

ACTS 13:13-41 OUR FIRST ACCOUNT OF A MESSAGE BY PAUL, ca. 47 AD

Geographics

v. 13-14a From Cyprus to Perga to Antioch of Pisidia

- Perga – a coastal town in the province of Pamphylia in a very low-lying district with marshes, mosquitoes, hence malaria. Paul chooses to leave quickly and head north to higher ground.
- Antioch of Pisidia (South Galatia) – one of 16 towns named in honor of Antiochus, a General under Alexander the Great; located ca. 100 miles north of Perga; a chief civil and military center of South Galatia located on an imperial road that served as a trade route and safeguard of Roman interests; elevation 3600 feet above sea level.

“And John (Mark) departed from them and returned to Jerusalem,” **WHY?** See 15:36-39

- **CONJECTURE:** Paul needed higher ground for health reasons, John resisted or rebelled at this decision (see Gal. 4:13).
 - Or, John questioned the decision to move more toward the Gentiles.
 - Or, John rebelled over his minor role as an attendant (13:5).
- All conjecture, we know only that John refused to go to the work with them (15:38).
- **APPLICATION:** Personnel problems (human relations) are, and always have been, one of the most serious in any multi-staff ministry.

v. 14b-15 Paul and Barnabas are asked to speak at a synagogue in Antioch.

13:16-41 Paul’s First Message at Antioch (Pisidia)

This is the first written account of a message by Paul. Though saved for at least 12 years, though he preached publicly at Damascus and Jerusalem early after his conversion, though he taught for a couple years at Antioch in Syria, we have no record of any message. This is the first.

v. 16-21 Introduction: A Rapid Review of Hebrew History

v. 16 **His Listeners:** *“men of Israel”* = natural born Jews (dispersed); *“fearers of God”* = Gentiles, some proselytes to perverted Judaism, some merely God fearers who respected the Jewish faith. It is the Gentiles who prove most responsive to the gospel.

v. 17-22 **Hebrew History:** Five Key Aspects in Preparation for the Saviour

1. v. 17a *“The God of this _____.”* The self-revealed God, the one and only true God, unique to Israel as a nation among the pagan nations.
2. v. 17b *“The God of Israel _____ our _____;”* that is, our national heritage is unique, we are objects of His sovereign choice through whom redemption would come. **NOTE:** God, Israel’s God, is the subject of nearly all the verbs through v. 23, major historical facts are attributed to Him. **THIS IS A HEBREW PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY** (like Stephen in Acts 8; like Nehemiah in Neh. 9:7ff; like David in Psa. 105).
3. v. 17c-18 Our God _____ Israel out of Egyptian bondage.
4. v. 19-20 Our God _____ us the land of _____ which occupation took several hundred years. The seven nations destroyed are listed in Deut. 7:1.
5. v. 21-22 Our God gave us King Saul, then removed him, then He raised up _____ to fulfill His will.

(OVER)

Paul began this rapid review of Hebrew History with the call of Abraham; he ends it with the reign of David. This quick review was preparatory for the introduction of Jesus, who in the lineage of David, is the Saviour, both of Israel and of the Gentiles.

v. 23-31 Jesus, The Saviour

v. 23-25 The Source and Identity of the Saviour

1. Jesus was of _____ seed.
2. Jesus was brought (KJV, “raised”) into Israel by _____.
3. Jesus was brought into Israel as its _____.
4. John the Baptist was not _____, only his announcer.

v. 26 The Objects of Jesus’ Salvation: Mankind

“to you (“to us,” NASV), to Jews and Gentiles, is the word (doctrine, message) of this salvation sent.” The message of salvation is to a universal audience; it is not limited in its scope.

v. 27-31 The Objectivity of the Message of Jesus’ Salvation

This message centers in objective historical facts about Jesus Christ, namely,

1. Though brought to Israel as Saviour, He was rejected and crucified, v. 27, 28.
2. He was buried, v.29.
3. He was raised from the dead by God, v. 30.
4. He was seen by many, v. 31 (his resurrection was verified).

This objective message demonstrates that biblical salvation is a proclamation of objective fact, not subjective experience. The most pointed delineation of the Gospel, I Cor. 15:1-4, focuses precisely on these same historical facts.

v. 32-41 The Application of This Message of Salvation

v. 32 **Its Proclamation:** *“Unto you (plural), we are proclaiming (εὐαγγελίζω/euaggelizo*; present middle indicative) the good news”.*

*Verb form: 11 times in Gospels; 15 times in Acts; 22 times Paul; 7 elsewhere.

*Noun form: 12 times in Gospels; 2 times in Acts; 60 times Paul; 3 elsewhere.

FROM USAGE ALONE, WE CAN SEE THAT PAUL IS THE GREAT EXPOSITOR OF THE GOSPEL!

v. 33-37 **Its Support** God fulfilled His promise by raising-up Jesus (not “again” as per KJV) in and for Israel. In v. 34 He raised him from the dead. Psa. 2:7 (v.33) and Isa. 55:3 (v.35) support both of these statements. In eternity God decreed that His Son (eternal), would be placed in a special relationship, that of Israel’s Messiah and King, through the loins of David. The resurrection assures that this relationship will be realized.

That David died, was buried and suffered decay and corruption prove that his words of Psa. 16:10 could not refer to himself. This prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus (as per Peter, Acts 2:25-32).

v. 38, 39 **Its Significance:** Justification by Faith Alone

v. 38 Forgiveness of sins is through Christ’s Gospel alone.

v. 39a Believing in His Gospel brings immediate justification.

v. 39b Justification is absolute, “from all things”.

v. 39c Justification cannot be by the law of Moses. This last statement was very offensive to law-minded Jews.

v. 40, 41 **Paul’s Conclusion:** Do not scoff (as the prophets predicted some Jews would do); receive this final message of Good News of God’s grace in Jesus Christ.

v. 42-52 **The Results** (to be continued next week)