

Paul's First Sermon

Introduction:

1. Paul's first sermon teaches us many things about Christ, the scriptures, the gospel, faith, election, etc.
2. It was not his first sermon, for he preached at Damascus and elsewhere, but they were not recorded.
3. Bible verses are put to a test with ... 13:20 ... 13:21 ... 13:33 ... 13:42 ... 13:45 ... 13:48.

A Brief Outline:

1. Paul and Barnabas are called to evangelism (1-3).
2. Cyprus – the conversion of Sergius Paulus (4-13).
 - a. They first preached in Salamis, Cyprus (4-5).
 - b. They then preached in Pathos, Cyprus (6-12).
 - c. They then traveled to Perga in Pamphylia (13).
3. Antioch of Pisidia – Paul preached in the synagogue (14-41).
 - a. Paul reviewed Jewish history (14-22).
 - b. Paul reviewed life and death of Jesus Christ (23-29).
 - c. Paul proved resurrection of Jesus Christ (30-37).
 - d. Paul exhorted the hearers to believe (38-41).
4. Antioch of Pisidia – Response to the gospel (42-52).
 - a. Some Jews and Gentiles were converted (42-43).
 - b. Other Jews rebelled in envy at Gentile enthusiasm (44-45).
 - c. Paul turned from the Jews to the Gentiles (46-48).
 - d. The Lord overruled the Jewish persecution (49-52).

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.

- A. This church was in Antioch of Syria, about 300 miles directly north of the city of Jerusalem.
 1. It was lower in altitude than Jerusalem, so it was down (Acts 15:1; 18:22; Gal 1:18; 2:1).
 2. Seleucus I Nicator founded it as a capital city of the Seleucid Empire after Alexander the Great's death. He was one of the kings of the north prophesied by Daniel (Dan 11). He named it after a family member. Consider Antiochus the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes.
 3. Today it is Antakya, lying just inside Turkey's most southeastern tip, just north of Syria.
 4. It began with teachers from Jerusalem after Stephen's death, as Barnabas (Ac 11:19-26).
 5. This church was very large, as indicated by the great numbers converted (Acts 11:21,24).
 6. It was there that the followers of Jesus Christ were first called Christians (Acts 11:26).
 7. Paul and Barnabas took this church's funds to Jerusalem for a famine (Acts 11:27-30).
 8. This was Paul's home church until carried prisoner to Rome (Acts 14:26; 15:35; 18:22).
 9. False teachers visiting this church from Jerusalem caused the early council (Acts 15:1-5).
 10. It was also here that Paul had to rebuke Peter to his face for hypocrisy (Gal 2:11-21).
- B. Let us observe and remember that one congregation in a certain place is the church by itself.
- C. Here are multiple elders – prophets and teachers, including two apostles, Paul and Barnabas.
 1. This church was very large, as indicated by the great numbers converted (Acts 11:21,24).
 2. They might well have had more elders than these five mentioned, due to their great size.
 3. Prophets and teachers can be different gifts (Rom 12:6-7; I Cor 12:28; Ephesians 4:11).
 4. Prophets were inspired teachers and foretellers (Acts 11:27-28; I Cor 13:2,8-9; 14:29-32).

5. Teachers were ordinary teachers dependent on study (I Timothy 2:15; 4:13-15; Titus 1:9).
6. Prior to the scriptures being finished, prophets revealed (II Pet 1:19-21; II Tim 3:16-17).
7. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Spirit, who loved Paul (4:36-37; 9:27; 11:22-26).
8. The elder named Simeon is not the apostle Simon Peter by a Latin adjective for black.
9. Lucius of Cyrene was not Luke, for the writer of this book used the third person; but he may have been Paul's kinsman (Rom 16:21) and an early convert (Acts 2:10; 11:19-20).
10. Various Herods killed babies, John, James, and derided Jesus – but God saved Manaen!

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.

- A. While serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Ghost called Barnabas and Saul for a work.
- B. A bishop's ministerial labors are to the Lord, so he ought never to tire of them (I Cor 15:58).
- C. Note that the glorious and special conversion of Gentiles began with fasting and prayer.
 1. We generally do not rightly emphasize the importance of fasting (Matt 17:21; I Cor 7:5).
 2. Waiting for Holy Ghost leading in all matters is both prudent and essential (Zech 4:6).
- D. Elder Saul had already been told of his call to labor among the Gentiles (Acts 9:15-16).

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

- A. Upon receiving Divine direction, they yet fasted and prayed again for God's further blessing.
- B. Having further prayed and fasted, the same elders sent them away in strict obedience.
- C. Laying on of hands was more symbolic than potent, for it displayed God's ordained call.
- D. They sought not to the church or other ecclesiastical structure for authority or approval.

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

- A. Luke is careful to convey to Theophilus and us that this new ministry was by God's leading.
- B. Seleucia was a seaport city about 16 miles from Antioch, founded by the Greek Seleucus I Nicator, one of Alexander's generals and a king of the north prophesied by Daniel (Dan 11).
- C. From this seaport, they sailed to the large island in the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea.

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.

- A. They preached in at least two cities on the island, one at each end, Salamis and Paphos.
- B. Observe Paul's constant method to open up city evangelism in the Jewish synagogue – looking for the worshippers of the true God (Acts 17:1-4), which we will see again (13:14).
 1. He would open the Jewish scriptures and confirm the prophecies about the Messiah.
 2. The gospel was to first go to the Jews before the Gentiles (Acts 1:8; 11:19; 13:46).
 3. Gentiles who feared the true God worshipped with the Jews (Acts 8:27; 13:16,26,43).
 4. The apostles never entertained or used the methods of seeker sensitive, church growth gurus; they preached God's word, just as Paul later commanded Timothy (II Tim 4:1-4).
 5. Paul did not preach in jails or shopping malls like modern fundamentalist "soulwinners."
 6. They would never have despised the word of God by writing "John 3:16" on a placard and buying an end zone seat. They knew better than to cast pearls before swine.
- C. John Mark, son of Barnabas's sister Mary (Acts 12:12,25; Col 4:10), traveled with them.

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:

- A. Traveling west to the city of Paphos at the island's other end, they found a Jewish sorcerer.
- B. This false teacher relied on witchcraft power from the devil for a superstitious hold on men.
 - 1. Apostolic Christianity rejects any use of Ouija boards, horoscopes, planetary signs, palm readers, psychics, Jeanne Dixon, Houdini, fortune cookies, and other forms of witchcraft.
 - 2. Sorcerers are children of the devil; their future is the lake of fire (Acts 13:10; Rev 22:15).
 - 3. *Barjesus* means son of Jesus. Remember that Jesus, or Joshua, was a popular name.

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.

- A. 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. Compare Lydia (Ac 16:14).
- B. This poor deputy had the Jewish false prophet and sorcerer named Bar-jesus or Elymas, who was intent on hindering Paul and Barnabas from preaching to the deputy.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

- A. Though the Holy Ghost directly called for the trip, satan was moving against Paul already.
- B. We should not be surprised at satanic opposition to holy endeavors or obedience, for the Holy Spirit took even our Lord for temptation by the devil after His baptism (Mark 1:9-13).
- C. *Elymas* is an Arabic name for this Jewish sorcerer, meaning a learned or wise man.

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

- A. Here Luke stops using "Saul" (his Jewish name) and instead uses "Paul" (his Roman name).
- B. He may have obtained it by Sergius Paulus, and it may have helped him among the Gentiles.

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?

- A. Compare this blunt, critical, negative name-calling with the sweet lies of modern "pastors."
- B. There are few men of God left anywhere who will address enemies of Christ as they should.

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.

- A. Paul cursed him in the name of the Lord Jesus with blindness, which immediately occurred.
- B. The idea of Jesus as a loving, pampering, friend of sinners is entirely without Biblical basis; He was and is the friend of repentant sinners, who are lovers of the way of righteousness.
- C. We last see this Bar-jesus or Elymas groping around and needing someone to lead him.

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

- A. This mighty sign was sufficient to confirm Paul's preached word, and the deputy believed.
 - 1. The Lord had promised such sign gifts to confirm apostolic preaching (Mark 16:15-20).
 - 2. Paul had the full arsenal of mighty signs and wonders (Acts 15:12; Romans 15:18-19).
 - 3. Paul could heal blindness in person or by hankies, and he could also cause blindness!
 - 4. Rather than opening up a Starbucks to get converts, Paul cursed a man with blindness!
- B. The deputy was astonished at the doctrine of the Lord for its authority and power (Matt 7:28-29), which was not the milquetoast, effeminate form of godliness so popular today.

13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

- A. Leaving the island of Cyprus, Paul and friends sailed the Mediterranean to modern Turkey.
- B. Their point of entry to Asia Minor was the city of Perga in the region of Pamphylia.
- C. John deserted them in Perga and returned to Jerusalem, where his mother lived (12:12,25).
- D. This desertion caused considerable contention between Paul and Barnabas later (15:36-41).

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. This is another Antioch, across the eastern Mediterranean from the first, Paul's home church.
- B. As their usual manner, they waited for the Sabbath Day and went into the Jewish synagogue.
- C. If we desire to be Bible Christians, we should be so by learning and following the Bible.
 - 1. Biblical evangelism is executed by following the methods of the apostles and no one else.
 - 2. Paul went where he could find men worshipping Jehovah from the Bible (Acts 17:1-3).
 - 3. He did not go to malls, brothels, jails, orphanages, street corners, or other vain venues.
 - 4. Paul labored for the elect, so he went where he might encounter the elect (II Tim 2:10).
 - 5. Each synagogue had Jews and Gentiles that had converted to circumcision and Moses.
 - 6. If the gospel is foolish to natural men, wise preachers seek spiritual men (I Cor 2:14-15)?

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.

- A. Without the grace of God, reading the scriptures helps no one (Luke 16:31; John 5:39-40).
- B. For obvious reason, but by the secret providence of God, the rulers of the synagogue invited their apostolic guests to exhort the attending audience. Glory!
- C. This opportunity would have given Paul and Barnabas great pleasure, as Paul stood to speak.

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

- A. He addressed the two components of the audience – Israelites and Gentile proselytes (13:43).
- B. *Ye that fear God* is not a subset of the Israelites, but the Gentiles fearing Jehovah (13:26,43).
- C. Sincere Gentiles would only join the Jews out of fear of God and loving Jehovah, for it likely cost them dearly to be circumcised and follow the life-changing Mosaic rituals and rules.
 - 1. Consider the importance of this description, for natural men do not fear God (Rom 3:18).
 - 2. Paul went where he could find God fearers (synagogues), and he addressed them as such.

3. His methods did not change after he had turned to the Gentiles (Acts 17:1-3; 18:4; 19:8).

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.

- A. Paul's first words were about God's choice or election of the Israelite nation, which God chose above all other nations for His presence, blessing, and revelation (Ps 147:19-20).
- B. He proceeded to describe God's providence of blessings on Israel, but judgment on Egypt.
- C. The blessed God destroyed Egypt, took their wealth, and killed their firstborn for His Israel!
- D. Not only did God choose Israel and exalt them, but He used them to crush the Egyptians.
- E. From his first words, Paul accurately described God's favor toward Israel, which would have convicted every sensible Jew of the great privileges they had before God (Rom 3:1-3).
- F. If you do not think there is elective choice involved, try Exodus 9:16 and Romans 9:15-17.

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

- A. These are the forty years in which God destroyed the rebellious generation rejecting Canaan.
- B. God was gracious and merciful to suffer their rebellion, for He could have annihilated them.

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

- A. Here is a further lesson of election, for God chose Israel and rejected seven greater nations.
- B. After destroying these seven nations, God directed Joshua to divide the land to twelve tribes.
- C. The division of the land took five years by comparing Joshua 14:7 and 14:10 against 24:29.
- D. *The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD* (Prov 16:33).

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

- A. This is very clear: after Joshua divided the land, Israel had 450 years of judges until Samuel.
- B. Compare the corruption and perversion of this history in modern versions of the Bible, supposedly based on better manuscripts and used by better translators and textual critics.
 1. The *NIV* reads, "All this took about 450 years. After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet."
 2. *The Message* reads, "- a span in all of about 450 years. Up to the time of Samuel the prophet, God provided judges to lead them."
 3. The *ESV* reads, "All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet."
 4. The *HCSB* reads, "This all took about 450 years. After this, He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet."
- C. Martin Anstey has adequately reconciled this verse with Joshua, Judges, and I Samuel in his wonderful work, "Chronology of the Old Testament," which can be obtained online.

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.

- A. Rejecting both God and Samuel, Israel sought a king like all the pagan nations around them.

- B. In great mercy, God gave them Saul the son of Kish, who reigned for exactly forty years.
- C. Modern versions corrupt I Samuel 13:1 in a variety of ways when compared to this inspired length of Saul's reign. See <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/bible/scripture/bible-babel.htm>.

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.*

- A. God's election again comes into focus, as God removed Saul in order to establish David.
- B. Though David sinned at times like or worse than Saul, God endorsed his overall character.
- C. Paul assumed his audience understood the exalted position God gave David and his prophesied son, who would fulfill all of God's will through His promised son.
- D. David was a father of Jesus Christ, a type of Him, and a name for Him (Eze 37:24; Hos 3:5).

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

- A. Jesus was Son of David by both His legal father and biological mother (Matt 1:1; Luke 3:31).
- B. God had promised such a Son from David, and He fulfilled His promise (Jer 33:15-19).

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

- A. John the Baptist had the glorious role of announcing and presenting Jesus to Israel, which the New Testament recorded as being known by all in Judea and surrounding areas (Matt 3:5).
- B. He preached *before his coming*, for His baptism was His coming in public formality (John 1:29-34), as John being only six months older than Jesus did not preach before His birth.

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.*

- A. John fulfilled his course by being fully obedient to his heavenly commission (Is 40:1-5; etc.).
- B. John the Baptist's whole ministry pointed to Jesus Christ, which he did faithfully (Jn 1:6-8).

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.*

- A. God ordained the gospel to go first to the Jewish nation and scattered Jews before it went to the Gentiles in the uttermost parts of the world (Acts 1:8).
- B. As in his opening salutation, Paul appealed to Jews and those Gentile proselytes fearing God.
- C. Paul and all ministers following him bring *the word of this salvation*, not the salvation itself.
 - 1. God reconciling His elect and the word of reconciliation are different (II Cor 5:18-21).
 - 2. The gospel brings life and immortality to light, not life and immortality (II Tim 1:9-10).

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.

- A. The Jews and Jewish rulers in Jerusalem were left in the darkness and deadness of their own souls to miss their own Messiah, which the scriptures plainly described (John 5:39-40).
- B. The Jews rejected God's Son and His word, so they fulfilled it by killing Him (I Cor 2:6-8).
- C. Unless God opens your heart and mind, you will miss a truth-preaching, money-rejecting man feeding 5000, raising the dead, healing the sick, quieting storms, and so forth!
- D. Remember what Abraham explained to the rich man about his brothers (Luke 16:31).

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

- A. Their murder of Jesus Christ was without cause, just as had been prophesied (Isaiah 53:8-12).
- B. Pilate tried to save Jesus, but the angry Jews demanded His crucifixion (John 18:28 – 19:16).

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.

- A. Many prophecies pertaining to Jesus Christ's death were perfectly fulfilled by His enemies.
- B. The beloved disciple described two of those events by his personal witness (John 19:31-37).
- C. Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus took His body and buried it in a nice tomb (Is 53:9).

30 But God raised him from the dead:

- A. What glad tidings! What sweet news! What good things! What a powerful disjunctive!
- B. The audience would have known of His death, but now they heard of His resurrection!

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.

- A. There were many eyewitnesses of Him after His resurrection, more than 500 (I Cor 15:1-8)!
- B. He provided many infallible proofs over a period of 40 days of His resurrection (Acts 1:1-3).
- C. Apostles were all eyewitnesses (Acts 1:21-22; 22:14-15; 26:16-18; I Corinthians 9:1; 15:8-9).
- D. Galilee was the area near the Sea of Galilee, where His hometown of Nazareth was located.
 - 1. It is a very distinct district of the Roman Empire, about 50-90 miles north of Jerusalem.
 - 2. Galilee was made up of the three former tribal areas of Naphtali, Zebulun, and Issachar.
 - 3. The Jews of Judea were prone to despise these people (John 1:46; Mark 14:70; Acts 2:7).

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

- A. The gospel rightly preached and understood is the wonderful news of God sending His Son to fulfill all the prophecies of the seed of the woman, seed of Abraham, Shiloh, etc.
- B. But it also includes the glorious news that God raised Him from the dead and glorified Him.

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.

- A. God fulfilled the promise of His Son and His Son's resurrection to Paul's generation of Jews.
- B. The glorious words of Psalm 2:7 are fulfilled by apostolic authority in Christ's resurrection!
 - 1. This begetting is not eternal generation in eternity past or conception in Mary's womb.
 - 2. Do you have sufficient faith to trust the Holy Spirit against your feelings and opinions?
 - 3. Psalm 2 describes our Lord' coronation and exaltation in heaven after His resurrection.
 - 4. Jesus was "declared" to be God's Son by His resurrection from death (Romans 1:4).
 - 5. Jesus is the first begotten from the dead and firstfruits of them (Rev 1:5; I Cor 15:20).
 - 6. Hebrews 1:5, also quoting Psalm 2:7, applies them as well to His exaltation (Heb 1:4).
 - 7. Heretics advocating an eternal generation in the godhead start quivering at this verse.

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.

- A. Isaiah had prophesied, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David" (Isaiah 55:1-5).
- B. If Jesus had died and corrupted, then God's covenant would have been broken and His promise of David's Son would not have been sure ... but God raised Him from the dead!
- C. Notice how Paul preached, just as described, from various texts of scripture (Acts 17:1-3), for we have a quotation in the verse before, this verse, and the verse following!

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

- A. A third prophecy of this resurrection from the dead and corruption was given in Psalm 16:10.
- B. Peter had reasoned powerfully from this passage with the Jews at Pentecost (Acts 2:22-36).

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:

- A. Though it appeared David had written Psalm 16 in the first person, he wrote of Jesus Christ.
- B. Every Jew (or Gentile proselyte) knew David had died, was buried, and did not rise again.

37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

- A. But God raised the Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the Son of David, without corruption.
- B. Jesus was viewed and touched by His eyewitnesses with an uncorrupted human body.

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

- A. What the Jewish leadership could not know, Paul now taught freely to this blessed crowd!
- B. Paul's "invitation" had no organ music, begging, or tear-jerking stories, but scriptural logic.
- C. Forgiveness of sins was not obtained through Moses' Law, but through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- D. The resurrected man Christ Jesus is the one Mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5).
- E. Consider how glorious this good news was to those trusting in Moses' Law (Romans 10:1-5).

- F. Forgiveness of sins is a glorious blessing from election and predestination (Ephesians 1:3-7).
- G. The only forgiveness of sins that comes via preaching is practical for our comfort and fellowship with God (I John 1:3-10 cp Psalm 32:1-5 cp Job 33:19-28).
- H. Paul did not bring reconciliation, but rather the word or news of it; cast off the bondage of Moses' Law and be reconciled in your minds to God, as He is to you (II Cor 5:18-21).

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

- A. Paul preached the news of free justification in Jesus Christ personally claimed by our faith.
- B. Justification is a sovereign act of the predestinating God of grace (Romans 5:18; 8:28-33).
- C. The Law of Moses could not justify any, but Jesus Christ justified us (Galatians 3:10-29).
- D. All that *believe* (present tense) are *justified* (perfect tense; passive voice) showing the order.
 1. The eternal phase of justification is God's predestinating purpose (13:48; Rom 8:28-30).
 2. The legal phase of justification is Christ's finished work (Rom 3:24-26; 4:25; Tit 3:4-7).
 3. The vital phase of justification is righteousness applied internally (Eph 4:24; II Pet 1:1).
 4. The practical phase of justification is our faith and good works claiming it (James 2:24).
 5. The final phase of justification is our declared righteousness at judgment (II Tim 4:8).
- E. This is not an Arminian text promoting man's free will and decisional justification, for the believing response of these hearers depended on God's ordination (Acts 13:48).
- F. Read Samuel Richardson's wonderful defense of justification by Christ rather than by our decision or faith (1647) ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/salvation/justification-by-christ-alone.pdf>.
- G. Read about eternal justification as an immanent act in God's counsel prior to and apart from human faith ... by John Gill, John Brine, William Ames, William Twisse, William Perkins, Tobias Crisp, Johannes Maccovious, Hoornbeck, Witsius, Goodwin, Coccieus, Bentley, John Saltmarsh, John Eaton, William Dell, Lewis Wayman, Joseph Hussey, John Skepp, etc.

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

- A. Paul warned his hearers not to fulfill the prophecy against the Jews for unbelief (Hab 1:5).
- B. The gospel of Jesus Christ is not something to trifle with ... as so many do in this generation.
 1. Jesus Christ is coming to wreck vengeance on all those disobeying it (II Thess 1:7-8).
 2. If you are God's child minding earthly things, you are an enemy of Christ (Phil 3:18-19).
 3. God has given witness and record of His Son, and you better believe it (I John 5:9-13).

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.

- A. Paul warned his hearers not to fulfill the prophecy against the Jews for unbelief (Hab 1:5).
- B. Many Jews would reject the Messiah, though confirmed by many mighty signs and wonders.
- C. These despisers would wonder with unbelief and would consequently perish because of it.
- D. Just a few years later, Jesus sent the Romans armies under Titus to make the city desolate!

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.

- A. Can you imagine being a Gentile proselyte ... a second-class citizen of the kingdom of God?
- B. As the Jews wandered out of the synagogue, the Gentiles could not believe their blessed ears!

- C. The Gentile proselytes (13:16,26) begged that they might hear this message the next Sabbath.
- D. Do you grasp that many prophets and righteous men have not heard what you hear today?

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.

- A. When the scheduled assembly had ended, many of the Jews and Gentiles followed Paul out.
- B. Rather than wait for the next Sabbath Day, those with zeal wanted to hear more immediately.
- C. Rather than guarantee eternal life if they were to die that day, Paul charged to perseverance.
 - 1. Let us only hear the gospel as good ground hearers that bear much fruit (Luke 8:18).
 - 2. Let us not fail of God's grace and return to former vomit (Heb 12:14-17; II Pet 2:20-22).
 - 3. Paul would press the Corinthian church to not receive God's grace in vain (II Cor 6:1-2).

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

- A. The Jews were likely a minority in the city, so Luke wrote primarily of the Gentile citizens.
- B. This great increase in numbers could only occur if many told friends and family members.

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.

- A. The wickedness of the Jews is revealed by their contradicting and blaspheming out of envy.
- B. Jesus and Paul warned of Jewish obsession for Gentile conversions (Matt 23:15; Phil 3:1-3).
- C. The Jews envied the Gentile multitudes flocking to Paul's take off from their own religion.
 - 1. They immediately began speaking against what Paul was teaching to destroy his effect.
 - 2. They contradicted him in any way they could, lest the Gentiles would convert to Christ.
 - 3. They blasphemed by saying horrible things about Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

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.

- A. Angered by the Jewish envy, contradiction, and blasphemy, they boldly rebuked these Jews.
- B. They stated their orders from the Lord that the gospel should be first preached to the Jews.
 - 1. Jesus had told his apostles early to seek the lost sheep of Israel only (Matt 10:6; 15:24).
 - 2. The Great Commission of the apostles was initially limited to Jews (Acts 1:8; Rom 1:16).
- C. If you reject the gospel of Jesus Christ by rebellion or neglect, you damn yourself as a reprobate – do not deceive yourself (Mark 16:15-16; I Cor 16:22; II Cor 13:5; Tit 3:10-11)!
 - 1. No man is worthy of eternal life, but these rebels showed their profanely wicked hearts.
 - 2. The gospel is either the savour of life unto life or of death unto death (II Cor 2:14-17).
- D. Some of these blinded and obstinate Jews could be Paul's mystery Jews (Romans 11:25-32).
 - 1. For it was the unbelief of these Jews that turned Paul's effort to believing Gentiles.
 - 2. Paul seems to refer in this passage of the Romans of a short-term blinding of elect Jews.

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.

- A. Paul then acknowledged his original call to the ministry (Acts 9:15-16 cp Isaiah 49:6).
 - 1. There is only true source of life and light, not those merely bearing witness (John 1:4-9).
 - 2. There is only one Saviour of men, all others only witness of His salvation (Acts 4:12).
- B. The ministry of the gospel brings God's salvation in Jesus Christ to *light* (II Timothy 1:10).
- C. The ministry of the gospel brings the word of reconciliation to the reconciled (II Co 5:18-20).
- D. We understand this *salvation* to be the same practical salvation as in I Cor 15:2; I Tim 4:16; James 1:21; 5:19-20; Acts 2:40; etc.
- E. We deny this *salvation* to be new names written down in glory or regeneration (John 1:13; 8:45; Rev 13:8; 17:8).

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.

- A. These despised and inferior worshippers of God heard the joyful sound that Christ was theirs!
- B. The Gentiles elected and predestinated to eternal life were glad and glorified the gospel.
 - 1. Here is God's sovereign choice of some to salvation (John 6:38-39; 10:28-29; 17:2; Rom 8:28-29; 9:15-24; Eph 1:3-12; II Tim 1:9; 2:19; I Pet 1:2; Rev 13:8; 17:8).
 - 2. No matter what you read in the context about believing or gospel light, the basis and source and cause of their believing is right here in front of your eyes – God's ordination.
 - 3. Ordination precedes regeneration, which precedes conversion, for without regeneration no man will believe – this is plain and simple (Jn 1:13; 3:3; 5:24; 8:45; I Cor 2:14; etc.).
 - 4. There is a very different ordination also taught in the Bible – to condemnation (Jude 1:4).
 - 5. The alternative is to assume God is trying to save all men with the salvation entirely dependent on their ordination and elective choice of God, rather than God's of them.
 - 6. No wonder Paul limited himself to synagogues, for he sought the elect (II Timothy 2:10).
- C. Consider how a modern perversion of the scripture compromises the text's predestination – The Message reads, "All who were marked out for real life put their trust in God."
- D. This author was taught at Bob Jones University by Dr. George W. Dollar in a course called, "Acts of the Apostles," that "ordained" should be "disposed." See Rom 1:25; II Cor 2:7; 4:2.

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

- A. *Published* in the Bible does not require use of printed matter, but the spreading of the gospel.
- B. The Thessalonians sounded out the word of the Lord by their changed lives (I Thess 1:6-10)!
- C. This is accomplished one person at a time, as the Gadarene, beginning at home (Luke 8:39).
- D. Do you have the same glad and zealous spirit as these Antiochians and the Gadarene?

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.

- A. Part of the devil's opposition to the gospel is to stir up the highly esteemed against the truth.
- B. There is peer pressure – there is superior pressure ... and enemies of the gospel will use both.
- C. The devil uses the politically correct and socially admired to make Christians look foolish.
- D. Many in our nation would prohibit and hinder the gospel if they could. Do not be surprised.

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

- A. As Jesus had taught His apostles, Paul and Barnabas cursed the unbelievers (Matt 10:14-15).
- B. They did not compromise or modify the message to make it more palatable for reprobates.

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

- A. In what condition did Paul and Barnabas leave the disciples? Full of joy and the Holy Ghost!
- B. We are Gentile converts of the Lord Jesus Christ! We should also be full of the same!

Conclusion:

- 1. Are you glad? Do you glorify the word of the Lord? Are you thankful God saved you from Gentile ignorance and superstition? We are bound to give thanks always (II Thess 2:13-14)!
- 2. Are you filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost? If not, then repent of your carnality and worldliness.

For Further Study:

- 1. See, "Unconditional Salvation," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/bible/salvation/unconditional/seven-proofs.htm>.
- 2. See, "Five Phases of Salvation," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/bible/salvation/when-were-you-saved.htm>.
- 3. See, "When Was Cornelius Saved?" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/when-was-cornelius-saved.pdf>.
- 4. See, "Justification By Christ" (1647), ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/bible/salvation/justification-by-christ-alone.pdf>.
- 5. See, "Why Preach the Gospel," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/why-preach-the-gospel.pdf>.
- 6. See, "Why No Invitation?" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/why-no-invitation.pdf>.