

Paul and Barnabas have left Antioch, in Syria, which now has a good and growing church which is sending out pastors and missionaries to evangelize the Gentile world; '*... As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*' Acts 13:2

Paul and Barabbas then left on their first missionary journey and came to Antioch in Psidia which had no church as of yet. They went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and quietly sat down but after the Law and Prophets were read, as on every Sabbath, the leader of the synagogue asked them to speak.

Acts 13:16: '*Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, **and ye that fear God, give audience.***'

This following, short sermon from Paul, is one of the most monumental sections of Scripture in all of God's Word! Paul then gave a concise recitation of Israeli history up to the coming of John the Baptist.

Verse 24: '*When John had first preached before His/Jesus' coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.*'

John did not preach the Gospel of God's Grace unto Eternal Life: he preached only the Gospel of Repentance: 'Repent and be baptized for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand! The promised Messiah is almost here and you can receive Him as your long awaited King!' But, of course, most refused to listen to him or to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 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.*'

John still didn't know Who that promised Messiah was; he would not know until he saw what God had promised him: '*And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*'³⁴ *And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*' John 1:33

Then he knew; imagine: it was his own Cousin, Jesus, just a few months younger near Whom he'd grown up! We all have cousins; imagine finding out he/she is the Son of God...

Verse 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.***'

You Jews! Israelites! And you Gentiles who fear God, who have consented to become Jewish proselytes: God has sent unto you this promise of Salvation unto Eternal Life! Believe! Do not turn away from the Truth! Do not be foolishly evil as were the Jews in Jerusalem and their rulers!

Verse 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.*'

Even though Jesus Christ was wholly innocent they demanded His death!

Verse 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.*'

They were truly guilty of the worst of crimes even though all that they had done was prophesied: Isaiah 53 and Deut. 21:23 God predicted all that they would do but He did not force them to do so; unlike the Lord Jesus Christ, they were all guilty! And Jews would pay the terrible price for their ancestors' sin for the next 2000 years until Jesus Christ returns at Armageddon when, finally, God begins to fulfill every glorious promise He has given to Israel, all of which will be fulfilled perfectly and completely! Finally, all who are left alive will see Him, recognize Him and turn to Him in faith to believe:

*'And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.'*¹⁰ *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.'* Zechariah 12:9 and ... '*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, **until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.***'²⁶ *And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.'* Romans 11:25

Verse 30: '*But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.*'

Here Paul says that it was His disciples who were witnesses to His Resurrection, who saw Him, walked, talked and even

ate with Him in His Resurrection Body; Paul only saw Him later, after His Ascension, back to Heaven; Later, to the Corinthians, he will write: *'For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: ⁵ And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: ⁶ After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. ⁷ After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. ⁸ And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.'* 1Corinthians 15:3

Basically, Paul says, *'I was the worst person ever! So, I have worked extra hard, extra diligently, extra patiently, extra-extraly in every way and will do so until He calls me home upon my murder in Rome! So listen! Pay attention and turn to Him in faith! I labor in complete patience and love because of His unimaginable Patience, Love and Grace to me!'*

Verse 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.'*

And this is the first and greatest promise to Israel... the Savior through Whom all the World would be blessed.

Verse 34: *'And as concerning that he raised 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.'*

David prophesied of the One would not begin to decompose in the grave but David did rot away, as would we all...

Verse 38: *'Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Jesus) 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.'***

Pay attention! To you, the most blessed and privileged people in all history is being preached the promise and offer of forgiveness and justification from all sins which even all the Law of Moses could never do... think about it! Every sin you've ever committed, every evil thought, word and deed: forgiven completely! Past, present and future...this is offered to you! Do not refuse! Do not turn away! Your eternity... Heaven and Hell are at stake! Believe this and act on it or else!

Verse 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.'*

Paul, here is quoting from the prophet Habakkuk: *'Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvelously: for I will work a work in your days which ye will not believe, though it be told you.'* Hab 1:5

You are hearing God's Word: don't disbelieve as many will; don't die the eternal death of Hell as will so many!

Verse 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.'*

We're not told, yet, whether the Jews will be wise or whether they will be so very foolish; but the Gentiles are very wise so as to beg Paul to tell them all the Truth of God's Word which they, as a gift from God, recognize which Paul is offering but we will see, in just a few short verses, that Paul will recognize, as his charge from God, his responsibility to take God's Word of forgiveness and Eternal Salvation to the greater Gentile World.

It is, however, odd that the Gentiles ask Paul to come back a full week later to give them the Truth rather than simply saying: we're here, you're here, tell us now! the Words of Life Eternal... tell us now! But... the next verses will tell us why they did insist on Paul's return to preach on the following Sabbath...

Verse 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.'*

When the synagogue meeting ended and most of the Jews started filing out, many other Jews and many Gentiles who had converted to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas outside. The religious proselytes were Gentiles who had

converted to Judaism; that was the only way a non-Jew could be acceptable to God; believing God's Word was the only acceptable path to God, following the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament; the Law of Moses with circumcision was the only legitimate worship of God according to the Word of God, as so far received with no New Testament written as of yet...

Let's assume there might have been 50-100 people gathered in the synagogue; remember... 1st Century Judaism was like so many churches today... uninteresting, bored people boringly reading and reciting the same Scriptures over and over again; not that the Scripture is ever boring or uninteresting but, for the most part, they had no understanding or expectation regarding God's Word: no one, outside of those within the confines of Israel and even most of those, also, were not believing or understanding, or else most of Jerusalem would not have been willing to demand the murder of the One Who fulfilled The Law and Prophets which they boringly recited, and heard, Sabbath after Sabbath, year after year, Century after Century until they became blind and deaf to the Truth of God's Precious Word.

'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.' (Verse 27 above)

On the other hand, those within the synagogue whom God had chosen from the foundation of the World, and now prepared, were fully ready and open to hear God's Word clearly spoken through His servant, Paul. Then, afterward, to this smaller group, of Jews and Gentiles, Paul more fully explained God's gracious offer of Eternal Life to all who will believe. They did believe and were Born Again as True Christians and Paul would have told them, with no equivocation, unlike we, too often, the full cost of their decision: persecution and even physical martyrdom but he also would have explained the true, all-surpassing superlative Eternal Gain of Eternal Life in the Lord Jesus Christ as well as the true reality of eternity in the Lake of Fire; after giving them complete information, Paul persuaded them to continue in the freely offered Grace of God.

But now we see why they also urged Paul to come back to the synagogue to preach, probably out in the open air, the following Sabbath: *'... and came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.'*

This small group of newly born again believers now possessed and understood the precious gift they'd all been freely given by God the Father through their Lord Jesus Christ: they now found that their new, overwhelming motivation and incentive is to see that all their friends, co-workers and neighbors would also experience their wonderful new life-changing Faith and Salvation to Eternal Life in the Lord Jesus Christ. They all went back to home and work effusively gushing, as only a new Believer does, toward everyone they knew or even came in contact; in fact, they most likely went knocking on every door they could reach over the next entire 6 days and 20 hours, while sleeping little until the following Sabbath morning at which time they were up before dawn, knocking on doors, waking everyone they could; the result of their genuine evangelism explosion was that ***almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God!*** And since Luke is not given to hyperbole, we know that his statement is true that almost the entire city of Antioch in Pisidia came to hear the greatest Evangelist, ever, tell them the whole council of God.** Later, Paul will later say to the elders of the Ephesian Church: *'Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. ²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.'*

But, sadly, these new Believers' experience will be similar to ours too often... many trusting and guileless Gentiles were ready for Faith but many Jews were filled with envy and blasphemous hatred which, is what Paul experienced throughout his years of ministry...

Verse 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.'*

Luke seems to say: *'But when the Jewish leadership and many other self-righteous Jews saw the multitudes of Gentiles and other Jews thronging to hear Paul, they, like so many Jews before them who saw the preaching of Stephen, Peter, James and other bold Believers, they stirred the passions of their own sycophantic followers unto furious murderous hatred.'*

Verse 46: *'Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary 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.'*

Paul **and** Barnabas waxed bold... remember, Barnabas is the older, longer a Believer, took young Saul under his wing; Paul is the more learned, likely far more brilliant with far greater Scriptural understanding and vastly more personal teaching from the Risen Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven, Itself, but I think he did humbly defer to Barnabas whenever he could. And,

doubtless, Barnabas was humble enough to grow by leaps and bounds under Paul's tutelage as evidenced by his later being able to lead his own, effective, Evangelistic Team with young John Mark.

What a thing to be said of you! You force the Truth from you and judge yourselves unworthy of Everlasting Life long before standing before the Final Judgment Seat of Christ at the end of the Millennium! Sadly, but deservedly, you will spend the next 2000 years in Hades before being cast into the Lake of Fire for Eternity.

Before you glare at me, do you imagine there is, now, any person, at all, undeservingly in Hades? But, some might say, '...the poor Jews upon whom God put spiritual blindness...' Paul said, *'You judge yourselves unworthy!'*

And so... here is the pivotal turning point in the Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, forced by the Jewish leadership of Antioch in Pisidia: *'... lo, we turn to the Gentiles.'*

Verse 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.'*

Remember, Jesus said to fearful Ananias, concerning the newly converted Saul/Paul: *'Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel...'* Acts 9:15

Verse 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.'*

The Gentiles were so glad because, suddenly, the unbearable yoke and bondage of Judaism, the false self-righteousness fostered by the demands of the hypocritical Pharisees additional demands plus the Law of Moses, was suddenly lifted; they were free! They then took the Gospel *throughout all the region*. Paul will later write: *'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage... whosoever of you (think you) are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.'* Gal 5:1

This verse, Acts 13:48 is what makes this section of Luke's record of Paul's ministry to His Lord, so very monumental!! *'... and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.'* Many try to make this verse say: '... as many as believed were appointed to Eternal Life.' **But it does not!** All these in Antioch in Pisidia, the proconsul of Paphos, Sergius Paulus, all who bekeved in Antioch in Syria, all whom we've seen who believed since Peter's great sermon on Pentecost, you and me: all were God's Chosen and Elect from the foundation of the World: *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: ⁴ According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.'* Ephesians 1:3. Every one of us were ordained, by God, to Eternal Life; then, after we were born, at God's chosen moment, as He gave us His precious gifts of Repentance and Faith to believe, we believed and were born again! That is what God's Word says and commands us to believe!

Verse 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.'*

I'm confident that Luke does not mean genuinely 'devout and honorable' women; surely he is holding up "air quotes" as he writes this... more likely: 'devoutly hypocritical spiritually blind and deaf Jewish women and the chief politicians and Pharisees of the city who expelled, likely, their last hope of Eternal Life.

Verse 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.'*

This follows immediately upon their Paul's statement in (see verse 46): *Meaning: 'and so, we shake off your dust; we don't even want to carry your blasphemous and unbelieving dust away, even on our feet!'*

In this episode, Paul is actually paraphrasing David speaking to the young deserter from Saul's defeat and death who lied, saying he was an escaped Amalekite who had been responsible for Saul's death, thinking David would reward him. *'And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD's anointed.'* 2Sam 1:16 Paul would have known this Scripture intimately, having been named for King Saul.

Next chapter we'll see their ministry in Iconium: more of the same...

*muslims have bastardized the true meaning of the term, martyr: from a person murdered simply for their religious faith, most often Christians, while ascribing it, instead, to their own *lying, vicious, depraved, diabolical assassins.*