

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

### HISTORY (ACTS 13:13-25)

#### SOMETHING HAPPENED ALONG THE WAY

Up to this point, Barnabas had led the missionary team, but now we see that "Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos" to go to Perga (South Turkey). We also see that John has left as well. Ch. 15 shows that a genuine falling out took place. It probably started with Barney and Paul, and John took Barney's side.

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

John probably couldn't stomach a Roman citizen being the leader, Paul was probably difficult to work with, and Barnabas may have gotten jealous of Paul.

- **Even though Christians don't always agree or work together well, this doesn't mean the message of Christ is flawed.** People are flawed, even church leaders.

#### FIRST JEWS, THEN THE GREEKS AND ROMANS

After the Shema (prayers) and the Torah reading, the Jews in the synagogue "sent word" to Paul and asked if he and his "brothers" had any "word of encouragement."

- Paul was a scholar in Jewish history, but all Jews would have been well versed. So, Paul is going to take history and build the case for Jesus as the Messiah.

#### "FELLOW ISRAELITES AND YOU WHO FEAR GOD"

Paul taught Jews and a group of Greeks that had become followers of the Jewish God. He started with the Exodus and quickly moved through 450 years of history to show the **sovereignty** of God throughout Jewish history.

- The verbs used to describe God's provision: **chose, prospered, led, endured, overthrew, and gave** are important.

#### THE ULTIMATE ACT OF GRACE

The great leaders of the OT were a foreshadowing of the ultimate leader God was sending. John the Baptist prophesied that Jesus would come and save mankind.

- John was the last prophet to proclaim that God would do **the ultimate act of grace: to give His Son as a sacrifice for our mistakes.**

### RESURRECTED (ACTS 13:26-37)

#### PAUL MOVES ON TO THE TOPIC OF SALVATION

After the brief history lesson, Paul arrives at a more recent historical event, the crucifixion of Jesus. Paul's point on this subject was simple: **Jesus died, He was securely buried, God raised Him from the dead, and He was seen by hundreds of witnesses.**

#### THOSE WHO WERE EXPECTING, RECEIVED

Paul says that those who were looking for the prophecies have received their answer, but many people missed it, though they read the scriptures every week in the synagogues. The Jews that didn't recognize the obvious Messiah had Him killed at the hands of Pilate though he could find no grounds for punishment.

#### THE EMPHASIS ON THE GRACE OF GOD

Though they "carried out all that was written about Him, they took Him down from the tree and put Him in a tomb," God still "raised Him from the dead." **Despite the centuries of rebellion and the rejection God knew His Son would face on earth, God still sent the Savior into the dark world to save us!**

#### A VERY COSTLY TRANSACTION

Paul told the crowd that God offers salvation, but salvation had to be purchased through the blood of Jesus. **Substitutionary atonement** put Christ on the cross.

- We often say that **salvation is free**, but we must remember that **it isn't cheap. Our sin cost a Father His Son, and our lives should honor that sacrifice.**

#### NOT LIKE OTHER SAVIORS

Unlike the heroes of the past like David, Jesus resurrected and avoided "decay." Paul quotes Psalm 2 and 16 and Isaiah 55 to show that **God has kept His promise to deliver His people**, and the resurrection of Jesus is the sign of that.

### GRACE (ACTS 13:38-43)

#### THE SERMON WAS COMING TO A CLOSE

The final point was clear; **forgiveness comes through faith in Jesus, and faith in Jesus produces justification** that following the laws of Moses could not.

- **Justification** is a legal term that means **we can stand before God and be right with Him because Jesus has paid our debt acquired by sin.**

#### HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?

Paul taught grace alone. Even though we can do things to foster a relationship with God and grow, it is by His grace that we are saved and can improve.

- **We are to strive to grow closer to God and separate ourselves from sin, but even if we're never perfect, we have not earned God's grace.**

### THE INVITATION ALSO COMES WITH A WARNING

Paul quotes Habakkuk 1:5 to show that scoffers of the truth will "vanish away" because of their unbelief and refusal of God's gift.

- **Though God is gracious, we must also act and accept that grace by following Him. If we do not, there are eternal consequences.**

#### THE PEOPLE URGED THEM TO SPEAK AGAIN

Paul and Barnabas had to move on to Antioch. Before they left, the people in Pisidia were so fascinated with the gospel that they asked them to continue next Sabbath. Paul urged them to "continue in the grace of God" because **they had what they needed: the scripture, an open mind, and the desire to learn.**

### MOVING ON (ACTS 13:44-52)

#### THE NEXT GATHERING WAS DIFFERENT

In the days between Sabbaths, Paul and Barney probably taught the gospel to whoever was interested. Since a lot of people were noticing this, many others got jealous of the Christians. The opposition was not about the message, but from the **envy** of others who wanted to be in the limelight.

#### BECAUSE OF ENVY, THEY CONTRADICTED PAUL

The Jews were probably upset that so many outsiders and Gentiles were in their synagogue, so their envy led to contradicting the message of Paul.

- So, **envy leads to despising people which eventually leads to an attack on the truth and the blasphemy of God's word.**

#### THE FOCUS IS ABOUT TO CHANGE

After this experience, Paul acknowledges his mission to reach the Jews first has come to a completion in this area. Since they "reject it and judge" themselves "unworthy of eternal life," Paul and Barnabas now focus on Gentiles.

- **The crowd had become self-righteous: possibly the greatest error one can make.**

#### HUMANITY ALWAYS COMES UP SHORT

Paul reminded the Jews that they were called to be "a light for the Gentiles," but they had failed in that calling. In God's grace, He sent Jesus to be that light.

- A lesson we must embrace without becoming cynical: **humanity will always come up short. If we trust in human ability alone, we will be disappointed.**

#### HOW DID THE OUTSIDERS RESPOND?

When the Gentiles heard that they'd be the focus of the gospel message in their city, they "rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord" because they had "been appointed to eternal life." Here we have a **collision of free will and predestination. God chooses us while we simultaneously trust Him.**

#### INCITING A RIOT (V50)

In their anger and envy, the Jews recruited their most influential men and women to persecute Paul and Barney and throw them out of the city. The Jews probably told the authorities that the **Pax Romana** was being compromised.

- **God always seems to upset the peaceful façade of the world to remind us that we are lost without Him.**

#### AFTER THE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE THAT REFUSE TO SEE THE LIGHT...

Paul and Barney leave town and "**knock the dust off their feet**," a phrase Christ used in Matthew 10.

Though many people were left with "joy and the Holy Spirit," Paul and Barney **had to move on to a more receptive audience.**

#### WHAT ARE WE WILLING TO DO?

- Do we have our own **Pax Romana**, a time of "peace" with minimal expansion? **Does it become all about us?** Is that the mindset of a Christian?
- As we go into a new year, are we willing to let God upset our "peace" in order to give us true peace and purpose?
- Are we willing to **knock dust off our feet** in order to reach the ones that have an ear to listen?
- Are we being good stewards with our time? Of course we pray for everyone, but are hurting people being neglected because of self-righteous scoffers?
- **What will we do for the Kingdom in the future?** Will we keep moving the way we have been? Will our ambition and drive slow to another disappointing crawl once the newness fades?