

PISIDIAN ANTIOCH, THE MAIN CITY OF SOUTH GALATIA (PART I): THE PREACHING OF PAUL ACTS 13:14–41

Introduction

This is the only full length message of Paul in Scripture. It gives a panoramic view of history, of God's glorious plan for man.

- I. Paul and Barnabas entered Pisidian Antioch (vv. 14-16).
- II. God has been working throughout all history: He suffered and bore with the ways of Israel (and of the world) (vv. 17-22).
- III. God has consummated history: He has given the world a Saviour, Jesus (vv. 23-41).

I. Acts 13:14–16 Missions – Evangelism

Paul and Barnabas entered Pisidian of Antioch. The facts are stated very simply.

1. The two ministers entered the synagogue on the Sabbath (Saturday). This was the method of evangelism adopted by Paul (see *Paul's Method of Evangelisation*, Acts 13:46-47). Paul knew something: the faithful among the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles would be there. He and Barnabas would have a ready-made audience, so they grasped the opportunity.

Thought 1. Note how deeply Paul and Barnabas were committed to their call and mission. They were consumed with making Christ known and with meeting the desperate needs of men for life. They existed for this very purpose and for this purpose alone. Note the scene: they entered a city and grasped the opportunity that was available to share Christ.

Thought 2. The method of evangelism must always be to go where people are.

2. As strangers, they were invited to speak. This was the common practice of synagogues, to invite visitors to share a word of encouragement and exhortation if they wished. Remember: Paul was a rabbi, so an invitation to speak would naturally be extended to him. (See *Synagogue*, Mt. 4:23.)
3. Paul took the lead, addressing the Jews and the Gentiles who feared God. The people sitting before Paul would be the Jews who were faithful to their Old Testament Scriptures and the Gentiles who...
 - had become sick of the immoral and wicked society and religion of their day.
 - had seen some truth in the Jewish Scriptures and worship of one God.

Thought 1. Note: since Paul had been in Paphos, the capital of the island Cyprus, he had been taking the lead instead of Barnabas. He would continue to be the leader, the apostle to the Gentiles. Just imagine the character of Barnabas, the strength and humility of his love and trust in the Lord. When he saw the Lord moving Paul ahead in

leadership, Barnabas willingly encouraged the move and fully supported Paul in his ministry. What a rebuke to so many who allow jealousy and envy to enter their hearts against others who are moved ahead. We must serve where God has placed us, serve in love, supporting and pushing others ahead. (see Ph. 2:3-4).

ACTS 13:14

PISIDIAN ANTIOCH OR PISIDIA OF ANTIOCH

The city is called Pisidian of Antioch to distinguish it from Antioch of Syria, the home base of Paul and Barnabas. (See *Introductory Notes, Special Features, Galatians*).

- => The city sat on a high plain about 3600 feet above sea level. It was a cultural and commercial centre, by far the most important city of Galatia (modern day Turkey).
- => The city was a city of Asia Minor founded around 300 B.C. by Seleucus Nicator, the founder of the Seleucid empire, named after his father Antiochus.
- => The city was made a free city by Rome in 25 B.C. and made a part of the rough province of Galatia.
- => The city was made the military centre of the district by Rome to control the surrounding wild tribes of native people.
- => The city was made for the purpose of business and culture.
- => The city was a great commercial city, the most important trade city in Galatia. The major commercial route between the west and Ephesus and the Cilician cities (Syria) ran right through Antioch.

A church was established in Pisidian of Antioch, but with great difficulty. Many of the Gentiles received the Word of God, but the Jews rejected Christ, stirring up influential women in particular to arouse the city officials against Paul and Barnabas. The two servants of God were forced to leave the city under attack. (See notes, Acts 13:42-52.) The strict Jews, the vicious Judaizers from Pisidian of Antioch and later Iconium, opposed Paul so strongly that they began following and arousing the people throughout Galatia against him. They even led people to attack and stone him (Acts 14:19). But Paul and Barnabas remained faithful and many were reached for Christ. Churches were established and a strong witness was firmly rooted throughout Galatia (see Acts 14:21-22). Note: the church...

- was founded by Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:14f).
- was revisited by Paul on his return journey to root them more deeply in the Lord (Acts 14:21-22).
- was apparently visited by Paul on his second and third missionary journeys (Acts 16:6; 18:23).
- was one of the churches to whom Paul wrote *The Book of Galatians*. □

II. *Acts 13:17–22 History of Israel and God's Plan*

God has been working throughout all history. He suffered and bore with the ways of Israel and of the world (see v.18). The message preached by Stephen just about covers the same points Paul proclaimed. It is helpful to look at Stephen's message for development of Paul's points (see notes, Acts 7:1-53). Note how Paul's emphasis was God Himself...

- God's working with man throughout all of history
- God's working with man through the nation of Israel

The thrust of Paul's message (v. 18) was that God had suffered and put up with the behaviour of man from the very beginning. The words *He endured their conduct* (etropophoresen) mean...

- that God has suffered and put up with man's behaviour
- that God has borne and nourished man along just as a loving and caring father (see Deu. 1:31)

Note the emphasis again: it is upon God Himself and how He has borne and endured with man all through history.

1. God chose Israel (see note, Acts 7:2-8).
2. God delivered Israel. They had stayed in Egypt too long, becoming complacent and worldly, perfectly satisfied with the pleasures of Egypt. In fact, they stayed so long that an evil Pharaoh arose who enslaved them. But God loved and cared and delivered them (Exo. 6:1, 6. See notes, Acts 7:17-29.)
3. God *put up* and suffered with Israel through the desert. God gave Israel glorious provision, the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night (Exo. 13:21-22) and manna for food (Exo. 16:15, 33-35). Yet they grumbled, murmured and rebelled against Him. But still He "endured" and put up with them, nourishing them right along (Deu. 1:31. See notes, Acts 7:30-41.)
4. God led Israel to conquer Canaan. He constantly protected them, leading and guiding them to victory after victory despite their lack of trust and constant disobedience (Deu. 17:1; 20:17. See Num. 13:26-33 for an example of Israel's distrust in taking the land. See Acts 7:5-6 for God's promise that He would give the land to Israel.)
5. God gave Israel judges. Once the land was conquered, Israel slipped into complacency, selfishness and sin, forgetting God and His call. Nations marched against Israel. But despite Israel's sin, God heard the cry of the faithful few and raised up deliverers called judges (see *The Book of Judges*).
6. God gave Israel a man who was not only a judge, but the first of the great prophets, Samuel (see 1 Sam. 7:6, 15-17; 1 Sam. 3:20; Acts 3:24; 13:20). Yet Israel was

dissatisfied with God's choice and leadership. They looked at the world and desired what the world had — a king.

7. God gave Israel a king *of their own choosing*, a man named Saul. Saul was everything that men would choose, a very physical man who stood head and shoulders above everyone else (1 Sam. 9:1-2, 16; 10:17-25).
8. God raised up a special king of His own choosing. Man's (Israel's) choice failed: Saul mismanaged God's will and the government that God wanted established. God removed him and set His own choice upon the throne, a man named David. (See *Jesus Christ, Davidic Heir*; Acts 13:22-23.)

ACTS 13:22–23 JESUS CHRIST, DAVIDIC HEIR

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.' From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Saviour Jesus, as he promised. Acts 13:22–23

God is the One who “made” David to be King of Israel (1 Sam. 16:12-13). Note several points.

1. God “found David.” The picture is that of God seeking a man to fill the gap. God sought throughout Israel for a man who would obey and fulfil His will (Psa. 89:20).
2. The man needed was a man who had a heart set on God and His will alone: “a man after [God's] own heart,” a man who would seek to fulfil all God's will (1 Sam. 13:14; Psa. 40:8; Isa. 44:28).
3. The choice of God was divine. Note:
 - => The divine choice: God provides the man.
 - => The divine heart: a man after God's “own heart.”
 - => The divine behaviour or obedience: a man who will fulfil all of God's will.

All of this, of course, points toward Christ. David was a type of Christ. God “testified,” that is, God made a covenant (v. 22) and promised David that He would send a Saviour to Israel and the world, a Saviour that would come through his seed (v. 23. See notes, Lk. 3:24-31; note, Jn. 1:45; *Jesus Christ, King of Israel*, Jn. 1:49. See Rom. 1:3.) It was the seed of God's King, the promised Saviour, that Paul began to proclaim.

Thought 1. Note how God is still the One who is working and suffering and bearing with man, reaching out to save and deliver all who will be saved. □

III. *Acts 13:23–41 Jesus Christ, The Pivotal Point of History*

God has consummated history. He has given the Messiah to the world — given the Saviour Jesus Christ. Note that Paul...

- had reached the point toward which he had been moving.
- had reached the consummation of history.
- had reached the point when God *sent* the Saviour Jesus Christ into the world.

Paul launched right into his major thrust: the Saviour is Jesus. The name Jesus is significant to the Jews. It means Saviour, God will save. The Hebrew form is *Joshua* (yasha), which means Jehovah is salvation; He is the Saviour. The idea is that of deliverance, of being saved from some terrible disaster that leads to perishing (see Jn. 3:16; Rom. 8:3; Gal 1:4; Heb. 2:14-18; 7:25).

From this point on the sermon Peter preached on the day of Pentecost should be read. Paul's points are about the same as Peter's (see Acts 2:14-24; 2:25-36). Paul's message about Jesus Christ includes seven points.

1. The Saviour was proclaimed by a forerunner, John the Baptist (vv. 24-25). The world was not caught off guard. God prepared the world for the coming of the Saviour (see *Fullness of Time*, Gal 4:4). He sent John the Baptist, the forerunner, to proclaim...
 - the baptism of repentance (Mk. 1:4).

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 3:19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Acts 8:22 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.

Acts 17:30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

- the coming of the Saviour, of Him whose shoes John was not worthy to loose (Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:7; Jn. 1:19f).

Mat 18:4 "Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

James 4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Isa 57:15 For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."

2. The Saviour is “the message of salvation” being proclaimed to you (v. 26). Salvation means deliverance from both the power and penalty of sin, death and judgment. Paul declared that Jesus is “the message of salvation.” He Himself is the salvation of man, the salvation which God sent to man (see v. 23).
 - a. Jesus is the One whom “God raised from the dead” (vv. 30-33).

1 Cor 15:3-4 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.
 - b. Jesus is God’s Son, the One and only Son of God (v. 33).

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”
 - c. Jesus is the “Holy One” who did not suffer corruption or decay (vv. 35, 37).

Rom 1:4 And who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. (see 1 Cor. 15:12-19)
 - d. Through Jesus is “the forgiveness of sins” (v. 38).

Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.
 - e. By Jesus “everyone who believes is justified from everything” (v. 39).

Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 6:11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
3. The Saviour was rejected and crucified (vv. 27-28). The outline above with the following notes covers this point adequately (see *Death of Jesus Christ*, Acts 2:23; *Foreknowledge, Predestination*, Acts 2:23; *Death of Jesus Christ*, Acts 3:13; note, Acts 3:13-15).
4. The Saviour was raised from the dead by God (vv. 31-37). (See *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, Acts 2:24.)
 - a. There was the proof of eyewitnesses and of close associates who could not be deceived or mistaken (see *Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, Acts 1:3).
 - b. There was the purpose of Jesus’ resurrection, the good news of resurrection and incorruption for believers. God’s promise has been fulfilled (vv. 32-37). Believers shall be raised from the dead just as Christ was.

Psa 49:15 *But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself.*

John 5:25 *“I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.” (see Jn.6:40)*

John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.”*

Acts 24:15 *And I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.*

2 Cor 4:14 *Because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.*

1 Th 4:16 *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

5. The Saviour forgives sins (v. 38). The only Person who can forgive sins...

- is He who died for sins in order to gain the right to forgive (Jn. 1:29).
- is He who arose and is *now* living.
- is He who is living for the *purpose* of forgiving sins.

Acts 5:31 *God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.*

Acts 13:38 *“Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.”*

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

(See *Forgiveness*, Mt. 26:28.)

6. The Saviour justifies all who believe, justifies apart from the law (see *Credited*, Rom. 4:22; *Faith and Justification*, Rom. 4:22).

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Cor 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Gal 3:6 *Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

7. The Saviour brings judgment upon men. Since He has come, men must beware lest what the prophet declared come upon them (Hab. 1:5).

=> They can be *scoffers* (kataphronetai): to look down upon; think lightly of; act against.

=> They can wonder and perish: the idea is that a man can perish wondering if Jesus is truly the Saviour and if the Word preached is true (vv. 38-39). (See *Perish*, Jn. 3:16.) ■

ACTS 13:32–37 CORRUPTION, DECAY

Corruption means to decay, deteriorate, perish. In no place does Christ promise a new body to the unbeliever, to the unsaved and lost. A person's body and flesh can be destroyed forever. The unsaved die without any hope of ever receiving a new and glorified body that lives forever. (This is a fact seldom pointed out.) □

ACTS 13:32–37 RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

The purpose of Jesus' resurrection is incorruption, that is, He arose to make it possible for man to escape the corruption or decay of death. Long before Jesus ever came, God foretold that He would send the Saviour into the world and that the Saviour would not be allowed to see corruption or decay. Paul declared:

Acts 13:33 He has fulfilled [promises] for us, children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.'

Paul covers three prophecies in particular.

1. "You are my Son, today I have become your Father" (v. 33; Psa. 2:7; see Heb. 1:5; 5:5). The resurrection of Christ is proof that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom. 1:4).
2. "I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David" (v. 34; Isa. 55:3). The holy and sure blessings of David refer to the promises and the everlasting covenant given to David (see note, Lk. 3:24-31 for the Davidic promises). Paul was declaring that the resurrection of Christ fulfilled and sealed these promises.
3. "You will not let your Holy One see decay" (v. 35; Psa. 16:10). Paul was saying that David died and was buried and was left in the grave. He saw corruption or decay (v. 36). Therefore, the prophecy could not be referring to him. But there was a Person whom God raised from the dead: Jesus Christ. He saw no corruption or decay; therefore, the prophecy refers to Him. He is the Son of God (v. 33), the Holy One (v. 35), the Saviour (v. 23). (See notes, Acts 2:25-28; 2:29-31. See *Corruption, Decay, Acts 13:32-37.*) □