



# ACTS

HOW THE CHURCH WAS PLANTED

## Acts 13:13-16a

### In Pisidian Antioch

<sup>13</sup> From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. <sup>15</sup> After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak.”

<sup>16</sup> Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said:

## Review 13:13-16a

- We are continuing Paul and Barnabas's first missionary journey.
- ❖ In **13:13**, what changed about the trio?
  - Bear that departure in mind because it plays a key role later in this missionary journey. After Perga, Paul and Barnabas went on alone, north about 120 miles to Antioch in Pisidia. This is a different Antioch from the one we have been reading about so far. It is in the mountains of modern-day Turkey.
  - This region was generally known as Galatia, a name we recognize from the letter Paul would eventually write to the churches of the region.
  - In Pisidian Antioch, Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. A synagogue service of this time followed a standard order: opening prayers, a reading from the Law (the Pentateuch), then a reading from the Prophets. Afterward, if an educated person was in attendance, they were invited to speak. Enter Paul.

## Acts 13:16-33

Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: “Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! 17 The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; 18 for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; 19 and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. 20 All this took about 450 years. “After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. 21 Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. 22 After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’ 23 “From this man’s descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. 24 Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. 25 As John was completing his work, he said: ‘Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.’ 26 “Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. 27 The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. 28 Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. 29 When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead, 31 and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people. 32 “We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: “‘You are my son; today I have become your father.’

## Review 13:16-33.

- ❖ Why might Paul have been inspired to lay so much scriptural groundwork in **13:16-33**?
  - A. To show off biblical knowledge
  - B. Because his audience wasn't familiar with the Scriptures
  - C. To fill time
  - D. To illustrate Jesus is the fulfillment of what God promised to their fathers
- Up until **13:22**, Paul's synagogue listeners would have recognized from Scripture and agreed with everything Paul said. They might have noticed how perfectly each passage flowed into the next, as if it were all part of the same story, which it was.
- But for these first-century Jews, the content of **13:23** would have been the lean-in moment. He told them Jesus was the promised Savior from the line of David.
- ❖ According to the standard order of service mentioned earlier, what would have been read immediately prior to Paul being invited to say all this? In **13:27**, what did Paul say that they did not understand?
- ❖ Which Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah does Paul show were fulfilled in Jesus in this reading, and how do they explain why Jesus was rejected?

## Acts 13:34-52

34 God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’ 35 So it is also stated elsewhere: “You will not let your holy one see decay.’ 36 “Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. 37 But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay. 38 “Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39 Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. 40 Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you: 41 ““Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you. 42 As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. 43 When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. 44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. 47 For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’ 48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. 49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. 50 But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from their region. 51 So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

## Review 13:34-52.

- Paul went on to explain to them *exactly* how the words of the prophets were fulfilled. He listed one psalm and prophecy after another, revealing to them the ways in which the very words that had been on their tongues each Sabbath were the very words Jesus fulfilled in their lifetime. Then he offered them a sobering warning that was a prophecy being fulfilled in their hearing in that very moment.
- ❖ Use **13:40-41** to fill in the blanks in Paul’s quote from the prophet Habakkuk, which he prefaced with “Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you.”

“For I am going to do something in your days \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.”

- A common misconception about this verse (quoting **Habakkuk 1:5**) is that it is simply a general promise that God will do amazing or unbelievable miracles in people’s lives.
- However, in context, it is actually a warning. Paul uses it to tell his listeners that God is doing something surprising and decisive through Jesus, but they risk rejecting it. The focus is not on exciting blessings, but on judgment and the danger of missing what God is clearly doing. Paul is warning them that God’s work in Jesus is so significant that ignoring it will have serious consequences.

## Review 13:34-52.

- Even though Paul preached a challenging message, the people begged him to return. But the following week he did not get such a gracious reception.
- Here, God revealed His sovereign timing and the plan He had all along. Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly, revealing that the Word was always meant to be spoken to the Jews first, but they would now take that word to the Gentiles. And it spread like wildfire.
- Shaking the dust off one's feet was a Jewish way of showing separation from a place, usually a Gentile city, meaning they were leaving it behind. In this case, Paul uses the gesture after being rejected by the Jews to show that he is leaving their opposition behind and moving on with only joy and the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ What do Paul and Barnabas' response to both acceptance and rejection teach us about God's timing, the mission to the Gentiles, and handling rejection in ministry?

## Acts 14:1-7

### In Iconium

14 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. <sup>2</sup> But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. <sup>3</sup> So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. <sup>4</sup> The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. <sup>5</sup> There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. <sup>6</sup> But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, <sup>7</sup> where they continued to preach the gospel.

### Review 14:1-3.

- Iconium was considered the capital city of Lycaonia, a large region north of the Taurus Mountains, in what is modern-day Turkey. As a result of Paul and Barnabas's preserving work in the synagogue, a great multitude in Iconium believed, both Jews and Gentiles.
- In 14:2-4, things got rough for Paul and Barnabas in this city, but they leaned in.

### Fill in the blanks below.

"So, Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_" (Acts 14:3).

"For \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_, created in Christ Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_, which God \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ to do" (Ephesians 2:10).

- God used Paul and Barnabas's hands for the work, but we are God's handiwork. The work God did through Paul and Barnabas was work God had planned in advance for that specific region and those exact people; Paul and Barnabas were simply the conduits. As are we, when we step into alignment with the mighty work of God.
- These Scriptures shift the focus from *doing things for God* to *walking in the things God is doing through us*.
- ❖ Paul and Barnabas had to *act* (speak boldly) to experience God's *confirmation* (signs) in 14:3. In what area of your life are you waiting for confirmation before you are willing to walk in the works God already prepared for you?

## Review 14:4-7.

- ❖ In **14:4-7**, the city of Iconium becomes severely divided over the preaching of Paul and Barnabas, leading to a plot to stone them. Despite this dangerous opposition, what can we learn about the apostles' approach to ministry and the nature of the Gospel from their actions in these verses?
- ❖ In verse **5-6**, Paul and Barnabas learn of a violent plot to stone them and immediately flee to Lystra and Derbe. How does their decision to flee reflect a proper scriptural understanding of ministry, rather than cowardice, especially considering they were acting under the power of the Holy Spirit?
- The gospel forces a "division" (literally a *schism*) between those who receive it and those who reject it.
- This passage is significant because it is one of the rare places in Acts where Luke calls Paul and Barnabas "apostles" (v. 4, 14), signifying their authority in the face of questioning.
- The miracles were designed to affirm the "word of His grace," not merely to protect the messengers from danger.