



“The Gospel According to Paul”

Acts 13:13-41

Acts: The Unstoppable Gospel

Context

Acts 13 is the hinge of the Book of Acts, dividing the narrative into two major movements. It marks the transition from the ministry of Peter, the apostle to the Jews, to the ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. It also launches Paul’s first missionary journey – a two-year expedition in which Paul and Barnabas traveled more than 1,200 miles by land and sea.

Verses 13-15 – After leaving Cyprus, Paul, Barnabas and John Mark set sail for Perga, located on the southern coast of Asia Minor, but they had a setback.

- Pamphylia was a difficult and dangerous place to travel.
- Paul became extremely sick (Galatians 4:13-15).
- John Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas and returned home (Acts 15:38).
- It must have been very discouraging, but Paul and Barnabas pressed on.

A Model Sermon

This is Paul’s first recorded sermon. It’s most-likely a condensed summary of the message he delivered in Antioch. It reveals how Paul communicated the gospel to an audience who is grounded in the Old Testament.

I. PREPARATION (vv. 16-25)

In these nine verses, Paul covers nearly 2000 years of Jewish history, highlighting the most important points.

1. God is sovereign over history

He is the absolute focus of this passage. He is the one working and performing the action of the verbs. It’s a reminder that history is *His Story*.

2. God is fulfilling his promises

The word “promise” appears three times. The word “fulfilled” is used twice. Paul explicitly refers to the Scriptures nine times, and he alludes to at least twelve books in the Old Testament. All of it is designed to point to Jesus Christ as the hope of salvation.

II. DECLARATION (vv. 26-37)

Next Paul moves from the past to the present – from anticipation to fulfillment.

Four Key Elements of the Gospel:

1. The death of Christ

It's ironic that even though the religious leaders in Jerusalem didn't recognize Jesus as the Messiah, they fulfilled prophecy by nailing him to the cross (Psalm 22:16; Zechariah 12:10; John 3:14).

Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies, but the religious leaders missed it because they cared more about their religion than they cared about God.

2. The resurrection of Christ

The resurrection is not just a matter of speculation or conjecture.

- It's a matter of historical fact (v. 31; cf. Acts 1:3).
- It's a matter of fulfilled prophecy. Paul refers to three resurrection prophecies in the Old Testament: Acts 2:7, Isaiah 55:3, and Psalm 16:10.

III. INVITATION (vv. 38-41)

3. The Reality of Sin

Acts 13:38 – “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you...”

4. The Necessity of Faith

Acts 13:39 – “through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.”

The Greek verb for “freed” is *dikaioo*. It's a legal term that refers to a legally binding verdict. It means to be justified or declared righteous.

Paul ends his message with a sobering warning that demands a response (vv. 40-41).

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

1. Why do you think John Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey, and how do you think that affected them?
2. In verses 16-25, Paul reviews 2000 years of Israel's history. What lessons stand out to you from this section? Why did Paul include all this history?
3. What are the key elements of the gospel according to Paul? How does his sermon give you a greater appreciation for the gospel?