

~ACTS~

Lesson 39- Paul's Sermon: The Promise of the Messiah

Acts 13:13-23

We are continuing our study in the book of Acts, and we are working our way through chapter 13 learning about the events of Paul's first missionary journey. Last week we looked at the first leg of this journey as Paul and Barnabas set off from Antioch to preach the Gospel in Barnabas' hometown of Cyprus, Acts 13:1-12. And today we will pick up in verse 13 as we see them travel north to the region of Galatia and we are going to start looking at the first sermon recorded in Scripture by the Apostle Paul. The entire sermon goes through verse 41, and we will be looking at the first part through verse 23, **Acts 13:13-23**.

The total duration of this journey is just under two years, from 45-46ad. Paul was converted on the road to Damascus at the end of 36ad so its been about 9 years since Jesus told him he would be sent to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, Acts 26:16-19. But in these nine years, Paul hasn't been just sitting idle. He has been preaching in Damascus, Jerusalem, and Antioch, and it is my conjecture that he also preached in Arabia those three years after his conversion, and also while he was in Tarsus. But now in chapter 13, the Holy Spirit has sent him as the Apostle to the Gentiles. Last week we saw Paul and Barnabas preach in Cyprus, and today we see Paul travel north preaching the Gospel in Galatia. And it is in chapter 13 that we have the special privilege for the first time of hearing what he was actually preaching because Luke records his message as Paul spoke in the Jewish synagogue in Antioch Pisidia.

Paul's sermon goes from verse 16-41 and it can be divided into four parts: **I**) The Promise of the Messiah, v. 16-23; **II**) Jesus fulfilled this Promise through His death and resurrection, v. 24-37; **III**) forgiveness of sins and Righteousness is only through Jesus, v. 38-39; **IV**) The Judgement of rejecting Jesus, v. 40-41. Today we will focus on the first section of his sermon, namely the Promise of the Messiah. But first, Luke gives us the details of their journey from Cyprus as they travel north to Galatia. Let's start with verse 13...

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.

Notice that Luke refers to Paul as, "**Paul and his party**." Paul has now taken the role of leader, and Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark leave Cyprus and sail to Pamphylia. They probably came to the port of Attalia, and then traveled by foot a short distance to the city of Perga in Pamphylia. But sometime after they came to Perga, something happened, and Mark departs the company and goes back home to Jerusalem. We're not exactly sure the events that caused this separation, but we know it was not a pleasant departure. The words Luke uses tell us this. The phrase "departing from them" is ἀποχωρήσας ἀπ' αὐτῶν. This is an emphatic departure because the preposition ἀπό, meaning "away from" is used twice. This word ἀποχωρέω, is used only four other times in Scripture and they always have to do with an intense departing, Matt 7:23; Luke 9:39. But I think the best example of the use of the is word as it pertains to the events in Perga is Jeremiah 46:5 LXX- "Why is it that they are terrified and withdraw back, ἀποχωρέω. Because their mighty ones will be smitten. They have fled in flight..."

I personally believe Mark fled because of lack of courage. They just had a run in with Elymus the sorcerer on the island of Cyprus and now something has happened in Perga to make him flee in terror. It seems that Mark just couldn't handle the road. And I believe Paul confirms this when he is having a discussion with Barnabas about taking Mark on the second missionary journey, **Acts 15:36-40**. This word "departed" in Acts 15:38 is ἀφίστημι. It means to stand away from, withdraw, or even fall away, Luke 8:13. Mark didn't reject salvation, but he certainly withdrew from a lack of courage and this created a great contention between Paul and Barnabas. But later in life, about 20 years later, there is a beautiful reconciliation between Paul and Mark that we see in Paul's last letter to Timothy, **2 Timothy 4:9-11**. But here in Pamphylia, Paul and Barnabas must travel north to Antioch Pisidia without their assistant Mark.

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.

This journey from Perga to Antioch Pisidia was treacherous. It was a journey through the mountains of more than a hundred miles. Writers of antiquity such as Josephus, Strabo, and Eusebius tell us of thieves and robbers who would live in these Pisidian mountains and attack travelers on the road. Strabo calls them "Pisidian Highlanders." They were wild and warlike highlanders, who were the terror of the whole surrounding country, Strabo, 1. c.; Xenoph. Anab. 1, 1, 11; 2, 5, 13; <https://www.biblicalcyclopedia.com/P/pisidia.html>. These could have been the "perils of robbers" that Paul speaks of in 2 Cor 11:26. The threat of these bandits in the mountains may have been another reason why Mark fled back to Jerusalem.

But when they finally arrive in Antioch Pisidia, Paul follows his same pattern, **went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down.** To the Jew first and then the Gentile.

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."

Being guests, Paul and Barnabas probably sat in the back and after the ceremonial readings of the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue invited Paul to speak. Paul probably introduced himself beforehand. It was not everyday that a student of Gamaliel, a Hebrew of Hebrews would pass through their region, Acts 22:3; Phil 3:5, so the leaders invited Paul to speak, literally saying, "Brethren, (fellow Jewish men), if there is in you a Logos of exhortation to the people, then speak." Little did they know that THE Logos was in them, and Paul was ready to release the Word of Life to them. The ruler of the synagogue had just finished reading out of the Law and the Prophets, and in verse 27, Paul is going to bring up the fact that the Law and the Prophets are read every Sabbath, but the Jews in Jerusalem rejected whom they were speaking of, and they killed Jesus, **Acts 13:27**. Remember what Jesus said in **John 5:39-40**. So Paul is going to tell them that the Scriptures they are reading speak of Jesus who is the Messiah.

16) Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:

It was customary in Hellenistic synagogues to stand while speaking, Lenski, Interpretation of Acts pg. 515, and Paul addresses the people in the room. The majority were Hellenistic Jews, but there were some Gentile proselytes as well, Acts 13:43. So Paul addresses the men of Israel, who are Jews, and those who fear God, these are probably the Gentile proselytes. And he says, ἀκούσατε, Listen! Paul is now going to go through Jewish history proving that Jesus is the Promised Messiah from the Scriptures, and he begins in verse 17...

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.

As I have said before, this choosing of Israel is not an election for personal Salvation, it is an election of service to bring forth the Messiah into the world. Paul says God chose our fathers. This is specifically speaking of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve sons of Jacob forming the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Paul speaks of the favor that Joseph had in the land of Egypt. Remember when we went through Stephen's address to the Sanhedrin in Acts 7. The first 70 years they were in Egypt they were exalted and favored because of Joseph, but then after Joseph died, another Pharaoh took control *who did not know Joseph* and out of fear of revolt, he put the children of Israel in bondage for 140 years, Acts 7:9-19. But Paul says **with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it**. Through the mighty hand of God, with the 10 plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, the manna, the water from the Rock, God brought them out of Egypt, Acts 7:36; Exodus chapters 6-15.

18) Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness.

During these 40 years, the children of Israel turned their hearts back to Egypt, Acts 7:39, but because of the promise He made to Abraham, He put up with their ways. He brought them through *as a man carries his son*, Deut 1:30-32; 7:7-8. God brought them out of bondage and kept them through the wilderness because of His faithfulness to His Word. To keep His Promise to Abraham, that in his Seed all nations of the earth would be blessed. And even though nearly two million Israelites perished in the wilderness because of unbelief, Heb 3:16-19; Acts 7:51-53, God always had His remnant who would believe and carry on the Promise to fruition; men like Moses and Joshua and Caleb. After Moses died, the mantle was given to Joshua to take them into the promised land.

19) And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.

Notice who did the conquering... God, **He had destroyed seven nations**. These seven nations are described in Deut 7:1-6. God is keeping His promise and going before them, fighting for them. And God is still doing that today for us. He is the Captain of our Salvation, τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας, Heb 2:10, the One who leads us into the Promise of Eternal Life' the One who has conquered the enemy of Death and Hell, Rev 1:18, and distributed His inheritance to us who believe, Isaiah 53:12; Col 1:12; Acts 26:18; Eph 1:11, 18. Paul continues with the history of the Promise of the Messiah...

20) After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

After Joshua died, God raised up judges to rule the land, and these judges continued until the Jews were given their first king whose name was Saul. But if you count the number of years that elapsed from the death of Joshua, 1437bc to the time Saul is made king, 1094bc, that is only 343 years. But Paul says it was about 450 years, so was Paul wrong? Absolutely not! You have to remember who was the first judge that God appointed over Israel. It was Moses when he was 40 years old, but Israel rejected him, Acts 7:23-27. God had made Moses their ruler and judge when he was 40 years old, this was around 1542bc. And when you count from 1542 – 1094 you get 448... **about four hundred and fifty years**. I believe this is how Paul is calculating this.

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,

The time of the judges ended when God made Saul king, 1 Sam 8:6-8; 9:1-2; 10:17-19. But because of Saul's rebellion, God removed him. You remember the story when Saul rejected the word of the Lord and spared the life of Agag, king of the Amalekites, and the best of the all the flocks contrary to what God had commanded, 1 Sam 15:23. Which as a result, **He raised up for them David as king**. Paul is taking them right through their Jewish history leading them to the Promise of the Messiah through king David.

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.'

Paul is quoting from several Old Testament passages about the choosing of David and His divine plan of ushering in the Messiah, 1 Sam 13:14; Psalm 89:20; Is 44:28. God says, **"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart."** This is an amazing statement from God knowing that David wasn't perfect. But none of us are perfect and God knows that. What God is concerned about is our hearts, and David had a heart for God. There is no one else in the Old Testament, besides maybe Abraham, that had a better grasp of the New Covenant and God's grace and mercy. David truly had a personal relationship with God. And it would be through David, from the tribe of Judah, whom God would send forth the Savior of the world.

23) From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus—

Paul is telling them that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Promise they have been waiting for. These promises that we read every Sabbath is fulfilled in the Man, Jesus Christ our Savior. He is the Messiah, the One promised to come through the Seed of David. Every Jew knew the Messiah would come from the Seed of David. Remember when Jesus asked the Pharisees, "*What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?*" ...and they immediately answered, "*The Son of David.*" What they couldn't answer was the next question... "*If David then calls Him Lord, how is He his Son?*" Matt 22:41-46. The answer is that God became flesh and they couldn't admit this. This term "Son of David" was a Messianic term. Everyone knew the Messiah would come through the seed of David, Matt 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9; 22:42. The Seed of the Messiah was promised through David, **2 Sam 7:12-13**. This is the Promise that Paul refers to when he says... **according to the promise**.

But the Promise of the Seed didn't start with David, it began all the way back in the garden, **Genesis 3:15**. Then the Seed was promised to Abraham, **Genesis 22:18**, **Galatians 3:16**; then the Seed was promised to Isaac, Gen 24:60; 26:4; then to Jacob, Gen 28:4, 14; then to Judah, Gen 49:10; then to David as we just read, 2 Sam 7:11-13. Then the Prophets continued to write about the Seed, the Salvation of God coming as a Man, but also as God Himself.

- Isaiah 1:9LXX- Unless the LORD of hosts had left to us a Seed, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah.
- Zechariah 6:12-13-¹² ..."Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD; ¹³ Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. (The body of Christ, John 2:21; Eph 2:21-22; 1 Pet 2:5) He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
- Zechariah 2:10- "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming, and I will dwell in your midst," says the LORD.
- Zechariah 9:9- "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey."

This was fulfilled at the Triumphal Entry when Jesus came riding in on the donkey and a very great multitude of people began crying out...

- Matthew 21:9- "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!"

And the Pharisees tried to get them to stop singing because they knew the significance of this saying. But even though many accepted Him as King on that day, they thought Jesus was coming to conquer the Romans and set up His Kingdom. They missed the prophecies of the suffering Servant. Specifically, that of Isaiah 53 and Daniel 9 foretelling of His sacrifice.

- Daniel 9:25-26-²⁵ Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. ²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself...

This prophecy was fulfilled exactly to the day from the time king Artaxerxes made the decree to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, Nehemiah 2, until the Triumphal Entry in 32ad. That timeframe is exactly sixty-nine weeks of years or 69 x 7 = 483 years to the day. Sir Robert Anderson wrote a book about this, **The Coming Prince**. All these prophecies about the coming Messiah built up to this moment on the cross,

and yet the Jews missed it, **Matthew 23:37**; Luke 12:56; 19:42- *If you had known, even you, especially in this your day...* This is the Day your Messiah is coming.*

This is what all the Apostles were preaching, that Jesus is the promised Savior, the Risen Christ. This was the premise of Peter's sermons, we saw this with Stephen and Philip, and now Paul. And we will see this continue all through the book of Acts.

23) From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus—

Paul is telling everyone in the synagogue that Jesus is the Savior, the One Whom God promised to bring Salvation. He is Son of God and Son of Man, born of the seed of David, our God who has come to bring Salvation to us and the whole world.

As Paul continues his sermon, he will explain that the Promise of this Salvation was fulfilled in the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ... He came first as the Suffering Servant... His second coming will be as Righteous Judge, as King of kings and Lord of lords.

* **More prophecies of Jesus' coming and His Salvation...** Isaiah 8:14; 9:1-2, 6-7; 11:1, 19:20; 22:22-23; 28:16; 45:15, 21-23; 46:13; 48:16; 49:2-7; 51:4-6; 53:1-12; 59:16; 60:16; 61:1-2; 62:11; 63:5; Jeremiah 3:23; 23:5; 33:16; Dan 7:13-14; Hosea 11:1; 13:14; Joel 2:28-32; Micah 5:2; Habakkuk 3:13; Zech 3:8; 12:10; Malachi 3:1. Isaiah 7:14