concise sermon about Christ (42-43).
1. The Gentile proselytes (16,26) begged that they might hear this message next sabbath.
 2. Many Jews also followed Paul and Barnabas with interest in the gospel of Christ.
 3. The two evangelists persuaded them to continue in the grace of God – the true test.
 - a. Let us hear the gospel only as the good ground bringing forth fruit (Luke 8:18).
 - b. Let us not fail of God's grace and return to our former vomit (Heb 12:14-17).
- J. The Jews rebelled against Paul and Barnabas and their message out of profane envy (44-45).
1. With a week's opportunity to spread the word, almost the whole city came together.
 2. With their synagogue threatened and murder of Christ exposed, they defile them.
 3. They immediately began contradicting and blaspheming the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- K. Paul witnesses the Jewish hatred of the gospel and turns it directly to the Gentiles (46-48).
 - 1. God's order for the preaching of the gospel had been to the Jews first (1:8; 3:26).
 - 2. They rejected the Word of God and judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life.
 - a. No man is worthy of eternal life, but these fools showed their profane hearts.
 - b. Paul did not bring eternal life, but rather preached the gracious means of it.
 - c. He brought salvation TO LIGHT and the WORD OF it (II Ti 1:10; II Co 5:19).
 - d. The preaching of Christ manifests either existing life or death (II Cor 2:14-17).
 - 3. Paul then acknowledges his original call to the ministry (9:15-16 cp Isaiah 49:6).
 - a. There is only One Light: all others are only witnesses of that Light (Jn 1:4-9).
 - b. There is only One Saviour: all others only witness of His salvation (4:12).
 - c. Godly ministers must preach the sense rather than the mere sound of words.
 - 4. The Gentiles ordained to eternal life believed and glorified the Word of the Lord.
 - a. They rejoiced to hear the news that God intended His message for them also.
 - b. With gladness they thanked and praised God for an interest in Jesus Christ.
 - c. Belief of the gospel was and is dependent upon ordination to eternal life.
 - (1) Ordination precedes regeneration, which must precede conversion.
 - (2) There is also an ordination to condemnation of the wicked (Jude 4).
 - (3) Why is this text ignored? I have heard "ordained" as "disposed."
- L. The Lord overrules Jewish rebellion and persecution to further Gentile conversions (49-52).
 - 1. These glad Gentile believers zealously spread the word of salvation in Jesus Christ.
 - 2. The Jews took politically correct and socially accepted persons to condemn Paul.
 - 3. As Jesus taught them, they shook the dust off their feet against them (Mat 10:14-15).
 - 4. In spite of such persecution, these Gentile believers had the joy of the Holy Ghost.