

# Paul's Preaching Part 1

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[ 0 : 00 ]     What we're about to read is almost the conclusion to it. So if we start at verse 38 in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 13.

Let it be known to you, therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone that believes is freed from everything which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

Beware, therefore, lest there come upon you what is said in the prophets. Behold, you scoffers, and wander and perish.

For I do a deed in your days, a deed you will never believe, if one declares it to you. As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them in the next Sabbath.

And when the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

[ 1 : 19 ]     The next Sabbath, almost the whole city gathered together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy and contradicted what was spoken by Paul and reviled him.

And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, it was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Since you thrust it from you and you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.

For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God. And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

And the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of their district.

[ 2 : 40 ]     But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Amen. May the Lord bless you. That reading may be to his praise and to his glory. We'll stand again as we sing Man of Sorrows, What a Name. The Sunday nights, we're looking at several passages, two from Acts, one from 1 Thessalonians chapter 1, which are designed to show the interlinking between the doctrine of election, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and the free offer of the gospel, whosoever will may come.

And I turn your attention to verses 48 and 49 of Acts 13. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God.

And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region. When we come to consider the Acts of the Apostles, it has a definite structure.

And that structure is found in chapter 1, verse 8, where Jesus says this, So from that statement, you can see that there are three distinct areas of witness.

[ 4 : 33 ] The Jewish period of the church's witness from the beginning to chapter 8, verse 3. A transition period of the church's witness from 8.4 to 12.25.

And then this Gentile period of the church's witness from chapter 13 right on to the end. Now these texts that I've quoted tonight are taken from Paul's first missionary journey, covered in chapters 13 to 15, and the activities of that first missionary journey took place over some four years.

When the Gentiles heard this, the hearing of salvation. How did they come to hear about this great salvation?

Now what I want to do to answer that question is to analyze, not by reading it all, but by summarizing this sermon, which is the longest one that we have from Paul in Acts 13.

Now the first bit is this. It's a summary of the historical preparation for Christ's coming. And this includes the call from Abraham to the deliverance from Egypt, from the deliverance from Egypt to the death of Moses, period of Joshua, of Judges, the reign of Saul, the reign of David, the advent of Jesus, announced by John the Baptist.

[ 6 : 14 ] And all of these you can find in verses 16 to 25. And the section concludes with this statement. Of this man, the man David, of this man's posterity, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he had promised.

Before his coming, John had preached a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And so now we move on to the second bit.

And the second bit deals with Christ having come is declared to be the fulfillment of a divine promise. And so what we have here from verse 26 on is the death of Jesus, 27 and 28, his burial in verse 29, his resurrection in verses 30 to 37, the evidence for the resurrection also in verses 30 to 31, the fulfillment of the promise, 32 to 35, and that this prediction did not in any way relate to the person of David the king.

So we read in verses 36 and 37, for David, after he had served the counsel of God in his own generation, fell asleep and saw corruption.

But he whom God raised saw no corruption. And the third bit is a conclusion. It's the importance to all who hear of the truth about Christ.

[ 8 : 04 ] This section includes the nature and offer of the gospel, verses 38 to 39, and a warning against refusing the gospel in verses 40 to 41.

And these verses say this, Beware, therefore, lest there come upon you what is said in the prophets. Behold, you scoffers and wander and perish, for I do a deed in your days, a deed which you will never believe if one declares it to you.

So what can we say about that sermon? We can say this. This is a sermon in which Christ is at the center.

would God that when people go into churches today, they would hear sermons at which Christ is the center.

In preaching to the Jews in the synagogue at Antioch, he had reminded them of the great acts of God which God had accomplished in the days of the Old Testament dispensation.

[ 9 : 14 ] but he's aware that there's a danger. There's a danger that these people, having listened, won't respond.

As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. When the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas who spoke to them and asked them to continue in the grace of God.

When we get to the next Sabbath, things have changed. When the Jews, verse 45, saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy and contradicted what was spoken by Paul and reviled him.

So Paul and Barnabas, they say this, it was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you.

Since you thrust it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we turn to the Gentiles. Now, what's his authority for doing that?

[ 10 : 35 ] Well, he quotes Isaiah 49, verse 6. I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.

This is the promise that Paul is acting on in the very depths of his being. This is the reason he goes to Antioch with this message of Christ which has been promised down the generations and offered to the Jews which they reject.

But the Gentiles accepted it. When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed, and the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region.

Now, in order to understand what's happening here as this meeting in the synagogue broke up on the first Sabbath, listen to what he says about those who did listen.

The people begged them that these things might be told on the next Sabbath. And when the meeting broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

[ 12 : 01 ] So there are two sets of people who are prepared to respond to this word. The first is many Jews and secondly, devout converts.

As far as the Jews are concerned, they are members of the Jewish race who now happen to be living in Antioch of Pisidia. The second group is designated as devout converts to Judaism.

The Greek word here is *proselytus*, i.e. proselyte, namely a convert to Judaism. And you will find in the book of Acts that they are designated as devout Greeks.

In other words, they were Greeks who were converted to worshipping the Jewish God in the synagogue and did not necessarily follow all the intricacies of following the monachie of the Jewish law as recorded in Genesis to Deuteronomy and as further interpreted by the Pharisees and rabbis.

So this would have meant that they weren't circumcised. So the Jewish rabbis described this group of individuals who had been converted to Judaism but not circumcision as proselytes of the gate, meaning they hadn't entered in properly to the faith of Judaism.

[ 13 : 31 ] Now the second thing you have to notice is this. There's an application in this sermon which is not limited to Jews.

Verse 16. Men of Israel and you that fear God listen. Men of Israel and you that fear God.

Verse 26. Brethren, sons of the family of Abraham and those among you who fear God to us has been sent this message of salvation.

In other words this is not a nationalistic sermon. It's not a message that only applies to a limited number of people. It's universal in its application.

So he goes on and he says in verses 38 and 39. Let it be known to you therefore that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you and by him everyone that believes is freed from everything which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

[ 14 : 45 ] This is his appeal. It's not all that different to any appeal that we might make now. It's an appeal that extends to all peoples.

It promises forgiveness of sins. It promises peace of mind. It promises freedom of a kind that the world can't give.

Freedom. the next Sabbath things have changed. Almost the whole city gathered together to hear the word of God but when the Jews saw the multitude they were filled with jealousy and contradicted what was spoken by Paul and reviled him.

and now we're told that both Barnabas and Paul they say this it was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you but his estimation is this that since you thrust it from you you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life we turn to the Gentiles.

Now this action causes the Gentiles we're told to be glad and to glorify the word of God and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed and the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region.

[ 16 : 14 ] Now when we get to the next bit the latter part of this verse we find a stress is being made which deals with the planning and ordination to salvation of those who had believed.

In other words behind the faith of every believer there is a divine plan which has brought this salvation about and made it a practical reality.

Now one of the things you have to consider is that in the Acts of the Apostles this statement that as many as were ordained to eternal life believed is unique.

It's not mentioned in respect to any other group of peoples. So why should it occur now? This text occurs at the very beginning of Paul's first missionary tour in which he made a tour a circuitous tour of Asia Minor.

It marks the beginning of this extended period of the church's witness to the entire world. And the reason it occurs here is simply to reinforce the idea that what is now happening is entirely of God and that God has preordained it.

[ 17 : 47 ] Now the Apostle has much to say about this and you can read about it in Romans 9 to 11. But we don't have time to look at that this evening.

But at the conclusion of Romans 11 he says this, lest you be wise in your own conceits I want you to understand this mystery brothers.

A hardening has come upon part of Israel until the full number of the Gentiles come in and so all Israel will be saved.

Jesus himself in Luke's gospel made a similar statement speaking about the Jewish rejection of the gospel they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled.

In other words what's being said now is that behind this extension of the kingdom to the whosoever not just Jews there is a divine plan which is 100% efficient to bringing about in the salvation of people's lives today and what we are considering this evening is the efficient salvation of the Gentiles who were in Antioch of Pisidia but what does it have to say to us now?

[ 19 : 26 ] one of the practical realities of the Christian faith is that we have to confess our faith in the fact that God has such a plan as well as professing our faith in the offer of the gospel to whosoever.

Two scriptures from the epistle to the Romans are like this. Romans 9 15 to 16 Paul quotes Moses mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion so it depends not on man's will or exertion mercy we trace back our own salvation to God himself and he has been solved God but when he goes to chapter 10 he says something different there is no distinction between Jew and Greek the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows him for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved in Romans 9 the divine plan in Romans 10 the wisdom of offering the gospel to everybody now as we study what

Paul went about and how he went about it in the Acts of the Apostles we can learn a great deal about how we can deal with offering the gospel today their message is summed up in these words let it be known to you therefore brothers that through this man that's the man Jesus Christ forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you and by him everyone that believes is freed from everything which you could not be freed from in the law or by the law of Moses now what can we take from this well first of all let's take the identity and the circumstances of the Apostle Paul that day when he set out from Jerusalem to arrest the Christian believers at Damascus there was no thought in his mind that when he arrived at Damascus he would be a

Christian it wasn't there so he traces back the fact that God intervened and spoke to him on the road Saul Saul you persecute me he traces that back and he realizes that God not accident has brought this about now if that's the case he says or he reasons out there's a great responsibility on me and so he says in 1 Corinthians 9 woe is me if I do not preach the gospel of Christ now how can we personalize all this we are here this evening because God has willed it God has brought it about he's made this an elect place now if he's made this house an elect place it therefore follows that on each of us there lies a great responsibility and that responsibility is the making known of the gospel to the lost outside if you were to go around each and every one of these houses out there you would find that the needs of humanity are very great but he's called us he's planned it so that we can take the good news to them whoever calls upon the name of the

Lord shall be saved amen