

should be saved,... and that fact continues on today, that in spite of the circumstances what we read here in ACTS 12:24 is still true: But the word of God grew and multiplied.

ACTS 13

We are going to begin our thoughts on ACTS 13 by examining the last verse of ACTS 12, which concludes the ministry of Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus' journey to Jerusalem from Antioch, Syria. Recall that Barnabas and Saul took relief to the poor famine stricken Saints of Jerusalem from the Christian Saints of Antioch, Syria, which is mentioned in ACTS 11:27-30. ACTS 12:25 *And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.*

Three important characters are mentioned in ACTS 12:25. We are familiar with Barnabas, who was first mentioned in ACTS 4:36 & 37 during the early days of the church in Jerusalem. There Barnabas brought money from a land sale, and gave it to the Kingdom Apostles for distribution among the believers there in Jerusalem who lacked, and had need. We learned there that Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus. Barnabas may have been a convert to Christianity during the early days of Pentecost, however the Bible isn't specific when he got saved. Obviously Barnabas well knew the Kingdom Apostles, and in ACTS 9:27 a few years later we learned that it was Barnabas who introduced Saul of Tarsus to the Kingdom Apostles. This was about three years after Saul was converted on the road to Damascus. It seems Barnabas first got acquainted with Saul of Tarsus shortly after Saul of Tarsus got saved, and apparently Barnabas was in Damascus at a synagogue service where Saul of Tarsus gave his testimony on how he got saved. So when Saul of Tarsus came back to Jerusalem after being saved in ACTS 9:27, it was Barnabas who introduced him to the Apostles. However two weeks later Saul of Tarsus was sent back to his boyhood town of Tarsus, where five years later Barnabas was sent to bring Saul to Antioch, Syria to teach the Jew and Gentile Christians in that young assembly. Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus then became a couple of the teachers in Antioch, Syria. Most recently in ACTS 11:27-30 it was the team of Barnabas and Saul who brought from Antioch, Syria the financial relief for the church at Jerusalem. How long Barnabas and Saul were in Jerusalem isn't told us in scripture, but apparently while they were there the events we just went over in ACTS 12 occurred.

This brings us to discuss John, whose surname was Mark, a young man at this time of ACTS 12. We first read about him in ACTS 12:25 where we find that his mother's name was Mary. What we learn later in scripture is that John, whose surname was Mark, mother Mary, was Barnabas' sister. We find this in COLOSSIANS 4:10 where John, whose surname was Mark, was also called Marcus, much like Peter, who also was known as Simon, and Cephas. COLOSSIANS 4:10 in part reads: *...Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas.* Interestingly we find John, whose surname was Mark mentioned eight times in scripture; five times as Mark, and three times as Marcus. When I did the study on the life of the Apostle Paul we referred to John, whose surname was Mark as John Mark, and we have several times before in this study also called him John Mark to distinguish him from the Apostle John. Down the road about twenty plus years from the time-frame of ACTS 12, John Mark will be found as a great help to the Apostle Paul. We find this recorded in 2 TIMOTHY 4:11, which reads: *Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.* Certainly we will discuss this in greater detail later in this study if the Lord tarries that long. In the immediate future however as we will see in a little bit in ACTS 13 that John Mark, at that point in time, was not an asset to Paul's ministry, but thank God that later on he was profitable to the Apostle Paul for the ministry. We too benefit from John Mark, for he was the very same guy who later wrote The Gospel According to MARK! So what we have noted so far is that John Mark was first associated with the church at Jerusalem as was his uncle Barnabas.

In Mark's gospel he records an unique event that happened on the night that Jesus Christ was betrayed by Judas; an event that isn't recorded in the other gospel records. We read this event in MARK 14:51 & 52. MARK 14:51 *And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth*

cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: 52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked. Since this portion of scripture seems to have no real connection with the context of the rest of the story other than an interesting side light, one scholar notes that this may be a reference to Mark himself. If that is the case then we must note that John Mark was a young man at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus, and a first hand witness to Jesus arrest.

So we find in ACTS 13:1 that Barnabas, Saul of Tarsus, and John Mark are now back in Antioch, Syria, which was now the home church of Saul of Tarsus, who goes on in ACTS 13 to be known as the Apostle Paul. ACTS 13:1 *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.*

There is a lot of information contained in ACTS 13:1. Remember first as we read this, that our brother in the Lord Luke, who was the writer here, was also, it seems, a current resident of Antioch, Syria. Luke here for the first time in ACTS is writing something he observed first hand, and that being at this point in time when Barnabas, and Saul of Tarsus returned from there famine relief journey to Jerusalem there were now at the church in Antioch *...certain prophets and teachers...* then Luke lists five men whom he personally knew. No doubt there were others of this same caliber there in Antioch, Syria also, but Luke only mentions these five. Of course we know that five is the number of GRACE, and the Holy Spirit had Luke write about these five to emphasize to us the fact that the assembly there in Antioch, Syria was a diverse grace Christian assembly, whose attendees were both Jew and Gentile from all parts of the world. Recall that Antioch, Syria was a melting pot of cultures for it was a commerce center of trade. Antioch had everything that Roman wealth, Greek culture, and Oriental luxury could produce. In other words, Antioch was a wealthy city. The citizens of Antioch were somewhat unique in that they were given by the Roman Empire the privilege of worship in their own way without fear of repercussion or persecution. Antioch, Syria was called the "Queen of the East," also "Antioch the Beautiful," and was a fairly modern city at this time in history.

Let's examine in a little more detail this fact that Luke seems to emphasize here, that there were now at the church in Antioch *...certain prophets and teachers...* . The Greek word translated "prophets" here is prophetes {prof-ay'-tace}, number 4396 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which means (according to Vine's Dictionary) one who speaks forth openly of the Divine counsels of grace already accomplished, and the fore-telling of the purposes of God in the future. Recall this scripture that we have previously read in 2 PETER 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* Peter here was writing how the Old Testament prophets *...were moved by the Holy Ghost...* to speak of future events. The same is true of the prophets of New Testament times, who also *...were moved by the Holy Ghost...* to speak of future events. So here in ACTS 13:1, who of the five men listed were prophets, and who were teachers? The way the Holy Ghost inspired Luke to write this we find no real distinction made between the prophets and teachers here. Since there is no distinction made here between prophets and teachers we are led to believe that these five discharged both offices as led by the Holy Ghost; both instructing the people as teachers, and telling future events as prophets. Thus we also are to realize that these *...certain prophets and teachers...* here in ACTS 13:1 were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and the same Holy Ghost is the One of the Trinity who shows you things to come according to JOHN 16:13. To help further answer this question of who were the prophets, and who were the teachers Luke writes about here in ACTS 13:1, let's do a quick review of three key verses in ACTS 11. ACTS 11:19 *Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.* ACTS 11:20 *And some of them were men of Cyprus {like Barnabas mentioned in ACTS 13:1} and Cyrene {like Lucius of Cyrene also mentioned in ACTS 13:1}, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.* ACTS 11:27 *And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.* So we find where some of these prophets, and teachers had recently come from, and that was Jerusalem. Furthermore we must again

appreciate here that Luke knew all of these men, and had heard them all teach, and tell of things future as the Holy Ghost led them in their teaching.

ACTS 13:1 *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.* Let's look at the five (the number of GRACE) ...*prophets and teachers...* mentioned in this verse that Luke wrote about. (1) First listed is Barnabas {son of prophecy, or son of consolation}, whom we discussed previously, and Barnabas will become a famous Church Apostle, that is one who taught Paul's gospel message. The Church Apostles were sent unto the Gentiles. Barnabas must have been a patient man, for Barnabas was patient with Paul, having been the first Saint from Jerusalem to take Paul in and get him acquainted with those at Jerusalem. Then after letting some years go by, Barnabas set sail for Tarsus, where he patiently searched for Paul, then after finding him brought him to Antioch where they taught together. Some years down the road after Paul and Barnabas split up, Barnabas will patiently teach John Mark the gospel of Paul. Late in life Paul will acknowledge the importance of John Mark, who has again been added to his ministry, by stating that John Mark is a fellowlabourer with Paul (PHILEMON 1:24), and ...*profitable to me for the ministry...* (2 TIMOTHY 4:11). The second (2) man mentioned in ACTS 13:1 is ...*Simeon that was called Niger...* . Simeon {hearkening} is such a common name in scripture, that this particular man is often confused with The Simeon of Cyrene mentioned in MATTHEW 27:32 and MARK 15:21. He may be the same man, God only for sure knows. We do know from ACTS 13:1 that he was called Niger, which indicates that he was a proselyte from a region in Africa, and the Twentieth Century New Testament translation of this portion of this verse reads: ...*Simeon who went by the name of Black.* If he was a black man from a region of Africa it shows how diverse in background were those in the church at Antioch, Syria, and the fact of how the preaching of the gospel had spread ...*and unto the uttermost part of the earth...* ...ACTS 1:8. The third (3) man mentioned in ACTS 13:2 is ...*Lucius of Cyrene...* . Lucius {light; bright; white}. Cyrene is located on the north coast of Libya. On the day of Pentecost in ACTS 2 we read that there were those confounded and amazed and marveling because they heard in their own language, Jews from Jerusalem speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost in languages these Jews knew nothing about, the wonderful works of God. Some of these who were confounded were from Cyrene. We are not told in scripture much about Lucius of Cyrene, but know that the preaching of the gospel had reached those of Cyrene, and somehow this good news came unto the ears of Lucius of Cyrene. The fourth (4) man mentioned in ACTS 13:1 is ...*Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch...* . Herod the tetrarch was the Herod who beheaded John the Baptist. We don't know much more than this about Manaen {comforter}, but it goes to show that Christianity was all around the Herod's. Herod Agrippa stated unto Paul in ACTS 26:28 ...*Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.* Thank God that Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch became a Christian, and one of the ...*prophets and teachers...* in the church at Antioch. The fifth (5) man mentioned in ACTS 13:1 is Saul {requested}, the same is known as Saul of Tarsus, and more famously later he is known as the Apostle Paul. Saul is called Saul (instead of Paul) twenty-four times in the New Testament scripture. Twenty-four is the number that has to do with the PRIESTHOOD. Saul was closely connected with the high priest there in Jerusalem, and as such also was closely connected with the Jewish Sanhedrin. We find Saul of Tarsus first mentioned in ACTS 7:58 at the stoning of Stephen. ACTS 7:1 tells us that Stephen gave his address to the Jewish council in answer to the high priest questioning of him. Saul obviously was there also having a close connection to the Jewish Sanhedrin. And as we mentioned many times before, it was this former Saul of Tarsus, who told Luke the words of Stephen's sermon, for Stephen's Holy Ghost inspired sermon were the words that pricked the conscience of Saul of Tarsus before he was saved. In ACTS 8:3 we read: *As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.* And he did so with the blessings of the high priest. ACTS 9:1 & 2 verifies this, and ACTS 22:5 further illustrates how closely associated with the Jewish council of the Sanhedrin Saul was, stating: *As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the*

elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. Thus we see that Saul, also known as Saul of Tarsus, had a name and reputation of much evil by those Saints at Jerusalem. Ananias of Damascus in ACTS 9:13 & 14 questions the Lord concerning Saul, stating: *...I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.* Thus we see that Saul of Tarsus had a poor reputation amongst the Christians at Jerusalem, and then after his conversion the scripture tells us that he had a poor reputation amongst his former associates there at Jerusalem; in fact they went about to kill him {study ACTS 9:29, ACTS 21:31 and ACTS 23:15}. ACTS 9:30 tells us that Saul was sent from Jerusalem back to his boyhood home of Tarsus, where he headquartered and dedicated his time and life unto the Lord until about five years later when Barnabas went to seek him in ACTS 11:25. Now here in ACTS 13:1 we find Saul listed last in this list of five *...prophets and teachers...* in the church that was at Antioch. However Saul will be put front and center by the Holy Ghost from this point forward. The last point in time in chronology that we find Paul called Saul is in ACTS 13:9, and later references to Paul being called Saul is when the scripture refers back to the time his conversion. After ACTS 13:9 we find Saul called Paul 162 times in scripture.

By noting the short diverse history of these five *...prophets and teachers...* we should now better appreciate the working of the Holy Ghost in these men's lives, and how they were able to be *...prophets and teachers...* in the church at Antioch, Syria. From their diverse background we couldn't see maybe only a couple of them being teachers, and probably none of them being called a prophet, so we again see the power of the Holy Ghost in action here, for He is the agency of the Godhead that empowers one to become a teacher, or a prophet. Again it seems Luke knew all five of these men, but he only goes on to record further information about Barnabas, and Saul, who, starting in ACTS 13 becomes the Apostle Paul, and Barnabas becomes the Apostle Barnabas. {Study ACTS 14:4 & 14.}

In ACTS 13:1 the list of these five *...prophets and teachers...* starts with Barnabas, and ends with Saul. Perhaps Barnabas is listed first because he was the oldest, and most senior of these five. Certainly we know from scripture that Barnabas was a follower of Christ years before Saul of Tarsus was even saved, so in that respect Barnabas was senior being born again years before Saul of Tarsus. However as we go through this chapter we will find at least two important points concerning Barnabas and Saul. The first point we have already noted is that Barnabas is mentioned first. The second thing to observe as we progress through this chapter is that Saul's name gets changed to Paul, after which he takes the leadership roll between the two. Barnabas' name is found five times in this chapter; Saul is mentioned four times, and Paul's name is listed seven times in ACTS 13. Since Luke was a follower of the Apostle Paul we shouldn't find it unusual how here in ACTS 13 that Luke begins to expound upon the apostleship of his close friend the Apostle Paul.

ACTS 13:2 *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.* There is a lot of key background information found in this verse that gives the foundation to a successful ministry. Realize as we examine the depths of this verse that in the days and months that follow Paul and Barnabas will establish churches at Antioch in Pisidia, Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium. A future Apostle Timothy will be one result of this ministry. So will Titus, Apollos, Aquila and Pricilla, plus many others we don't have time to list here. Then down the road a few years the Apostle Paul will do two more missionary journeys establishing more churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, and Ephesus. All of these future assemblies wouldn't have been possible had not it been for the foundation spoken of here in ACTS 13:2. So we need to examine this key verse, and realize it's importance in scripture. Furthermore at least nine of Paul's fourteen epistles were written to the assemblies founded in these missionary journeys.

The five *...prophets and teachers...* of ACTS 13:1 *...ministered to the Lord, and fasted...* before two of them were singled out by the Holy Ghost for a missionary journey. Let's break this down a little further to the two things mentioned here. First they *...ministered to the Lord...*

Secondly they fasted, and this fasting was also to the Lord. We must realize that this shows that the Lord was first place in their lives. He was first in value to them. They weren't being men pleasers, but rather they were seeking the Lord's perfect will in their lives. This was their heart attitude. They wanted God's will in their lives, and they wanted to pursue God's best for their lives. This word "ministered" as used here in ACTS 13:2 comes from a Greek verb rarely used in the New Testament scripture; the Greek word used here is "leitourgeo," number 3008 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, with the meaning in our text that these five *...prophets and teachers...* were doing a free will service of love, or performing a work of love dedicated to the Lord at their own cost of time, labour and money, and they were doing this cheerfully. Though it hadn't yet been written these five knew the truth of PHILIPPIANS 4:19 *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* Their motivation was only to do the will of the Lord. In COLOSSIANS 3:23 Paul writes: *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men...* and this was the heart attitude that we find of these five men. In 2 CORINTHIANS 11:7 Paul writes: *Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?* These five *...prophets and teachers...* were then servants unto the Lord, and He was their first love. Again in GALATIANS 1:10 Paul writes: *For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.* These five men then were devoted and dedicated to pleasing the Lord and doing His will, and are found here ministering unto the Lord, and fasting. In other words they are worshipping the Lord, and not seeking to please or entertain men as so many that call themselves preachers, evangelists, and ministers are doing today. These *...prophets and teachers...* in ACTS 13:1 & 2 were indeed worshippers. Jesus pointed out in JOHN 4:23 and 24 some facts concerning worship, stating: *But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.* Brother Copley in his comments on this portion of scripture in his study book on ACTS notes: "Our chief and first ministry is not to preach, but to worship. "The Father seeketh worshippers." If the Lord can get good spiritual worshippers, He soon can get able laborers and teachers and preachers. What a deep delight this ministry becomes as we learn to yield to the holding, waiting, preparing power of the Spirit. And what eternal profit we afterwards see therein." {End of quote from Brother Copley.} Their fasting at this time was not an outward show, but rather a spontaneous cessation of everything that might interfere with a prolonged waiting upon the Lord. Thus we see of these five *...prophets and teachers...* their total dedication and devotion to the Lord as *...they ministered to the Lord, and fasted...* . They were patient in waiting for an answer from the Lord as they *...ministered to the Lord, and fasted...* .

Next in ACTS 13:2 we read: *...the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.* Now how did the Holy Ghost say anything to these five dedicated worshippers? We must note that these men were full of the Holy Ghost. ACTS 11:24 has already stated this of Barnabas: *For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith:...* . In ACTS 13:9 we read this concerning Saul: *Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost,...* . That word "filled" in verse 9 translates into our English word "full," indicating that Saul of Tarsus also was full of the Holy Ghost, which we know he was. Men and women full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith and wisdom, is not unique in the book of ACTS, in fact the reason so much is accomplished in the book of ACTS, by ordinary men and women, is that they were men and women full of the Holy Ghost. {Study ACTS 2:4; 4:8; 4:31; 6:3; 7:55; 11:24; and 13:9 for starters}. Would to God that there were more men and women full of the Holy Ghost in the world today! Men full of the Holy Ghost accomplish the Lord's work, and these particular men of ACTS 13:1 & 2 were called *...prophets and teachers...* . What did they prophesy? Whatever the Holy Ghost gave them to prophecy. 1 CORINTHIANS 14 sheds light upon this subject, and 1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-5 reads: *Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. 2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. 3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to*

edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. 5 I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying. By either a prophecy from the Holy Ghost, or a tongues and interpretation from the Holy Ghost, it was made known unto these five men of ACTS 13:1 & 2 to ...*Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.* We see then that Barnabas and Saul were to be separated from the church at Antioch; called without the camp of Antioch in other words, and separated for the work whereunto the Holy Ghost has called them.

Remember we are examining what Luke wrote us in scripture, and in the book of ACTS Luke, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost had a theme, and the theme of this whole book is the ACTS of the Holy Ghost. What we just examined here in ACTS 13:1 & 2 is another example of the far reaching workings of the Holy Ghost in the lives of Spirit filled believers.

The fact that Saul of Tarsus was chosen by the Holy Ghost to be sent to points as yet unknown for the work the Holy Ghost called him to should be no surprise to us here. Recall back in ACTS 9:15 that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself had told Ananias of Damascus in a vision that Saul of Tarsus was ...*a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.* Furthermore three days earlier on the day Saul of Tarsus was saved on the road to Damascus, Jesus Christ Himself announced to Saul of Tarsus that He had appeared unto Saul for this purpose, to send him unto the Gentiles! We read this in ACTS 26:16-18, that ninety-nine word sentence in our King James Version of the Bible, which I have before termed Paul's life sentence that he received on the day he was redeemed. Jesus said to Saul of Tarsus in ACTS 26:16 *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Now more than a decade since he was saved here in ACTS 13:2 we read how Saul of Tarsus was send forth with his orders from the Lord. ACTS 13:2 *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.*

Let's take a closer look at this word "work" found here in ACTS 13:2. One definition of this word "work" is business, employment, that which any one is occupied, and we know from scripture that Saul of Tarsus was occupied from that day on the road to Damascus with accomplishing the Lord's business. The Lord's business is the Lord's business, and He is not interested in making a lot of money in His business, for His business is in changing lives. Twelve year old Jesus told his parents in LUKE 2:49 ...*that I must be about my Father's business.* In JOHN 10:10 *Jesus stated: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* In JOHN 12:46 *Jesus stated: I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.* JOHN 1:11 & 12 further states: *He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:...* . The Father's business in this church age is best explained in a nutshell in ACTS 15:14, which reads: *Simeon (Peter) hath declared how God at the first (for the first time) did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.* It was to this business, this work, to which Saul of Tarsus was called: ...*for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness... to ...the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me...* ...ACTS 26:16-18. The Apostle Paul writes in EPHESIANS 4:11 & 12 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:...* . It was to this work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, to which Saul of Tarsus was called. And he did a good job in this work whereunto he was called. The Apostle Paul wrote in COLOSSIANS 3:23 *And*

whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men,... and he certainly led by example. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* So we see that Saul of Tarsus was faithful to do the work whereunto the Lord had called him to do. There is a reward for doing the work that the Lord has called you to do, and it is best summarized in REVELATION 22:12 *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

Before we move on to ACTS 13:3, did the Holy Ghost here in ACTS 13:1 & 2 reveal exactly where Barnabas and Saul were to go to accomplish this work whereunto they were called? Obviously the answer is “no” to this question. These five *...prophets and teachers...* full of the Holy Ghost, and Barnabas and Saul in particular, like Abraham in days of old, sought the Lord every step of the way, and then walked by faith to the destinations the Lord led them to. To accomplish the work of the Lord one has to walk by faith. The Old Testament worthies of faith became full overcomers by walking with the Lord by faith. The New Testament worthies of faith that will be full overcomers called the Bride of Christ will attain this high calling by faith.

ACTS 13:3 *And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.* Barnabas and Saul were called in verse 2, and then another round of prayer and fasting took place. It seems afterward that the whole assembly was present when they *...laid their hands on them, they sent them away...* on what we now know as Paul’s first missionary journey. If we jump ahead to ACTS 14:26 for a moment to the point in time when this missionary journey was completed we find that Paul and Barnabas *...thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.* In other words they reported back to the church at Antioch, Syria who had sponsored this missionary journey back here in ACTS 13:3. All three of Paul’s missionary journeys were sponsored by the church at Antioch, Syria for Antioch, Syria had now become Paul’s headquarters, his assembly that he could call home.

The first steps in Barnabas, and Saul’s journey that they took by faith is revealed in ACTS 13:4. ACTS 13:4 *So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.* It is most probable that Luke was present here at Antioch, Syria when these two future Church Apostles were sent off by the Antioch assembly on what we call Paul’s first missionary journey. Luke here notes (under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit) how they (Barnabas, and Saul of Tarsus) were *...sent forth by the Holy Ghost.* This is to say that the direction Barnabas and Saul were to go was determined by the Holy Ghost. They had requested in prayer guidance from the Lord as to where they were to first go, and the Holy Ghost directed their path. I found it interesting to note that the phrase “sent forth” is only found twenty times in scripture, and the number twenty is the number associated with REDEMPTION. Interestingly the word REDEMPTION is also found twenty times in scripture. REDEMPTION speaks to the paying of a ransom, which price was paid for our sin upon the cross where Christ Jesus died for our sins. COLOSSIANS 1:14 expresses it like this: *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.* So back here in ACTS 13:4 we find that Barnabas, and Saul of Tarsus, were “sent forth” by the Holy Ghost on a REDEMPTION tour. This was the purpose of their missionary journey to tell those where they were “sent forth” about the forgiveness of sins, the REDEMPTION that was theirs as the result of Jesus Christ dying upon the cross. All anyone has to do in order to receive this REDEMPTION is to *...believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...* according to ACTS 16:31.

Let’s now look at the rest of ACTS 13:4 *So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.* Seleucia was Antioch’s seaport city, located sixteen miles away on the north mouth of the river Orontes. Seleucia means “white light,” and Brother Copley noted it was called “white light” because it was a sea port town. There is no record in scripture of the Apostle Paul preaching in this town. Once in Seleucia we find Barnabas and Saul sailing to Cyprus. Cyprus means: “love: a blossom, or fairness.” Cyprus is mentioned in eight New Testament scriptures, all in the book of ACTS. Cyprus was Barnabas’ home country as is told in ACTS 4:36. Perhaps Barnabas and Saul had previously discuss the home country where Barnabas

grew up, and now Barnabas would have the opportunity to give Saul a tour, which would also, for these two, be a gospel tour.

ACTS 13:5 *And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.* Salamis means: "salt, surge on the shore, or shaken," possibly coming from the fact that the waves crashing upon the shore there caused some serious shaking at the times of heavy seas. Salamis is on the eastern shore of Cyprus, and the closest sea port of Cyprus to Seleucia from whence Barnabas and Saul had sailed, about 130 miles distance. Salamis is noted to be the Grecian capital of the island of Cyprus, and a great number of Jews were settled at this busy mercantile port. Since there were a great number of Jews at Salamis, there also were numerous Jewish synagogues at Salamis. Possibly Barnabas had many acquaintances at Salamis who would allow him and Saul to preach the word of God in these various synagogues. No doubt some of the Saints found at Salamis had come there because of the persecution that arose about Stephen as is noted in ACTS 11:19. Nothing more is stated in scripture concerning Salamis other than this fact: *...when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.* Isn't it interesting that the man responsible for the scattering of the disciples because of the persecution that arose about Stephen, who was Saul of Tarsus, was now given an opportunity, it seems, to preach the love of God, and the grace of God to some of the very Saints that left Jerusalem because of him? Suppose you would have been a saved Jew in Jerusalem before the stoning of Stephen, would you have prayed for Saul of Tarsus to someday get saved? Jesus said in MATTHEW 5:44 *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.* If any of the saved Jews at Salamis that were formerly from Jerusalem, who attended that synagogue serve the day Barnabas and Saul were there preaching the word of God, they no doubt would have rejoiced in the fact that Saul of Tarsus had indeed got saved, however we are not told if any of this happened or not.

This visit to Salamis gives us our first glimpse of a pattern found in scripture of what the Apostle Paul did everywhere he went on his missionary journeys, and that being, if possible, he went and preached to a synagogue of the Jews. We have briefly mentioned this before that in the synagogues is where the Jews met for their Sabbath day services. Paul being a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, still dressed as a Pharisee. Paul being a Pharisee, and dressing like the Pharisees did actually unlocked some doors of opportunity that he otherwise wouldn't have had. The reason for this is that often times in a synagogue service Pharisees would be asked by the Jews in these synagogues to speak unto them. The Jews always respected, and held in high esteem the Pharisees, and were eager to hear what the Pharisees had to say. Paul was more than willing to speak in a synagogue service when asked, and he even wrote in ROMANS 10:1 the reason for his eagerness: *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* Many Jews got saved because of Paul's preaching, however we don't read of that happening here at Salamis.

One more fact is revealed here in ACT 13:5 and that is when Barnabas and Saul began this missionary journey we find that they also had John Mark with them, and as Luke puts it: *they had also John to their minister.* Some translations state here that John Mark was their attendant, or assistant. John Mark who would later be a blessing to the Apostle Paul in his later ministry, was at the time of ACTS 13:5 not yet ready to be a minister. We should also point out that in ACTS 13:2 after much prayer and fasting that the Holy Ghost didn't say separate me Barnabas and Saul, and John whose surname was Mark unto the ministry whereunto I have called them. John Mark wasn't a part of this calling. It seems that uncle Barnabas wanted John Mark to be a part of this ministry, but that wasn't yet part of God's plan for John Mark. First of all he wasn't yet ready for this, and more importantly as we just noted, John Mark wasn't yet called into the ministry. Simply put John Mark didn't yet have the calling on his life to be a part of this ministry, so when we get to ACTS 13:13 we will find that John Mark departed from uncle Barnabas, and Paul, and returned back to Jerusalem where he was from.

Between ACTS 13:5 and ACTS 13:13 we find some serious opposition from Satan against Barnabas, and Saul, and even John Mark. It is during this encounter where Saul is put to the

forefront, and has his name changed to Paul in ACTS 13:9. The missionary journey will go on to be known as Paul's first missionary journey. It will also go on to be lesser known as Barnabas last missionary journey with Paul. As we go through all of this let's keep in mind that it was the Lord, by the leading of the Holy Ghost, directing all of these three men's steps.

One of the common themes that Luke presents as he chronicles the life of the Apostle Paul from this point forward is the seemingly constant opposition he faced on all fronts as he preached the word of God everywhere he went. Scofield in his headlines of ACTS 13 writes above verses 6-13 "Opposition from Satan." Above verses 44 & 45 Scofield writes: "Opposition from the Jews." Above ACTS 13:50-52 Scofield writes: "Opposition from devout and honourable women, and chief citizens." This is a pattern of opposition that is going to be found in all the lives of believers who pursue the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Such opposition from satanic inspired sources will be a common theme in all who will be full overcomers. The warfare of the Spirit-filled believer is outlined in EPHESIANS 6:10-12, and fully expounded upon in EPHESIANS 6:13-18. Notice what is written in EPHESIANS 6:10-12. EPHESIANS 6:10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* Note the six "**against**" things mentioned in verses 11 & 12: *stand against the wiles of the devil... ..against flesh and blood,... ..against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* The number six we learned in our meaning of the Bible numbers study has three main meanings: MAN, SATAN; and SATAN'S INFLUENCE OVER WORLDLY MAN. These six "**against**" things listed in verses 11 & 12 that oppose the believer all receive their influence from Satan, who is the prince of the power of the air mentioned in EPHESIANS 2:2. But what does ROMANS 8:31 tell us? ROMANS 8:31 *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* Study out Paul's answer to these questions in ROMANS 8:32-39 and see that nothing, even none of these six "**against**" things listed in EPHESIANS 6:11 & 12 of Satan's influence, are really tools allowed of God to be used in our favor to prove to us that nothing *...shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Brother Hill wrote in the introduction to his study book "The Warfare of the Believer:" "We can become joint heirs with Jesus Christ, but not by being thrown into a mold. We are of the wrought nature of metals which must take shape as we go with God. The cuttings, hammerings, floods, fires, furnaces and the lions' den—these are the things that will prepare us to become joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We can be heirs of God yet lose out on joint heirship with Jesus. We have a worthy foe and he can beat us out of our inheritance. There is only one man that can and already has conquered him and He is on our side. We can be strong in that Man, Christ Jesus, and in the power of His might we can defeat the enemy." {End of quoting Brother Hill.}

So as we continue studying about Paul's missionary journeys that only Luke chronicled in scripture, please note the constant opposition Paul faced on all fronts as he preached the word of God everywhere he went. This is all a part of what Jesus Christ Himself told Ananias of Damascus in ACTS 9:16 *For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* The pattern then that we have noted here is what to expect in the preparation of the Bride of Christ. But like our mentor the Apostle Paul wrote in ROMANS 8:31 *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* We are God's workmanship according to EPHESIANS 2:10, and He is the one who designed and brought into our lives these testing events that often make us suffer with Him, to prove Himself faithful to us in all things. There are no accidents along our specially designed race course, only testing events of His choosing. Let Him who is the author and finisher of our divinely designed race course have His way in our life every day. PHILIPPIANS 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;... .*

There is another theme presented in ACTS chapter 13, which is first revealed in verse 5, and that being Paul and Barnabas *...preached the word of God...* . We will find the phrase "**the word of God**" four times in ACTS 13. We found in verse 5 that *...they preached the word of God in the*

synagogues of the Jews... and in verse 7 they will also **preach the word of God** to individuals. Later in ACTS 13:46 we will see that Paul and Barnabas then began preaching **the word of God** unto the Gentiles.

ACTS 13:6 *And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear **the word of God**.* A lot of information is packed in these two verses. Barnabas and Saul, and John Mark still assisting them at this early point in their missionary journey, were all probably traveling by foot, and they here went from the east end of the island of Cyprus to the west. The distance traveled would be more than a hundred miles, and would have taken them several days. Most likely Barnabas and Saul were visiting the many acquaintances and family of Barnabas as they journeyed through the island of Cyprus, and preaching **the word of God** along the way. In this process Barnabas and Saul were becoming quite famous as they journeyed along, for the Roman governor of the island, Sergius Paulus, will request their presence at Paphos.

A little history of Cyprus, and Paphos before we move on. The inhabitants of Cyprus were mostly all caught up in the worship of the mythological Greek gods. (The same was also true of Tarsus where Saul was from.) Paphos was a maritime city on the west end of Cyprus, with a harbor, and it was the residence of the Roman governor of the island of Cyprus. Paphos name means "suffering" or "boiling" or "hot," and was famous for being a unrestrained and immoral town who worshipped the Greek god Venus. Venus was also known as the queen of Paphos. A superb temple was built at Paphos in honor of Venus where she was worshipped with all her rites. Stating it another way we see that Satan was having his way at this time at Paphos. The temple and the town of Paphos were later destroyed by an earthquake.

As we read above when Barnabas and Saul got to the capitol city of Paphos, the Roman governor, Sergius Paulus, a Gentile, requested them to come to his residence, and preach **the word of God** to him. This was something Saul of Tarsus was called to do on the road to Damascus by our Saviour Jesus Christ, who told him in ACTS 26:18 that he was being sent unto the Gentiles ...*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Furthermore Ananias of Damascus was told by the Lord that Saul of Tarsus was ...*a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel...* according to ACTS 9:15. A Roman governor is not quite a king, but an important ruler none the less. So in this visit Saul of Tarsus will get to preach to a governor, who happens to be a Gentile, and to another man, a Jew, who also happened to be a false prophet, whose name was Barjesus. Barjesus means: son of Jesus. This man Bar-Jesus may have been the son of a man named Jesus, but he certainly wasn't the son of Jesus Christ. His name does however explain his devilish mission: to bar Jesus, meaning to oppose, prevent, forbid, obstruct, exclude, to keep out the gospel message of Jesus. In verse 8 we will find that Bar-Jesus had another name, which was "Elymas the sorcerer" meaning: wise; learned; a magician. Wise learned magicians were part of Pharaohs enclave that opposed Moses back in EXODUS. Wise learned magicians were part of Nebuchadnezzar's team there in DANIEL. And I am sure that wise learned devil inspired magicians are a part of the prince of the power of the air's team in all of the world's governments, but the fact remains that ...*greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world...* ...1 JOHN 4:4.

Sergius Paulus is only mentioned this one time in scripture, and that being in ACTS 13:7. We are told here in verse 7 that Sergius Paulus was "a prudent man." The word used here for "prudent" is found four times in New Testament scripture, and means intelligent, wise, learned, of a sound understanding, and shows that Sergius Paulus was a man of good sense. One author notes that this word "prudent" may also show the sense of candid, and may have been used of Sergius Paulus because he was a man of large liberal views with a philosophic and inquiring mind, who was willing to obtain knowledge from any source. Hence he had entertained the Jews like Bar-Jesus, and was also willing to listen to the Jews Barnabas and Saul; men whose preaching had aroused his curiosity.

PROVERBS 14:15 *The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.*
PROVERBS 18:15 *The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge; and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.* Hence we gather that Sergius Paulus had an open mind when he requested a private audience with Barnabas and Saul, to hear for himself what kind of preaching this was that was stirring up the people of Cyprus.

Let's again read ACTS 13:6 & 7. ACTS 13:6 *And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear **the word of God**.* This word "desired" in the Greek is found 14 times in New Testament scripture, (14 is the number of DELIVERANCE or SALVATION), and means to seek earnestly, to enquire for, seek for, search for, seek diligently. Recall in MATTHEW 2 that the wise men from the east diligently sought for two years the young child Jesus, and one of the verses in one of our Christmas songs states that "wise men still seek Him today." Ask yourself how many today are desirous to hear the word of God? I think you will find the answer is not many. The Apostle Paul told us in 2 TIMOTHY 3 that in the last days men shall be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. 2 TIMOTHY 3:1 *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;...* . The wise and prudent desire to hear the word of God. In LUKE 11:28 we read these words of Jesus: *...blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.* ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* HEBREWS 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* In HEBREWS 11:3 we find a hint at just how powerful the word of God is: *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* If you want to get to know Jesus better, get to know The Word of God, who is Jesus according to REVELATION 19:13. There are 45 scriptures which use the phrase "the word of God;" 45 is the number of PRESERVATION. Sergius Paulus was a wise and prudent man who "desired to hear the word of God." Obviously the word of God that was being spread by Barnabas and Saul on the island of Cyprus had a far reaching effect beyond even the ears of those who were hearing it, for even the ears of the governor was eager to hear it.

Before we read verses 8-10 here in ACTS 13, I want to make mention of a subtle fact a brother pointed out to me recently, and this concerns the name change of Saul to Paul in ACTS 13:9. ACTS 13:9 in part reads: *Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost...* . Ancient Hebrew letters of the alphabet were symbols, and each letter had meanings for their symbols. Saul and Paul differ in spelling only in their first letter. According to the ancient Hebrew Alphabet the "S" in Saul means destroyer, or devourer, or sharp and cutting; and the "P" in Paul means to become a mouth, and opening, an entrance; also a spokesman for the flock; to praise. In ACTS 13:9 Saul of Tarsus becomes the Apostle Paul. Paul then is the name the Holy Ghost has Luke write about the Apostle Paul, who is known to us as the Apostle to the Gentiles according to ROMANS 11:13. We could say much more about this, but we couldn't say it any better than the Apostle Paul himself did in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* The old Saul became the new man Paul. Again in GALATIANS 1:23 Paul wrote: *But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.* The destroyer Saul of Tarsus got saved on the road to Damascus, and has now become the Apostle Paul the spokesman of the flock of Christ; a teacher,

and an Apostle of the gospel of God. Another portion of scripture that brings this all together for us is found in 1 THESSALONIANS 2:1-4. 1 THESSALONIANS 2:1 *For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: 2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. 3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: 4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.*

With this in mind, do we read in scripture of Saul of Tarsus leading anyone to the Lord? The answer is no, however we do know that this former destroyer of the church, Saul of Tarsus, after he was saved did lead thousands to the Lord, but the scripture only records this happening after Saul of Tarsus name was changed to Paul. Howbeit we also know Saul of Tarsus after he was saved, and still called Saul, did lead an untold number of souls to the Lord, but it wasn't until his name was changed to Paul that the Holy Ghost has Luke record anything about this. And this change happens here in ACTS 13.

From ACTS 13:9 Saul is called Paul from here on out in scripture, except for the times when he is referred to on the road to Damascus where he was called Saul. Saul of Tarsus was probably named in memory of Israel's much desired and asked for first king Saul. The name "Saul" means "asked for," or "desired." 1 SAMUEL 9:2 tells us that king Saul was head and shoulders taller than any of the people. The name Saul was Saul of Tarsus' Hebrew name given him of his Jewish parents. But also to be noted in his day that the Jews had two names, one Hebrew, and one Greek, Latin or Roman name, and Saul of Tarsus Latin name was Paul. Paul means "little." In JOHN 3:30 we read these words of John the Baptist: *He must increase, but I must decrease...* spoken of John the Baptists' place compared to Jesus place. The Holy Ghost wants us to note the name change from Saul to Paul, (from the tall "desired" to the "little") to show us how Paul had this same heart attitude as John the Baptist: *He must increase, but I must decrease.* Paul himself states it like this in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:10 *...for when I am weak, then am I strong.* In EPHESIANS 6:10 the experienced Apostle Paul writes: *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* The "power of His might" is manifest through Christians that are filled with the Holy Ghost. ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...* . Further in EPHESIANS 6:11 & 12 Paul writes: *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness {wicked spirits} in high places. {high: or, heavenly}.*

ACTS 13:8 *But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?*

Elymas' name means wise: learned: a magician; and from interpretation it is thought that he may have even been called a doctor. In the least he was respected and a learned man, and his mission was to withstand Barnabas and Paul, and to turn away the governor from hearing the word of God. One of the key words in verse 8 is that word "withstood," which means to set one's self against (face to face), to withstand (face to face), to resist (face to face), to oppose (face to face), and to set against. Elymas himself was seeking some sort of popularity, power, and political influence, otherwise why hang out with the governor? Since the days of Moses, and even before, sorcerers have made a living hanging out with the rulers of this world. Satan is indeed the prince of the power of the air, that worketh in the children of disobedience (EPHESIANS 2:2) whether they be governors, kings, senators, congressmen etc. and he hangs out in the seats of worldly power. Elymas was one of Satan's imps. Elymas' lively hood depended on his being able to influence the governor. Thus Elymas withstood Barnabas and Paul (face to face) with the intent *...to turn away the deputy from the faith.* There was more at stake here than just trying to protect his job, for Elymas was about the

Satan's business, which was far more important to him. Notice that verse 10 gives a full revealing account of just what the business of Elymas was, stating that he was a man *...full of all subtilty and all mischief...* a *...child of the devil...* an *...enemy of all righteousness...*, whose mission was *...to pervert the right ways of the Lord*. The Greek word translated "pervert" here in verse 10 is the same word translated "turn away" in verse 8. "Pervert" means: to distort, to turn aside, to oppose, plot against the saving purposes and plans of God, to turn aside from the right path, to corrupt. Thus we get a glimpse of the opposition that Satan would use to oppose Paul's gospel even being preached, and this was not just true only here at this Satan infested unrestrained and immoral town of Paphos, whose inhabitants actively worshipped the Greek god Venus; this kind of opposition from Satan was encountered everywhere Paul would go.

Note in verse 9 this most important point that Paul was (as one translator puts it) "full of the Holy Ghost." The whole book of ACTS is really about some of the things men were able to do because they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and not only were they filled with the Holy Ghost, they were full of the Holy Ghost, and His unlimited heavenly power was manifest through them. Saul of Tarsus first witnessed the power of the Holy Ghost in the life of Stephen. We have noted many times in lessons past how that the whole powerful message of ACTS chapter 7 is left as a record for us because of the fact that Holy Ghost recorded it in the heart of a young man who personally heard Stephen's sermon, and this young man's name was Saul of Tarsus. ACTS chapter 6 notes this of Stephen: in verse 3 we see that Stephen was one of seven men chosen that was *...full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom...*; in verse 5 we see *...Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost...* and verses 8-10 read: *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. 9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. 10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.* All of the above mentioned facts about Stephen were only possible because he was a yielded vessel "full of the Holy Ghost." We can wonder what Stephen could have accomplished had he not been stoned to death in ACTS 7, but Stephen had finished his course after planting the seeds of the gospel in the heart of Saul of Tarsus. Now back here in ACTS 13:9 we find the same power of the Holy Ghost about to be manifest through Paul because he too now was a yielded vessel "full of the Holy Ghost." What a marvel! In a sense (though not really) Paul now will pick up where Stephen left off! (If you study ACTS 6 you will note in verse 11-14 that they who opposed Stephen set up false witness against him, and here in ACTS 13:6-13 we find one in opposition to Paul and Barnabas named Elymas who himself is a false witness.) Paul will only be able to stand against the wiles of the devil here at Paphos because he as put on the whole armour of God, and that most importantly includes being full of the Holy Ghost.

ACTS 13:10 *And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* Let's look at three key words in this verse before we move on. The word "subtilty" comes from a Greek word which also translates into the following English words: craft, deceit, guile and subtilty. The following verses come to mind when thinking about the word "subtilty." We find the word "subtilty" six times in scripture, and recall what we stated earlier about the number six having meanings that point to SATAN; and SATAN'S INFLUENCE OVER WORLDLY MAN. GENESIS 3:1 *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? ...3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. 14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. 2 CORINTHIANS 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. REVELATION 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his*

angels were cast out with him. So we see that Satan himself is pictured when we read the word “subtilty.”

The next key word that we note in ACTS 13:10 is “mischief,” which is only found once in the New Testament, and means: unscrupulous, cunning, mischief. The Greek word translated “mischief” is also in some versions translated “villany,” which further carries with it the thought of wickedness, easiness, and laziness, and is a word also used of theft. In JOHN 10:10 we read these words of Jesus: *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* Also in LUKE 9:56 we read: *For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* In REVELATION 9:11 we read of Apollyon: that is to say, a destroyer, a reference to Satan himself. REVELATION 9:11 *And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.* The Holy Ghost here in ACTS 13:10 showed the Apostle Paul exactly who Elymas the sorcerer was, and the kind of Satan inspired “mischief” he was about.

The third word we will examine in ACTS 13:10 is the word “enemy.” Enemy means: hated, odious, hateful, hostile, hating, and opposing another. Jesus probably best defined the enemy in the following verses: MATTHEW 13:24 *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this....36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil.* Thus in these three words in ACTS 13:10, subtilty, mischief, and enemy, we get different snap shots of Satan, the influence behind Elymas the sorcerer.

ACTS 13:8 *But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* How did Paul know that Elymas was full of all subtilty and all mischief, and that Elymas was a child of the devil, who is the enemy of all righteousness? Paul was full of the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost knew who this Elymas was, and what he was about. ACTS 13:1 tells us of five men who were *...prophets and teachers...* and Paul (as we now call him) was one of these prophets. In other words Paul had the gift of prophecy, and he even states *...I have the gift of prophecy...* in 1 CORINTHIANS 13:2. This gift of prophecy is a sign and an evidence that Paul was full of the Holy Ghost; (study 1 CORINTHIANS chapters 12-14). The Holy Ghost knew who Elymas was, and what Elymas was about, and this information came out from the lips of Paul in the form of a prophecy. Apparently both Sergius Paulus (the governor) and Elymas the sorcerer listened to the preaching of the word of God for awhile before Elymas “withstood” Barnabas and Paul *...seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.* In 2 TIMOTHY 3:8 we read who these sorcerers were that withstood Moses in EXODUS 7:11; 7:22; 8:7; 8:18; 8:19; and 9:11: *Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate {a mind void of judgment or, an unapproving mind} concerning the faith.* Again later in 2 TIMOTHY Paul warns Timothy of another man who “withstood our words:” 2 TIMOTHY 4:14 *Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.* These men that withstand the words of the Lord are inspired of Satan, and the Holy Ghost knows who these men are; thus Paul full of the Holy Ghost can prophecy these words to Elymas in front of Sergius Paulus and Barnabas: *O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* This

statement was no doubt shocking to the governor, but Paul however wasn't trying to gain the governors favor, Paul was trying to prevent the governor from going to hell. GALATIANS 1:10 *For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.* Note that Paul by the power of the Holy Ghost called Elymas *...thou child of the devil...*, which literally translates to "son of the devil." These words spoken of Jesus in JOHN 8:44 apply to Elymas: *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.* Brother Copley in his commentary of ACTS 13:10 notes this most important point, of comparing the phrase *...thou child of the devil...* with the phrase *...the children of disobedience...* {see EPHESIANS 2:2; 5:6 and COLOSSIANS 3:6}. Essentially we are talking about the same group of people here.

ACTS 13:9 *Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.* Paul full of the Holy Ghost and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost having now asked Elymas this question: *...wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?...* makes an eye opening statement: *And now, behold,...* . In other words the Holy Ghost through Paul is making this statement: Elymas I now want you to see something from the hand of the Lord. The phrase "*...the hand of the Lord...*" is found 36 times in scripture, and this is the 36th time here in verse 11. 36 is the number that points to an ENEMY. Elymas was an enemy of the truth having yielded his life totally over to the god of this world (Satan). In 2 CORINTHIANS 4:3 & 4 the Apostle Paul makes this statement: *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.* So we see that the mind of Elymas was blinded by Satan, and to illustrate this point to those who were hearing Paul preach here in ACTS 13 the Holy Ghost through Paul said: *And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.* Paul knew what being blind for a season was like. If you think back on the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Paul) you will remember that he too was blinded for a season. The difference between Saul of Tarsus' blindness and Elymas blindness was the condition of their heart. Saul of Tarsus' heart was full of Light; Elymas' heart was full of darkness. When the power of the Holy Ghost came upon believing Paul in ACTS 9:18 *...immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales...* .

The scales that fell from Saul's eyes were given to him of the Lord to protect his eyes from that blinding light that Paul saw in the way on the road to Damascus a few days earlier. It was the grace of God that brought Saul of Tarsus salvation, and the scales over his eyes were another sign of God's great grace, and God's great love and thoughtfulness towards us in every aspect of our lives. Had the Lord not given Saul scales to protect his eyes, he may very well have been physically blind the rest of his life. The scales falling off are also representative of the truth that can only be revealed by the Holy Spirit. Those who haven't been filled with the Holy Ghost have scales over their spiritual eyes, which keep them from seeing all the things God would like them to see. That's why being filled with the Holy Ghost is such an eye opening experience (pun intended). Jesus told his disciples in JOHN 16:12-15: *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* How can you be guided into all the truth without the Holy Ghost? You can't. Further how can you see all the truth without the guidance of the Holy Ghost? You can't. It takes the power of the Holy Ghost to fully enlighten our eyes of understanding to see the deeper things of God. That is why the Apostle

Paul wrote in EPHESIANS 1:18 & 19 these words in a prayer for all Saints, that *...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.*

If you haven't received the Holy Ghost since ye believed (see ACTS 19:2-6) then there are scales over your spiritual eyes. When the hand of the Lord came upon unbelieving Elymas in ACTS 13:11 *...immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.* The governor Sergius Paulus witnessed this supernatural miracle, his spiritual eyes being opened just as Elymas' physical eyes were being blinded by the hand of the Lord. Recall in ACTS 26:18 that the Lord Himself told Saul of Tarsus on that road to Damascus was that He was sending him unto the Gentiles *...To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* This is exactly what was taking place here at Paphos with the governor Sergius Paulus; his spiritual eyes were opened, he believed, and he turned from darkness to light having received the word of God and forgiveness of sins. ACTS 13:12 states it like this: *Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.* As for Elymas the child of the devil, the son of Satan, note the condition his taskmaster (Satan) has brought him to: not only spiritual blindness but also physical blindness to the point that he is helpless and needs someone to lead him by the hand, and in such a helpless condition he would be unemployable. In short following the leading of Satan has cost Elymas his sight, his job, and in the end his life has been completely destroyed forever by the destroyer.

Before we move on we should also point out some typical teaching found in the verses we just covered from ACTS 13:6-12. The blindness of Elymas here is typical of Israel's religious blindness for this age, and is spoken about in ROMANS 11, the chapter that deals with Israel's future. We are currently living the Church Age, that parenthetical time in scripture where the Lord has turned to the Gentiles, for His chosen people, the Jews as a nation have reject Christ being their Messiah, and Saviour. Paul says in ACTS 13:46 and 47 *...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. 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.* Paul didn't have any idea that the Church Age would be two-thousand years long, but the Lord knew, and sent us Gentiles a Jew to be our Apostle for this age. Of course our Apostle is the Apostle Paul as is told us in ROMANS 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles,...* Paul knew he was ahead of his time as a saved Jew for he wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:8 *And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.* Paul, when he was known as Saul of Tarsus, had also rejected Christ as his Saviour as was manifest at the stoning of Stephen, which was the point in scripture the nation of Israel had nationally reject Christ. Paul before being saved knew he fit right in with what is now written in ROMANS 11:10, and 25 concerning the nation Israel. ROMANS 11:10 *Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. ...25 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.* But by the grace of God, Saul of Tarsus was saved ahead of the time appointed for the Christ rejecting nation of Israel, which is why Paul wrote that he was *...as of one born out of due time...* 1 CORINTHIANS 15:8. The unbelieving Elymas the sorcerer being blinded here in ACTS 13 pictures *...that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in...* ROMANS 11:25. ISAIAH 66:8 tells us that a nation shall be born at once, and that will be at the end of the tribulation. When that day comes the blindness will be lifted from the nation Israel as they get saved, and the Millennium will begin.

ACTS 13:13 *Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.* There are some hidden gems in this verse that the Holy Ghost left for us to see. We are not told in scripture of any others in Paul's

company on this journey other than Barnabas and John Mark. Thus we can assume that *...when Paul and his company...* are spoken of it simply refers to Barnabas and his nephew John Mark. We do know as time went on in later journeys many others joined in the company of Paul. Perhaps some recent converts were now following Paul for a while as he continued his missionary journey, but the scripture here doesn't mention their names. John Mark we find in this verse was not willing to go on from Perga with Paul and Barnabas, thus he returned by himself to Jerusalem. Perhaps John Mark wasn't at that time willing to follow the leadership of Paul, or possibly other things influenced his departure. We know from ACTS 13:2 that it was Barnabas and Saul (Paul) who were separated unto the work to which the Holy Ghost had called them, and John Mark's name was not included in this calling. Paul and Barnabas went forth to the work to which they had been called by the Holy Ghost, which is a major step that each and every full overcomer must take: that is to be faithful to the calling of the Lord in your life.

Probably the more important thing to see here is that Paul has gone from the last one mentioned in verses 1 & 2 (of ACTS 13) to the main character of focus on this journey. It seems Barnabas has taken Paul as far as he can having now introduced him to those acquaintances of his home country. Obviously the Holy Ghost is now leading the direction that Paul and Barnabas will go next. The sailing distance by ship from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia is about 200 miles. Pamphylia is a province in Asia Minor, and Perga was one of the most considerable cities in Pamphylia, however Perga was not a maritime city, but rather was situated on the river Cestrus about 7 and 1/2 miles upstream from it's mouth. Perga means: earthy, much earth, or very earthy. Pamphylia means: of every tribe, or all sorts, or all tribes. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:47 tells us: *The first man is of the earth, earthy...*, thus we see that Perga was made up of earthy men and women from all over the world. In Paul's day those at Perga were famous for the worship of the Greek goddess Diana, and on a neighboring mountain of Perga was a splendid temple of Diana, which gave celebrity to the earthy men and women from all over the world. Paul and Barnabas and John did not come to Perga to see the sights, but rather they were following the leading of the Holy Ghost. We do not read of any preaching taking place at Perga here in ACTS 13:13, but later in ACTS 14:25 we find Paul and Barnabas preaching the word in Perga.

Luke records Paul's first Sermon found in Scripture

We made mention much earlier in this study on what Luke wrote us in scripture that Luke documented twenty-one sermons in his writing The Gospel According to LUKE, and The ACTS of the Apostles! We are coming to that portion of scripture here in ACTS 13 where Luke records Paul's first sermon that we have of his in scripture. We will find this sermon in verses 16-41, and it is important to study this sermon for it becomes a pattern sermon similar to one Paul preached the first time he went into each synagogue along his missionary journeys. This sermon in ACTS 13 preached at Antioch in Pisidia is similar to the sermon Stephen preached in ACTS 7 in that both record the history of Israel, and that is where the similarity ends. Stephen's sermon was preached to the Christ rejecting Jewish Sanhedrin council, who didn't want to hear anymore about Christ. They had hardened their hearts, and ears, and like their fore fathers always resisted the Holy Ghost. {Study ACTS 7:51.} Paul's sermon was preached to both Jews and the Gentiles present at a Sabbath day's service, some of whom wanted to hear more of the grace of God. Keep in mind both sermons were preached by men full of the Holy Ghost, thus both were Holy Ghost inspired sermons. The Holy Ghost knew His audience; knew who was present in both of these sermons, and the fact of the matter was Stephen's sermon was designed to reach one man in particular, and that man was Saul of Tarsus. Paul's sermon in ACTS 13 still speaks men with open hearts today. We will point some more of the differences between Paul's sermon, and Stephen's sermon as we explore the contents of Paul pattern sermon found here in ACTS 13.

Before we get to Paul's sermon in Antioch in Pisidia we have to first get Paul and Barnabas there, and this takes place in ACTS 13:14. ACTS 13:14 *But when they departed from Perga, they*

came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. After leaving Perga in Pamphylia, that town made up of earthy men and women from all over the world, Paul and Barnabas came by foot to another town named Antioch. This town named Antioch was the capital of a province of Asia Minor called Pisidia.

The journey from Perga to Antioch in Pisidia needs some explanation. It seems that it was to such places as Perga that the Lord had told the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus he was sending him too (study ACTS 26:16-18). Perga was full of unbelieving Gentiles, earthy people from every part of the world, so why would Paul leave such a place without first preaching to these people? Keep in mind Paul and Barnabas were following the leading of the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost was leading them to Antioch in Pisidia. Conybeare and Howson in their notes on the Life and Epistles of St. Paul note a custom from this region of Asia Minor that has apparently prevailed for centuries, which was to leave the hot regions near the sea in late spring, and move up to the cooler basin-like hollows on the mountains with their flocks and herds. Thus Perga's population dwindles during the hot summer months, and there would be few people left to preach to during that time. The journey from Perga in Pamphylia to Antioch in Pisidia traverses some of the most rugged terrain that the Apostle Paul would ever face. One commentator notes that the journey from Perga to Antioch would be a long journey, the route laying almost entirely through rugged mountain passes with rivers bursting out of the bases of huge cliffs, or dash down wildly through very narrow ravines, making the journey a most hazardous one. Paul and Barnabas probably continued this hazardous journey up the course of the Cestrus River as far as the inland lake district, and then proceeded slowly through the dense forestation of the Taurus Mountain range to the north side of that range where Antioch in Pisidia is located. The whole length of the journey has always been famous for being infested with robbers. The highest peak in the Tarsus Mountain range is 12,250 feet, and Antioch in Pisidia is 3600 feet above sea level. The distance between Perga and Antioch is about 100 miles as the crow flies, and probably nearly twice that by this hazardous foot journey. When the Apostle Paul makes mention of the eight-fold perils he faced in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:26, it is thought that he is mentioning a lot of the hazards he faced during this portion of his first missionary journey from Perga to Antioch in Pisidia. 2 CORINTHIANS 11:26 reads: *In journeyings often, in perils of waters {rivers}, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.*

So why make note of the above facts? The Holy Ghost wants us to see that in order to reach the lofty heights that the Apostle Paul reached, then we are going to have to leave the earthy worldly folks who dwell in Perga, and follow the eight fold perilous path blazed by the Apostle Paul. The heights to which the Apostle Paul reached put us on the throne with Jesus as His Bride! The number eight recall has several meanings, one of which is the BRIDE OF CHRIST. This is one of the mysteries of scripture revealed in Paul's gospel. Paul himself told us in 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 to: *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* Again in PHILIPPIANS 3:17 Paul wrote: *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* Further in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:5 Paul wrote: *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.* In this present church age we are to follow Paul as he followed Christ, and we do this by following Paul's gospel. Paul encouraged us to *...press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus...* in PHILIPPIANS 3:14, and he never once told us this way would be easy. In fact Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* And he told us why in 2 TIMOTHY 2:12 *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him...* . The Apostle Paul on his Christian journey through life suffered many various tests and trials, and this journey from Perga in Pamphylia up to Antioch in Pisidia pictured this fact.

Let's now look at the last part of ACTS 13:14. ACTS 13:14 *But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.* After this hazardous journey Paul and Barnabas went to a Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath day, and "sat down." Paul had attended Sabbath day services all of his life being a Pharisee, and the

son of a Pharisee. Barnabas, being a Jew, had also attended Sabbath day services all of his life. Paul and Barnabas didn't yet know anyone in the synagogue here in Antioch of Pisidia, they were just doing what they were accustomed to doing, and also following the leading of the Holy Ghost. So Paul and Barnabas were unknowns to the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia when they went in and "sat down." This phrase "sat down" is found forty times in scripture, and again forty is the number of PERFECT TESTING. As we continue looking at this section we will find Paul and Barnabas perfectly tested before they departed Antioch of Pisidia. Note this also, when Paul and Barnabas "sat down" don't you know that all the regular attendees in this services would have taken notice of these two new travelers in attendance, and one, Paul, would have been dressed in his Pharisee attire. The Jews certainly would have paid careful attention to the fact that they now had a Pharisee in their midst. Recall that the Pharisee's were looked up to by the Jews, and they were always eager to hear what a Pharisee had to say.

ACTS 13:15 *And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.*

Let's discuss again briefly the Sabbath day service in a Jewish synagogue. We know for a fact that Paul, being a good son of a Pharisee, would have attended weekly the Jewish Sabbath day services if at all possible. The typical Jewish synagogue Sabbath day service consisted in part of the reading of the law and the prophets. Matthew Henry's Commentary states that in the synagogues they had seven readers every Sabbath, the first a priest, the second a Levite, and the other five Israelites of that synagogue. The first order of the service was *...the reading of the law and the prophets...* ACTS 13:15. This was a very important part of a Jewish worship service as copies of the Scripture were in that day very rare. The reading of the law and the reading of the prophets was divided each Sabbath day service so as to be read over entirely once every year. This would mean that on each Sabbath day two portions of scripture would be read, in course, one from the five books of Moses (the law), and one from the other books of the Old Testament (the prophets). The PSALMS were also incorporated into each of these services, probably as songs, and sometimes as prayers. One historian notes that the forty-fourth Sabbath in the year has readings from DEUTERONOMY 1 (the law), and ISAIAH 1 (the prophets), from which Paul will make reference or allusion to in his forth coming sermon. (The forty-fourth Sabbath occurs in July or August). As a well studied Jew we must know that the Apostle Paul would most likely know the Old Testament texts that would be read on this particular Sabbath, thus with great help from the Holy Ghost he could have a related sermon prepared in the back of his mind for this particular service if the opportunity presented itself. We are not told in scripture how the Apostle Paul prepared for this particular sermon, however we do know that the Apostle Paul later in life wrote Timothy in 2 TIMOTHY 4:2 *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.* We also know that Paul was full of the Holy Ghost, thus we know that there was a preacher living inside of him, who also was the Holy Ghost, the inspiration behind all scripture.

Next we must note here in Antioch in Pisidia that the rulers of the synagogue had taken notice of these two strangers to them, Paul and Barnabas, and seeing one of them, Paul, being a Pharisee, they greatly wished to hear what he had to say. So we read here in ACTS 13:15 that *...the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.* Here is something interesting to consider: the Greek word for exhortation is paraklesis {par-ak'-lay-sis}, number 3874 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, meaning among other things: exhortation, admonition, comfort, consolation, and encouragement. It is also the same word used of Barnabas in ACTS 4:36 where Barnabas is called *...The son of consolation...* paraklesis {par-ak'-lay-sis}. The attendees here in Antioch in Pisidia didn't know this, but we do, so which one of the two would get up and give a word of exhortation (paraklesis {par-ak'-lay-sis}) to them? And of course we know the answer was Paul, for between Barnabas and Paul, Paul had become the chief spokesman having been ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus to be a preacher, and an Apostle sent unto the Gentiles. Paraklesis {par-ak'-lay-sis} is found in twenty-eight verses of

New Testament scripture, and the number twenty-eight is the number of ETERNAL LIFE. The big picture theme that the Holy Ghost has the Apostle Paul preach about here in Antioch in Pisidia was the fact that all can have ETERNAL LIFE by believing on a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God raised from the dead.

In ACTS 13:16-41 Luke records the words of Paul's sermon at Antioch in Pisidia. Think about this for a minute. Luke wasn't there, so how did Luke record this first sermon we have in scripture preached by the Apostle Paul? Well the answer of course is Luke wrote this by inspiration of the Holy Ghost after being told by Paul himself what he preached. This sermon was that important that the Holy Ghost wanted it recorded in scripture for millions down through the Church Age to study! Of course Luke didn't know that, but we do. ACTS 13:16-41 is a complete sermon, one of a few complete sermons by Paul recorded in scripture. If Paul's sermon here at Antioch in Pisidia were a work of art, it would be a masterpiece. In the art world a "masterpiece" is a work of art that has been well studied, and is appreciated for the many fine and detailed aspects of the craftsmanship involved, whether it be a painting or a sculpture. Many hours of knowledgeable labor are put forth to create a masterpiece in the art world. We know that our lives are being worked into a masterpiece by the Master building fine linen weaving craftsmanship of the Holy Ghost. We studied in church camp this year EPHESIANS 2:10 where we read: *For we are his workmanship, {Masterpiece} created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* Paul's sermon that he preached here in Antioch in Pisidia was pattern sermon, meaning the kind of sermon he first preached in all of the synagogues he went to, modified by the Holy Ghost as need to fit the assembly he was addressing. Paul didn't preach this sermon over, and over again, but rather used this sermon as an outline in his mind to first address people in other synagogues down his before ordained road in life. Paul's sermon that he preached here in Antioch in Pisidia was indeed a masterpiece, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, so we will read it first for familiarity, and dissect some of it later. Truly there is not enough hours in the day to fully explore all of the points touched upon in this sermon. That is why it is a masterpiece from which we still glean from today. On your own time you too can study this sermon, and discover some treasure for yourself under the guidance from the Holy Ghost. Literally millions of sermons have been preached over the last 1900 plus years from the verses found in Paul's sermon of ACTS 13:16-41.

ACTS 13:16 *Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. 17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. 19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. 23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: 24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 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. 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. 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. 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. 30 But God raised him from the dead: 31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. 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. 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. 38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man 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. 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.

As a quick overview, Paul sermon here consists of twenty-six verses in our King James Version of the Bible, and twenty-six is the number associated with the GOSPEL, or the GOOD NEWS, of the GOSPEL. Paul sermon here lays the foundation upon which Paul's gospel message is based, and of course that foundation is Jesus Christ. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* Everything that Paul says in this Holy Ghost inspired sermon points the hearer to Jesus. Paul does not focus any attention upon himself. Not one time in this sermon does Paul use the words "I," "me," or "myself" in reference to himself. The closest Paul comes to make a reference about himself is in verse 32 where there is a reference to Paul and Barnabas when he makes the statement "...we declare unto you glad tidings..." This also speaks to the GOOD NEWS, of the GOSPEL. In verse 23 Paul introduces Jesus as the Saviour from the seed of David. In verses 24-29 Paul gives a quick history of the life of our Saviour, and introduces how He was crucified upon the tree (the cross of Calvary), and died for our salvation. Then four times, in verses 30, 33, 34 and 37 Paul emphasizes that Jesus was raised again from the dead by God. Next in verses 38 & 39 the Holy Ghost inspires Paul to proclaim the key point of his sermon when Paul states: *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man 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.* This is just a brief overview of Paul's sermon, which is truly a masterpiece inspired by the Holy Ghost. Since this is the longest sermon of Paul's recorded by Luke in scripture we will now look further into it because *...All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works...* ...2 TIMOTHY 3:16 & 17.

So far in the book of ACTS Luke has recorded several complete sermons; three by Peter in ACTS 2, 3, and 10; one by Stephen in ACTS 7, and now this one in ACTS 13 by the Apostle Paul. The only sermon that we know Paul heard was the one preached by Stephen in ACTS 7, which was heard exclusively by the Jewish Sanhedrin council, and at that time Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul, was closely associated with the Sanhedrin council. Stephen's sermon of ACTS 7, and Paul's sermon of ACTS 13 were both preached by men full of the Holy Ghost. In comparing these two sermons we find some broad similarities, mainly both of these sermons record in order some of the history of Israel. Stephen's sermon begins with Abraham with his focus being primarily upon God, and what He had done for the children of Israel back to the days of Abraham, and how their fathers and grandfathers, had constantly failed to recognize God's divine hand in their lives, and how they had continuously failed to trust God, and put their faith in Him.

Some in this Sanhedrin council that Stephen addressed in ACTS 7 had also heard Jesus words of MATTHEW 23. Here is part of what Jesus told them in MATTHEW 23. MATTHEW 23:29 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, 30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto*

*yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? 34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. Of course we know that they crucified Jesus shortly thereafter. After Stephen said what he did in ACTS 7:51-53 the Jewish Sanhedrin stoned Stephen to death. Stephen words of ACTS 7:51-53 echoed Jesus words of MATTHEW 23. Here is what Stephen said: ACTS 7:51 *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.**

Let's now look at Paul's sermon of ACTS 13 a little closer keeping in mind that Luke recorded this sermon from interviewing Paul, or maybe even Barnabas, for Luke wasn't there in Antioch in Pisidia. But Luke had heard Paul preach enough to know Paul's manner of speaking. Luke records in ACTS 13:16 *Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.* Paul didn't know these people in this synagogue so we must realize that people in this synagogue, being people, probably communicated with each other as Paul was about to speak. Paul wanted their undivided attention, so we find that he beckoned unto them with his hand, that is made a gesture to hold it down so to speak. Once he had their undivided attention Paul began to respectfully speak, and addressed the congregation with these kind words: *"Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience."* Notice that Paul addressed this sermon to the Jews first (Men of Israel), and then to the proselytes, that is the Gentiles who had renounced idolatry and joined in with the Jews in ordinary worship, called here by Paul (*...ye that fear God...*). In other words Paul was saying "Everybody who is here, please, listen to me." No one in attendance was left out of this invitation to hear the "glad tidings" {see verse 32} of which Paul was about to proclaim. Paul was emphasizing that he was speaking to all that fear God, and wanted to learn more about Him.

ACTS 13:17 covers the first fourteen chapters of Exodus in one verse. ACTS 13:17 *The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.* Additionally this verse simply states the facts of the first five books of the Bible, which are ascribed to Moses, and called in some circles The Pentateuch. These first five books of the Bible also recalls the fact that God was the one who chose the people of Israel to be "a peculiar people" unto Himself. Each and every one of the Jews whom Paul was addressing in this sermon at Antioch in Pisidia could trace his heritage through their fathers clear back to their father Abraham. All the Jews in attendance there at Antioch in Pisidia would also know that they were "a peculiar people" as is noted in DEUTERONOMY 14:2. DEUTERONOMY 14:2 *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.* The facts of this verse go back to what God told Abraham back in GENESIS 22:18 *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.* The word "peculiar" is only found seven times in scripture, and here indicates that the children of Israel were chosen by God to be "a peculiar people" ...unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth. Note that the nation Israel was chosen "to be" "a peculiar people" for that is the way God views them. DEUTERONOMY 7:6 states is like this: *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.* The Hebrew word for "special" here is the same word translated "peculiar" in

DEUTERONOMY 14:2. Before our eyes God is still showing the world today that the children of Israel are indeed a “special” and “peculiar” people, whom God has preserved for Himself, to prove to us that Israel is a nation *...above all the nations that are upon the earth*. The culmination of this fact will occur at the beginning of the millennium when the new creation Israel as a nation shall be born in a day, and become the head of all nations. {Study ISAIAH 66:8.} DEUTERONOMY 14:2 *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth*.

Here in ACTS 13:16 & 17 the Apostle Paul wasn’t addressing the nation of Israel, but rather Paul was addressing *...Men of Israel, and ye that fear God...* in other words Paul was addressing individuals. Paul here, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, was laying the foundation of his gospel message, which is Jesus Christ. And the men of Israel present in this synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia would have been taught that in the sight of God they were a part of this “special” and “peculiar” people called Israel, but please note in both DEUTERONOMY 7:6, and DEUTERONOMY 14:2 the little words “to be.” DEUTERONOMY 7:6 *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth*. DEUTERONOMY 14:2 *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth*. The words “to be” point to a future time. The Apostle Paul will tell the Jews in Antioch in Pisidia another “to be” statement in ACTS 13:47 that sheds the proper light on what we have been here discussing. ACTS 13:47 *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*. Paul made this statement to the unbelieving Jews at Antioch in Pisidia in essence telling them that as peculiar people chosen of God they were to be a witness, and a testimony to the salvation of God, and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ the Saviour, but as Paul notes in ACTS 13:46 this salvation you have “put it from you,” thus you are not the testimony, and witness you were chosen “to be.” Again in the millennium the Nation Israel will then be the witness, and testimony to the Nations as they point them to the Saviour Jesus Christ.

We mentioned above that the word “peculiar” is only found seven times in scripture, and we know the number seven points to SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION. We noted in our camp study this year (2025) that the Bride of Christ will be SPIRITUALLY PERFECT having grown up into Christ in all things. {Study EPHESIANS 4:15.} This years camp study expounded upon EPHESIANS 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them*. In that regard all believers are “peculiar,” but not all people are believers. That rib portion company taken out of the body of Christ to be the Bride of Christ is indeed the most “peculiar” of all believers having grown up into Christ in all things Spiritually mature, SPIRITUALLY PERFECT. The Apostle Paul further defined this SPIRITUAL PERFECTION in TITUS 2:13 & 14. TITUS 2:13 *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. The Greek word translated “peculiar” in TITUS 2:14 is periousios (per-ee-oo'-see-os), number 4041 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, and is only found here in New Testament scripture, thus it is a unique word used by the Apostle Paul to describe the unique Christ like qualities of the Bride of Christ. Periousios here in TITUS 2:14 speaks to “the joy that was set before Him” of HEBREWS 12:2, which we discussed at length in our HEBREWS 12:1 & 2 study. In that study we made mention of the fact Jesus Christ created all things, in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, and that He is before all things, and by Him all things consist, as COLOSSIANS 1:16 & 17 plainly states. The things that were created by Him, and for Him, and for His good pleasure are not *...the joy that was set before him...*. So we marveled that there was a *...joy that was set before him...* who had created all things, and by whom all things consist, a *...joy that was set before him...* that He has not yet experienced. That *...joy that was set before him...* narrows down to His wife, the Bride of Christ, who during this Church Age hath made herself ready as REVELATION 19:7 tells us. The

whole purpose of this Church Age is to take out a Bride for Christ, for she indeed is the *...joy that was set before him...* as He endured the cross in HEBREWS 12:2. This was in essence the message that was given unto Paul to preach, that Jesus Christ will have a joint-heir sugkleronomos, {number 4789 in The Strong's Greek Concordance}, "**peculiar**" periousios (per-ee-oo'-see-os) Bride to reign with Him in the Millennium, the Kingdom Age.

To finish our discussion on "**a peculiar people**," and get back to examining Paul's sermon at Antioch in Pisidia, we must realize that these Jews at Antioch in Pisidia would have been taught by reading EXODUS, and DEUTERONOMY that they indeed were chosen to be "**a peculiar people**," a special people unto God. But what they didn't yet know here at Antioch in Pisidia was that Jesus was indeed their Messiah, their Saviour, *...And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses...* ACTS 13:39. Paul here in ACTS 13 by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost was laying the foundation of his gospel message, which again is Jesus Christ. The Gentiles present in Antioch in Pisidia as Paul preached his first sermon there wouldn't have any idea that they too could be "**a peculiar people**," that is "**a peculiar people**" unto Christ, for as yet that hadn't heard, and believed ACTS 13:39 *...And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*

The Apostle Peter (we should all know by now) was an Apostle to the Jews, the children of Israel. And Peter wrote two epistles addressed primarily unto the Jews, but are profitable for all. In 1 PETER 2:9 Peter reached back to his Jewish roots, and wrote "**a peculiar people**" statement, which Jewish believers would have understood. 1 PETER 2:9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, **a peculiar people**; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* Peter here is referencing EXODUS 19:5 & 6. EXODUS 19:5 & 6 *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a **peculiar** treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.* In 1 PETER 2:9 the Greek word translated "**peculiar**" is peripoiesis {per-ee-poy'-ay-sis}, number 4047 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, meaning here: God's own possession. Note again the reference is to the Nation of Israel.

Back to Paul's sermon of ACTS 13. ACTS 13:17 *The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.* Now Paul has everyone's undivided attention as he begins to speak here at Antioch in Pisidia, and they have never heard him speak before. Neither have we in the setting of a sermon, so after reading this first complete verse of the body of this sermon what do you hear, or detect in this sentence? Let me help you see, and hear what I am talking about. The word "exalted," and the phrase "high arm" are not common expressions used in everyday language. The word "exalted" is found fifty times (PENTECOST) in the Old Testament, and fourteen times (DELIVERANCE or SALVATION) in the New Testament! The phrase "high arm" is only found twice in scripture, once here in ACTS 13:17, and once spoken by God in JOB 38:15. So we notice that these two expressions cause the listener to really pay attention to what the speaker is saying. The speaker here is the Apostle Paul, but the words he is using are inspired by the Holy Ghost to cause the listener to realize what is being said is truly important. We must focus upon who Paul was speaking of using these terms "exalted," and "high arm." Was Paul here saying that the children of Israel were to be exalted? No, Paul was magnifying *...The God of this people of Israel...* for it was God who *...exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.* When there was no hope for the children of Israel of to be free from slavery in Egypt *...The God of this people of Israel...* exalted Israel, that is raised them up from a very low and depressed state of bondage, and slavery, to freedom, and to special privileges as a nation, which fact we discussed in the previous paragraphs in our discussion on "**a peculiar people**." So Paul was saying that it was God who was to be exalted, for He was the One who freed the children of Israel from the land of bondage, Egypt. Furthermore it was the very same God *...with an high arm...* with great strength exerted to the uttermost, that brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. So

here in verse 17 we find that Paul was addressing primarily the people of Israel, and to recall in their history that God *...with an high arm...* with great strength exerted to the uttermost, exceeding, abundantly, more than they could ask or think, brought them out of the land of Egypt. Indeed they were foreigners to the land of Egypt four hundred and thirty years. EXODUS 12:40 *Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. 41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.*

ACTS 13:17 *The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.* Perhaps The Amplified Bible version of ACTS 13:17 brings us a little more clarity: *The God of this people Israel selected our forefathers and made this people great and important during their stay in the land of Egypt, and then with an uplifted arm He led them out from there.* Paul was highlighting to the people in the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia the fact that it was the God of Israel who chose the people of Israel to be great and important. Indirectly Paul was reminding those in the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia of how God fulfilled His promise to Abraham through his seed, the children of Israel, even though Paul doesn't mention Abraham until verse 26. In short Paul was highlighting what God has already done for the people of Israel, and he continues to do so verse by verse, time period by time period, until he introduces Jesus to them in verse 23.

None of us have heard the Apostle Paul preach, that is until this sermon of ACTS 13. Do we hear him now? One thing we should begin to glimpse is his heart attitude, which leaks out in the tone of his speech. We find this further manifest in Paul's words of ACTS 13:18 where Paul causes the listener to recall the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness for forty years. As we noted above the Apostle Paul was using some unusual expressions to make his point, and to hold their attention. Thus as we get to verse 18 we find that the Apostle Paul indeed had their undivided attention, and those in attendance in Antioch in Pisidia were now paying even closer attention to his every word. ACTS 13:18 *And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.* This phrase *...suffered he their manners...* is unique coming from the Greek word *trophoreo* {trop-of-or-eh'-o}, number 5159 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, with the meaning that God bare them as a nursing father. In other words God sustained them, blessed them, and nourished them, and bore them in His arms as a tender nurse does her child. The Apostle Paul was telling those in Antioch in Pisidia the positive side, God's side of Israel's wandering forty years in the wilderness, and how God continued to show His exceeding love, grace, and mercy to them twenty-four seven. The Amplified Bible version of ACTS 13:18 reads: *And for about forty years like a fatherly nurse He cared for them in the wilderness and endured their behavior.* The Literal Translation from the Greek English New Testament of ACTS 13:18 reads: *And as forty years time (passed), He tenderly bore them in the wilderness.* Thus we see the tone that the Apostle Paul was setting here in Antioch in Pisidia was for the listener to see the tender mercies of God; God's faithfulness and His great grace that He continually bestowed upon the children of Israel after their exodus from Egypt. Basically here Paul was paraphrasing what is recorded in DEUTERONOMY 1:31, which reads: *And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.* So our take away from ACTS 13:18 is to see, and hear the positive tone Paul was setting in his sermon and he begins to introduce to them Israel's Saviour, Jesus.

A lot of Old Testament scripture covers Israel's forty years of wandering in the wilderness, which Paul here in Antioch in Pisidia passes over in one summary sentence that focus upon the positive grace, and mercy, and love of God that Paul was here preaching. Paul makes no mention in this sermon of the abject unbelief of the children of Israel during this forty year time period, but let us reflect upon it for a moment. Knowing their history of what happened this forty years in the wilderness, if we said that the children of Israel had bad "manners" it would indeed an understatement. They griped and complained every step of the way for forty years. They didn't like the way they were being led; they complained about Moses, and Aaron; they didn't like their food;

they complained about not having this or that; and they even spoke of the good old days they had back in Egypt eating fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlick, {see NUMBERS 11:5} quickly forgetting that they were bondmen in the land of Egypt. And for forty years God suffered their manners, their bad manners in the wilderness, and kept them, even though they were ungrateful, and unthankful almost every step of the way. At the end of this about forty year period of time Moses addressed the children of Israel, and told them the following in DEUTERONOMY 8. DEUTERONOMY 8:2 *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.* 3 *And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.* 4 *Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.* 5 *Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.* 6 *Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.* So again we find our loving God ...about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness,... daily providing their meals, giving them water to drink, and He also daily provided a pillar of cloud to keep them cool during the day, and a pillar of fire to keep them warm at night; He kept their clothes new, and took care of their every need for forty years in the wilderness, for the purpose to ...*prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.* In other words everyday in the wilderness the children of Israel experienced a miracle from the mighty hand of God, and for the most part they failed to appreciate God's faithfulness in their lives.

Did we see much growth and development in the children of Israel while they wandered in the wilderness? No, not really. Why? Because of unbelief. Of those that crossed the Red Sea only two over the age of twenty got to live on the other side of the Jordan river, that being Joshua and Caleb. There were about three million people who crossed the Red Sea. Let's read two verses from DEUTERONOMY that explains what unbelief can do. DEUTERONOMY 1:2 *(There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadeshbarnea.)* DEUTERONOMY 2:14 *And the space in which we came from Kadeshbarnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD swore unto them.* Unbelief caused the children of Israel to spend a lifetime on an eleven days journey!

Again the Apostle Paul here in Antioch in Pisidia didn't dwell on these forty years of wandering in the wilderness, but quickly takes them to the promised land of Canaan in verse 19. ACTS 13:19 *And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.* The "he" of verse 19 is God. Basically from a historic perspective this verse summarizes the book of JOSHUA, which was the intent of the Apostle Paul in making this statement. Furthermore this reference the Apostle Paul makes concerning the ...seven nations... takes the Jew back in thought to the time of Abraham, and to a covenant that the Lord made with him, which is spoken of in GENESIS 15. GENESIS 15:18-21: *In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 The Knites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, 20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, 21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.* By the time of Moses these nations were reduced to seven, and Moses told them the following in DEUTERONOMY 7. DEUTERONOMY 7:1 *When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they*

will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. 5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

Did the children of Israel utterly destroy these seven nations, and make no covenant with them? No, nor did they forbid to intermarry with them as is told in JUDGES, and many other scriptures. Moses here in DEUTERONOMY 7 was speaking to the children of Israel that were under the age of twenty at the time of crossing the Red Sea. Now here in DEUTERONOMY 7 the oldest of the children of Israel would be sixty, except for Joshua and Caleb {Study NUMBERS 14}. Let's now read a few more verses from DEUTERONOMY 7 to see Moses' further encouragement to the children of Israel. DEUTERONOMY 7:6 *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: 8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; 10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. 11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.*

Returning to ACTS 13:19 we hear the tone the Apostle Paul was setting, and find it to be a positive upward looking tone that reflected back upon tender grace, and mercy, and love, and faithfulness of God as He gave Israel the land of Canaan! ACTS 13:19 *And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.* The Amplified Bible version of ACTS 13:19 combines thoughts from verses 19 & 20. ACTS 13:19 *When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave them [the Hebrews] their land as an inheritance [distributing it to them by lot; all of which took] about 450 years.*

In ACTS 13:20 Paul takes the listener to the next four hundred and fifty years time frame in Israel's rich history, and God time and time again continued to show each generation of the children of Israel His grace, mercy, and love. ACTS 13:20 *And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.* This verse summarizes what happened in the book of JUDGES, and beyond, a period of about four hundred and fifty years. Paul here also mentions Samuel the prophet, who was well respected by men of Israel. When Paul mentions Samuel, it is the second person of Hebrew heritage that he has mentioned thus far in his sermon. In total Paul will make mention by name of twelve important men in Jewish history in this sermon. Samuel the prophet is the second Hebrew mentioned in this sermon, Israel was the first. The Jews of Paul's day had great respect for Samuel, and Josephus even spends more time talking about Samuel than he does Jesus! Samuel is the first of six prophets mentioned by name in this sermon: David, Jesus, John, Abraham and Moses being the other five, mentioned in this order.

We could spend several Sunday School lesson on the space of about four hundred and fifty years Paul mentions here when the children of Israel were ruled by the judges that God gave them. We discussed this time frame in great detail in our study of the life of Paul, and we won't repeat all of that information here. JUDGES 2:16-19 summarizes the rebellious attitude of the children of Israel during the time of the judges. JUDGES 2:16 *Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. 17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so. 18 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. 19 And it*

came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. The children of Israel followed this pattern for ...about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet... ACTS 13:20.

The underlying point that Paul is making by mentioning Samuel in this sermon is that the children of Israel were still rebellious through the time of the prophets, and through the time of the kings of Israel, and what they needed to really look to was a Saviour, not a king or a prophet or a judge. Paul here was emphasizing that even though the children of Israel were rebellious during this time period, God was faithful. As Paul continues to preach, no doubt, the minds of those present here at Antioch in Pisidia were drawn to the facts covered in the early chapters of 1 SAMUEL, for Paul in the next few verses will make many references to facts mentioned in 1 SAMUEL. The children of Israel in Samuel's time were still rebellious toward God as they were in the times of the judges as 1 SAMUEL 8:19 informs us. 1 SAMUEL 8:19 *Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us.*

Let's step away from Paul's sermon here in ACTS 13 for a moment to consider something of great importance to us that are pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus that Paul wrote about in PHILIPPIANS 3:14. We are taught by Paul to be followers of Paul as he followed Christ, and to *...mark them which walk so as ye have us for and ensample... PHILIPPIANS 3:17.* Paul was instructing us to pay attention to those who walk by faith as he walked by faith, always looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith. In HEBREWS 11 Paul gives several examples of those Old Testament worthies, who walked by faith, so a question for us all to ponder in light of Paul's sermon in ACTS 13 is, how many Old Testament worthies of faith came out of this time period of approximately four hundred and fifty years Paul mentioned in ACTS 13:20? This was basically four hundred and fifty years of rebellion, yet in HEBREWS 11 Paul highlights four judges, Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthae, as being some of the worthies of faith during this time period during which several million Israelites lived, and died. All of the fourteen judges of Israel were overcomers in their own right, however these four were highlighted in HEBREWS 11 as being full overcomers during this four hundred and fifty year period because they accomplished what they did by placing their faith 100% in God, knowing that *...without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him... HEBREWS 11:6.* The darkest of times brought forth the heroes of faith. All full overcomers start out on their race course an untested hero of faith, but it takes the tests, and the trials, and dark valleys of life to bring forth those who truly live their lives by faith. ROMANS 10:17 reveals the secret of all full overcomers: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Paul then switches gears in HEBREWS 11:40 and writes about us of the New Testament: *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* Are you one of the few from this Church Age that will be found in that rib portion company of believers, who will be forever known as the Bride of Christ? God has given us everything in the Church Age to the end that we may be joint heirs with His Son Jesus, which will only be accomplished "by faith." The phrase "by faith" is found thirty-seven times in scripture, and thirty-seven is the number associated with THE WORD OF GOD. See the connection to ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God?* Lest you think this is not for you, let me quote something Brother Hill said in his PHILIPPIANS study (lesson 13), and I mentioned this in our camp study this year. "If you are a child of God and you are sitting in this meeting, God has laid a hold of you for this. It is as simple as that. It will have to be your negligence or your rejection if you don't have it. This is for you. He has laid a hold of you." {End of quoting Brother Hill.} Brother Hill was talking about being in the bride of Christ.

ACTS 13:21 *And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.* Paul here adds three more famous names

in Israel's rich history, Saul, Cis, and Benjamin. Notice here also that this is the second time Paul has mentioned a time period of forty years in Israel's history. These at Antioch in Pisidia didn't now the number forty is the number of PERFECT TESTING, but you do. The phrase "forty years" is only found in forty-five scriptures, and the number forty-five points to PRESERVATION. God has preserved the nation Israel from GENESIS until now. God tested them as we read earlier in DUETERONOMY 8:2 *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.*

ACTS 13:21 reveals a little about the Apostle Paul himself, for he was named after Saul the first king of Israel. Furthermore in ROMANS 11:1 and PHILIPPIANS 3:5 Paul writes of the fact that he too was from the tribe of Benjamin. One of the outstanding facts about the tribe of Benjamin was that the first Jewish king was Saul, whose name means "requested," and "desired," and "asked for." No less than twelve scriptures emphasize the fact that the children of Israel "requested," "desired," and "asked for" a king. It is also interesting to also note here in ACTS 13:21 is the only place in scripture that notes how long king Saul reigned, which was forty years. Perhaps the Jews in attendance at Paul's sermon in Antioch in Pisidia were also aware of this, but if not Paul here had validated his own authenticity to the Jews in attendance.

King Saul was rejected of the Lord from further reigning as king of Israel because he rejected the word of the LORD. We read in 1 SAMUEL 13:13 & 14 a quick summary of Saul being told by Samuel that he was rejected by the Lord from further reigning as king of Israel. 1 SAMUEL 13:13 *And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. 14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.* 1 CHRONICLES 10:13 and 14 further summarize the career of king Saul this way: *So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; 14 And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.*

In ACTS 13:17-21 the Apostle Paul has covered about the first nine hundred years in the rich history of Israel emphasizing in every verse that it was God who chose Israel to be a special people unto Himself in fulfillment of a promise he made to Abraham in GENESIS 15. It was God who brought them out of the bondage of Egypt. It was God who sustained them in the wilderness for forty years. It was God who gave them the land of Canaan. It was God who again delivered them time and time again during the period of the judges. It was God who gave them a king when they insisted upon having a king. Paul was telling those here in Antioch in Pisidia of God's plan for them in step by step fashion. In ACTS 13:22 the Apostle Paul will introduce God's chosen vessel to be their king, which was David. In verse 23 Paul will explain that from king David's seed God raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus. So Paul in essence informed his audience here at Antioch in Pisidia that step by step since the days of Abraham, God had a plan for Israel, and had taken care of them all along the way, and now, in their own lifetime had given them a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord! Furthermore the Apostle Paul will bring out the fact later in this sermon that not only did God give the children of Israel a Saviour, but all men everywhere that believe on the name of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be saved! In short Paul's sermon of ACTS 13 introduces the plan of God for all men everywhere to be saved! What a thrilling and uplifting life changing positive message Paul presented here in Antioch in Pisidia.

To state it another way, what we find here in Paul's sermon of ACTS 13 is a glimpse into Paul's own heart. That is quite a statement isn't it, but again none of us have heard Paul preach until now. Luke the writer of ACTS knew very well the Apostle Paul's personality, and here in ACTS 13 the Holy Ghost, by the pen of Luke, brings out the character of Paul's heart. Paul himself will later in time further reveal the character of his own heart in writing his one hundred chapters of scripture that

he left us in the fourteen books he wrote in the New Testament. And what Paul wrote about was the new creation life we have in Christ Jesus. GALATIANS 2:20 highlights this theme where Paul writes: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Before Paul was saved he persecuted Christians. After Paul was saved he ran after Christ as hard as he could pointing everyone he came in contact with to our precious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and His gracious ways. Paul's gospel message points the believer to God's best, and having God's best. God's best is Jesus! Being married to Jesus is having God's best. Yes indeed Paul's gospel message reflected what was in Paul's own heart, and was a message of faith, hope, and love; especially love, the love of God as 1 CORINTHIANS 13 teaches. Paul's gospel thus is very positive as we begin to see here in ACTS 13.

ACTS 13:22 is a very important verse, for here Paul introduces David, and why God choose David to be king instead of Saul. ACTS 13:22 *And when he had removed him, (king Saul) he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.*

There certainly is a lot of things that we could discuss concerning this outstanding verse of scripture, and many sermons have been preached from this verse. ACTS 13:22 is another very positive verse, and quickly points out why David was so highly favored in God's sight, which was because David had sought the Lord for everything in his life, and had followed the word of the LORD, and His leading since his youth. In short David sought to know the will of God; to know the heart of God; and to do the will of God. God chose David to be king instead of Saul, for as we noted above, Saul was rejected of the Lord from further reigning as king of Israel because he rejected the word of the LORD.

Let's stop here for a moment and consider something that you may not have thought about before. God the Father highly favored David as we just noted, but Jesse, the earthly father of David, didn't even consider David important enough to stand before Samuel when Samuel was looking over Jesse's sons to anoint God's chosen to be king! We read this in 1 SAMUEL 16. 1 SAMUEL 16:1 *And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. ...7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. ...10 Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. Certainly Jesse must have been perplexed, for he had spent much time and effort in raising these sons, and considered each on worthy to be a king. Yet ...Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these. Jesse, David's father, didn't yet understand what would later be written in ISAIAH 55:8 & 9 -- *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* 1 SAMUEL 16:11 *And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep.* Jesse must have thought there is no way David could be king, and that is why David wasn't yet present when this important man of the Lord, Samuel, came to view Jesse's sons, to anoint one to be king of Israel! But God's thoughts of David were higher than Jesse's thoughts of his youngest son, ...*And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. 12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.**

If you take the time to read further in 1 SAMUEL 17 you will see in verse 28, even after David had been anointed king, that David's eldest brother thought David to be full of pride, and naughtiness of heart. But David was God's choice to be king for God knew what was in David's

heart, which is why God chose David to be Israel's king. We see in the above passages that David faced some shunning from his father, and his older brothers, but David was also an Old Testament full overcomer, and David overcame any anger against his father, and brothers, and David also by faith conquered fear in 1 SAMUEL 17, and overcame the giant Goliath. We here then see a little of 2 TIMOTHY 2:12 in the example we have of the life of David: *If we suffer, (with Christ Jesus) we shall also reign with Him.* In other words we are to focus upon the Lord, and not on what others think or say about us, for the Lord searcheth the heart. JEREMIAH 17:10 *I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

Again Paul said in ACTS 13:22 *And when he had removed him, (king Saul) he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.* Do you realize that Jesse would barely be known in scripture if it wasn't for his son David? Jesse wasn't known as an icon of faith, but his son David was. Three hundred years later the prophet Isaiah highlights Jesse in foretelling that Jesus will come through Jesse's line. ISAIAH 11:1 *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.* That branch was Christ.

David became famous because David followed the word of the LORD. And as we know from studying the Old Testament concerning David, the fact was David embraced the word of the LORD. The LORD was number one in David's life. David magnified the LORD, and the PSALMS David wrote further emphasize this fact. Furthermore the PSALMS David wrote reveal what was in his heart. Recently Pastor O'Dorisio did a series of Bible studies from PSALMS 139, another heart revealing Psalm of David, rich in meaning to the full overcomer. On you own you can study all the PSALMS David wrote, and see for yourself under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the heart of David. How many times have we had a series of studies from the 23rd PSALM? Brother Hill did a series of sermons on the 23rd PSALM, which later was published in book form called The Shepherd's Psalm. What a treasure of truth to the full overcomer.

PSALM 34 is another example of a Psalm David wrote, that reveals what was in David's heart. PSALMS 34:1 *I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. 3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. 4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. 5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. 6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. 8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. 9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. 10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing. 11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD. 12 What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? 13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. 14 Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. 15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. 16 The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. 17 The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. 18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. 20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken. 21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. 22 The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*

Truly David was a man after God's own heart! So again let's read Paul's statement of ACTS 13:22 *And when he had removed him, (Saul) he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.* With this statement we see (among many things) the heart attitude of the full overcomer, for the full overcomer is a man (male or female) after God's own heart, one who

will fulfill the will of God. David was such a man, and Paul was such a man. Ask Paul, Paul what do you remember of David? And he answers "he was a man after God's own heart." Furthermore Paul categories David with the Old Testament full overcomers mentioning him in HEBREWS 11:32. Paul saw David from God's perspective, and so should we for that is the way the full overcomer views things. So as we focus on David the son of Jesse, let's us do so from the perspective of the full overcomer, and look at David's life like God looked at David's life, and see the things that were in David's heart that made him the outstanding full overcomer that he was.

And what makes a full overcomer, a full overcomer? Does this mean that a full overcomer was born that way, and never had anything in life to overcome? Certainly not. The record we have in scripture of David's life also shows his many faults, and his great offences. How about David's great sin? Which one, you may ask? In David's life there are many sins documented in scripture, and you can search these out on your own time. Two of the many famous sins of David are his affair with Bathsheba in 2 SAMUEL 11 & 12, and David's sin in numbering Israel in 2 SAMUEL 24. How was David a full overcomer after all of this? In 1 JOHN 1:9 we read: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* David acknowledged his sin, and the Lord forgave him. Does this alone then make David the Old Testament full overcomer that he was? No, but acknowledging his sin and seeking the Lord's forgiveness was an important first step to take on his way to becoming a full overcomer. We just read above in PSALMS 34:6 this prayer of David: *This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.* This is how David became a man after God's own heart. PSALMS 32 is another place where David's heart is poured out unto the Lord, please take the time to study this PSALM out on your own time. Right now we will take a brief look at the first five verses of PSALMS 32. PSALMS 32:1 *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.* 2 *Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* 3 *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.* 4 *For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.* 5 *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.* Paul himself quoted from these verses in ROMANS 4:6-8, which reads: *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*

In PSALMS 51 we find another of David's Psalms, and PSALMS 51 was written when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after David had gone in to Bathsheba. PSALMS 51:1 *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.* 2 *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.* 3 *For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.* 4 *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.* 5 *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.* 6 *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.* 7 *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* 8 *Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* 9 *Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.* 10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.* (Here we now see David a man after God's own heart.) 11 *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.* 12 *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.* 13 *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* 14 *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.* 15 *O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* 16 *For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.* 17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* 18 *Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou*

the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

Let's look at one more Psalm of David, a man after God's own heart, that we are discussing in ACTS 13:22. We are here revealing the heart attitude of what makes a full overcomer, a full overcomer, and PSALMS 103 is another snap shot of what was in David's heart. PSALMS 103:1 *Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; 5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. 6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. 7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. 8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. 9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. 10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. 16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. 17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; 18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. 19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. 20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. 21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. 22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.*

Back to ACTS 13 where we are examining Paul's first sermon that he preached unto those in Antioch in Pisidia. Remember they didn't know the first thing about Paul; they had only requested that if he had any word of exhortation for the people to say on (ACTS 13:15). Paul here was exceeding their expectations. And of course they all too would have had positive recollections of Israel's favorite king, David, and even to this day Israelites have favorable memories of king David! So again Paul tells them in ACTS 13:22 *And when he (God) had removed him, (king Saul) he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.*

Notice also here in ACTS 13:22 a SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY of David's character. Recall that the number two is the number of SUFFICIENT WITNESS or SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY. Two things Paul highlights about David's character in ACTS 13:22: (1) David was a man after God's own heart, and (2) David was a man that fulfilled all God's will. This simply means that God knew David would do the will of God, and keep God's commandments. All the kings who lived after David were measured on whether or not they did right in the sight of the LORD as David had done. Only a very few of Israel's kings did so.

As we finish examining this verse there is one more thing I want to point out. This is the first of six verses in this sermon where Paul quotes from the Old Testament, and the translators of the King James Version (it seems) were using the Septuagint, a Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, since the wording of this Old Testament quote best fits what is written in the Septuagint. In this first example of Paul quoting Old Testament scripture, Paul was quoting from memory, but not verbatim, the thought found in 1 SAMUEL 13:14, which we read above. 1 SAMUEL 13:13 *And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. 14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.*

Paul is referring to David again in ACTS 13:23. ACTS 13:23 *Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:...* . This verse covers a thousand year time frame from David to Jesus. In this verse Paul introduces those in Antioch in Pisidia to the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was from the lineage of David. All that Paul has to say to them from this verse forward concerns our Lord and Saviour, Jesus. Paul here in ACTS 13:23 connects the thousand year dots between David and Jesus, and he does so by talking about David's seed, and God's promise to David.

The promise God made to David is known as the Davidic Covenant, which is recorded in 2 SAMUEL 7, and repeated in 1 CHRONICLES 17, and may I suggest you read, and study these chapters further on your own. The promise God made unto David is further summarized in the following scriptures, just to mention a few. PSALMS 89:3 & 4 -- *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, 4 Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.* PSALMS 132:11 *The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.* We read in Peter's first sermon preached on the day of Pentecost these Holy Ghost inspired words found in ACTS 2:29 & 30 -- *Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet, (yes, David was a prophet) and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.* Another verse of scripture that references the fact that Jesus came from the seed of David is ROMANS 1:3 *Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.* One last verse we will reference that speaks of Jesus being from the seed of David is found in JOHN 7:42 *Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?* We can assume that at least some, if not all of the Israelites in attendance at Paul's sermon here in Antioch in Pisidia would have also known this, *...That Christ cometh of the seed of David,...* but if not Paul here in ACTS 13:23 has informed them: *Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:...* .

Paul now has introduced the listener here in Antioch in Pisidia their (and our) Saviour, Jesus. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the theme of Paul's life, and the main topic of Paul's gospel message. In ROMANS 1:16 & 17 Paul later explained: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.* The foundation of Paul's gospel message is further explained in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

To me, and hopefully also to you, the following is very interesting, and revealing on how the Holy Ghost put this sermon together. The Holy Ghost has the Apostle Paul mention the name of Jesus eighth among the men listed so far in this sermon. The names Paul has named so far in this sermon are: (1) Israel, (2) Samuel, (3) Saul, (4) Cis (Kish), (5) Benjamin, (6) David, (7) Jesse, and (8) Jesus. Recall from our meaning of the Bible numbers study that the number eight has five (GRACE) different meanings, and all five point us to Jesus in one fashion or another. As a quick refresher the number eight means: (1) NEW CREATION -- [2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (NEW CREATION): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*]; (2) NEW BIRTH -- [JOHN 3:3 *...Except a man be born again, (NEW BIRTH) he cannot see the kingdom of God.*]; (3) NEW BEGINNING -- [again 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*]; (4) RESURRECTION -- [JOHN 11:25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*]; and (5) BRIDE -- [JOHN 3:29 *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom:.. (Jesus).*].

Jesus name is the Greek form of the Hebrew Jehoshua, and means "Jehovah is salvation." "Jehovah is salvation" has been the main theme so far in this sermon of Paul's. "Jehovah is salvation" with an high arm brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt in ACTS 13:17.

“Jehovah is salvation” for forty years suffered the children of Israel’s manners in the waste howling wilderness, and sustained them there in ACTS 13:18. “Jehovah is salvation” brought the children of Israel into the promised land of Canaan in ACTS 13:19. “Jehovah is salvation” gave the children of Israel strong powerful leadership in Moses and Joshua hinted at in ACTS 13:17-19. “Jehovah is salvation” gave the children of Israel judges for spiritual leadership during the space of another four hundred and fifty years in ACTS 13:20. “Jehovah is salvation” also gave them prophets for spiritual leadership also hinted at in ACTS 13:20. “Jehovah is salvation” gave the children of Israel kings in ACTS 13:21 and 22. And now here in ACTS 13:23 Paul introduced these at Antioch in Pisidia to “Jehovah is salvation” by stating His name: *...God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.*

The Holy Spirit has Paul refer to Jesus a total of 28 times in this sermon of ACTS 13 by the following names, descriptions, or titles: Jesus (2), Saviour (1), Son (1), Holy One (1), This man (1), A man (1), Him (10), One (1), the word (1), thee (1), He (4), His (3), and Thou (1). Twenty-eight is the number that has to do with ETERNAL LIFE. The thought of Jesus and ETERNAL LIFE are further brought out in the following scriptures: ROMANS 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* 1 JOHN 2:25 *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.* 1 JOHN 5:11 *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* 1 JOHN 5:20 *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

We have no way of knowing how many there in attendance in Antioch in Pisidia that Sabbath day in ACTS 13 knew anything about Jesus, or His being crucified. Nor do we know if any of them knew anything about John the Baptist, but perhaps some did. In Paul’s day we know there were some familiar with John the Baptist, but not with Jesus Christ. For example that eloquent man in ACTS 18:24-28, Apollos, knew who John the Baptist was, but didn’t know who Jesus was until Aquila and Priscilla revealed this to him. The same was true of the twelve disciples Paul later met in ACTS 19:1-7, so we must acknowledge that the ministry of John the Baptist was known by many who had not yet heard of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Here in Antioch in Pisidia the Holy Ghost knew what those in attendance had knowledge of, and prompts Paul to next mention John the Baptist in ACTS 13:24 & 25. ACTS 13:24 *When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.* 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.*

Up to this statement the Apostle Paul was referencing Old Testament scripture in the previous statements he made. However here in ACTS 13:24 & 25 it seems from our King James translation that Paul was mentioning facts not backed up with Old Testament scripture, perhaps however this was not the case. Conybeare’s translation of these two verses reads: *And John was **the messenger who went before His face to prepare His way before Him**, and he preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course his saying was, “Whom think ye that I am? I am no He. But behold there cometh one after me whose shoes’ latchet I am not worthy to loose.”* The Old Testament text Conybeare’s translation references is MALACHI 3:1. MALACHI 3:1 *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me:...* . The messenger spoken of in MALACHI 3:1 is John the Baptist. If Conybeare’s translation is correct then MALACHI 3:1 would be the second of the six verses in this sermon where Paul quotes from the Old Testament. When the Apostle Paul mentions that it was John the Baptist, who *...had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel...* Paul was reminding them of what was written in ISAIAH 40:3. ISAIAH 40:3 *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*

Paul notes here in ACTS 13:24 that John the Baptist preached before the time of Jesus ministry *...the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.* The phrase “*...the baptism of repentance...*” is a Pauline phrase adopted by John Mark and Luke, students of Paul, and is found in

four New Testament scriptures; MARK 1:4, LUKE 3:3, ACTS 13:24, and ACTS 19:4. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost gave this prophecy concerning his new born son John the Baptist in LUKE 1:76 and 77: *And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.* Again as ACTS 13:24 states John the Baptist preached before the time of Jesus ministry *...the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.*

The focal point of Paul's sermon here in Antioch in Pisidia is Christ Jesus the promised Saviour, whom Paul has now introduced in the first ten verses of this sermon. The last sixteen (LOVE) verses of Paul's sermon focus upon the fact that Jesus Christ is indeed the promised Saviour. If any had "drifted off" from paying attention to what Paul has already said, the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to readdress them again in ACTS 13:26. ACTS 13:26 *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.* In other words Paul is saying to everyone in attendance; 'please hear me out, for *...to you is the word of this salvation sent.*' Here we find for the second time in this sermon an urgent invitation for both Jew and Gentile, everyone, to hear the words that began in earnest to unlock the door of faith. Paul says: *...To you is the word of this salvation sent.* In total we find the word "you" eight times in this sermon, and Paul is emphasizing *...to you is the word of this salvation sent.* The words "*...to you...*" make this message personal. Is Jesus your personal Saviour?

The spot light is clearly now upon Jesus, the Master in this "Masterpiece" sermon, and really begs the question: "What will you do with Jesus?" Oh I know that Paul doesn't specifically ask this question, but rather reveals unto the hearer the contemporary events concerning Jesus that have led Paul to them, to preach unto them the forgiveness of sins, which is made available unto them, and us, by the precious shed blood of Jesus, in Whom we have redemption, that is deliverance from our sins. And with these thoughts Paul is causing the listener to ponder the question: "What will you do with Jesus?"

Our King James version records these next words of Paul's sermon this way: ACTS 13:27 *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. 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.* With these few words Paul covers events detailed for us in the four gospel records of the life and death of our Saviour Jesus Christ. With this statement Paul has plainly told the hearers that a Saviour, Jesus has come, and was slain by "they" of Jerusalem, and yet he does so in such a manner as not to shame the Jews here at Antioch at Pisidia, for there were some in attendance who were hearing of this most important event for the first time.

Let's look at ACTS 13:27 from the Apostle Paul's perspective, realizing that he too was among them that dwelt at Jerusalem, perhaps even at the time of Jesus crucifixion, or within a couple of years after this. And that Paul himself was in tight with their rulers at that time, and was even taught by Gamaliel, one of the leaders of the Sanhedrin. So Paul as a youth lived with, and was taught by, and strongly influenced by those in authority at Jerusalem, who did not know Jesus was the Christ, the promised Messiah, and furthermore these very same leaders, who taught Paul as a youth the Old Testament scriptures, really didn't know or perceive the words of the prophets, which were read every Sabbath in the synagogues! The scriptures didn't speak to their hard hearts, thus *...the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day...* were not understood by their unbelieving ears, as ISAIAH 6:9 & 10 states. ISAIAH 6:9 *And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* Jesus Himself referred to this scripture in MATTHEW 13:14 & 15 when he explained unto the disciples why it was He spake in parables: MATTHEW 13:14 *And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall*

hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Thus we find that their ears were dull of hearing, which is why Paul said what he said in ACTS 13:27 *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.* It was like they were deaf to the scriptures! These former leaders, and teachers of Paul were the very one who fulfilled the Old Testament scriptures in condemning Christ to be crucified! Paul himself here in ACTS 13:27 was giving a testimony of who he once was, and he even emphasized that *...they knew him not...* showing that at that time he himself didn't recognize Christ Jesus to be the Saviour, Jesus! These words of ACTS 13:27 were very real to the Apostle Paul, and certainly here in Antioch in Pisidia he must have expressed all of this with heart felt empathy.

ACTS 13:27 *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.* It seems that Paul himself didn't realize the fact of this statement until the day he heard Stephen preach his final Holy Ghost sermon in ACTS 7. And Stephen there told Paul these heart pricking words: ACTS 7:51 *Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.* However long it was between the stoning of Stephen until the Lord appeared unto Paul, then called Saul, on the road to Damascus was the lowest point in time in Paul's life. The words of Stephen's echoed in his mind night and day, until that wonderful day Jesus appeared unto him, and said: *...Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? ...I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks...* (ACTS 9:4 & 5) meaning it is hard for you to continually kick against, and resist the pricking of your conscience ever since you heard Stephen's sermon about me! Saul of Tarsus immediately knew this was true. He knew Jesus was speaking unto him, and confessed Jesus as Lord. Then Saul inquired what he should do, and immediately believed, and followed the Lord's instruction. The weight of sin was immediately lifted from his life. 1 JOHN 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Three days later Ananias of Damascus laid hands on our beloved Apostle Paul, and prayed that he would have his sight restored, and that he would receive the Holy Ghost. Paul was then filled with the Holy Ghost. It was the Holy Ghost who then opened his spiritual heart, eyes, and ears to see, and hear, and receive the word of the Lord, which he had been taught all of his life. At that time, by the power of the Holy Ghost, Paul then himself also heard *...the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day...* and began to preach *...Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God...* ACTS 9:20. That is basically all he knew at that point in time of his young Christian life. This sermon of ACTS 13 in Antioch in Pisidia is a more complete expounding of what Paul first preached as a believer.

Let's read again ACTS 13:27-29 -- *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. 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.* Here in these few words Paul explains how those at Jerusalem, and their rulers condemned Jesus to death, and how they got the Roman governor Pilate to go along with their plan. Unwittingly they, by their actions, *...fulfilled all that was written of...* Jesus because *...they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day.* They didn't believe the scriptures, thus they condemned Jesus to death. Paul here passes over rapidly the circumstances of Jesus death upon the cross, (the tree of Calvary), so that he might quickly establish the fact of Jesus resurrection, which is a point of emphasis of Paul's in verses

30, 33, 34, and 37. As a side note here, there are at least 52 verses of scripture that reference the fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead! Twenty-one of them are found in Paul's gospel.

ACTS 13:30 But God raised him from the dead: 31 *And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.* These two verses are the foundation of Paul's gospel in a nutshell. The Apostle Paul would later write a whole chapter in 1 CORINTHIANS 15 about the resurrection of Jesus Christ where he expounded upon what we just read here with the following words: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1 *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 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;...*

Jesus told these above five hundred in ACTS 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* Many of these same individuals were filled with the Holy Ghost some fifty days later, *...who are his witnesses unto the people... that ...it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things...* ...LUKE 24:46-48.

It seems to me that perhaps some here in attendance in Antioch in Pisidia would have heard of Jesus death, and resurrection, but only the Lord can answer if this were true or not. If they had heard of this it was because of someone filled with the Holy Ghost proclaiming this message, a witness filled with the Holy Ghost. This is what Paul was telling them here in ACTS 13:30 But God raised him from the dead: 31 *And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.*

The Holy Ghost then inspires Paul to proclaim the good news message he came to Antioch in Pisidia to preach. ACTS 13:32 *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. 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. 38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man 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.*

Earlier we discussed *...the promise which was made unto the fathers...* which boils down to the promised Saviour Jesus Christ. That promise goes back to Adam and Eve, where God promised in GENESIS 3:15 *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* The woman's seed is Christ Jesus, who shall bruise the serpent's (Satan's) head, while the serpent shall bruise His heel. The seed of the serpent bruised the Seed of the woman on the cross of Calvary where Satan manifest himself as prince of this world, able, because of his power over men, to hang Christ upon the cross, and kill the Prince of Life. However that was Satan's eternal defeat. That was the way of victory for the Seed of the woman. We read in JOHN 12:31 & 32 these words of Jesus: *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* Three days after being hanged on the cross Jesus Christ rose from the dead, thus His wounding was only a bruise on the heel. After Christ has reigned for a 1000 years as King of kings, and Lord of lords, that old serpent Satan shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and shall be

tormented day and night for ever and ever according to REVELATION 20:10. Thus in the end the Seed of the woman, Christ Jesus, is absolutely triumphant over all the power of the devil. Furthermore the promised Saviour Jesus Christ is spoken of by Moses in DEUTERONOMY 18. Moses is speaking here of the promised Prophet, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. DEUTERONOMY 18:15 *The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;* 16 *According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.* 17 *And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.* 18 *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.* The Apostle Peter in his second sermon quoted these verses, as he noted that Jesus Christ was this Prophet, and we find this in ACTS 3. ACTS 3:22 *For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.* 23 *And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.* In ACTS 7 in the sermon Luke recorded of Stephen we find these words of DEUTERONOMY also referenced. ACTS 7:37 *This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.* These are just a few of the many references to Old Testament scripture that foretells of *...the promise which was made unto the fathers...* Paul mentioned here in ACTS 13:32.

ACTS 13:32 *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.* 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.* 38 *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man 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.*

We mentioned earlier that there are six verses of Old Testament scripture Paul references, or quotes from in this sermon, and we have already looked at two. In verse 33 Paul quotes from PSALMS 2:7, his third old Testament reference, which reads: *I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.* Paul will again quote this verse in HEBREWS 1:5, and HEBREWS 5:5. In verse 34 we find Paul's fourth Old Testament quotation, this time Paul is quoting ISAIAH 55:3 -- *Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* Have you ever wondered what "the sure mercies of David" are? There are several Old Testament scriptures that tell us what "the sure mercies of David" are. In 2 SAMUEL 7 we find the covenant that the Lord made with David. 2 SAMUEL 7:15 & 16 informs us: *But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.* 16 *And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.* "The sure mercies of David" are also extensively referenced in PSALMS 89. PSALMS 89:2-4 summarizes it this way: *For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.* 3 *I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,* 4 *Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.*

Paul's fifth Old Testament citation found in this sermon of ACTS 13 is in verse 35 where he quotes from PSALMS 16:10, the same portion of scripture that Peter spoke of in his first sermon in ACTS 2:27. PSALMS 16:10 *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

The emphasis in verses 30, 33, 34 and 37 is that God raised Jesus from the dead! ACTS 13:30 *But God raised him from the dead.* ...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.* 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.* ...37 *But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.* This was the “glad tidings,” the good news gospel message the Apostle Paul was ordained to preach by the Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus. To the Jew, Christ Jesus was the fulfillment of the promise God gave to their fathers, which we discussed above.

The “glad tidings,” the good news gospel message Paul was here preaching in the Jewish synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia was that the Jesus Christ the Messiah has come; that Christ the Lord and Saviour has come; paid the penalty for sin upon the cross, the tree of Calvary where He died; and God raised Him from the dead! Then Paul makes his most important statement as he concludes his short sermon: ACTS 13:38 *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man 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.* This is a very powerful statement, which concludes with a bomb shell declaration that we will now examine further.

Notice here that Paul for the third time addresses them as “men and brethren,” a statement made to once again get their undivided attention. Paul wants them to focus in upon the fact ...*that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.* The phrase “forgiveness of sins” is found exactly five (GRACE) times in scripture. EPHESIANS 2:5 and 8 both tell us the same thing, which is by grace are ye saved. Being saved means the “forgiveness of sins.” We mentioned the good news gospel message the Apostle Paul was ordained to preach by the Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus, and the “forgiveness of sins” was part of what Jesus told him as is recorded in ACTS 26:16-18. ACTS 26:16 *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;* 17 *Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,* 18 *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Interestingly the word “forgiveness” is only found seven times in scripture, seven being the number that points to SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION. Thus Paul emphasizes here in Antioch in Pisidia this fact in ACTS 13:38 *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man 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.*

Notice also here in ACTS 13:39 Paul twice mentions the word “justified.” ACTS 13:39 *And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* I imagine it was a hard thing for many of the Jews there in Antioch in Pisidia to grasp the importance of what the Apostle Paul just told them here, that by our Lord and risen Saviour Jesus Christ, ...*all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* There must have been a stir among the “men and brethren” of Antioch in Pisidia as Paul declared to them for the first time ...*all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* They must have looked perplexed at one another as they had just been told that they ...*could not be justified by the law of Moses.* To the Jews in attendance these were hard words to hear! To them this was a bombshell! And being sensitive to their law abiding background, this would be a difficult concept to grasp, that there were some things, many things, even all things ...*from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* Study GALATIANS 2 and you will find that even Peter had to be reminded of this fact, for the Apostle Paul told Peter in front of those in the assembly at Antioch, Syria the following in GALATIANS 2. GALATIANS 2:14 *But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why*

compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Note here also how one is justified: *...a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.*

It is interesting also to note there that the phrase “justified by” is found exactly fourteen times in scripture, again fourteen is the number associated with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. Paul later wrote in ROMANS 3:28 *Therefore we conclude that a man is **justified** by faith without the deeds of the law.* Again in GALATIANS 3:11 Paul said: *But that no man is **justified** by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.* And once again ACTS 13:39 *And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be **justified** by the law of Moses.*

So we find here in Antioch in Pisidia that the Apostle Paul has presented his glad tidings good news gospel message he was ordained to preach, and so he closes his short impromptu sermon with this concluding warning: ACTS 13:40 *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.* Here in verse 41 Paul quotes from the sixth Old Testament scripture found in this sermon, HABAKKUK 1:5, which reads: *Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.* HABAKKUK 1:5 from the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament, reads: *for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.* Thus we see that the spotlight that Paul was now putting on them was focused on the heart of everyone who was hearing his message, and to allow them to see for themselves whether or not they were going to let the light of the gospel shine in their hearts and believe.

The word “beware,” with which Paul begins verse 40, is found in twenty-six verses of scripture, and the number twenty-six again is the number pointing to the GOSPEL, or the GOOD NEWS of the GOSPEL. Paul’s sermon here at Antioch in Pisidia was indeed the GOOD NEWS of the GOSPEL!

Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures Commentary states of these closing verses: “Paul has hurled a thunderbolt at the close.” We have to note that this is true, however Paul was preaching under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, so the thunderbolt was Holy Ghost inspired. I think we all love to hear a sermon that has a wonderful exhortation to conclude it with, but how do we feel about a sermon that ends with a warning? It depends on what side of the warning we fall as to our response to this question. If we are in agreement with the warning, then we feel good about the sermon, and if we are in disagreement with the warning, then we feel a conviction of some sort or another, which can only be positively remedied by getting our hearts in tune with the Lord’s. With the words “*Beware therefore*” Paul is putting the spotlight on the heart of each and every hearer of this gospel message, for them to examine themselves and see if they were going to let the light of the gospel shine in their hearts, or not. Simply put Paul was asking them to *...believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,* (see ACTS 16:31.)

Paul’s sermon was now concluded here at Antioch in Pisidia. So we wonder did anyone here at Antioch in Pisidia get saved as a result of Paul’s preaching this sermon? Recall when Peter preached his first sermon in Jerusalem that the ACTS 2:41 tells us that about three thousand souls were saved that day. At the conclusion of Peter’s second sermon in ACTS 3 & 4 we find in ACTS 4:4 that about five thousand men were saved. But the scripture here in ACTS 13, at the conclusion of Paul’s sermon, records nothing about who got saved here at Antioch in Pisidia. Nor do we read down the road of any disciples from Antioch in Pisidia following Paul. Perhaps there were those who did. Truly God knows how many were added to the kingdom of God here at Antioch in Pisidia, but no specific number is told us in scripture.

So what was the result of Paul's sermon here at Antioch in Pisidia? Certainly there was a great commotion here when Paul finished speaking. We find the immediate reaction in the next verses of ACTS 13. ACTS 13:42 *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.* 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.* 44 *And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.*

Some other translations of verses 42 and 43 clarifies what took place after this sermon. Verse 42 in our King James indicates that the Jews left the synagogue, and the Gentiles hung around for a while. Verse 43 indicates that both Jew and Gentile sought after Paul and Barnabas for more understanding of what they had just heard in this sermon. There seems to be something lost in our King James Translation of verses 42 especially, and often times one translation reads different than another. The American Standard Version of verse 42 reads: *And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next sabbath.* This shows that there was a curiosity of those in attendance concerning what Paul had just spoken about. Verse 43 indicates that both those of the Jews and Gentiles were a part of this group who wanted to hear more. Verse 43 also tells us: ... *Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.* The word "**persuaded**," and the phrase "**the grace of God**" are both found in twenty scriptures. Twenty is the number associated with REDEMPTION.

Let's talk about "**the grace of God**" for a moment. TITUS 2:11 *The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Paul and Barnabas in the days following this sermon expounded upon "**the grace of God**" that bringeth salvation. "**The grace of God**" was foundational to Paul's gospel message. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10 *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* ACTS 13:39 *And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* The subject of "**the grace of God**" is indeed endless, so take some time on your own to research this subject further.

ACTS 13:43 *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.* The American Standard Version of verse 43 reads: *Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.* Scholars argue also over the translations of verse 43, but agree on the fact that after the synagogue congregation broke up, and left the synagogue, there were those who were requesting a wish of Paul and Barnabas to hear more of these doctrines before the next Sabbath days service. The words in verse 42 "*the next Sabbath*" is thought to mean: "in the week between (Sabbath's)." Strong's Concordance agrees with this line of thinking noting the meaning to be "meanwhile, or in the mean time," which is to say in our words of today "before the next Sabbath" they wished to hear more from Paul and Barnabas. This meaning makes the most sense, since verse 44 tells us: *And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.* Thus it appears that Paul and Barnabas spent their time in the days after this sermon expounding their doctrine to those who wanted to hear and learn more of "**the grace of God**." Note here that the Holy Ghost has Luke write the word "**persuaded**" here; that ...*Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.* Vine's Dictionary explains how this word "**persuaded**" means to win over, or to bring about a change of mind. So during the week's time between synagogue Sabbath day services here in Antioch in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas were busy winning over ... *many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes,*... who

...followed Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas' time must have been occupied all hours of every day expounding their doctrine to those who wanted to hear and learn more of "**the grace of God.**" So much so that by the next Sabbath day Paul and Barnabas' teaching had stirred up the curiosity of almost the "whole city," for that is who came to the next Sabbath's day service there in Antioch in Pisidia. Anyone in advertising can tell you that the best way to advertise is by word of mouth. By word of mouth advertising then, *...the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God...* ACTS 13:44.

We are to make note of the fact that Paul's gospel message stirred up *...almost the whole city...* here in Antioch in Pisidia, and this pattern didn't just stop there. When we get to ACTS 14 we will find that every where Paul and Barnabas went multitudes were affected either positively for the Lord, or negatively against the Lord, thus against Paul and Barnabas. Down the road a few short years, and a couple of chapters later we will read in ACTS 17:6 this statement about Paul's gospel message: *...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.* Oh the wonder working power of the Holy Ghost in men called to preach Paul's gospel message!

So again what was the result of Paul's sermon here at Antioch in Pisidia? Paul and Barnabas' coming to Antioch in Pisidia had now stirred up the whole city, for in a weeks time almost everyone in Antioch in Pisidia came the next Sabbath day *...to hear the word of God...* ACTS 13:44. How quickly the news had spread that there were two Church Apostles in town preaching, and teaching the good news gospel message of Jesus Christ, that *...by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses...* ACTS 13:39. Note that ACTS 13:44 does not say that the whole city gathered together in the Jewish synagogue, but rather states that *...the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.* "The word of God" is Jesus REVELATION 19:13 tells us, so ACTS 13:44 is telling us that *...the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear...* more about Jesus! HEBREWS 4:12 further explains: *For the word of God is quick, (alive and breathing) and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* "The word of God" is not bound according to 2 TIMOTHY 2:9. Furthermore 1 PETER 1:23 explains that "**the word of God**" *...liveth and abideth for ever.* And 1 JOHN 2:14 teaches the believer that "**the word of God**" abideth in you.

Back to ACTS 13:44 where we find Paul in Antioch in Pisidia preaching to a mega church. It is highly unlikely that *...almost the whole city...* could fit into the Jewish synagogue, or any other building for that matter. In order for *...almost the whole city...* to be able to hear **the word of God** preached by Paul, most of them would of had to have been outside. Unfortunately scripture doesn't reveal how this all happened, but the results of this gathering to hear **the word of God** indicate that by some means *...almost the whole city...* came to hear Paul preach on this his second Sabbath day in Antioch in Pisidia. How many in this mega assembly had receptive ears to hear and believe and receive in their hearts *...the word of this salvation...* (ACTS 13:26), **the word of God**, which Paul had preached unto them the previous Sabbath day we are not told. Obviously many did have open hearts that received the message they heard. This crowd consisted of more Gentiles than Jews. They *...came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.* No doubt when Paul got up to speak on this second Sabbath's day service he stood up, beckoned with his hand and probably stated something like this; "Men of Israel, ye that fear God, and you large number of Gentiles in attendance today give audience." This did not set well with the Jews. As we look at the next few verses we will see that the Gentiles as a whole were receptive to hearing **the word of God**, and the Jews as a whole were filled with envy.

ACTS 13:45 *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.* No doubt the Jews often interrupted Paul's second sermon. With eyes of faith we can see things that are worthwhile to our lives, but with our natural eyes we often see the wrong thing. The Jews in attendance here *...saw the multitudes...* and not the workings of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Secondly we read here that *...they were filled with envy.* Envy is not a good thing to be filled with, or full of. The Holy

Ghost is a good thing to be filled with, and full of. One of the meanings of “envy” as used here is “an envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy.” ACTS 13:45 *...But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy,... and ...they were completely overcome by their jealousy...* is the way one translation puts it. *Jealousy is cruel as the grave...* THE SONG OF SOLOMON 8:6 informs us. PROVERBS 14:30 says this: *A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.* The picture here is that envy is like a cancer that destroys from within. The third thing that we note in ACTS 13:45 concerning the traditional Jewish carnal thinking is manifest in the way they spoke: they *...spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.* The Greek word *antilego* {an-til'-eg-o}, number 483 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, is used twice in this portion translated into our English “spoke against” and “contradicting.” The fourth word of importance to note in this verse, and that is the word “blaspheming,” which is a stronger form of “speaking against” and “contradicting.” “Blaspheming” means: to speak reproachfully, rail at, or revile. Again Paul himself as Saul of Tarsus had familiarity with this kind of traditional Jewish thinking, and specifically talks about it in ACTS 26:9-11 in his defense speech before King Agrippa, stating: *9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. 11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.* Again in 1 TIMOTHY 1 Paul writes a letter unto Timothy explaining his own line of traditional Jewish thinking before he was saved, writing in verse 12: *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; 13 Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* Here at Antioch in Pisidia Paul was the recipient of this kind of treatment, and was suffering persecution for Jesus sake. PHILIPPIANS 1:29 records Paul's word, stating: *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* ROMANS 8:17 & 18 tells us of the glorious reward that awaits those who suffer for his sake. ROMANS 8:17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* 2 TIMOTHY 3:12 again informs us: *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* This was Paul's testimony to Timothy, and just the beginning of persecutions and afflictions which were to befall him in this his first missionary journey. 2 TIMOTHY 2:12 *If we suffer, (with Him), we shall also reign with him...*

How much of the word of God Paul and Barnabas got to preach this second Sabbath day service in Antioch in Pisidia isn't recorded by Luke. ACTS 13:46 & 47 records the message Paul and Barnabas were able to preach after being heckled, contradicted, and blasphemed: *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. 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.*

These two verses reveal a lot, and lays the foundation for what happened next on this missionary journey. Here Paul and Barnabas reveal by the power of the Holy Ghost the following message: that to the Jew *...the word of God should first have been spoken to you;...* and to the Gentiles we are sent to preach the message of salvation, and everlasting life! Let's examine these two verses a little closer.

Note how the scripture states that they “waxed bold” in verse 46. This phrase “waxed bold” comes from the Greek word *parrhesiazomai* {par-hray-see-ad'-zom-ahee}, number 3955 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, a word used nine times in our King James Bible, and eight of these times are in reference to Paul. Recall in ACTS 1:8 that it states: *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* Because Paul and Barnabas were

“full of the Holy Ghost,” (see again ACTS 11:24; 13:2; 13:9), they had the “power” to “wax bold” and be witnesses unto these in the uttermost part of the earth, here called Antioch in Pisidia. The phrase “waxed bold” means: to use freedom in speaking, be free spoken, to speak freely, to grow confident, to have boldness, to show assurance, and to assume a bold bearing. I will assure you that Paul and Barnabas didn’t wax bold in themselves, but rather being Apostles full of the Holy Ghost they were inspired by the Holy Ghost to speak freely and boldly this message, which was addressed to these ...*contradicting and blaspheming*... Jews.

ACTS 13:46 & 47 *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. 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.* Essentially this was the sermon Paul, and Barnabas got to preach their second Sabbath day in Antioch in Pisidia! Note this phrase addressed to the Jews ...*It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you...* . An expounded translation of this phrase reads: “We were bound to proclaim God’s message to you Jews first...” It is of paramount importance in our understanding the mission of the Apostle Paul in his calling of the Lord to understand this statement: ...*It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you...* . This theme is echoed over and over again in scripture; that is to say the children of Israel, the Jews, were given of God a prominent place among all of the people of the earth, a fact Brother Hawkins also noted in the September 2025 issue of the Grace and Glory magazine, where he quoted Moses from DEUTERONOMY 32:8 *When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.* Thus we see again that it was God who gave the children of Israel, the Jews, a prominent place among all of the people of the earth, and that is why it was of necessity that first of all Paul would seek out the Jews every place that he went. And Paul Himself was a Jew, and later he wrote in ROMANS 10:1 *Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* The following scriptures perhaps shed more light on why to the Jew, that ...*It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you...* . DEUTERONOMY 7:6 *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.* ...14:2 *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.* One of the last things Jesus said after His resurrection while still here on earth is found in LUKE 24, and was spoken unto His disciples, all whom were Jews: LUKE 24:47 *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* Who are the people found at Jerusalem? The Jews. In Peter’s second sermon that he preached to the Jews at Jerusalem after being filled with the Holy Ghost, he stated: ACTS 3:25 *Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.* 26 *Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.* Paul, himself being a Jew, acknowledged in many places in his epistles these same facts concerning the Jew, and why it was necessary that the word of God must first be spoken unto them. ROMANS 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* Paul later proclaimed in ROMANS 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.* This is why Paul said here in ACTS 13:46 after first speaking unto the Jews, and having the gospel message rejected by them: ...*lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* 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.*

Let’s turn our attention to the Gentiles, the non Jew. The word “Gentiles” is always capitalized in scripture, and furthermore there have always been far more Gentiles in the world than Jews. Our brother in the Lord, Luke, who wrote the book of ACTS, was also a Gentile as we mentioned in the introduction to this study. Luke also wrote the gospel according to LUKE, where in

chapter 2 he records a unique event concerning a just and devout old man, a Jew name Simeon, who when Jesus was an infant got to hold our Lord and Saviour in his arms, and prophesy about Him by the power of the Holy Ghost. Simeon means “hearkening,” that is the hearer of the word of God. Let’s read again this account. LUKE 2:25 *And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. 26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, 28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. What Simeon spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost concerning Jesus being ...A light to lighten the Gentiles,... is a quote from ISAIAH 42:5-7, the same scripture Paul was referencing here in ACTS 13:47, and ISAIAH 42:5-7 states: 5 *Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:* 6 *I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;* 7 *To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.* Compare this to what Jesus Himself told our Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus in ACTS 26:16-18. ACTS 26:16 *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;* 17 *Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,* 18 *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.**

Do you now see the power of the Holy Ghost in our text? ACTS 13:46 *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.* 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.

Let’s now continue reading. ACTS 13:48 *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.* How many Gentiles here in Antioch in Pisidia were saved at this time is not recorded here in scripture. Paul and Barnabas themselves probably didn’t even know, so they could not convey this information to Luke, who wrote this account. What does this peculiar, and unusual statement used by Luke mean? ...*and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* The word “ordained” comes from the Greek word “tasso,” number 5021 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which is found eight times in the New Testament, and is translated into five different English words, one of which is “ordained.” We talk about the numbers five, and eight often, so by now we should all equate the number five to GRACE (EPHESIANS 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*), and the number eight also has five meanings. The number eight we learned in our study of the meanings of the numbers is a number with several important meanings, and it has to do with NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; all which have to do with salvation, and the number eight also points to RESURRECTION; and the BRIDE. To the Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia who were ...*ordained to eternal life*..., they believed, and were in Christ Jesus a NEW CREATION, having received a NEW BIRTH, and were given a NEW BEGINNING, having believed in the RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ, and in time if they continued following the Apostle Paul and learned from his teachings they too could be the BRIDE of Christ.

There is a second key word here that helps our understanding of this statement ...*and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed*,... and that is the word “believed.” The word “believed,” as used here, means” to commit one’s trust in Jesus, knowing that in Him they shall not perish, but have

eternal life. {See JOHN 3:15}. Those that ...*were ordained to eternal life believed...*, and those who are not don't ever believe. God knows, and has known this from the beginning, and yet 2 PETER 3:9 tells us: *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* ROMANS 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

We are getting to the closing verses of this 13th chapter of ACTS wherein is recorded the beginnings of Paul's so called first missionary journey. Of course this first missionary journey of Paul's was with Barnabas, both of whom were sent forth by the Holy Ghost from Antioch, Syria in ACTS 13:2. ACTS 13:2 *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.* Recall that John Mark was with them in the beginning of their ministry, but he left them in ACTS 13:13, and he left them for many reasons, but most importantly we must note that John Mark was not separated by the Holy Ghost to be a part of this first missionary journey. Remember also that one of the first places they went was the island of Cyprus, Barnabas' home country. And when they came to Paphos the word of their teaching had spread to the point that they were famous. Famous enough that the governor of the island, Sergius Paulus, even heard of them, and wished to hear for himself the word of God. How was it that Sergius Paulus heard about Paul and Barnabas? It was because of word of mouth advertising; that is people on the island of Cyprus had heard Paul and Barnabas speak concerning the word of God, and had told others, so much so that Sergius Paulus wished to hear their account first hand. Their preaching the word of God had a far reaching impact. We could say the same thing that is recorded in ACTS 13:49 -- *And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.* The meaning of the word "published" here means that the word of the Lord went far and wide being spread abroad by those Gentiles who were saved in Antioch in Pisidia; word of mouth advertising. Let me throw in something else here that we will study further in ACTS 13:52, that being these new believers, now disciples, ...*were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.* About thirty-five years ago I flew with a man from Seattle, Washington who told me of being filled with the Holy Ghost at an evening service he attended. When he arrived home his wife took one look at him and said: "What happened to you?" She saw he was a glow with the joy of the Holy Ghost. Now bring that same kind of happening back here to Antioch in Pisidia, and realize those Gentiles who had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who had also been filled with the Holy Ghost would have had similar experiences as my friend from Seattle. There would have been several "What happened to you?" occurrences in Antioch in Pisidia during this time, and by word of mouth this news of ...*the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region...* ACTS 13:49.

ACTS 13:50 *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.* Conybeare and Howson indicate the possibility of a three to four month stay, however the scripture doesn't give the amount of time that Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch in Pisidia. They were there long enough to for the Jews to stir up the honourable women and the chief men of Antioch in Pisidia, and to raise a further persecution against Paul and Barnabas, who then expelled them out of their territory. Thus we read in ACTS 13:51 *But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.* Jesus gave these instructions to His disciples in LUKE 9:5 *And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.* This act of shaking off the dust of their feet sent a message to the Jews, which in effect was saying you are worse than the heathen, for you were offered salvation, but you rejected it and persecuted us. Apparently Paul and Barnabas were not told to stay out of Antioch in Pisidia forever, for they again would return about a year or so later as noted in ACTS 14:21 & 22. These kinds of events in Paul's life inspired his later writing statements like the ones found in the following scriptures: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:26 *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men*

after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. PHILIPPIANS 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. 2 TIMOTHY 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. ROMANS 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

From Antioch in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas next went to Iconium a town about fifty some miles southeast of Antioch in Pisidia. Comparing Antioch in Pisidia to Iconium we find this difference: Antioch was a Roman colony, and Iconium was a native Phrygian town part of the Roman province Galatia. Iconium was also known for being a rich little city.

We next find this remarkable statement in ACTS 13:52 *And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.* Often we read scripture so fast that we miss big chunk's of what is being said. Who were the disciples that ...*were filled with joy, and the Holy Ghost*? Is the reference to Paul and Barnabas, or to the new believers in Antioch in Pisidia? Actually both answers would be correct, but the reference to the disciples here speaks to the new believers in Christ Jesus in Antioch in Pisidia. These new Christians at Antioch in Pisidia, both Jew and Gentile, had just received, first hand, the Pauline gospel from Paul himself, and you know that Paul didn't hold anything back from them. The word "joy" in verse 52 is akin to the word "glad" in verse 48. In verse 48 they were "glad" that the words of everlasting life should be preached unto them, and they glorified the word of the Lord. In verse 52 they were full of "joy" because these words of everlasting life had been preached unto them, and they continued to glorify the word of the Lord. Furthermore many of these disciples had been filled with the Holy Ghost, as it states in verse 52: *And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.* Those of you who are filled with the Holy Ghost know and will always remember how full of joy you were after receiving the Holy Ghost. This was the excitement and the joy that the disciples were experiencing at Antioch in Pisidia. We may have up to this point in time have wondered if Paul and Barnabas got to teach these disciples at Antioch in Pisidia any of the deeper truths of Paul's gospel, but now we know that some of these disciples at Antioch in Pisidia were filled with the Holy Ghost, and as we have pointed out many times before, it is the responsibility of the Holy Ghost to teach us all things, bring all things to our remembrance, to guide us into all truth, and to show us things to come. So obviously Paul and Barnabas had introduced to the disciples on this seed planting missionary journey all of the deeper truths of Paul's gospel, such as the importance of being filled with the Holy Ghost, and being established in God's word, and being built up in Christ Jesus even to the point where they could be found qualified to be the Bride of Christ. Obviously after learning these things the disciples there at Antioch in Pisidia would be filled with joy, and a great big part of the reason that they were filled with joy was because they also were filled with, and full of the Holy Ghost. As Paul and Barnabas left Antioch in Pisidia, their memories would be filled with the joyous disciples that were there, thus Paul and Barnabas too ...*were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.* Truly only the Lord, and the power of the Holy Ghost, could make Paul and Barnabas full of joy after being rejected, and kicked out of the town of Antioch in Pisidia. Thus they left in victory, in joy, and rejoicing in the Lord, and not defeated in the least. This also should speak volumes to our own heart. Are we to be defeated by circumstances, and events of everyday life, or are we to rejoice in the Lord greatly as Paul wrote us from his dungy prison cell in PHILIPPIANS 4:4? PHILIPPIANS 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.* The full overcomers are focused on things above, thus they can be identified, for they rejoice in the Lord always irrespective of circumstances, or earthly discouragements. Is that you? We too are to be ... *filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost...* ACTS 13:52.