

“**The Great Adventure**” continues...

SUPERNATURAL

Acts Season 4/Spring 2011

April 10

ACTS 13:13-43

¹³ Paul and his companions then left Paphos by ship for Pamphylia, landing at the port town of Perga. There John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ But Paul and Barnabas traveled inland to Antioch of Pisidia.

On the Sabbath they went to the synagogue for the services. ¹⁵ After the usual readings from the books of Moses and the prophets, those in charge of the service sent them this message: “Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, come and give it.”

¹⁶ So Paul stood, lifted his hand to quiet them, and started speaking.

“Men of Israel,” he said, “and you God-fearing Gentiles, listen to me.” ¹⁷ “The God of this nation of Israel chose our ancestors and made them multiply and grow strong during their stay in Egypt. Then with a powerful arm he led them out of their slavery. ¹⁸ He put up with them through forty years of wandering in the wilderness. ¹⁹ Then he destroyed seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to Israel as an inheritance. ²⁰ All this took about 450 years. “After that, God gave them judges to rule until the time of Samuel the prophet. ²¹ Then the people begged for a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. ²² But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.’ ²³ “And it is one of King David’s descendants, Jesus, who is God’s promised Savior of Israel! ²⁴ Before he came, John the Baptist preached that all the people of Israel needed to repent of their sins and turn to God and be baptized. ²⁵ As John was finishing his ministry he asked, ‘Do you think I am the Messiah? No, I am not! But he is coming soon—and I’m not even worthy to be his slave and untie the sandals on his feet.’ ²⁶

“Brothers—you sons of Abraham, and also you God-fearing Gentiles—**this message of salvation has been sent to us!** ²⁷ The people in Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize Jesus as the one the prophets had spoken about. Instead, they condemned him, and in doing this they fulfilled the prophets’ words that are read every Sabbath. ²⁸ They found no legal reason to execute him, but they asked Pilate to have him killed anyway. ²⁹ “When they had done all that the prophecies said about him, they took him down from the cross and placed him in a tomb. ³⁰ **But God raised him from the dead!** ³¹ And over a period of many days he appeared to those who had gone with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people of Israel.

³² “And now **we are here to bring you this Good News. The promise was made to our ancestors,** ³³ **and God has now fulfilled it for us, their descendants, by raising Jesus.**

This is what the second psalm says about Jesus:

‘You are my Son. Today I have become your Father.’

³⁴ For God had promised to raise him from the dead, not leaving him to rot in the grave. He said, ‘I will give you the sacred blessings I promised to David.’ ³⁵ Another psalm explains it more fully: ‘You will not allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.’ ³⁶ This is not a reference to David, for after David had done the will of God in his own generation, he died and was buried with his ancestors, and his body decayed. ³⁷ No, it was a reference to someone else—someone whom God raised and whose body did not decay.

³⁸ “Brothers, listen! **We are here to proclaim that through this man Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins.** ³⁹ **Everyone who believes in him is declared right with God—**

something the law of Moses could never do. ⁴⁰ Be careful! Don't let the prophets' words apply to you. For they said,

⁴¹ 'Look, you mockers, be amazed and die! For ***I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone told you about it.***'"

⁴² As Paul and Barnabas left the synagogue that day, the people begged them to speak about these things again the next week. ⁴³ Many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, and the two men urged them to continue to rely on the grace of God.

LIVE WELL POINT---

?---Why are we here?

Why do we put signs out on the weekends announcing our service each Sunday? Why do so many show up at 7, 7:30, 8, 9 or 10 to set this up week after week? Why do our singers sing, instrumentalists play, teachers teach?

Why was Paul and Barnabas in Antioch of Pisidia (Turkey)

“WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A MESSAGE...WE ARE HERE TO SHARE A MESSAGE...A LOVING GOD OFFERS FORGIVENESS THROUGH HIS SON...AND this same God who supernaturally raised Jesus from the dead can likewise raise each and everyone who submits to His power through a reliance on His grace to bring life where sin has brought death in every area of our lives.”

ROMANS 7:24/25 & 8:10/12

4 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? **25** Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin...

...**10** And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. **11** The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. **12** Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do.

DIVE DEEPER MATERIALS

As always---our thanks goes out to N.T. Wright (Acts for Everyone) and Ben Witherington III (Acts: A Socio Political Commentary) for their insightful commentaries as well as David Guzik's commentary offered on enduringword.com

From David Guzik's enduringword.com

4. (13) From Paphos to Perga.

Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

a. **They came to Perga:** Paul, Barnabas and their companions leave the island of Cyprus, coming to Perga on the mainland of what is today Turkey.

b. **John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem:** We don't know exactly why John Mark went home to Jerusalem. Was he homesick for his family? Was he afraid of the tough and dangerous travel through the mountains ahead of them? Was he resentful that the team of his cousin *Barnabas and Saul* (Acts 12:25) had now become **Paul and his party**? Was he a pessimist because Paul was suffering from poor health (Galatians 4:13)? Whatever the reason, Paul didn't appreciate the fact that John Mark abandoned the missionary journey here.

i. Who was right? Who was wrong? God had to deal with each party involved, but a great work was still going to be done for the glory of the Lord. Paul would continue to reach the world for Jesus, and John would write one of the gospels.

C. The sermon at Pisidian Antioch.

1. (14-15) The customary invitation in the synagogue gives Paul an opportunity to preach the gospel.

But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. 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."

a. **Went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets.** A synagogue service generally went like this: Opening prayers were offered, then there was a reading from **the Law** (the first five books of the Old Testament). Then, a reading from **the Prophets**. Then, if there was an educated person present, they were invited to speak on subjects related to the readings.

b. **Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on:** Paul wasn't the kind of man who you invited to give a **word of exhortation** without expecting that he would take you up on the offer.

2. (16-23) Paul begins his sermon in the synagogue, explaining how God's work in history culminates in Jesus.

Then Paul stood up, and motioning with *his* hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: "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. Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. After that He gave *them* judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 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. 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.' From this man's seed, according to *the* promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior; Jesus."

a. **Men of Israel and you who fear God** addresses both groups who would be at the synagogue on a typical Sabbath: Jews and "near Jews," those Gentiles who admired Jewish religion but did not make a full commitment to Judaism.

b. In this survey of Israel's history, Paul notes important events - the choosing of the patriarchs, the deliverance from Egypt, the time in the wilderness, the conquest of Canaan, the time of the Judges, the creation of a monarchy - but it all culminates in Jesus (**according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior; Jesus**).

c. This survey of Israel's history demonstrates that God has a plan for history, and we need to sense a connection to that plan. Jesus is the goal of history, and as we are in Jesus, we are in the flow of God's great plan of redemption.

3. (24-29) Using the examples of John the Baptist and the Jewish rulers, Paul shows how people both received and rejected Jesus.

"After John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 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.’ 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. 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*. And though they found no cause for death *in Him*, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took *Him* down from the tree and laid *Him* in a tomb.”

a. **As John was finishing his course, he said:** John the Baptist responded to Jesus the right way. He prepared the hearts of others of Jesus, and he saw Jesus as who He is. John knew Jesus was the One greater than all others. He knew Jesus was more than a teacher, He was the Lord God we must all answer to.

i. **The sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose:** This statement shows that John knew Jesus was high above him. In that day, it was not uncommon for a great teacher to have disciples follow him, and it was expected that the disciples would serve the teacher in various ways. This arrangement came to be abused, so the leading rabbis established certain things that were too demeaning for a teacher to expect of his disciple. It was decided that for a teacher to expect his disciple to undo the strap of his sandal was too much; it was too demeaning. Here, John insists he isn't even worthy to do this for Jesus!

b. **For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him:** Those who didn't know the Scriptures rejected Jesus, and delivered Him to Pilate to be executed, and Jesus was executed, and laid in a tomb.

i. **They took Him down from the tree:** In calling the cross a **tree**, Paul is drawing on the idea from Deuteronomy 21:22-23. In that passage, it says that God curses a person who is hanged from a tree. Paul wants to communicate the idea that Jesus was cursed so we could be blessed (Galatians 3:13).

4. (30-37) Paul preaches the resurrected Jesus.

“But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we declare to you glad tidings; that promise which was made to the fathers. 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.’ 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.’ Therefore He also says in another *Psalm*: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’ For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.”

a. **But God!** What glorious words! Man had done his best to fight against God - even to kill Him - **but God** was greater than man's sin and rebellion, and rose in triumph over sin and death.

b. The fact is simply stated (**But God raised Him from the dead**). But evidence from eyewitnesses is offered (**He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him**).

c. Then, Paul applies the truth of resurrection. The resurrection means that Jesus truly is the unique Son of God (Psalm 2:7), and it proves He was utterly holy even in His work on the cross (Psalm 16:10).

5. (38-41) With a promise and a warning, Paul applies the truth of who Jesus is and what He has done.

“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man 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. Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: ‘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.’”

a. **Through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins:** The promise is that, because of who Jesus is and what He has done for us, **forgiveness** is offered to us freely in Jesus. We may be

justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

i. What's wrong with justifying ourselves before God? It assumes God grades on a curve; it gives us the glory for our own salvation - instead of simply saying *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.* (Ephesians 2:8-9)

ii. Some refuse to embrace the salvation of Jesus in the secret place of their heart, because they want a salvation of their *own* making. They want to be saved the old-fashioned way - they want to *earn* it.

iii. In only a few months, Paul will be writing a letter to these churches in Galatia, dealing with these same themes of being justified by God's grace and not by keeping the law.

b. **Everyone who believes is justified:** Jesus does not only forgive us, but we are also **justified** by Him. Forgiveness takes care of the debt of sin, but justification puts a "credit" on our account before God.

c. **Beware, therefore:** The warning is that if we do not embrace the person and work of Jesus with our whole lives, we are **despisers** who will **perish**.

d. Some commentators have complained that Paul preaches too much like Peter did on Pentecost. But what is to complain about? It shows us that Peter and Paul preached the same gospel, and the same gospel was preached some fifteen years after Pentecost as was preached on that first day.

i. Others note similarities between Paul's sermon here and the sermon of Stephen in Acts 7. That was a sermon that Paul heard when he still hated the name of Jesus. Perhaps the sermon of the first martyr of the church was still ringing in the ears of the man who led his execution!

D. The Response to the sermon at Pisidian Antioch.

1. (42-43) Many people, both Jews and Gentiles, express interest in Paul's message.

So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 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.

a. We should assume that many of these believed, because Paul and Barnabas **persuaded them to continue in the grace of God**. This means they had already started to trust in the grace of God.

b. *Continuing* in grace is as important as beginning in grace; we must never leave it as the basic principle of our relationship with God. Far too many only think of **grace** as the introduction to the Christian life, but God wants **grace** to remain as the foundation for our life with Him.