

**Acts 13:16-47 (Sermon in Antioch of Pisidia)**

“Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. <sup>17</sup> The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. <sup>18</sup> And for about forty years he put up with<sup>[b]</sup> them in the wilderness. <sup>19</sup> And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. <sup>20</sup> All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. <sup>21</sup> Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. <sup>22</sup> And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ <sup>23</sup> Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. <sup>24</sup> Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. <sup>25</sup> And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’

<sup>26</sup> “Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. <sup>27</sup> For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. <sup>28</sup> And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. <sup>29</sup> And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. <sup>30</sup> But God raised him from the dead, <sup>31</sup> and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. <sup>32</sup> And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, <sup>33</sup> this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm,

“‘You are my Son,  
today I have begotten you.’

<sup>34</sup> And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,

“‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.’

<sup>35</sup> Therefore he says also in another psalm,

“‘You will not let your Holy One see corruption.’

<sup>36</sup> For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, <sup>37</sup> but he whom God raised up did not see corruption.

<sup>38</sup> Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, <sup>39</sup> and by him everyone who believes is freed<sup>[c]</sup> from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. <sup>40</sup> Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about:

<sup>41</sup> ““Look, you scoffers,  
be astounded and perish;  
for I am doing a work in your days,  
a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.””

<sup>42</sup> As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath.

<sup>43</sup> And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

<sup>44</sup> The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. <sup>45</sup> But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. <sup>46</sup> And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. <sup>47</sup> For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,

““I have made you a light for the Gentiles,  
that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.””

## Setting

Saul, after his conversion preached for some time in Jerusalem. Acts 9 tells the story of Saul's conversion and his ministry immediately following.

### **Acts 9:26-30**

And when he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. <sup>27</sup> But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup> So he went in and out among them at Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. <sup>29</sup> And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists.<sup>[a]</sup> But they were seeking to kill him. <sup>30</sup> And when the brothers learned this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

Barnabas, a man from Cyprus was one of the early converts of the disciples. He was in Jerusalem and in community with the apostles when the early group of followers were worshipping. We first meet Barnabas back in Acts 4 where he sells land and gives it to the benefit of the early believers.

### **Acts 4:36-37**

Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, <sup>37</sup> sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Later, after the stoning of Stephen, some followers were scattered to Antioch – a region north of Jerusalem, in modern day Syria.

### **Acts 11:19-26**

<sup>19</sup> Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. <sup>20</sup> But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists<sup>[a]</sup> also, preaching the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup> And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. <sup>22</sup> The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. <sup>23</sup> When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, <sup>24</sup> for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. <sup>25</sup> So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, <sup>26</sup> and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

The church at Antioch was founded by men who were scattered because of his pre-conversion persecution of the saints. As that church grew in the faith, the disciples in Jerusalem sent to them Barnabas. He was, no doubt, sent there to verify the presence of God and the soundness of the doctrines – remember there was no New Testament yet, so they could not simply say they were basing

their faith in the doctrines of the Scripture. This was also immediately after the visions Peter had of the blanket with the “unclean” animals on it and accepts the Gospel going to the Gentiles. Barnabas finds the church in Antioch correct in doctrine. The Bible tells us that Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. Seeing this in Antioch, Barnabas set out to find Saul. We’re not told the reason for this, but imagine – **the church in Antioch was built upon the witness of refugees from Saul’s persecution, and Barnabas goes to get the now converted Saul.**

**I find it absolutely incredible that Barnabas went looking for Saul.** But that’s the story, and a great testament to the Grace of God. Saul and Barnabas spent a year in Antioch worshiping and teaching the early believers.

#### **Acts 11:27-30**

<sup>27</sup> Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. <sup>28</sup> And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). <sup>29</sup> So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers<sup>[a]</sup> living in Judea. <sup>30</sup> And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

So after a year in Antioch, Saul and Barnabas make a trip back down to Jerusalem to deliver food to the church in Judea. They evidently stay there for a little while Herod persecutes the church. In Acts 12 Herod kills James (The brother of John) one of the original 12 disciples by cutting off his head, and throws Peter in prison. Peter is released from Prison and Herod dies in Acts 12. At the end of chapter 12 we read that the Gospel spread in Jerusalem and Saul and Barnabas return to Antioch

#### **Acts 12:24-25**

But the word of God increased and multiplied. <sup>25</sup> And Barnabas and Saul returned from<sup>[a]</sup> Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark.

## Evangelism in Cyprus (Chapter 13:1-12)

#### **Acts 13:1 – 3**

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger,<sup>[a]</sup> Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” <sup>3</sup> Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Saul (gentile name Paul) and Barnabas set sail to the island of Cyprus.

Cyprus is an island in the Eastern Mediterranean.

- This island is off the coast of Syria.
- Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea.

- It covers 3,571 square miles
- Was the birthplace of Barnabas – Acts 4:36-37

This is a homecoming for Barnabas, and we can speculate that he wanted to share the Gospel with his people, maybe his family, maybe his childhood friends. They travel the island sharing the Gospel.

- Proclaimed the Word of God in the Synagogues
- Went through the whole island
- Proconsul (Roman Governor) summoned them to hear the Word
  - Magician (Bar-Jesus or Elymas) False prophet – opposed them
  - Saul, filled with the Spirit – rebukes him
    - Son of the devil, enemy of righteousness, full of deceit and villainy
    - Will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?
      - (Isaiah 40:3, John 1:23)
    - Magician blinded
- Governor believed

## Paul and Barnabas in Antioch in Pisidia (Chapter 13:13-52)

After they left the island of Cyprus, they journeyed north towards the modern day Turkey. They landed in Perga in Pamphylia and John left them there to return to Jerusalem. From there they continued on to Antioch in Pisidia (about 100 miles north along the Cestrus river through the mountains. This city was a major Roman colony in Asia Minor. The land journey would take them about a week to arrive there on foot.

Here in this city Paul gives an amazingly God- centric sermon of the Gospel.

### [Read Acts 13:13-52]

A couple of things we should make note of in this sermon by Paul.

#### 1. The God-centric nature of the Sermon

- Paul's Sermon in the Synagogue on the Sabbath
  - God is the cause of all History
    - God chose our fathers (v.17)
    - God made our people great in Egypt (multiplied them) (v.17)
    - God led them out of Egypt (v.17)
    - God put them in the wilderness for 40 years (v.18)
    - God destroyed 7 nations in Canaan (v.19)
    - God gave them the land as an inheritance (v.19)
    - God gave them the Judges until Samuel (v.20)
      - They asked for a king (v.21)
    - God Gave them Saul for 40 years (v.21)
    - God removed Saul (v.22)
    - God Gave them David (a man after my own heart) (v.22)

11. God gave Israel a Savior, Jesus, from the line of David as He promised (v.23)
  - a. Before His coming, John the Baptist proclaimed a baptism of repentance for all the people
  - b. The message of salvation came to the Jews first.
    - i. To us has been sent the message, sons of Abraham (v.26)
    - ii. Those that lived in Jerusalem did not understand or recognize (v.27)
    - iii. They fulfilled the prophecies by condemning Him (v.27)
    - iv. The found no guilt in him (v.28)
    - v. They asked Pilate to have him killed (v.28)
    - vi. They took him down and laid him in the tomb (v. 29)
12. God Raised him from the dead (v.30)
13. What God promised, He has fulfilled by raising Jesus (v.32-33)
  - a. Jesus is God's son (v. 33)
  - b. David spoke of Him (v. 34-36 – same reference that Peter uses in Acts 2 – cited from Psalms 16)
14. Through Jesus forgiveness of sin is proclaimed (v.38)
15. Through Jesus you are freed from the Law of Moses (v.39)

God is in charge of all of History. God is the one that builds up and tears down. God is the one who allows His chosen people to be in bondage for 400 years, or gives them the Promised land. God is the one who sets up kings (or Presidents) and God is the one who tears them down. God is actively involved in the affairs of men and works all things together for good.

## 2. God is in charge of people, places, and events

**I think a lot of times we say this, and think we believe this, but we function as practical-deists.** We act (I act) as if I determine my fate, I am responsible for my life and my future. I am responsible for the faith of my children and the legacy that I produce. I am responsible for the results I achieve in my job (hear the pride in this – in ACHIEVE)

*A deist is a person who believes that God designed and created the world and governs it through natural laws that are inherent in everything. Human beings are "free agents in a free world." A "free agent" is someone who has authority and ability to choose his/her actions and who may make mistakes. A "free world" is one which ordinarily operates as it is designed to operate but failures and accidents may occur.*

This sermon, and I believe the entire Bible is pretty clear – that God is responsible for the happenings in our lives and families.

**Luke 12:6-7** tells us that God knows how many hairs are on your head – sounds like a God that takes an interest in the small things of our lives.

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?<sup>[b]</sup> And not one of them is forgotten before God. <sup>7</sup> Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.

### 3. God accomplishes His plans with (or without) our knowledge. – that’s why we are called to trust and be full of faith.

One last thing on the Supremacy of God in all things (**I get this from John Piper**) Look closely at Acts 13:27

#### **Acts 13:37**

For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him.

This verse is talking about the crucifixion of Jesus. It tells us that those who fulfilled the prophecy that He will be crucified did not do it because they understood what they were doing, they did it because they did NOT understand what they were doing.

Deists would have you believe that God allows us to make our own choices and “hopes” that it will all work out fine. This passage tells us that these men, who crucified Jesus, were not acting in partnership with God to accomplish the prophecies – but were acting in oblivion of God’s plan!

**Is it fair to say that: God accomplishes His purpose in history (and my life) withier I am aware of it or not?**

### Back to the narrative

Many believed – Jews rejected. This is a familiar theme in Acts. The Gospel goes to the Jews first, then when they reject it goes to the Gentiles. *We have discussed this already theologically from Romans 9-11*

#### **Acts 13:44-45**

The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. <sup>45</sup> But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.

The Gentiles believed (all that were appointed to Eternal life)

#### **Acts 13:48**

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

The Jews in this city continued to oppose Paul and Barnabas and persecute them, so they left for Iconium.

## Chapter 14 – The Continued Journey & The Return Trip

1. They went to Iconium (14:1-7)
  - a. Went to the Synagogue
  - b. Great number of Jews & Greeks believed
  - c. Unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles against them. (v. 2)

- d. They remained for a long time speaking boldly, God granted signs and wonders to confirm the message
    - e. Gentiles & Jews, with their leaders, attempted to stone them – they left.
- 2. Fled to Lystra city of Lycaonia (14:8-20)
  - a. Continued to preach the Gospel
  - b. Healed man who could not use his feet
  - c. People wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas
  - d. Paul and Barnabas reject the worship and proclaim they are just men
  - e. Jews from Antioch & Iconium came and stirred up the people (v. 19)
  - f. The people stoned Paul – he got up when the disciples came to him.
- 3. They went to Derbe, a city of Lycaonia (14:20-21)
  - a. Preached the Gospel
  - b. Made many disciples
- 4. RETURN TRIP (14:21-28)
  - a. Lystry, Iconium, *Pisidia*, *Pamphylia*, *Perga*, *Attalia*, Antioch
    - i. Strengthening the souls of the disciples
    - ii. Encouraging them to continue in the faith
    - iii. Appointed elders in every church
  - b. Committed them to the Lord