

THE GREAT SERMON AT ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA

BIBLE TEXT : Acts 13:13-52

LESSON 325 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "They went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Acts 13:13-52

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 he 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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Hardships

It is interesting to trace the missionary journeys of Paul. Let us keep in mind that travel conditions in the days of Paul were not as desirable as today. He tells some of his experiences in his journeys to preach Christ. He says there were dangers on land and on water; the danger of robbers and heathen; the danger of his own countrymen; the perils in the city and in the wilderness. Often he was very tired and suffered great pain. Sometimes he was hungry and thirsty. At other times he suffered from cold and insufficient clothing. (2 Corinthians 11:7-27 ⁷ Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? ⁸ I robbed other churches, taking wages of *them*, to do you service. ⁹ And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep *myself*. ¹⁰ As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. ¹¹ Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. ¹² But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. ¹³ For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works. ¹⁶ I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little. ¹⁷ That which I speak, I speak *it* not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. ¹⁸ Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also. ¹⁹ For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye *yourselves* are wise. ²⁰ For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour *you*, if a man take of *you*, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face. ²¹ I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinssoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. ²² Are they Hebrews? so *am* I. Are they Israelites? so *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so *am* I. ²³ Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. ²⁴ Of the Jews five times received I *forty stripes* save one. ²⁵ Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by *mine own* countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷ In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness) We never read that Paul complained of the hardships he suffered for Christ, but he said: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy" (Acts 20:24).

Paul had received a definite call from God to do a certain work and he was determined to finish that work. After he was saved, the Lord said of him: "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Paul was to be a light to the Gentiles and be the

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 fulfil 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

means of sending the Gospel to the ends of the earth (**Acts 13:47** ⁴⁷ **For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth**).

Barnabas

Paul's helper, Barnabas, was also a fully consecrated follower of Jesus. At one time he had owned some land, but he sold it and brought the money and gave it to the Apostles, so that it could be distributed to those who needed it (**Acts 4:34-37** ³⁴ **Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,** ³⁵ **And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.** ³⁶ **And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,** ³⁷ **Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet).** When Paul was a new convert, Barnabas proved his friendship and love for Paul (**Acts 9:27** ²⁷ **But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus**). Paul was fortunate to have Barnabas as his helper, a good man who had faith and was filled with the Holy Ghost (**Acts 11:24** ²⁴ **For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord**).

John Mark

Another young man, John Mark, also accompanied Paul on this missionary journey, and we find the three of them leaving the island of Cyprus. They board a ship and sail the Mediterranean Sea to the mainland of Asia and dock at a place known as Perga. Perhaps it is on this voyage that they encounter some of the perils to which Paul later refers.

When they reach the shore, Mark decides to leave the others and return to Jerusalem. This seems to be a great disappointment to Paul at this time; however, later on he speaks of Mark as a "profitable" helper in the ministry and talks kindly of him (**2 Timothy 4:11** ¹¹ **Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.** **Philemon 1:24** ²⁴ **Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers**).

All the Way

When one seeks God for forgiveness of sins, he promises God his life in service. Then as he draws closer to God and learns more about consecration, he seeks for and receives the glorious experiences of sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. But he must make good the consecration he has made. Many a one has said, "Lord, I give You my life." Without realising the full meaning of those words. Nothing is ever gained by turning back – if you go, go all the way.

Across the rugged mountain passes they travel to the city of Antioch in Pisidia. Just ahead is a great opportunity for reaching many people in this city. Perhaps you should not have gone back, Mark; you could have listened, with Barnabas, as Paul preached a wonderful sermon in Antioch.

In the Synagogue

It was on a Sabbath Day that they went into the Jewish synagogue. These synagogues were meeting places for the Jews where the Book of the Law was read. Tradition tells us that there were something like 460 to 480 synagogues in the city of Jerusalem; however, Antioch was not as large as Jerusalem.

After the reading of the Law and the prophets, the ruler of the synagogue sends someone to ask the two strangers if they have anything to say to the people. What an opportunity for Paul –

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.

⁴⁴ And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary

just what he was waiting for!

At once Paul stood up and addressed the Jews, saying, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience." Then he rehearsed God's dealings with the Jews from the beginning of the nation down to the time of Jesus. Paul had studied the Law and the prophets under the great Jewish teacher, Gamaliel. Paul was able to recite the Law, and also to explain how the prophecies were fulfilled concerning Jesus. He told them, "To you is the word of this salvation sent" (Acts 13:26). Those at Jerusalem who heard the Scriptures read every Sabbath Day, he said, were the ones who had condemned Jesus to death. Paul referred to Psalm 16:10 when he said, "Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Acts 13:35). This was the reason for so much unbelief in the hearts of the Jews: they did not believe that Jesus arose from the dead. Paul told them that David had gone to his grave and his body back to dust, but Jesus arose the third day.

How much better to go to Jesus and have sins forgiven than to be under the Law, Paul said. He warned them with stern words to beware lest they should despise, "wonder, and perish." In other words, Paul plead with the Jews that they should not turn down the love of Jesus and be lost forever.

At the close of the sermon, the Gentiles asked Paul to preach to them the next Sabbath. Nothing could have pleased him more, and the following Sabbath Day almost the whole city came to hear the Word of God. This made the Jews envious and they spoke against the words of Paul. But he had the answer for them: God had ordained that the Gospel should go "to the Jew first" (Romans 1:16); that is why Paul preached to them first. "But seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

Expelled

Some of the Jews and a great many Gentiles believed and were saved in this great revival which ended rather suddenly. The Jews stirred up trouble and had Paul and Barnabas expelled from there. Then, as if to say, "You have had your opportunity and have turned it down and we go to those who will receive the Gospel," Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet against the Christ-rejecting Jews of Antioch and went to Iconium, about 45 miles southeast of Antioch.

Unto All Nations

God gives every one an opportunity to accept Him and be saved. Jesus said: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). In the days of the early Church, Paul and Barnabas were among the first sent out to preach the Gospel. Since that time the news of salvation has been proclaimed in all the world. Very few are truly seeking God, receiving a born-again experience and living according to the Bible. Nevertheless, the Gospel has gone into every land, and the end is very near.

We cannot all go out as missionaries, but let us do what we can to turn hearts unto the Lord before it is too late. Some do not have the opportunity to go overseas as missionaries, but they can work for Jesus here at home. Some can give of their means to help support a missionary in a foreign land; or canvass their neighbourhood with Gospel literature and invite people to church. Are you ashamed of the Gospel? Paul was not (**Romans 1:16** ¹⁶ **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek**). Another way to help spread the Gospel is by praying for the meetings in the open air, the jail meetings, and hospital visitations. Every man, woman, and child can have a part in leading souls to Christ through prayer. "And they that be wise

that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

⁴⁷ For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

⁵⁰ But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

⁵¹ But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3).

Light in the Darkness

Paul, a Jew called of God to be "a light of the Gentiles" (**Acts 13:47** ⁴⁷ **For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth**), became a great Apostle and a great light. He never fell short of his high calling. Every one who is called of God today – Jew or Gentile – is called to be a light, for Jesus taught us, "Ye are the light of the world" (Mathews 5:14). Are we going to stand true to our high calling, like Paul, and be a light to the world, by our testimony and the life we live?

QUESTIONS

1. Who accompanied Paul on this journey?
2. Tell how Paul was given an opportunity to preach in Antioch.
3. What was his text?
4. What attitude did the Gentiles take toward Paul's Sermon?
5. What took place the next Sabbath Day?
6. Tell of the attitude of the Jews then.
7. Is the Gospel for the Jews or the Gentiles?
8. To whom was Paul especially sent?
9. Look up some verses that teach us that God is no respecter of persons.