

Acts Chapter 13

- Up to this point Jerusalem has been the center of the church, and Peter, and perhaps James the acknowledged leaders. Now the focus shifts to Antioch which will be the center of Christianity, and to Paul as the leader as the Gospel is on the move outward to the Gentiles.
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V: 1 Paul and Barnabas have made their way back to **Antioch** where the narrative picks up again after the parenthetical break of chapter 12.

Map

- The church in Antioch had several men that were prophets and teachers with a distinction being made between the two:
 1. Prophets are those who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, guide the church as they speak the heart of God through edification, correction, exhortation, and comfort.
 2. Teachers are those who teach the Word, helping to ground the church as they point out the ways and the mind of God revealed through the Word of God.
- There are some denominations that say that prophets and teachers are one and the same, and they can be, but not always, here we see a distinction.
- **In Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12** listing the gifts of the Spirit, prophets and teachers are listed separately.
- The names of the men listed in the church of Antioch:
 1. Barnabas.
 2. Simeon who is also called Niger, who is thought to be the same as Simon of **Cyrene** who was compelled to carry the cross of Jesus.
 3. Lucius also of Cyrene.
 4. Manaen, who had been a boyhood friend of Herod Antipas, the Herod who ordered the death of John the Baptist. So Manaen has connections with powerful people.
 5. Paul, a former Pharisee, born in Tarsus, schooled in Jerusalem and now serving Jesus.
- Like the original Apostles, a very diverse group of men.

V: 2 As they were serving the Lord and fasting...

- Ministry as such is usually directed to the church in some form, teaching, or counseling, or meeting some need within the church, maintenance or whatever -

but here they are ministering to the Lord which is actually the purpose and intended function of the church.

- There is a difference between minister for the Lord as opposed to ministering to the Lord.

(Turn to:)

Ezekiel 44:10-11, 15 “¹⁰And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from Me after their idols; they shall even bear their iniquity. ¹¹Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them.” - “¹⁵But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near to Me to minister unto Me, and they shall stand before Me to offer unto Me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God:”

- God created us for His glory, that through the church He might receive praise and honor.

Ephesians 1:12 “That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.”

- Our ministry to the Lord is time spent waiting on Him in prayer, lifting our minds and our hearts through worship, and extolling His goodness and His works.
- This will naturally overflow and minister to others.
- For me to properly serve you, I must first spent time waiting on the Lord and worshipping Him. Quite honestly I need to spend more time doing just that.

2 Timothy 2:6 “The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.”

- God has to work in our hearts before we can minister to others.
- Serving the Lord and fasting; denying their flesh in some respect. Fasting is an attempt to weaken the flesh and to strengthen the Spirit.

Jesus said:

Matthew 5:16 “When you fast...” it is assumed in a certain sense that we should fast.

- Fasting may take different forms; food, TV, sweets, any of the various things that feed the flesh.

- We're pretty accustomed to eating 3 meals a day, but we can go a week or more without reading the Word or praying at times and not even notice.
- There is that constant battle between the Spirit and the flesh the one we feed will get stronger, the one we starve will get weaker - and the stronger of the two will win.

“The Holy Ghost said...” God spoke to their hearts, He communicated His will to them - quite possibly through the prophets that were there.

Isaiah 30:21 “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”

Romans 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

“Separate me Barnabas and Saul...”

- At this point in the game Barnabas has somewhat of a senior role compared to “Saul” which is why he is listed first, very soon that will change and “Paul” will become the more prominent figure.
- Anyone who serves the Lord is going to be “separated” from many things, homes, families, friends... it's all part of an accelerated sanctification or consecration program.
- God made it clear to them that He has called Paul and Barnabas to a specific ministry.

Romans 1:1 “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,”

We have to know that we're called to a specific ministry:

2 Peter 1:10 “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:”

V: 3 They fasted, they prayed, they commended them to the Lord and laid hands on them, and sent them on their way

- Seeking to be obedient to what God had called them to, they commended them to God's care.
- The laying on of hands seems to be a consistent way of ordaining men to ministry.

- Later Paul would caution the church not to do so too quickly:

1 Timothy 5:22 “Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.”

V: 4-5 This is the beginning of Paul’s first missionary trip.

- The church laid hands on them and sent them on their way but in reality as we see here:

“... *being sent forth by the Holy Ghost...*” this is the secret of the success of the early church; hearing the Spirit speak, listening, being guided and empowered by the Spirit.

Galatians 3:3 “Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

Map:

- First stop “**Seleucia**, then from there to **Cyprus**. On Cyprus landing in **Salamis**, working their way 100 miles or so across the Island to **Paphos**, synagogue by synagogue. Barnabas was from Cyprus so he knew his way around.
- The island of Cyprus was known for its copper mines and its shipbuilding industry. It was sometimes called “Macria” which means “happy isle” because of its almost perfect climate and abundance of natural resources.
- John Mark is along as their servant. He was about 12 years old when Jesus was crucified so now he’s probably in his early 20’s. He is also Barnabas’ nephew. (Colossians 4:10)

V: 6-7 In Paphos they come across a sorcerer and false prophet, a Jew by the name of Bar-Jesus or “son of Joshua” who is the assistant or counsellor to the governor.

- The governor is described as a prudent or intelligent man who was actually seeking Barnabas and Saul out, he wanted to hear the Word of God.
- God always seems to find the seeking heart.

Jeremiah 29:13 “And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.”

V: 8 The sorcerer opposed and withstood the Gospel message - and still does today.

- Seemingly wherever the Gospel message is brought, it is opposed.

V: 9-11 Saul, who is called Paul - this is the first time he's called Paul, and the last time he's called Saul.

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

- A new name for a new man! Saul was a Jewish name, and Paul a Roman name, appropriate for a man appointed to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles.
- Paul fixed his eyes upon Elymas - that must have been uncomfortable, foreboding perhaps.
- On another occasion when James and John saw the people reject the Gospel message they wanted to call fire down from heaven - and Jesus rebuked them:

Luke 9:55-56 "55... ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. 56For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them..."

- This time it's different: Paul is "filled with the Holy Spirit..."
- Paul just called it like it is; "full of all subtilty" - "deceitful, dishonest" and "mischief" - "wickedness" or unscrupulous behavior.
- "Thou child of the devil" - no interpretation needed there, pretty clear.
- Enemy of all righteousness, enemy of everything good.
- Rhetorical question: will you not cease to pervert / corrupt the right ways of the Lord?
- Paul accused Elymas of deliberately and consciously trying to deceive Sergius Paulus, saying that by his practicing the demonic arts, he'd proven himself to be a child of the devil.
- Paul first declares what Elymas really is, then he says what's going to happen.
- He's blind to spiritual truth, now he'll be blind to everything else as well. God has a sense of humor / irony; Elymas means "Enlightened One."

Acts 9:9 Remember Paul was blinded just before he got saved....

- For a season? No telling how long that will be, but long enough for Elymas to see that God means business. He had to be lead away by the hand.

- There are those who almost always object to identifying false prophets for what they are. “We shouldn’t speak negatively, or it’s not right to judge.” (Bill Johnson, Joel Olstein, Rick Warren, Joyce Meyers...)
- The problem is that when you’re a shepherd serving the Lord, we’re called to protect the sheep from harm and as such when you see a wolf coming to kill and destroy the sheep, a good shepherd knows what to do. Paul has the heart of a shepherd.

V: 12-13 Sergius Paulus became a believer. He saw what transpired, he heard the Word of God, the doctrine of the Lord and he believed. He wasn’t astonished at the miracle, he was astonished at the doctrine. The doctrine is that Jesus loves him!

Romans 10:17 “So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

- Mission complete at this point, they’ve pretty well covered Cyprus and they all depart. “Paul and his company” for Perga in Pamphylia, and John Mark heads back to Jerusalem. Used to be Barnabas and Paul, now it’s Paul and his company - they’ve switched roles in leadership.
- We can only speculate, and many do, on why John Mark went back to Jerusalem. Later this would be an issue between Paul and Barnabas, and as a result they will end up with two missionary teams instead of one. Later this too would be resolved when Paul sends for John Mark to help him.

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

V: 14 They each left in different directions; John Mark back for Jerusalem, Paul & Barnabas for Antioch in Pisidia. ([Map](#))

- The area where they are traveling is in the high lands, it’s a tough arduous journey with steep canyons and gorges. There are frequent flash floods and raging rivers that are difficult to cross, it’s was also noted for it’s many bandits and robbers.
- Serving the Lord is an adventure, right?
- It is thought that because of the things that Paul describes in the book of Galatians that he might have had Malaria at this time also and that getting to the higher ground of the plain might have eased his suffering from it.

- The area around Antioch is on a plateau located at 3,500 feet above sea level. When Paul wrote his letter to the churches in Galatia, it was just that, a group of churches. Galatia is a region as opposed to a singular city. There were churches in Antioch, **Lystra**, **Derbe**, and **Iconium** amongst others.
- There were several cities in the ancient world named Antioch, this one of Pisidia, different than the Antioch of Syria where they were first called Christians.
- Seleucus I Nicator was one of the four generals under Alexander the Great, who when Alexander died the empire was divided into 4 sections. Seleucus Nicator actually named 16 different cities after his father Antiochus.
- As was their custom, Paul & Barnabas headed immediately for the local Synagogue on the Sabbath.

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

- Paul always went to the Jews first, then he went to the Gentiles.

V: 15 Typically in each synagogue there is a systematic reading schedule, that is consistent in all synagogues. On a given day they will read a portion of the Law, the Pentateuch, and a portion of the prophets. They will actually get through the entire Law each year this way.

- I like that they simply read it out loud, turned it loose.

Nehemiah 8:5-8 “⁵And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; for he was above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up: ⁶And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. ⁷Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, and Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Ma-aseiah, Kelitia, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaih, and the Levites, cause the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. ⁸So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

- It is also customary to allow any traveling Rabbi's to comment on the scripture reading, which they invite Paul to do.

V: 16 Paul then begins to speak; he acknowledges that he is speaking to two different groups of people present in the Synagogue.

- “*Men of Israel*” refers to the Jews who were present, the leaders of the Synagogue and the other Jewish people.

- “*and, ye that fear God...*” There were Gentiles that came to the Synagogue who were thirsty for God. The Gentiles often came because they were tired of the multiplicity of the Greek and Roman gods, and became interested in the monotheism of Judaism. Many of those Gentiles were converted to the Jewish faith.

V: 17 As Paul begins he demonstrates quickly that he’s not talking about another god, that they are on common ground.

- Paul then proceeds to give an abbreviated summary of the history of Israel beginning with their deliverance from bondage in Egypt, which is the beginning of the nation.
- This is all somewhat similar to Steven’s sermon in Acts Ch. 7

V: 18-23 For forty years God “suffered” their manners in the wilderness.

- That means He put up with them, their complaining, and whining...
- The Jews were proud of their rich heritage but seemed to gloss over a lot of bad behavior.
- After the 40 years of wandering they crossed over the Jordan river and began to conquer the land that God had given them.
- They went through that period of time, 450 years, the times of the judges. Ending with **Samuel the prophet**, Samuel was singled out because he leads to David, who then leads to Jesus.
- King Saul is mentioned because they wanted a king like the nations around them. King Saul is removed - why? Because he wouldn’t do God’s will, he was disobedient to the Word of God.
- Then God raised up king David, a man after His own heart, who would fulfill the will of God which included David’s descendants one of which would be the Messiah, the Savior, Jesus.
- All of this is familiar history to them, and it’s creating a bond of trust between Paul and his listeners.
- Paul rather quickly cuts to the chase, getting to the main point, and begins to speak of Jesus.
- There were so many scriptures in the OT that described the coming Messiah - and Paul’s listeners would have been familiar with them.

Psalm 132:11 “The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon the throne.”

They knew:

Isaiah 9:6-7 “⁶For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

Jeremiah 33:17 “For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want (for) a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel;”

V: 24-25 Paul shifts to modern Jewish history as he brings up the subject of John the Baptist. John’s ministry was well known through Judaism, and many had speculated as to whether he might be the messiah or not.

- John Ch. 1 - The Pharisees sent a delegation to investigate and to ask John if he was or not.

John 1:23 “He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord...”

- John pointedly said that he was not the Messiah but that he came to point people to Him, who’s sandals he wasn’t worthy even to touch.

V: 26 Again, almost as a form of endearment he emphasizes “Children of the stock of Abraham, and whoever among you fears God...”

- Jesus was sent to save you from your sins! This Gospel of salvation is for everyone - both groups who would be reconciled into one group - the church.

V: 27-28 Paul now speaks of the crucifixion: Paul gives them a couple of reasons for the crucifixion, why it happened.

1. They didn’t know Him.

John 1:10-12 “¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. ¹¹He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. ¹²But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:”

2. They didn't know the scriptures:

Matthew 22:29 “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”

John 5:37-39 “³⁷And the Father Himself, which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. ³⁸And ye have not His word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not ³⁹Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.”

- Because they didn't know the scriptures, they didn't recognize the Messiah when He came to them.

Jesus even prayed for them from the cross:

Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

- The voice of the people prevailed over justice, over doing what was right. Though there was no real cause of His death, the people insisted that He be crucified. The record is clear that Pilate wanted to release Jesus because he knew that Jesus was innocent - but the people prevailed upon Pilate and he gave in to their will.

V: 29 When they had fulfilled all that was written, all that was prophesied ahead of time.

Isaiah 53:3-8 “³He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. ⁴Surely He hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth. ⁸He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken. ⁹He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.”

- Paul preached the Gospel to these people. The promise made to David was fulfilled, He sent the Savior, who is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 “³For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures;”

- God fulfilled every prophecy ever written concerning His rejection, His suffering, and His death.

V: 30-31 “*But God raised Him from the dead:*”

1 Peter 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

- The resurrection is the cornerstone of the Gospel, because without it there is no Gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:17-19 “¹⁷And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. ¹⁸Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ¹⁹If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”

“*And He was seen of many...*”

- For a period of about 40 days, Jesus appeared to His disciples at different times and places, and they all became witnesses of His resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 “³For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures: ⁵And that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: ⁶After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. ⁷After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. ⁸And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”

- Paul is laying it out pretty well. One of the miracles in this is that they are even listening - the Spirit is indeed moving!

V: 32-33 They are declaring the good news of Jesus Christ to anyone who will listen:

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 “³For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”

- Paul is speaking about the promises that were made unto the fathers, the patriarchs - which have now been fulfilled to their descendants in the raising up of Jesus - the promised Messiah has arrived with proof of who He is.
- One of those prophecies as quoted is **Psalm 2:7**.

Psalm 2:7 “I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, thou art My Son; this day have I begotten thee.”

- Often people interpret this scripture in light of the birth of Jesus, the incarnation; but Paul is using this in context of His resurrection from the dead.
- Paul is not saying Jesus was begotten in the sense that He was created, because Jesus is and always has been eternal.

John 1:1-3 “¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.”

V: 34-37 David is a central figure when it comes to so many of the prophecies about the Messiah who would be a descendant of David; and that David was used to pen many of those same prophecies.

Isaiah 53:3 “... I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”

- God had promised David that the Messiah would be one of his descendants, David knew that one day he would be with the Lord.
- One of those Messianic prophecies is located in **Psalm 16:10**.

Psalm 16:10 “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

- The first part “... *thou wilt not leave my soul in hell*...” has a dual fulfillment.
1. David believed that he wouldn't go to hell, but that he would be with the Lord. It says you won't leave my soul in hell. When David died, he went to “**Abraham's bosom**” which was a temporary holding place in hell where the believing dead waited for Jesus to liberate them. When David died, believing, in faith - Jesus

had not yet died to pay the price for his sins, so he, Abraham, Adam, Caleb, and a great many others waited for that to take place.

2. The second fulfillment is related to the first: When Jesus died on the cross He at one point descended into hell to set the captives free, not to stay there Himself, not to be punished in any way, He was there to set at liberty those for whom He died to pay the price, those who died in faith prior to His sacrifice on the cross.

Isaiah 61:1 “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

Ephesians 4:8-9 “⁸Wherefore he saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. ⁹Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth.”

Matthew 16:18 “... I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

So Paul is quoting:

Psalm 16:10 “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;..” And we see the dual fulfillment, now the second part of that reference:

Psalm 16:10b “neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

- The Messiah would suffer and die on the cross, He would be buried, and because He would rise again from the dead his body would not see corruption, He would not go through the normal decomposition process that everyone else, including king David would go through.
- Paul is pointing out that because this obviously didn't apply to David, who's body saw corruption, this is obviously not about David, but it's about His prophesied descendant.

V: 38-39 Because of these things, it's through this God man, Jesus that we preach to you about the forgiveness of sins.

- The greatest need that any and every person has is for the forgiveness of their sins. Therefore the the greatest gift is that of meeting that need.
- Forgiveness of sins is one of the distinguishing elements of Christianity that is in fact unique to Christianity.

- Biblical forgiveness is liberating; it is the mechanism for reconciliation between both God and men, between men and men, it's our opportunity to unload our guilt and set it aside.

Psalm 32:1 "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered."

- The pharmaceutical industry and the "mental health industry" would be vastly different, and greatly diminished if people would lay hold of "forgiveness."
- Instead they specialize in either masking it, ignoring it, or blaming it on others - none of which helps to actually deal with it.

1 John 1:8-9 "8If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

James 5:16 "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed..."

- As Christians we receive forgiveness, and we extend forgiveness to others. Here Paul is doing just that, he's informing these God seekers, telling them that they can be forgiven, that their sin debt has been paid through the sacrifice of Jesus.

Isaiah 53:6 "... and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

- Paul is declaring that those who place their faith in Jesus are justified before God - just as if it never happened.
- And that the blood of Jesus does for them (justification) what the Law could never do, because no one is justified by the Law.

Romans 3:20 "Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Galatians 2:16 "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

The OT speaks of this:

Jeremiah 31:31 "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:"

This new covenant will lead to their forgiveness:

Jeremiah 31:34b "... for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Turn to: Hebrews Chapter 8

- In speaking of the covenant God made with Israel through the Law, the writer of Hebrews points out that the first covenant didn't work, thus a need for the 2nd:

Hebrew 8:7-9 “⁷For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.”

- In other words, if the first one worked, you wouldn't need a second.

“⁸For finding fault with them, He saith, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: ⁹Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.”

- He gave them the Law, and promised that if they kept His commandments, He would be their God and they would be His people. The problem is, they didn't keep His commandments.
- Thus, God was released from His part of the covenant. The problem with the first covenant was that it depended on the people to fulfill it, they couldn't and didn't keep it.
- The New Covenant is based on His faithfulness, His ability to keep it, it's based on His performance, not ours, it's His grace abounding towards us.

Hebrews 8:12 “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

- That is justification.

V: 40-41 The work of God's redemption of mankind has been declared to us through the Scriptures: If you will believe in Jesus Christ, you will be justified of all the sins you've ever committed.

- But to reject this message of God's love through Jesus Christ is to put yourself in the danger of facing God's judgment.

Paul is quoting from:

Habakkuk 1:5 “Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.”

- There is a dual fulfillment for this prophecy. The primary fulfillment is in Habakkuk's time. He's living in a time of national apostasy and moral decline, not unlike the times that we're living in.
- In Habakkuk's day things are getting worse and worse, and Habakkuk asks God not to tell him or inform him any more about it, it's all just too much for him.
- God responds that "He's working a work in his day that even if I told you, you wouldn't believe it..."
- The dual fulfillment is that Paul is now speaking to those who do not believe the work that God has done through Jesus Christ in providing forgiveness and justification from all our sin.
- Though the Gospel is or has been declared to them, they reject it's truth - in a sense fulfilling the prophecy that God gave to Habakkuk.

Romans 5:19-20 ¹⁹For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. ²⁰Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

V: 42 The Jews left, and the Gentiles approached Paul and Barnabas asking that they could hear them teach the Word of God again. I call that enthusiasm!

Jesus said:

Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

V: 43 Besides the Gentiles there were Jews and "religious proselytes" who followed Paul and Barnabas.

- Proselytes were Gentile converts to Judaism. They were "pagans" who probably got tired of the polytheistic forms of worship, being drawn to "mono-theism." It's got to be difficult to trying to sacrifice to or appease multiple gods, and never really being able to.
- To boil it down to one God, the True and Living God, then to learn that He doesn't expect us to appease Him, or to sacrifice to Him, but that He would sacrifice Himself to justify us before God Almighty - wow, that had to be a pretty enticing proposition.
- Many of the Jews and these proselytes responded to the message, to the spoken word of God, just like before:

Romans 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

Acts 2:41-42 “⁴¹Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. ⁴²And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

- They were persuaded to continue in the grace of God. Jews and proselytes, both trying to adhere to the Law, came to understand the doctrine of grace, which brings with it the fulfillment of the Law, through the sacrifice of Jesus.

John 1:17 “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

- We rely on the sufficiency of His sacrifice and thereby become the beneficiaries of His grace, as do all the believe on His name.
- At this time Paul is encouraging them to “continue in the grace of God.” But they would need a reminder later on:

Galatians 1:6-7 “⁶I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel. ⁷Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”

Galatians 3:1-3 “¹O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? ²This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

- We need to guard ourselves against the same thing!

V: 44 The next sabbath day the whole city turns out to hear the Word of God.

- Word travels fast, the Holy Spirit is moving. They had never heard the Word of God taught like that and they wanted to hear more.
- That is why the church exists, our purpose to impart the Word of God to God’s people.
- The church is not intended to be a social club, or a bingo parlor, it’s to be a place where people can gather to be instructed in the Word of God.

Ephesians 4:11-15 “¹¹And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ¹²For the perfecting of the saints,

for the work of the ministry, for the **edifying of the body of Christ**: ¹³Till we all come in the **unity of the faith**, and of the **knowledge of the Son of God**, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: ¹⁴That we henceforth **be no more children**, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;"

- The church is intended to be a Bible college of sorts, where we gather around God's word to be instructed; to become spiritually mature, to be strengthened in and guided by the Holy Spirit.

V: 45 "**But**" - contrast. Whenever there is a real work of God, a moving of the Holy Spirit, the enemy will always resist, and so often does from "within", from within religious confines.

- The motive is so often the same: "... *filled with envy*..."
- Some decry the fragmentation of the church through the many different denominations but certainly to some degree God has allowed this because different forms of worship appeal to different people.
- Some people can only related to God in a very liturgical environment, and so there are churches that are very liturgical where people can go and worship God in that environment.
- Others can only worship God in a more emotional kind of environment, more demonstrative environment and so there are churches that seemingly cater to that.
- The issue is maintaining or not compromising on the truth or going to extremes that take away from actually worshipping God in Spirit and in truth.
- At one point Jesus' disciples told Him about how another man had been driving out demons in his name, but that they'd told him to stop since he wasn't following with them.

Jesus said:

Luke 9:50 "... **forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.**"

- So the Jews spoke against what Paul was speaking about. Paul was speaking the Word of God and sharing the Gospel - that means they were speaking against these things, "*contradicting and blaspheming.*"

- To speak evil of or irreverently of God, to hurt the reputation of God, or to misrepresent God - all of which the Jews were doing either directly or by implication.

V: 46 Paul and Barnabas “waxed bold” - they basically had to just tell it like it is, telling a group of people essentially what they did not want to hear or acknowledge - challenge them directly - they were rejecting the truth.

- Jesus had foreseen this day, when the Jews would reject the Gospel and that it would be taken to the gentiles:

Jesus also “waxed bold” directly with the Jewish religious leaders:

Matthew 8:11-12 “¹¹And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

- On another occasion Jesus told the Pharisees a parable:

Turn to:

Matthew 21:33-46 Parable of the landowner...

“... *seeing ye put it from you...*” pushing it away, rejecting it. And thereby judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life.

John 3:17-18 “¹⁷For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

- They judge themselves, pronounce their own judgment.

Paul is consistent:

Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

- Because of those things Paul says “we turn to the Gentiles...” responding to the Lord’s command in V: 47.

V: 47 Jesus had ordained that Paul & Barnabas would be a light to the Gentiles, the Apostle or messenger to the Gentiles, to bring about salvation to the ends of the earth.

Isaiah 42:6-7 “⁶I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; ⁷to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.”

Paul is quoting Isaiah:

Isaiah 49:6 “And he said, it is a light thing that thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.”

V: 48 Paul and Barnabas are having this discussion in public, the Jews, the proselytes, and the Gentiles are all present. As Paul publicly rebukes the Jews for their unbelief, the Gentiles aren't rejoicing that the Jews have rejected the Gospel, they're rejoicing to discover that not only will Paul continue to preach and teach to them, but that they're part of God's ordained plan - that Paul is actually responding to what the Lord has commanded.

“As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” Pre-destination, the elect. The sovereign election of God is a divine mystery, incomprehensible to our finite minds.

- All through the centuries, theologians and scholars have argued both sides of this issue.
- God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. There are implications to both sides of the debate, but it won't be resolved on this side of heaven. All I can say that is if and when you choose Jesus as your Lord and Savior, soon after you learn that He chose you first.

1 John 4:10 “Herein is love, not that we loved god, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

V: 49 All of this caused the word to spread about what was going on, the Gospel was now a common topic of discussion by both it's supporters and it's detractors.

V: 50 As would be expected, the Jews stirred up trouble against Paul and Barnabas, and the work of God.

- The devout and honorable women were women who were proselytes and who had powerful connections. Married to the civic leaders.
- These are probably women who themselves had been draw to Judaism because of the value and protections that were placed on Jewish women, which was a real contrast to the women of the Grecian and Roman cultures.

- In these cultures women had very little value, they were treated and traded like cattle.
- The Greeks espoused that every man should have three different women to meet his various needs. A girlfriend or companion to accompany him to parties and public events, a consort or mistress to fulfill his sensual pleasures, and a wife to bear his legitimate children and care for his home.
- In this climate, honorable women were drawn to Judaism for its restrictions in placing a higher value on women and its holding of marriage in higher esteem.
- Ultimately Christianity superseded Judaism in this, placing equal value on women generally and greatly esteeming the institution of marriage.

Paul would later write:

Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

V: 51-52 Paul & Barnabas shook off the dust of their feet - they were done with those guys.

Jesus said when He sent His disciples out:

Matthew 10:11-15 “¹¹And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. ¹²And when ye come into an house, salute it. ¹³And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. ¹⁵Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.”

- No so far from there the disciples are filled with joy, and with the Holy Spirit.
- Persecution is supposed to suppress the church, to do harm to the church - but it always has the opposite effect.

The fruit of the Spirit:

Galatians 5:22-23 “²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

- Where there is an abundance of the Holy Spirit, there is an abundance of joy.

