

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts 13:13-26 | Session 34 | From All the People of Israel to Whosoever

We saw last time that Luke, the author, begins to refer to Saul as Paul (13:9). Name changes in Scripture appear to be a signal of something new taking place for the nation of Israel. Here, in verse 9, it does not say specifically *God changed Saul's name*, but it must have some significance nonetheless. Is it a signal that Paul has been given the revelation of the *mystery* (See Ephesians 3:3)? That mystery which was given to Paul was that the *gentiles (non-Jews) would now be fellowheirs with the Jews, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel...and it would be by grace through faith, a gift given to all men and women, boys and girls by believing* (Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 13:38,39). Therefore, it is my contention that the gospel of grace, as we know it today is beginning to be preached by *Paul* on his first missionary journey and we begin to see it unfold before us in our passage today.

Verse 13—

Paul and his company this appears to be a statement indicating **Paul** as the leader of the group. Luke certainly thrusts **Paul** to the forefront in this chapter. **Loosed from Paphos**, they weighed anchor, or they put out to sea. Heading due north to **Perga in Pamphylia**. And, **John departing...to Jerusalem**. Luke does not tell us the reason **John departed**, but it caused a clash between Barnabas and **Paul** later (See 15:38,39; 2 Timothy 4:11).

Verse 14—

We don't know how long they stayed in **Perga**, but they traveled north by land, about 156 miles, to **Antioch in Pisidia** (different place from Antioch in Syria), located in what is today modern Turkey. Their route would have been on the Via Sebaste, a Roman road built around 6 B.C. and still visible today! **Antioch in Pisidia** was the capital of **Pisidia** and a Roman colony and a large city with a theater seating 5,000. Many Gentiles including veteran Roman soldiers lived there. As was Paul's custom (Acts 17:2) he went to the **synagogue** first on the **sabbath day** (The seventh day, Saturday, not Sunday. In the dispensation of grace, we have no Sabbath to observe). While I could not find evidence of a synagogue being discovered, yet from the text we know one existed, the ruins of the city are still standing. Paul and his company **sat down**, some people of status, or elders might sit on benches around the synagogue walls, some less affluent synagogues might have had people sitting on the floor (See James 2:3).

Verse 15,16—

Custom always had the **reading of the Law and the prophets** according to a prescribed calendar (Luke 4:17). **The rulers of the synagogue sent unto them**, that is, Paul and Barnabas, inviting them to give **any word of exhortation**. We do not have indication why they were invited to speak or how they were recognized. We can speculate on several reasons, 1) they knew of Paul and his training in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3). 2) Some Jewish scholars suggest that teachers, both Jew and Gentile, wore special clothing to indicate their status. 3) Perhaps they had arrived days earlier and had already made a connection with the Jewish community and maybe were even staying with a fellow Jew. 4) Maybe Paul and Barnabas introduced themselves before the synagogue service began. Both Paul and Barnabas had the credentials to teach. But, however they were identified and called on, Paul is the one who **stood up** to speak.

Verses 16-37—

Paul's exhortation begins in the same manner as the apostle Peter's sermon in Acts 2¹. This could indicate how the apostle Paul taught the same *kingdom gospel* as Peter when he was in the presence of Jews—at least at first. Jewish teaching reviews the history of Israel often. This is why they have been able to hold on to their faith for centuries, even though dispersed. In the *church* today, we have lost our Biblical knowledge of history. The evangelical church today focuses primarily on a "Me" message; i.e., *what does this passage mean to me, me, me!* A loss of Biblical knowledge leads to a loss of a Biblical worldview.

Verse 23—

Why does Paul say that **God...raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus**? Jesus said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Likewise, Paul states in Romans 15:8, "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." Clearly, Jesus was sent for Israel—His earthly ministry was directed solely to Israel.

Verses 24-26—

Paul continues to remind those in the synagogue of the message of John the Baptist; preaching before the coming of Jesus, **repentance to all the people of Israel**. This is not a message we should preach today. This message was to the people of Israel alone.

Verses 27-31—

Paul steps back about 12 years and gives a history of how things have progressed to this point, that is, those in Jerusalem missed the fact that Jesus was Messiah even though the **read every sabbath...the prophets**. The Jews in Jerusalem **desired they Pilate that Jesus should be slain**, and that he was crucified on a cross, laid in a tomb, **but God raised him from the dead**. Likewise, after his resurrection Jesus was seen by witnesses for many days.

Verses 32-37—

The promise made unto the fathers was the resurrection. Paul cites this promise by quoting the Old Testament in Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 55:3, Psalm 16:10, and that the prophets were referring to the Messiah and not David, for **David...saw corruption: But he (Jesus), whom God raised again, saw no corruption**.

In Paul's exhortation, he has paralleled Peter's message. He is making the point to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah they have been looking for, but they missed him.

Verses 38-39—

But now, Paul deviates from Peter's message and proclaims something brand new. He first had to established Jesus as Messiah, now we see the *grace message for the very first time*.

Be it known unto you therefore. The word order could be *Therefore be it known to you. Therefore, because of who Jesus is, because he is alive, there is certain forgiveness of sins...AND*, there is more: **By him ALL that believe are justified from ALL things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses**.

This had to be a tremendous shock to hear. All along salvation has been for the Jew only, now this man they invited to speak in the synagogue saying ALL that believe can be saved and that it is apart from the Law of Moses. How will this NEW message be received? We will see that next time.

¹ M.D. Goulder, Type and History, page 83, 1964