

## Acts 13:1-43

“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away. 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to *their* minister. 6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name *was* Bar-jesus: 7 which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. 13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem. 14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men *and* brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. 16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. 17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and

exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought them out of it. 18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will. 23 Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: 24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose. 26 Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. 27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*. 28 And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. 29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre. 30 But God raised him from the dead: 31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. 34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. 35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: 37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. 38 Be it known unto you

**therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. 42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.”**

*Introduction: A Group of Prophets & Teachers In The Church of Antioch of Syria*

[Audio version: <http://resources.ccphilly.org/SPM609>]

“Acts chapter 13, the verse before that, **25**, really belongs to it, it says **“And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry,”** they had taken relief to the church there, **“and took with them John, whose surname was Mark”** the one who will write Mark’s Gospel, and certainly I love Mark’s Gospel, the pace of it, the way it moves, the meter of it, just unbelievable. **“Now”** it says **“there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.” (verse 1)** Manaen, the step-brother of Herod, now that’s the tetrarch, that’s Herod Antipas that put John the Baptist to death. And also Saul, of Tarsus was there. So this is an interesting church, you have a picture of these leaders, five of them specifically named, none of them are from Antioch, this is in Syria, Antioch in Syria. Two of them are from North Africa, Saul is from Tarsus, Barnabas is from Cyprus, and Manaen is brought up, it seems, in Rome with Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, who ends up with the territory there in Perea, and takes John the Baptist into custody and puts him to death. Interesting group, every church no doubt

needs a Barnabas, or a Barna-babe, I'm not sure. Barnabas had that ability just to see somebody with a broken heart, to come alongside them, to minister to them, great man to have there as part of the leadership of the church, I'm sure that his gift, his influence, so important there. Simon, called Niger, this is probably Simon the Cyrene who had carried the cross of Jesus Christ, and how we need those in leadership in the church, that are passionate about the cross of Christ, that have been there, that have taken hold, as it were, and have lent their shoulder to the things that the Lord has put in front of them, because of their passionate love for him. Manaen, brought up, just imagine, played with, brought up in the courts with, knew Herod Antipas his whole life, and no doubt he's brought up with a silver spoon in his mouth, wealthy, an aristocrat, politically a man with probably incredible influence. And somewhere along the line there is a divide, and Herod Antipas becomes the man that takes John the Baptist into custody, who would gladly hear him, but at a drunken party, for the sake of Herodias and his pride, has this man, this great prophet, the greatest prophet Jesus said that ever lived, beheaded. And on the other side, this other one that had grown up in the same circumstances and the same opulence ends up to be a man who finds Jesus Christ, and now here he is among these leaders in the church at Antioch. What an interesting picture, an interesting gathering of individuals as we look at them here. And then there's Saul of Tarsus, the great scholar, the great mind, the one who Gamaliel says that he couldn't keep in books there. And they're gathered together, interesting combination.

### *The Holy Spirit Steps In With Marching Orders For Saul & Barnabas*

It says in **verse 2**, notice, **“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”** The Holy Spirit mentioned 54 times in the Book of Acts, certainly directing the Church, again, Tozier saying that if the Holy Spirit was removed from the Church today, 95 percent of what we're doing would keep right on going and nobody would notice the difference. If the Holy Spirit were removed from the Book of Acts, 95 percent of what they

were doing would come to a screeching halt, and everybody would know the difference. **“The Holy Spirit said”** we’re not sure how that happened. It could have been in prophetic form or one of these men just opened his mouth, there are teachers there, it tells us the church is balanced, they’re teaching the Old Testament, it would be their text. There are prophets there, that maybe one of them openly prophesied, like Agabus from Jerusalem, setting these guys aside, or was it a situation where Barnabas and Saul had a burden for the Gentile world, they had been praying, saying *‘This is on our heart,’* and as they fasted and prayed the other men said *‘you know, we concur, God is speaking to us too, we’re all of one mind, we believe it’s the leading of the Spirit.’* And when we come to the conference in Jerusalem, Acts chapter 15, the apostles will say **‘It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.’** So it could have happened in that way, it doesn’t specify, and I’m glad because then we would franchise it and classify it, and it would dry up and wither away, if we could put it in a category. So it’s nonspecific, that we need to be open to the leading of the Spirit. But the question is, how much room do we make for the Holy Spirit in our own lives, in our own ministries? Here he is the one directing the church and says **“Separate [unto] me”**, isn’t it interesting, they’re there, they’re ministering to the Lord, that’s what creates an atmosphere where the Spirit is present and speaking, ministering to the Lord. They’re telling him how much they love him, where they’re worshipping and fasting, they’re seeking him. It doesn’t seem they’re asking from him, they’re ministering to him. Again, as we gather, I love the songs that we sing to him, *Thou Art Worthy*, I love that kind of worship, in the Book of Revelation chapter 4 and 5, it’s all *Thou*-centered, singing to him, the throngs in heaven are looking at him and singing to him and worshipping him, ministering to him. You know, sometimes folks again, they come to church, and they sit through the praise section of the service, and they walk away and say *‘Ya, I didn’t get anything out of that, it really didn’t move me at all.’* Who cares? Did it move him? Or are we coming together to minister to him or minister to you, it’s all about us, isn’t it all the time? They ministered to the Lord, it says here. And as they’re doing that the Holy Spirit then speaks to them, **‘Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the ministry whereunto I have called them.’** We’re almost 14 years, a little less than that, since the Road to Damascus, when the Lord appeared to Saul of Tarsus, and now he’s being separated. **“And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their**

**hands on them, they sent them away.” (verse 3)** Now after they have this edict from the Spirit to separate these two, then the church gathers together, it seems, and fasts and prays, they laid their hands on them, and **“they sent them away.”** Literally it says of the church, it isn’t in the Greek “they sent them away,” but **“they released them,”** they let go of them. **Verse 4** says, **“they sent forth by the Holy Spirit,”** that’s a different word altogether. So these men are released by the church to go to the ministry, that’s confirmed, **they’re released by the church, they’re sent forth by the Holy Spirit.** One man I read said *“In the mission field there’s only two kinds of missionary, the sent ones and the went ones,”* and he says *“you want the sent ones, you don’t want the went ones.”* Interesting picture, because the church here is willing to let go of or to release two of its most dynamic leaders, to go, to leave this body of believers, group of leadership. You know, sometimes when somebody comes to us in the church that’s a trouble-maker, that says *‘I feel a call to the ministry,’* we go *‘Yes! Yes! send him away!’* You don’t want to do that to a missionary or a missionary organization, you don’t want to send the church’s main trouble-maker somewhere else in the world, you keep them right here and minister to them, be patient with them and love them. But it’s different when two of the main leaders in the church, spiritual men, the church is willing to release them to go do the work that the Holy Spirit has called them to. We have a beautiful picture of that here. When they had fasted, when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them, and they released them, this is around March 48 AD, it’s in the Spring.

### *Paul’s 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey Begins*

**“So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.” (verse 4)** “by the Holy Ghost” notice that. Now, we want to use some PowerPoint, do we have that Matt, can you put that up? [see [https://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map\\_pauls\\_first\\_missionary\\_journey.html](https://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map_pauls_first_missionary_journey.html)] You get an idea, let me get out my military laser here, try not to burn a hole in the wall. See there’s Antioch in Syria. That’s their starting point. They have to travel from Antioch down to Seleucia, that’s about 16 miles. There’s Antioch where we start in Syria, because we don’t want to confuse it with Antioch in Pisidia, up here,

ok? We start in Antioch in Syria, they go to Seleucia, that's one of the main harbours in the Mediterranean, it's named after Seleucid, one of Alexander the Great's four generals, you remember Cassander, Seleucius, Ptolemais, named after him, it's a 16 mile walk from Antioch. Now please try, we want to get it in your mind this evening as we follow some of this, imagine if you had to appear for jury duty, and you had to go down to city hall, there were no cars, you didn't have a donkey. If you had to make a 30 mile journey to city hall, you start today, you stay with a friend or somebody on the way, and you get there tomorrow, walking there, to have them say '*Naw, we don't need ya,*' and you walk home. Just try to, you know, sometimes we don't want to go across the street to witness to our neighbour, sometimes we're at work we don't want to walk to the next desk to tell somebody about Jesus. This is the first time the Gospel will be going to sea in a missionary endeavor. Certainly there were those who were at Pentecost that went home to their native areas that had come to Jerusalem. This is the first time the Gospel is deliberately now going to sea, going to the Gentile world, the Gospel is moving now not because of persecution. You know, they were driven out of Jerusalem, the Gospel had been spread because of the persecution. Now this is through prayer and fasting, they have decided that God is sending them into the Gentile world. They make this 16 mile trek south to Seleucia along the Orontes River there where there's a major port, and as they get there, John Mark is probably the one, the language gives us, he's kind of the understudy or the subordinate, he's the one probably running around and buying them passage on a ship, they're going to take the ship now from Seleucia there, to Cyprus, to Salamis the main port on the eastern end of that island. Cyprus is about 135 miles from end to end, 60 miles wide here in this area, and they're going to take a ship about 100 miles from there to there, to Cyprus, to that end it's about 75, but right to the port it's a little more than that. So from Seleucia, they board a ship, the three of them, they travel 75, 80 miles. How long does that take? We're not told, depends on the winds. It isn't like the captain says '*Hey, put it in 3<sup>rd</sup> gear, we're behind schedule,*' it all depends if the winds are favourable, certain times of the year, they knew how to master the sea and which way the trade winds were blowing. So they're going to make this journey to Cyprus. We're told in chapter 4:36 that Barnabas was from Cyprus. So he's familiar with the entire island. It's a very interesting place, look, we're going to go into this, the language gives us the impression that they come to Salamis first and they preach the

Gospel there. In Salamis there are amphitheaters, there's a university, there's libraries, it's a metropolitan city. From there it says, let's look in **verse 4**, "**So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.**" (verses 4-5) Salamis is the largest city on the eastern end of the island where the port is. "**they preached the word of God in the synagogues**" and no doubt Barnabas knew where they were, "**of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.**" John Mark, the one who wrote the Gospel of Mark, with them. We find him in John's Gospel, it seems he's the young man there in Gethsemane, and he was an eye-witness to the arrest, the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's quite an experience for a young man, he's now with these two apostles. Throughout the chapter Barnabas is called an apostle. It says "the apostles" plural, speaking of Barnabas and Paul. Certainly they are in the sense that they have been sent forth to do this work. Now, interesting island, look, in **verse 6** it says "**And when they had gone through**" it's literally "**throughout the isle**" they go to Pathos, see Pathos at the other end? That's a 100 miles journey overland, they're going straight across, it says they went throughout, there are a number of other cities, and it seems they took their time and went to all of those other cities crossing the island. It's going to develop Paul, as they leave there, it's no longer Barnabas and Saul, it now becomes Paul and his party, Paul and Barnabas, he becomes the prominent leader. Cyprus presents some interesting problems, it's the third largest island in the Mediterranean, there's Salamis, and Celesia and Cyprus, there are ruins in Cyprus that are 6,000 years old, there has always been a presence of one culture or another there. The Romans were controlling Cyprus at this point, there's a Roman procurator there, we're going to find out his name, it tells us here his name is Sergius Paulus. They have discovered in excavations his full name is Lucius Sergius Paulus, he was appointed by the Roman Senate, and sent to Cyprus, and immediately after this, very interestingly they found he went back to Rome, and with three other engineers, he had charge of the Tiber River, because at certain times of the year the Tiber River as it flowed through the city of Rome would flood the city. So him, and three other engineers were in charge of aqueducts, different kinds of canals and sewer systems, so when the river rose, they would be in charge, imagine that, of the Tiber River so it wouldn't flood the city.

His family is in Pisidia Antioch, we have come to know there, actually in 1960 they discovered more about him. So this is an historical character, Lucius Sergius Paulus. Here's what's happening, on this island in the city of Salamis where they first come, there's a huge temple to Zeus there, where there's idolatry along with the synagogues. On the other end of the isle, Pathos, there is neo-Pathos, which is the new Pathos, and the old Pathos. The old Pathos has the major temple to Venice and Aphrodite there, which was an immoral worship. The Romans came to feel that that was depraved, they couldn't stand it, certainly Caesar worship would come into vogue. But the Romans couldn't stand some of the pagan worship that was throughout their empire, they tolerated it. On the Isle of Cyprus, every woman, when she reached womanhood, maturity, had to give herself to the temple of Venus for a certain length of time, and be a prostitute there, and give herself to any of those merchants selling in the city, or any men on the island, and all the money she would earn she would put in the treasury of Aphrodite in the temple. That's how depraved the island was. And here are these two men coming. Now here's something you want to take note of, if you're a missionary, you want to be a missionary, as we watch this, as Paul comes to Cyprus with Barnabas, they hit first the major metropolitan area, and then it seems they hit a lot of the outlying districts where there's synagogues, and they finally come to Pathos on the other end of the island. By the time Paul, after this, we're going to see, comes to Pamphylia and Perga, which is a major city at the bottom of the mountain range there in Galatia, he changes his strategy for missions. He then begins to go strictly to metropolitan areas, as we follow Paul, he's going to go to Ephesus, he's going to go to Thessalonica, he's going to go to Colossi, he's going to go to Rome, he's going to go to Corinth, he makes his policy to go to the big metropolitan area, and just when he gets there he causes a ruckus. And he will then trust the churches that are born to go out to the outlying districts in the area where those major cities are, to do the work that would be too time-consuming for him and Barnabas and Silas. So, his missionary strategy is developing here.

*Paul Preaches The Gospel To Sergius Paulus In Pathos,  
Cyprus*

They come now to Salamis, on the eastern end of the island, Mark is their minister [servant, helper], **“And when they had gone through the isle unto Pathos,”** to the other end, **“they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:”** son-of-Jesus, son of Joshua **“which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.”** (verses 6-7) it tells us this man, that he was a prudent man. Isn't it interesting, that he was desiring to hear the Word of God. **“But Elymas”** this is Bar-jesus the sorcerer, **verse 8** says **“But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.”** what it's telling us is the word Elymas means sorcerer or wise man or magi is the idea. So, it says here the **“Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.”** (verse 8) He is a prudent man (this Sergius Paulus), he is an educated man, he hears what's happening on this island as Paul and Barnabas are working their way across, no doubt he has ears across the entire island, and he wants to hear them. He hears of the good influence, he hears of what's taking place, and he wants to hear the word that they're preaching, and it says but this false prophet, this Elymas there tries to get in the way, and turn the deputy, the proconsul from the faith. **Verse 9, “Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?”** (verses 9-10) Now Saul means “requested” or “asked for,” it's interesting king Saul was the first king, and he was asked for, he was requested, that's what Saul actually means. His name now is changed to Paul, which means “little.” It doesn't seem like much of a compliment, does it? To be changed from “asked for” to “little.” So, **‘Saul, who is also called Paul, notice, filled with the Holy Ghost,’** and the class condition there is **‘being filled then, having been filled at that moment with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, on Elymas, and he says, O full of all subtilty and mischief, thou child of the devil,’** Paul, why don't you just say what you're thinking, **‘O full of all subtilty and mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?’** Imagine if somebody said that today, they'd be a *terrorist* in no time. **“And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not**

**seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.” (verse 11)** And Paul is thinking *‘I know exactly how you’ll feel, because they had to lead me by the hand into Damascus, and I had to wait for Ananias to come and pray for me.’* He says **“thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness;”** it’s hard for us to imagine what that was, **“and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.” (verses 11-12)** the deputy, the proconsul Sergius Paulus. He was astonished, not at the miracle, but **“at the doctrine of the Lord.”** What he’s astonished at is what he’s hearing from Paul and from Barnabas of Christ, of his forgiveness, of his resurrection. He sees what took place, which no doubt has amazed him, but he believed, what caused his belief is the Word of God, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord, so important. History then tells us, it’s not long after this, this man goes back to Rome. I wonder if when Paul got to Rome he was able to find this Sergius Paulus, as he came to visit him there.

### *Paul’s Missionary Journey Continues Up Into Asia Minor*

Notice, **“Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.” (verse 13)** John just got it seems afraid, panned out on him. So they leave here from Pathos, they sail now over 100 miles, probably about 150 up here to Perga, which is a little bit in from the coast [of Asia Minor, modern Turkey now], and it’s the area of Pamphylia. This [he’s pointing] Pisidia, this is Galatia, you see that, Paul comes to this area, there were robbers, it was a tough area, most historians feel that there was a typhoid [epidemic] going through the Mediterranean in this part of the world at this point in time, we’re going to hear that Paul has problems with his vision, some feel that he contracted this typhoid. No doubt him and Barnabas hook up with some type of a caravan that will go from Perga all the way up here to Pisidia Antioch, which is 100 miles, and it goes from sea level to 3,600 foot above sea level up to the plateau, so it’s quite an incredible journey. Imagine a hundred mile walk uphill, through robbers and brigands and thieves and a difficult

area. So they're going from Pathos, 150 mile voyage on the ocean, to Perga which is in Pamphylia, and up here in Galatia to the area of the Galatian plateau, so this journey is made. Now when Paul and his company loose from Pathos, verse 13, they came to Perga in Pamphylia, and John at that point departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. In chapter 15, verse 38, Paul and Barnabas have such a sharp argument about whether to take John Mark back into the mission field, that they split up at that point, and Paul takes Silas, and Barnabas will take John Mark and go into the mission field. As we come to the **Book of Colossians, chapter 4**, it says **"Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you, and Markus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom you've received commandments, if he come to you, to receive him)"** (verse 10) Paul says. Now he's softening, and of course Paul will say in the end of **2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy** as he is signing off, he says **"Do your diligence to come shortly to me, Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica, Precians to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia, only Luke is with me, take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me in the ministry,"** wonderfully Barnabas, who is the son of consolation, will take this young man, his nephew it seems, John Mark, will minister to him, and somewhere along the way hand him off to Peter, and he becomes then the secretary as it were of Peter, and will write the Gospel of Mark from Peter's memoirs and the things that he's heard from the apostle Peter at the end of his life, so valuable [and this turned into the Gospel of Mark]. So there are those, maybe in your life, who let you down, turn away, seem like they've gone back, they've walked out on their commitment to the Lord, they're backslidden, be patient with them, pray for them, God may have a wonderful plan for them, and he's whittling away at them, just as he's whittling away at you and I. So this young man goes back, possibly afraid, in this area of Pisidia Antioch. We know we are told this in the **Book of Galatians**, and I think it's important, Paul says in chapter 4 **"I am afraid of you for you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am, for I am as you are, you have not injured me at all. You know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first."** Now, Paul is saying to those in Galatia, **'you know how through the intermediate agency of sickness, I preached to you.'** He doesn't say *'Despite the fact I was sick I came,'* the Greek says **'Because I was sick I came to you.'** Paul, evidently, if he had this malaria, this trouble with his eyes, left sea level, where there was greater

trouble, he went up to the higher, drier regions of Galatia, 3,600 foot above sea level, where he ministered there, and he says to those Galatians, ***‘it was through my infirmity that I was here in the first place,’*** how God had used that in his life. He says ***‘You know through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first, and my temptation which was in my flesh, you despised not, nor rejected, but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness you spoke of, for I bear you record that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?’*** We know that Paul developed eye problems, and at one point he talks, he signs off an epistle, he says ***‘You see how large the writing is, it’s my own hand,’*** most of the time he had others writing for him. And this was a man of incredible fortitude, this is a man who never backed down, this was a giant in a little man’s body, who had bad eyes, who evidently was plagued with fevers, who traveled over some of the roughest areas in the world. And we think of the missionary now. It’s not like going to Greece today or going to the ruins of Ephesus today, these were rough areas. And this man forges forward with complete confidence, being sent forth of the Holy Spirit, as we read, and he comes now into this area of Perga which, and then he came to Antioch, 100 miles, in Pisidia, we’re up in the middle of the drawing at that point [[https://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map\\_pauls\\_first\\_missionary\\_journey.html](https://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map_pauls_first_missionary_journey.html)].

*Luke Records Paul’s Missionary Sermon For Us As An Example Of The Type Sermons He Preached & To Whom He Preached*

**“But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.” (verse 14)** “on the sabbath day” that will always be his practice. Now this is again, a metropolitan area, it’s a fairly large city. **“And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.” (verse 15)** So they look, they see Barnabas and Paul the apostle there, maybe they have heard this man is from the

Sanhedrin, this Paul the apostle, he's been a student of Gamaliel, and the man that's with him, Barnabas is a Levite, that was quite a remarkable experience for a synagogue up in this area. And it was typical in the synagogue, after the reading, to invite any traveling rabbis and so forth that were there to speak. So they say to Paul the apostle, **'If you have anything to say, would you like to have the mike?'** Now this is Paul the apostle. He said **'Mmm, ok,'** and he stands up in the middle of the synagogue, it says **"Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience."** (verse 16) [Comment: that part of the verse that I underlined were a group of people that has come to light in recent historical studies, especially in Oskar Skarsaune's *In The Shadow Of The Temple*, represented Gentiles whom the Jews in the local synagogue had evangelized to, convincing them of the existence of the One True God, instead of the pagan gods of the pantheon, and this special group of Gentiles were referred to by the Jews (and Luke in Acts uses their terminology) as *God-fearers*, or as Paul calls them *"ye that fear God."* These are the Gentiles, along with the some of the Jews in the synagogue, whom God would use Paul to call into the body of Christ. They are no longer pagan Gentiles, but attendees of the synagogues, worshipping on God's Sabbath and Holy Days just as the attending Jews did. To view this Messianic Jewish view of Paul's evangelism, in light of these historic discoveries, see <https://unityinchrist.com/history2/index3.htm>] Now he's calling them to pay attention, listen, this is the first recorded sermon of Paul the apostle. It's long, and it gives us a sense of his content. When we come to Iconium and Derbe and Lystra, we're not given the content of his preaching there. So we assume that the Holy Spirit gives us this long description of his first sermon recorded so we have a sense of his message and what he had to say as he spoke. And it's a very interesting picture, it is very much like the process that Stephen followed. You know, talk about plagiarism, here is Paul the apostle, if you study and you have twelve resources then it's research, if you have one resource it's plagiarism. Here is Paul, the words of Stephen had burned in his heart, he knew they were true. And again, I think Stephen may have died thinking *'Lord, what a waste, if I thought I had your Word, if I had had an open door,'* he had no idea there was one man he was sowing seed into that would change the world, our world here tonight. So it's very interesting to compare this with Stephen's sermon back in Acts chapter 7. **"Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel,**

**and ye that fear God,**” [remember the two distinct ethnic groups within the synagogue he’s addressing] **“give audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought them out of it. And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.”** or their lack of manners, **“And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan,”** notice this, **“he divided their land to them by lot.” (verses 16-19)** Please, you know, it’s a great place to refer when you’re in the Old Testament, when you’re in Joshua, you’re in Judges, it speaks of the portions given to the children of Israel by lot, the dice were loaded, to the Jew, it was not like the lottery we see on TV where you’re buying lottery tickets which you might win, no to the Jew the Lord directed the lot, they took that for granted that if they did it in faith [i.e. the Jews, tribe of Judah, got the area of and surrounding Jerusalem and the Shepula, whereas the other 11 tribes got different areas within the Promise Land of Israel, there was a God-ordained reason the tribe of Judah, the Jews got the mountainous area Jerusalem sits on, God was going to use the Jews of Judah and Jerusalem to protect his Law, and the Jews to this day have a God-given responsibility to maintain the Torah without flaws] It says here it was the Lord who divided their land to them, and he did it by lot, it says. **“And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, [Kush] a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.”** they would change from a theocracy to a monarchy here, asking for this, David would be God’s man, **“And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.”** (and I think some of his own there) **“Of this man’s seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:” (verses 20-23)** God will criticize Solomon, and he will say to Solomon **‘Your heart is not perfect towards me, like the heart of your father David.’** Wait, wait, David committed adultery, David committed murder, and God will say to Solomon **‘Your heart is not perfect toward me like the heart of your father David,’** David was a very human man, David fell, and David sinned, but one thing David never did, he never changed Gods, he failed before his God, he sinned before his God, he didn’t turn to Baal or to Ashtaroth. Solomon allowed his many

wives to build idolatrous temples throughout the area of Jerusalem, to the gods of Amon, to Molech, to Ashtoreth and to Baal and so forth, and God would challenge him and say **'Your heart is not perfect towards me like the heart of your father David.'** Ya, David made mistakes, but David never changed gods, and David finished loving the Lord with all of his heart, he says **'David, a man after my own heart.'** **"Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:"** (verse 23) Now they were all familiar with that, the Jews believed that the Messiah when he came would be of the lineage of David and the House of David, there was none of them that questioned that. **"when John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose."** (verses 24-25) now Paul, we're not sure, is he one of the Pharisees and Sadducees that came down to the river and John said to them **'Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come!'** had Paul stood there and heard those words right from the mouth of John the Baptist? Or had Paul heard them from others in the Sanhedrin? We're not sure, but it's interesting because of the details here of the ministry of John the Baptist to the point where he can quote some of the things that he said. And then he says this, **"Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent."** (verse 26) [notice this, here you have the "God-fearers" mentioned again, along with "the stock of Abraham," the Jews.] There were probably Hellenistic Jews there [no, they were Hellenistic God-fearing Gentiles there] and proselytes. Notice this, **"to you is the word of this salvation sent."** the *logos soterion*, the word *soter* is savior, salvation, he says that's what this is all about, **"it is the word of salvation."** Now we're going to hear this, interesting, as we go through the chapter, six times, we're going to hear of the word, here, of salvation. Ah, verse 42, we're going to hear that these Gentiles [*God-fearing* Gentiles from the congregation] that these "words" there again "might be spoken to them." Verse 44 says "the whole city gathered to hear the word of God." Verse 46 it says **"It was necessary that the word of God should first be preached to you..."** Verse 48, **"when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord."** Verse 49, **"And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."** It

become very clear that in Paul's presentation the Word of God was central. And as he traveled through the Roman world, his authority, as he went to the Jew first then to the Gentile, was the Word of God. And the Jews accepted that as authority of the Old Testament. And it was his strategy always to use the Word of God. [Comment: for some of the Old Testament passages in the Word of God Paul used to prove Yeshua's Messiahship, see <https://unityinchrist.com/prophecies/1stcoming.htm>. Both the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles within these synagogues Paul went to would all have been familiar with these Old Testament prophecies.] When we start to follow this along, we find out what he says to us is central to the Word of God, listen, we need to pray that the Word of God will remain the central issue in the Church in America and the Church around the world, because it is being sliced and diced and people are taking out the parts they like and putting away the parts they don't like, and then it's no longer the Word of God, it's the word of the critic. But if the Word of God is inerrant, and I believe it is, that if God was powerful enough to inspire it, I believe that he is powerful enough to preserve it, and give it to us. And I still believe it's alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, and Paul's going to say ***'the center of it is this Word of Salvation, at the very heart of the Word of God is the message of the salvation of God.'***

### *Paul Continues His Sermon About Salvation Through Christ*

Look what he says here. ***"to you is the word of salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him."*** (verse 26c-27) Because they didn't recognize him, and because they didn't pay any attention to the words of the prophets which are read in front of them every sabbath day, they themselves became the very ones who fulfilled the words of the prophets in condemning Jesus. Isn't that remarkable? Jesus would say unto them, ***'Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, you say in the morning the sky is red, that it's gonna be cold the next day, you can discern the signs of the sky but not the signs of the times.'*** Jesus would constantly hold them responsible to know,

because of the prophets, the day they lived in. In fact, in Luke chapter 19 in his triumphal entry on Palm Sunday [actually occurring on Palm Friday, 30AD], he is sobbing, he is convulsing, and he says ***'If you had only known that this thy day, the things that belong to your peace,'*** it's the very day that Daniel had prophesied, and he held them responsible. Look, so much more you and I, we have greater light, we have the Holy Spirit, the living Christ dwelling inside of us, we have the Word of God, you know, every one of us has a copy, a copy in our glove compartment, a copy we carry around, a copy in our bathroom, a copy in the living room, dining room table, living room table, Bible, Bible, Bible, we have Bibles everywhere. Are we hearing it? You know it's said, in your day one of the problems was the famine of "the hearing" of the Word of God, there's no famine of the Word of God. But there's a famine "of the hearing of the Word of God." And it's [the Word of God] everywhere today, it's on the radio, it's a controversy on the news all the time, it's in print everywhere, there's Christian cartoons now, there's a Christian media world, some great movies [one of my favorite movies is *Amazing Grace*], everywhere. Are we hearing, are we hearing the voices of the prophets? Paul says ***'Don't think they were more spiritual in Jerusalem, they didn't even listen to the things the prophets said, in fact, because they didn't recognize him and didn't listen, they fulfilled the prophets by condemning him.'*** ***"And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: and he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we"*** Paul and Barnabas ***"declare unto you the glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he raised Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."*** (verses 28-33) Isn't it interesting, the context here's not the birth of Christ, but the resurrection, if you're familiar with the Psalm. [Comment: Roman Catholicism gave us Christmas, whereas Jesus by his presence in Solomon's Portico, and teaching there during Chanukah was placing his blessing and emphasis on those days. Isn't that interesting?] ***"And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in***

another *psalm*, **Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption (Psalm 16:10).**” Paul telling them all these things were written. **“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.”** now here we go, center stage, **“Be it known unto you therefore men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”** (verses 34-39) i.e. **“that through this man, *Jesus Christ*, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.”** That’s the central part of the message. Listen, with all the messages in the Church today, this is what’s preached unto us nowadays, *‘the central part of the message of Jesus is his exemplary life, that he’s an example for us. He didn’t really atone for sins on the cross, he just hung on the cross to set an example for us.’* That’s blasphemous, as far as I’m concerned. He died there as our substitute, an atonement. There are those who say *‘no, the example of Christ is missional, missional, missional, when we look at his example, we should be out sharing in the community, doing humanitarian works,’* we should, of course, do those things. But you can do those things and never share the Gospel of Christ. You can feed the hungry and they can all go to hell when they die because none of them have gotten saved, and we would not have fulfilled the commission that Christ put on the Church. It says here the central part of the message when it’s preached is the forgiveness of sins. That’s what it’s all about, he says here **“Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him”** in verse 39 he’s going to contrast that to by the law, **“by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”** (verses 38-39) **“by him, all that believe, *Jew and Gentile*, are justified from ALL things,** and the Greek word for “all” means “all,” very profound. Look, **“by him, all that believe,”** that’s all of us, **“are justified from all things,”** that’s the first time Paul uses the word “justified,” and it becomes a regular part of his theology, we’re made righteous before God, we’re made holy before God, we’re made sinless before God, we are justified, just as if we had never sinned. It says **“by him all that believe are justified from all things,”** notice, “all things,” not most things, all things, and listen **“from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”** You can never be justified by keeping the law of Moses. Sabbath keepers should take

that to heart. No one is justified by keeping Sabbath, which is sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, if you want to keep Sabbath you have to work six days a week, not five days a week, it's very complicated, there's a Sabbatical year, and then there's a year of Jubilee, the Sabbath is not a simple process. But we're not justified by keeping Sabbath, we are not justified by keeping the dietary laws, aren't you happy. [Comment: the Hebrew dietary laws are being proven medically to be health laws, not religious laws. The Jews treat them religiously and in a religious context, but I don't believe that was God's intent for giving them.] I maintain a see-food diet, if I can see it, I can eat it. I say grace, and ask God to sanctify it and strengthen my physical frame, how wonderful, by Jesus Christ, by faith in him, we are justified from all things. [Comment: According to the "Judah ben Samuel's" calculation for Jubilee years, 1917 and 1967 were Jubilee years. Jubilee years, according to Leviticus are times of restoration, and it seems historically, God has used them to restore and bless Israel. Recently in our history, proving this out, in 1917 the Balfour Declaration allowed the Jews to start returning to Palestine, leading to the restoration of the Jewish nation in 1948. In 1967, The Six Day Arab-Israeli War took place, where Israel took back all of eastern Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza and the entire Sinai Peninsula. Amazingly enough, God started three major spiritual revivals shortly after 1967 on into the 1970s and continuing on into the 1980s. The Calvary Chapel movement started under Pastor Chuck Smith, baptizing thousands of Hippies at a time at Huntington Beach, California. Simultaneously the Messianic Jewish revival got going under Martin Chernoff, to the point now where there are an estimated 1 million Messianic Jewish believers worldwide. I was called into the Body of Christ in a Sabbath-keeping Church of God. From 1967 onward into the early 1970s multiple tens of thousands of new believers were coming into the this Sabbath-keeping Church of God, to the point in the mid 1970s we topped out at 150,000 members worldwide. I became born-again around 1970 through this group. Looking back with spiritual hindsight, one thing I noticed about this God-ordained revival amongst all three groups, one Sunday-observing, and two of them Sabbath-keeping. God at no time discriminated between any of these three groups, but blessed each with great spiritual understanding of his Word, revival and growth. If God is not going to make a difference or discriminate between Sunday-observing or Sabbath-observing believers in Jesus, we ought not to do that either. From my personal observation (I attended the Worldwide Church of

God for 45 years, a Calvary Chapel for ten years, and I now attend a Messianic Jewish congregation), each group is filled with Holy Spirit indwelt believers in Jesus. We simply have to stop throwing doctrinal stones at each other. The last Jubilee year to occur was 2017, and we are ripe for another great spiritual revival, just before the end of man's age. For more on this vital subject, see <https://unityinchrist.com/prophets/Zephaniah/REVIVAL.htm>

1] How wonderful, by Jesus Christ, by faith in him, we are justified from all things that the law could never justify us, the law of Moses, we could never be just in being a law-keeper. [Paul in Hebrews 8:6-13, quoting Jeremiah 31:31-34, told us that God writes his laws, all 10 commandments into the hearts and minds of all believers, so obedience becomes a God-thing, God-inspired, something God accomplishes within us, along with our cooperation of course. The apostle John said in 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:4 that "sin is the transgression of the law," and throughout the Bible we're told not to sin, to come out of sin, to repent, etc. And yet we are justified by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. There is a huge dichotomy between what law is being referenced to in Hebrews 8 and 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:4, the straight 10 Commandment law (the only law the early church had, as the New Testament hadn't been written yet), or some Law of Christ version, 9 of the 10 Commandments, and this dichotomy of belief resides between the Sabbath and Sunday-observing denominations. As I think you may be seeing by now, Law & Grace is a very complex doctrinal subject where different groups have different interpretations, and most of it is centered around choice in "days of worship." See <https://unityinchrist.com/whatisgrace/whatisgraceintro.htm>]

*At The End Of Paul's Sermon He Warns Those In The Synagogue*

**"Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." (verses 40-41)** he just challenged them about their fathers not hearing the prophets. **"Behold, ye despisers"** Paul quotes this from Habakkuk **"and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto**

**you.”** Now look, he said this was spoken by the prophets, and the same thing is true today, take note of the lesson. God told him **‘I’m going to do something, and if I told you what it was, it would blow your mind, you wouldn’t believe it anyway.’** Because he [Habakkuk] said to God, **‘God, you’re not doing anything, look what’s happening with the Babylonians, look what’s going on.’** God said to him, **‘O yes I am, if I told you what it was you wouldn’t believe it.’** And Paul says, he makes that application, **“Behold, ye despisers,”** that’s a quote from the prophet, **“and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”** and that was Paul at this point declaring it unto them. **“And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.” (verse 42)** [and these would have been the *God-fearing Gentiles* who attended in the same synagogue, as seen from the fact that they would be there in the synagogue next sabbath, waiting for Paul, as seen by the context of the verse] Present-perfect tense, **‘continually sought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.’** those Hellenists, that were proselytes, begged Paul and Barnabas to come back and speak this message to them again. **“Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.” (verse 43)** Paul and Barnabas speaking to those who believed, persuading them to continue in the grace of God. We have to be convinced of the same thing. Paul will write back to the churches in this area, to the Galatians, and say **‘I am surprised that you are so soon removed from the Gospel of grace that you’ve heard, to another gospel.’** And then he says **‘It’s not another gospel, it’s a deformed gospel, it’s a Jesus and gospel.’** In Galatia it was **‘O ya, Jesus, but you need to be circumcised also, you need to do this, it’s Jesus and the Law.’** It’s Jesus and nothing, it’s Jesus, the Good News. Paul says **‘I’m amazed that you are so soon removed from the Gospel of grace to another gospel.’** But he said **‘though we, or an angel from heaven come and preach another gospel to you, let them be anathema, even if an angel appears and preaches another gospel, let him be eternally damned, condemned.’** The author to Hebrews said **‘Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever.’** He said in light of that **‘it’s good for the heart to be established in grace, not in meats wherein those who have occupied themselves have not**

**profited thereby.'** In the human heart, the healthiest place where it could be planted and grow and be rooted and grounded is in grace, because we struggle there in the heart. Not in high spiritual things, not in meats where those who occupy themselves are not profited by them, it has to be the foundation of grace. Here Paul and Barnabas are persuading these new believers to continue in the grace of God, and it will characterize the ministry of Paul throughout his life, particularly as the Judaizers then begin, we'll see the beginning of that here, to track him down and to disrupt his ministry and to undermine his message. We see in **verse 44, "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God."** that's what we're going to have to wait for to finish the chapter I think here, only it won't be the sabbath, it will be the Lord's day, next Sunday evening, if the Lord tarries, let's pick it up there next week, verse 44 and we'll take it through the chapter. But we have our maps, and we have our little government laser, we'll try not to burn a hole through the wall, and we'll follow this missionary journey into the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter, then back to Antioch...Let's pray, quickly...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Acts 13:1-43, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]

I would like to include a quote from the scholar Oskar Skarsaune out of his book *"In The Shadow of the Temple," pp.171-to 173, par. 1, **The Mission to the God-Fearing Gentiles: On reading Galatians 1:16; 2:7-9, one may get the impression that Paul in his mission went exclusively to Gentiles. But Romans and Acts clearly prove that such was not the case. On the contrary, throughout his mission Paul acted on the principle that the Gospel was "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom 1:16). In every city, Paul first went to the synagogue to preach and debate (Acts 9:20-22; 13:5, 14-52; 14:1-43; 16:13; 17:1-5, 10, 17; 18:4). And more often than not, some, even many, of the Jews attending the synagogues became believers (see Acts 13:43; the Jews mentioned in v. 45; see also Acts 14:1; 17:4, 11-12; 18:4, 8; 19:9. Only some were "stubborn and disbelieved" [Acts 28:24]). The normal result of Paul's preaching was a split among the Jews: some believed, some not. The sometimes violent measures taken by the latter are proof that they considered Paul a real threat to their community. It was only after this split had been established that Paul turned to address the Gentiles (Acts 13:46-49; 18:6; 28:28). It is important to grasp the exact meaning of this "turning to the Gentiles."***

*It seems to mean that Paul left the synagogue and ceased to address the synagogue community as such. But it does not mean that he was no longer willing to proclaim the gospel to the Jews. Acts 19:8-10 shows he still did preach to Jews, and it is very likely that Jews are included in Acts 18:11 and 28:30). Next it is important to notice **what kind of Gentiles** Paul was addressing. Acts is very clear on this point: they were not just any Gentiles, but “God-fearers,” that is, Gentiles who believed in the God of Israel, lived according to the moral precepts of the Torah and visited the synagogue. [what Oskar is saying is these God-fearing Gentiles were essentially worshipping God on and observing the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath and Holy Days of Leviticus 23, and more than likely observing the dietary laws of Leviticus 11.] Very often they are mentioned as being present in the synagogue while Paul was still primarily addressing the Jewish community. In Acts 13:6 Paul even makes special mention of this group in his opening address in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia: “You Israelites, and others who fear God, listen.” The same double address appears again in Acts 13:26. It is this group of God-fearing Gentiles that is mentioned in 13:48 as having gladly received the gospel. In several instances, many God-fearing Gentiles are part of the synagogue audience and come to believe before Paul leaves their congregation (Acts 14:1; 17:4, 12; 18:4). “Turning to the Gentiles” does not therefore indicate a radical change in missionary procedure. It does not mean that Paul began to address an entirely new audience. It only means that, from now on, he focused on the God-fearers and established himself somewhere else than in the synagogue for the rest of his stay in that city...It is a remarkable fact that almost all Gentile converts whose names are given in Acts belong to this category of God-fearing Gentiles. Cornelius was “a devout man who...prayed constantly to God” (Acts 10:2). He even observed the Jewish hours of prayer (Acts 10:3, 30)...Only twice in the whole of Acts does Paul address Gentiles who do not belong to the God-fearers. The first time is in Acts 14:8-18, where Paul is forced to address the Gentile crowd to prevent them from sacrificing to Barnabas and himself, and the whole speech is concerned with preventing this. He does not proclaim the gospel to this crowd of “raw” Gentiles! The second time is in Athens (Acts 17:16-34). Here Paul seems to have widened his outreach to include philosophically educated Greeks, many of whom were no doubt theoretical monotheists who would agree with Paul’s polemic against temples and idols in Acts 17:22-31. But once again we see that the speech on the Areopagus was not given on Paul’s initiative: “they took him and brought him to the*

*Areopagus and asked him, 'May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?'" (Acts 17:19). Thus we find that the two apparent exceptions to the rule stated above substantiate rather than contradict it. What does this mean? It means that viewed from the outside, from the standpoint of the Roman authorities or the average person on the street, Paul's mission to the Gentiles was still an essentially Jewish affair, affecting mainly the Jewish community. The Gentile God-fearers were probably regarded as half-Jews by their Gentile neighbors, and their new faith in a Jewish Messiah would hardly be noticed were it not for the fact that some of them began to witness in a new way." [ibid, pp. 171-173, par. 1] Also, notice this, on these two occasions where Paul witnessed to "raw" pagan Gentiles, the first was disastrous, resulting in his being stoned, and the second resulted in no evangelical success, in Athens. No new church was established in Athens, amongst this highly intellectual crowd. It was amongst the God-fearing Gentiles, who had a spiritual foundation already laid within their hearts and minds, who had a knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures and prophecies, who proved fertile ground for Paul's evangelism. That is the point I believe Oskar Skarsaune is making in his book, which I highly recommend. One final quote that ties in with this one, from Oskar's book, "What, then, can we learn from the book of Acts about Paul's mission? We meet a very Jewish Paul, who conducted his mission almost entirely within the bounds of the synagogue and the circle of God-fearing Gentiles attached to it. This was fundamental to Paul's understanding of himself as a missionary. Romans 11:13-14 clearly shows the historical accuracy of the picture of Paul in Acts: in his mission to the Gentiles, Paul never went far from the synagogue." [ibid. p. 174, par. 3]*

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Map of Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey: [https://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map\\_pauls\\_first\\_missionary\\_journey.html](https://www.bible-history.com/maps/maps/map_pauls_first_missionary_journey.html)

For some Old Testament prophecies Paul used to prove Yeshua's Messiahship see

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