

Acts
“Jesus” The Sequel
III.) Chp. 13-28 “Witnesses to the end of the earth”
Chp. 13-14 Being sent on the way (1st trip)
13:14-52
“The Word of Grace”

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I.) Intro.

Before us today is one of Paul’s three recorded sermons, the most complete of the three.

He has the task of speaking of the only hope that the world has to an audience that:

- Have not heard it before
- Whose views are in direct conflict to Paul’s message

II.) Vs. 14-16 His-story

Vs. 14-16 Here we are given the setting of Paul’s message as he did not stay long in Perga, instead he and Barnabas left the coast and traveled 100 miles into the 3,600 foot Taurus mountains. They apparently didn’t share the Word of God in Perga until their return trip in Acts 14:25. Based upon Paul’s letter to the province of Galatia (4:13) he seems to taken ill as he writes, *“You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first”*. There were seven cites named Antioch in the ancient world and this one was located in modern day Turkey and as was their custom they brought the gospel to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles as they go into a synagogue. There was a general liturgy followed in the synagogue:

- a. They would start out with opening prayers or Shema where 18 blessings or prayers were recited
- b. Then there was a reading from the law, which is one of the first five books of the Old Testament
- c. They would then open up one of the prophets
- d. Followed by a “free reading” or teaching by a competent leader present
- e. Finally they would offer up a closing blessing

So after the reading of the Law and the Prophets the head of the synagogue looked at Paul and Barnabas to see if they would like to address the congregation.

Folks, these **divine appointments do not come across our plate without God’s preparation.** Paul had great experience even though this is his first recorded sermon:

- He had heard Stephen preach the gospel prior to his conversion
- Right after his conversion he “*preached or proclaimed*” Jesus
- After 3 years in Arabia he was able to “*prove*” that Jesus was the Christ
- Then eight years in his home town of Tarsus teaching the Word
- Finally Barnabas seeks him out for a year long teaching engagement in Antioch of Syria

Paul was no “*over night*” phenomenon. Folks, you will never be ready to be used of God if you are not consistently studying the Word of God.

Paul is going to give them an unusual history lesson as history is usually all about what men have done. But here Paul is going to share God’s gracious care for them.

III.) Grace in the past

1.) (17-22) First Paul shows them how God cared for them through out four periods of their history:

- a. Vs. 17 **Pre-history** “*God of this people Israel*”: He was gracious to them prior to them being organized as a people. In Gen. 12 God called Abraham out of his country to bless him.
- b. Vs. 17 **Early history**: “*Chose our fathers*”: He was gracious to them as he began to reveal Himself to their forefathers. God took those 12 and made them a nation of a million in 400 year’s time.
- c. Vs. 17-18 **National history**: God was gracious as He led them out of bondage and through 40 years of failure in the wilderness.
- d. Vs. 19-22 **Territorial history**: God was gracious to them as He fulfilled His promise from the start. He guided them even after they rebelled he gave them a King that they wanted and one that He wanted.

Saints, if we could stop for a moment and observe our lives we would be able to see how God’s grace has been inter-twined with our lives even prior to us meeting Him. A careful examination of our life would reveal how He was trying to reach you when you were still apart from Him and had no knowledge of Him.

IV.) Vs. 23-37 Grace in His Son

2.) (23-37 Paul’s sermon next focus is in on how God brought His leading by grace to the fulfillment in the Son of grace.

- a. Vs. 23-25 **The promise proclaimed**: Paul says that Jesus was the seed of David and thus the fulfillment of God’s promise to David.

- b. Vs. 26-31 **The prophecies published:** Next Paul says that Jesus was the one that all the prophets spoke about and still the nations did not understand. In missing the truth they fulfilled more prophecies by putting Him to death but God raised Him from the dead.
- c. Vs. 32-37 **The praised person:** Lastly Paul says that Jesus is the only one who was killed for our sins, buried in a tomb and raised from the dead. No other person in history demonstrates God's gracious care for us as much as Jesus!

Paul's sermon had five points to it:

- 1. Vs. 18 **His grace was towards them in spite of them:**
- 2. Vs. 20 **His grace was patient:**
- 3. Vs. Vs. 21-23 **His grace was faithful:**
- 4. Vs. 24-37 **His grace was persistent:**
- 5. Vs. 33-37 **His grace was promised:**

Paul answers two questions that most folks still want answered:

- A. Vs. 27 **If Jesus was the Messiah why didn't the Jews receive Him?** His answer, *"because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him."* In other words sin had blinded their understanding to the Word of God that was being read each week concerning Jesus. Remember what Jesus said in John 5:39, *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me."*

B. Vs. 28-30 If Jesus was rejected as being their savior does that ruin God's plan?

Paul's answer is no way; all they did was unwittingly fulfill God's purpose.

In verses 33-37 Paul lists three promises in scripture.

1. Ps. 2:7: **HE WAS WHO HE SAID HE WAS**
2. Isaiah 55:3: **HE DID WHAT HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO DO**
3. Ps. 16:10 **HE OFFERS THE ONLY WAY**

Folks, there is no plan "B"! **Good works are not good enough, religion is not religious enough.** If they were then why did Jesus come and die for our sins? That's the point of Paul as he preached this message.

II.) Vs. 38-41 Through this Man

Vs. 38-39 Paul having just shown God's grace through human history now shows how Jesus was culmination of that history. The book of Hebrews opens with these words; *"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."*

One of the great questions that every person should ask of their belief system is, **"What does it have to say about sin?"** To the Hindu you pay for your own sin by coming back in the next life, thus they have an elaborate cast system so that you don't help those who are desperate. Most the rest of the religions from Aryanism to Zoroastrianism, deal with a complicated system of good works. Not so with Christianity! Paul had just

preached in verse 28 that though they found no reason to put Jesus to death but they still delivered Him over to Pilate for his execution. Then in verse 38 Paul says it's through His death and subsequent resurrection that Jesus provided forgiveness of sins. **The sin of killing an innocent Jesus provided the only way by which all human sin will be forgiven. Man's greatest need gave way to God's greatest deed,** or as Paul writes in Rom. 5:20 "*where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.*"

In verse 39 Paul further elaborates on this by saying, "*by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things*". To illustrate the magnitude of his statement Paul puts the emphasis on this by adding the comparison in the words, "*from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.*" The difference between "**FORGIVENESS**" of sins and "**JUSTIFIED**" from all things is like a **military discharge**. If you are discharged from the military no matter how you are discharged you are no longer in service to your country. You could be kicked out of the military because you broke the rules or committed a crime, it doesn't matter your service to your country has been **forgiven, your debt has been paid!** Ah but the way you were discharged does stay on your record, if you were given a dishonorable or a general discharge you are still out of the military *but the way in which you are out still hangs over you.* **Paul is saying that your debt due to your sins was given an honorable discharge!**

- **First** it says that it's for **EVERYONE**: In the Greek the word "*everyone*" means.... EVERYONE! This offer is made available to every human person no matter what their ancestry, personal failure, religious background, etc.

- **Second** it says that this “*honorable discharge*” covers **ALL THINGS**: Not most things, past things, but “*all things*”. **Every sin you have ever committed or are presently committing or will commit in the future you will be given an “honorable discharge” from!**

There are only two things necessary for us to partake of an honorable discharge by God:

1. **BY HIM**: We must recognize that it is the “*goodness*” and not our own merits that have granted us this honorable discharge.
2. **EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES**: Next we must give our lives over to Him to be able to appropriate the benefits of this promise. Paul does not say that everyone who says the name of Jesus, prays or intellectually agrees with the person or work of Jesus has been given an honorable discharge from their sins. No, it says that they have to put their “*complete trust*” in Jesus.

Notice those ending words, “*from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.*”

Paul would write these same believers less than a year later with these words in Gal. 2:21

“I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.” If good works, the law, or any other then worked or was necessary for your forgiveness then why did Jesus die?

Vs. 40-41 There were no doubt some people who heard the great news of God’s grace

and said, “*I don’t believe it. I can’t receive, that my sins can have a “honorable*

discharge” by trusting in Jesus.” “*It’s too good to be true.*” **But the truth is He is so**

good that it is true! Paul quotes Habakkuk’s words about God’s soon coming judgment

upon Judah and there refusal to trust in God’s grace and goodness. The warning is to all

who refuse to accept this free offer because they can not earn it! Friend, don't reject the opportunity today of receiving an honorable discharge from all your sin!

III.) Vs. 42-48 Say it again

Vs. 42-44 I have been teaching the Word of God for 22 years and I never once has someone come to me to say, "*Man what you shared spoke to my heart so much would you mind giving the same message next week?*" In fact the word "*begged*" in the Greek is "*kept begging*" him. The Jews had been trying to get the gentiles to obey the law, so that when they heard the message of grace they waited before they responded so eagerly.

Paul identifies **everyone who believes** as those **who continue in grace**. The mark of being born again is continuing in the grace that saves, "**There can be no assurance without perseverance!**" It is the abiding relationship that we have in Jesus that shows that we are His. A week later almost the whole town shows up to hear the Word of God which shows that this was not just a passing fancy but rather something that stirred their interest enough that they told others. But the sudden swill of community interest brought about the opposite response in the Jews who did not receive Jesus as they were continually trying to contradict the teachings even to the point of speaking evil of Jesus.

Vs. 46-47 Paul says, "*Hey it was a privilege that the Word of God came to you all first, but in rejecting it you judge yourselves not worthy of hearing it.*" Folks, there is much wisdom in spending all your time trying to share the truth to those who only want to mock and ridicule it.

Vs. 48 The next phrase has gotten in the center of many debates concerning **predestination and free will**. First lets look at what it says, "*as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.*" It does not say it the other way around, "*as many as*

believed were appointed eternal life.” Luke’s words are from God’s perspective and the word “*appointed*” comes from a word that means to inscribe or enroll which gives me a great perspective. **I wonder if perhaps God has written every persons name in the book of life and if they refuse to trust in His Son they on their on blot out their own names?** God knows who will receive His Son the question is how can we know? Well that is easy repent and receive Jesus and you will discover that your name is there! That means that those that go to hell are those who choose to do so.

Vs. 49-52 The out come was that the Word of God was spread throughout all of Galatia, not just through Paul and Barnabas but through al those who trusted in Jesus. The **Word of God shook up the area**, but in the next verses we read that others stirred up trouble among the prominent women who were married to the leaders of the community and they took them and beat. **So some were shaken up while other was stirred off!** Hum, they were shaken and stirred, sounds like a Bound flick. Ah but the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and because of that great joy permeated their life’s!