

Acts 13:13-52: Why Did God Send His Son, What's He Here to Do...for You?

Ricardo Campos, Pastor Grace Chapel, Orange, CA June 4, 2017

I. Introduction

How often do you feel good about yourself? Is it rare? How often do you self-criticize...constantly? Why do you suppose you constantly find faults in yourself...in your appearance, in your achievements, in anything and everything you do? Would you like to be free of this? Is it possible to have the life you always wanted but could never have? Jesus came to give us a brand new life, but what does that mean? How do we get this life and more importantly, how do we live it?

II. Acts 13:13-52: Jesus Came to Fix Everything That's Wrong with ~~This~~ Your World?

Acts 13:13-15, though it was Barnabas who took Paul under his wing initially, it is now Paul who takes the lead since Acts is about highlighting two individuals: the apostle Peter—apostle to the Jews and the apostle Paul—apostle to the Gentiles. So Paul and his party leave Paphos, the capital of the island of Cyprus, and they travel about 180 miles by water to Perga, the capital of Pamphylia, which is in modern-day Turkey. The city worshipped the god Artemis and was populated with many Roman army veterans. The city also had a large Jewish population. It's at this point that John Mark leaves Paul and Barnabas. We're not told why he left; we'll get a hint later as to why in chapter 15. From Perga they head north to Antioch of Pisidia, which was a 100 mile journey on foot, crossing some rough mountains. They go to the local synagogue. It was the duty of the rulers to select the readers and speakers and if a distinguished guest was present, they might ask him to speak. So after a customary reading from the Torah and the Prophets, they invite Paul and Barnabas to preach on the text that was just read.

Acts 13:16-25, since Paul is now the leader, he addresses the crowd, which is made up of "Men of Israel"—Paul's fellow Jews, and "you who fear God"—Gentiles who believe in the God of Israel, but are not full proselytes, which means they haven't undergone circumcision. In the next 25 verses Paul goes on to cover the entire Old Testament and the first 4 books of the New Testament: it was God who established the nation of Israel; He chose their patriarchs. When they ended up in Egypt, He made them prosper and grow. When the Egyptians turned on them, God delivered them with a mighty hand. When He first led them to the Promise Land and they refused to enter, He sent them to wander the wilderness for 40 years but He kept being patient with them. He then brought them back to the Promise Land and removed the Canaanite nations in order to give them the Land He promised them. God then provided judges for them until their last judge and first prophet Samuel. When Israel rebelled against God and wanted a king like everyone else, God gave them their wish. Saul was from the wrong tribe (Benjamin); he was the most handsome but God warned them that he would be a bad king—they wanted him anyway. So he ruled Israel for 40 years. When God removed Saul, He replaced him with king David, from the tribe of Judah, "a man after My own heart, who will do all My will"—foreshadowing the Messiah that would come from David.

God promised them that from David's "seed" He would raise up a Savior for Israel, Jesus would be His name (Genesis 3:15; 2 Samuel 7:12-13, 16; Psalm 89:35-36). But before their Messiah was revealed, God sent John the Baptist to prepare the people for His arrival by preaching a baptism of repentance to all of Israel. He made it clear that he was not the Messiah, but that Messiah would soon be revealed.....~~what's~~ who's the entire Old Testament and first four books of the New Testament about, who are they pointing to? Jesus.

Acts 13:26-41, Paul stops and tells his fellow Jewish brethren and the Gentiles who believe in the God of Israel exactly why he's saying all this: God sent Paul to bring them the news of this "salvation." Then he makes an incredible statement about all those Sabbaths, all those times they read from the Prophets in the synagogue; every time, the voices of the Prophets were telling them and their leaders about the Savior God was sending them (cf. Luke 24:13-49). They were so blind to their Savior (cf. Luke 4:16-30) that they fulfilled everything God said they would do to Him: they rejected and killed Him and buried Him in a tomb, even though He was completely innocent! But God raised Him from the dead!! And for 40 days (Acts 1:3) He was seen by hundreds of people, especially His disciples who are His witnesses to this very day. This is the goodnews that God sent Paul to give them. The promise that God made to their forefathers, He has now fulfilled to them. God promised to bring His Son into the world and after His own people rejected and killed Him, God was not going to allow His body to see corruption. Instead He was going to raise Him from the dead forever to reign on David's throne, which is exactly what He promised king David (2 Samuel 7:12-13, 16; Psalm 16:10; 89:34-37). David's body may've seen corruption, but not the Seed of David because God raise Him from the dead. Therefore, it is through Jesus Christ, the innocent one who paid the penalty for the sin of the world, that our sins are forgiven. Everyone who simply believes in Him is saved, is cleansed from every broken command, from constantly trying to make themselves presentable to God. They must therefore beware, lest God punish them as He did those who refused to believe and repent in the days of Habakkuk (Habakkuk 1:5).

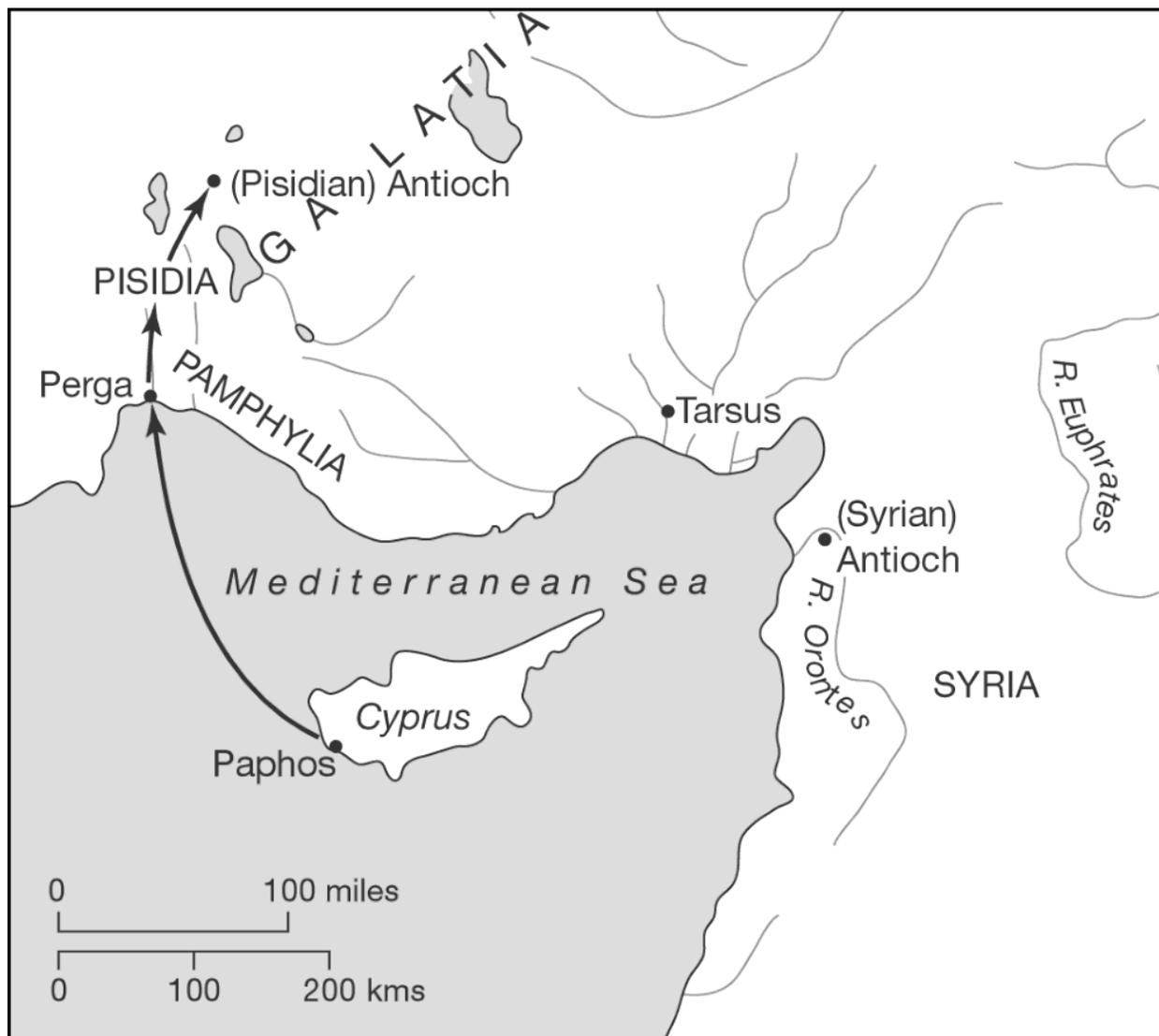
Acts 13:42-43, what's the audience's response? The Gentiles loved it, they wanted to hear more the next Sabbath. Not only that, many Jews and Gentile proselytes believed in Jesus and followed after Paul and Barnabas, who encouraged them and persuaded them to continue in the grace of God (instead of trying to keep a bunch of commands, instead of trying to justify themselves).

Acts 13:44-47, it's clear that those who believed in Jesus spread the word about the salvation that Jesus came to bring them: no more would they have to strive to keep God's commandments, no more would they have to correct everything that was wrong with them. Jesus had come to set them free, to give them a brand new life. So the next Sabbath almost the entire city came out to hear Paul and Barnabas. But some of the Jews were not happy; they were filled with envy when they saw the hordes of Gentiles and Jews who'd come to hear Paul. So they began to contradict, blaspheme against Jesus, and oppose everything Paul was saying. So Paul and Barnabas strongly rebuked them: since they have rejected Jesus' offer of salvation and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life, Paul and Barnabas will now turn to the Gentiles as God commanded and as God predicted previously through the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 49:6).

Acts 13:48-52, but the Gentiles were ecstatic and glorified the word of the Lord when they heard Jesus' incredible message of salvation. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed in Him. And though some Jews incited the prominent Gentile proselyte women and the city officials to persecute Paul and Barnabas and drive them out of the region, those who believed in Christ spread the word of the Lord throughout the entire region. Thus, Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet as a symbol of judgment against them (Mark 6:11) and they headed to Iconium. But all the disciples of Pisidian Antioch who were now living their new life in Christ were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Whatever is wrong with your world, Jesus came to fix it, why do people flock to religion? Because every one of us senses that there's something wrong with us, we've missed the mark somehow. And religion is there to tell us how to get rid of the shame, the guilt, in order to appease the Judge in the sky, all except one: Christianity.

Christianity is different, it says that you can never measure up, there's no way for us to reach God. But then it reveals the goodnews: God came down to us; Jesus did what we could never do and He did it on our behalf. He paid for every one of our sins for all time. You don't have to keep trying to appease God. Why do you think Jesus was raised from the dead? He took your death in order to give you a brand new life, the life you always wanted but could never get. He came to give you life and to show you how to live it with Him. He says, "Here let me take all that, all you have to do is follow Me and I'll even give you the power to do that." (John 17:3, 20-26; Galatians 4:6; 5:16-23)



III. Conclusion

"Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man [Jesus] is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses."

¹ Wright, T. (2008). *Acts for Everyone, Part 2: Chapters 13-28* (p. 8). London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.