

ACTS 13 – THE INVERSION and the HINGE

Last week we saw Peter going away, “on the lam,” as it were, not only for his safety, but also for the safety of those who knew him well. And with that, Luke, as he is writing the book of Acts, uses that as a segue into the spread of the Gospel into the more Gentile world. We should see it as a sort of transition. Jesus told the disciples to begin in Jerusalem, then go to Judea, then Samaria and eventually to ends of the earth. And that is what we are seeing, as God, through the church is reclaiming territory that was given over to other “gods.” You can read that in Dt. 32:8 and Psalm 82. As we pick back up in chapter 13, we will read of Paul on his first missionary journey and see that he takes the northern arm of the Roman Empire as his mission field. We will see that Saul begins to be known by another name; Paul. (This was wither one of the 3 or 4 names most people of the time had, or Saul: 1st king of Israel, Paul: little, or Saulos: in Greek means one with an effeminate walk.) The book of Acts, from this point on, will focus mainly on Paul and his ministry, with the other apostles being mentioned or making cameo appearances here and there. So, with this transition in mind, let’s begin in chapter 13.

1 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Luke sets us up for the transition of more Gentile inclusion by listing who all was ministering in Antioch.

Simon, called “Niger.” Niger means dark or black. Most likely from the area of Sudan or another East African country, possibly of Jewish descent.

Lucius of Cyrene: Cyrene was located in **northern Africa** in eastern **Libya**. A Greek city in the province of Cyrenaica, it had a Jewish community where 100,000 Judean Jews had been forced to settle during the reign of Ptolemy Soter (323–285 BC) and was an early center of Christianity.

Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod, the tetrarch. A Jew, but most likely raised in a well – to -do family and most likely from the sect of the Sadducees.

We have quite an eclectic group here. And don't forget, Barnabas was from Cyprus. That will come into play, shortly.

Praying and fasting. God told them to separate Paul and Barnabas for a more specific work.

4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.

6 Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, 7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? 11 And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you,

and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.”

And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Map

The dynamic duo, along with John Mark, left Antioch, (sailed down the river to the Med, or caught a ship in the port at the med?) and sailed west to the island of Cyprus, landing at Salamis, on the Eastern coast of the island. After teaching there, they went overland to the other end of the island to Paphos, where the governor resided. It was there that they ran into a magician, by the name of Bar- Jesus, (son of Jesus), otherwise known as Elymas, who tried his best to discourage people, especially the governor, Sergius Paulus from hearing the Gospel. Paul wasn't having any of this and cursed the man to a temporary blindness. (Was Paul thinking that the same thing had a positive effect on him, and that in turn, it may have the same effect on Elymas?) At any rate, the governor came to believe the Word of God. We don't read that he believed only because of the curse of blindness, though that was impressive, to

be sure, but the words, the message sealed the deal. And from there Luke quickly moves us north, back the mainland of what is now called Turkey. John Mark returns to Jerusalem. This will come up later in Acts.

Map

13 Now when Paul and his party set sail 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 to them, saying, "Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." 16 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: 17 The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. 18 Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. 19 And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of

Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.

20 “After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’ 23 From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus— 24 after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.’

26 “Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. 27 For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. 28 And though they found no cause for death in

Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. 29 Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. 30 But God raised Him from the dead. 31 He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. 32 And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. 33 God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:

***‘You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.’***

34 And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus:

‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’

***35 Therefore He also says in another Psalm:
‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’***

36 “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; 37 but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. 38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; 39 and by Him everyone

who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: 41 'Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you.' ”

Landed in Perga, then went on to Antioch. A different Antioch. (Not Syrian Antioch, from whence they left.) A Roman colony established at or around the death of Augustus, after the ending civil wars. Originally mostly made up of former Romans soldiers. Thought of as a miniature Rome.

Paul's pattern. Synagogue first, general population following.

In the synagogue on the Sabbath. After the reading, as was the custom, at times. Paul pull an Arnold Horshack!

Speaking to both Jews and “God- fearers.” Begins with the Exodus and selectively brings them to King David, where we reach the hinge of his argument.

Compares David to Jesus using the OT, and then juxtaposes them with the OT. (Later)

Then to John the Baptist.

Beginning in verse 26, Paul throws them a curveball. The man to whom John was referring was Jesus, and to you, (a mixture of people) was this word of salvation sent.

Verse 33: **“You are my son, Today I have begotten you.” Ps. 2:7**

What has that got to do with the resurrection?

What is Paul thinking when making this connection with the Psalm? Gr. Anastasios – to validate. As if placing on a stage to declare.

Goes back to David and the idea of corruption.

If David is supposed to be the greatest of Israel’s kings, then how much more is Jesus, the greatest king, Messiah, since he rose from the dead? This is the hinge of Paul’s message.

Paul has quoted from the Psalm, along with several quotes and ideas from Isaiah 55:3.

53:11; 11:11 Ps. 16:10. Paul peppers them with chapter after chapter, (they would have been hyperlinking) of Messianic Psalms and entire passages from Isaiah and even a little from Jeremiah, which talked of the servant to come, (Jesus as Messiah) and GENTILE INCLUSION.

Paul then stands on the gas with a warning that spoke to those in the audience of an imminence, when he quotes from Habbakuk 1. That book spoke of what, at the time, was the imminent

invasion by Babylon. And the Israelites of that day couldn't believe that God would punish them, let alone, that He would use Gentiles to do so.

So why was Paul using this passage? As we have seen from the context, the Gospel is not going only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. This didn't sit well with many of the Jews, as we shall soon see.

This is an inversion of Dt. 32 where set Israel apart from the other nations, giving them over to lesser "gods." Now, YHWH is reclaiming those nations, as was His plan throughout the OT, as one can read in the passages from which Paul is quoting. (hyperlinking)

Then the sabbath service ended and we can see now what happened as a result of Paul's message.

42 So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. 44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. 45 But

when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' "

48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51 But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium.

Those who had heard Paul speak went and talked about it to everyone. (That is what we're all to do.) The city marinated in that message for a week, so

much that it seemed the whole city was showed up at the synagogue for the next Sabbath. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, contradicting and blaspheming against Paul's message.

Why? Was it because Paul drew a crowd they had never been able to draw? Partly, but the main point here is that tribalism set in and the devout, more pious Jews saw themselves, their faith and culture being overrun with Gentiles. This, after all was one of the main themes of Paul's message. And we see that the Gentiles embraced it. But it was too much for the Jews who just couldn't see past their traditions and what they saw as their distinct birthright. What a shame.

Paul and Barnabas now grew bold and Paul quotes the "B" portion of Is. 49:6. This is a Messianic passage, showing the coming servant, (Messiah, Jesus) as going to the Gentiles upon His rejection by His own people. (I think Paul took some comfort in his place as a servant of God, being put in that same sort of scenario.)

This group has followed in the footsteps of "Those who dwell in Jerusalem..." Acts 13:27; actually fulfilling the prophecy once again.

Prominent Jews stir up the crowd. Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet (explain.) Got out of Dodge, heading for Iconium.

52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

How could they be filled with Joy after having been thrown out of town? Because they had done what they were supposed to do. We have seen time and again, who the church would grow amidst and despite of persecution. And through it all, the disciples rejoiced. Even when running for their lives, as Peter was doing in chapter 12, and even as Paul and Barnabas are doing now. We are responsible for being obedient to our callings and vocation – namely that of spreading the Word and making disciples. We are not responsible for the outcome, though we long for the greatest fruit possible. We do want to be as good as we can be at sharing our faith and making disciples. This is why we are to live and act the way God would have us act. But in the end, the response is up to the people with whom we come in contact and the plan of God.

Paul and Barnabas simply went where they were told, when they were told to go, said what they were told to say, and then let the chips fall where they may. And even as they were quickly getting out of town, (Butch and Sundance?) they were praising God the whole time, headed for the next stop on the tour. What would happen if we lived like that? HMMM?