

## **Talk – Acts 13:4-52 – Holy Spirit Mission**

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### **Central Truth**

Proclaiming Israel's good news to the Gentiles for the forgiveness of sins.

### **Purpose**

I want to listener to see that the gospel of Jesus Christ is our good news and brings salvation.

### **Bible Reading**

Is 49:1-7

Acts 13:4-52

### **Comment**

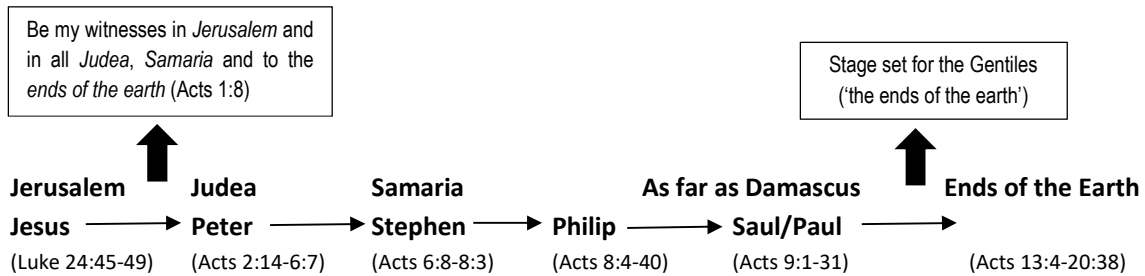
- Quick review of Acts 1-12
- The Gentile Mission begins (in earnest)
- The Anatomy of a Gospel Presentation:
  - Leadership* (13:16-23)
    - Israel – Egypt – desert – land (vv16-20a) – judges (to Samuel) – king (Saul then David) (vv20b-22)
    - Announcement* (13: – promised Jesus – John (vv23-25) – the message of salvation: Israel failed, fulfilled scripture, cross, resurrection – appearance (vv26-31).
    - The good news* to Israel is, through Jesus, the good news of forgiveness of sins to the Gentiles (vv32-41).
    - Result:* Jews and Converts, the whole city (gentiles) asked to hear more (making the Jews jealous) and 'all appointed to eternal life believed' – growth and persecution against Paul and Barnabas.
- Note the role of the Holy Spirit – starts v4 and concludes v52.

Note the frequent use of OT Messianic text (v33 – Ps 2:7; v34 - Is 55:3; v35 – Ps 16:10 (also Acts 2:25-28); v41 – Hab 1:5; v47 – Is 49:6 (also Acts 1:8))

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### **Talk Outline**



### **Reaching the Gentiles...**

#### **The Anatomy of a Gospel Message**

- God appointed Leadership (13:16-23)
- Announcing 'the' Leader (13:24-25)
- The peoples' response (13:26-31) – c.f. Peter's Gospel Message e.g. Acts 2:14-41
  - You killed him (vv26-29)
  - God raised him (v 30)
  - We saw him (v 31)
- Good News (13:32-41)

### **From Synagogue to City**

Invitations (13:42-43) – Jews and devout converts to Judaism urged

The whole city hearing the Word of the Lord (13:44-45) – Jews jealous

Strategy (13:46-48) – Jew first, then Gentile

Result (13:49 – 53) - word of God spread in the face of opposition

### **Reaching the Adelaide Gentiles....**

### **Holy Spirit**

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CHECK TIME

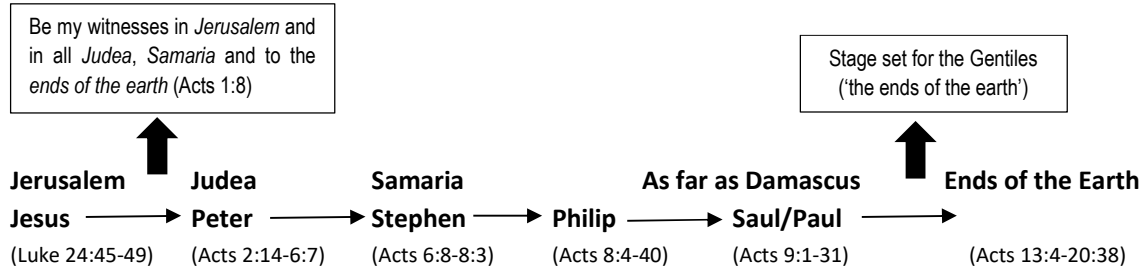
**Talk**

**Opening (before the Reading)**

- In a moment we are going to read Acts 13:4-52 (helpful to have open in front of you) and then start our next sermon series 'Reaching the Ends of the Earth' – which means we are jumping into the third major section of the Acts of the Apostles.
- Let me help us get our bearings.
- This book helpful charts a historical record of the how the gospel of Jesus Christ spread from Jerusalem (the capital of Judaism) on to Judea, then Samaria and then on into the surrounding Gentile areas, in those days thought to be the ends of the earth.
- Two years ago we started in the first part of Acts and looked at the commission that Jesus gave his disciples to take the gospel to the end of the earth. In the first six chapters we read what the early disciples did, particularly the Apostle Peter, in preaching and ministering to the new believers, mostly converts from Judaism around Jerusalem and Judea.
- As Acts testifies, many didn't like people converting from Judaism – and so as tensions increased, new believers fled and spread out to regions more far flung like Samaria. Last year we look at that spread of the gospel through the preaching of people like Stephen and Philip.
- We return now in this series to the third section of Acts – from chapter 13 to 20. We leave Peter behind, and now focus onto the way God choose to work through the Apostle Paul as he reached out first to the Jew, but ultimately to the Gentile. What we see in this section is really how the gospel first reached the ends of the earth.
- To locate you, geographically, we start in Acts 13 with the newly established church gathered in Antioch – today we would know that as Syria. It was here that believers were first called 'Christians' (11:26).
- You can see in verse 2, that Barnabas and Saul, we set apart, commissioned, and sent off to (verse 5) 'proclaim the word of God'.
- This becomes the first missionary journey to a Gentile audience.
- Just to make sure we are on the same page with these people references, the Old Testament people of God were called 'Israel' and in time of the New Testament they were referred to as 'Jews'. All others, all those from other nations, were called 'Gentiles'.

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- So far in Acts we have seen many Jews, become Christians as they have heard and believed in Jesus. There have only been a few occasions where we have seen a Gentile become a Christian – but from here on in Acts that will become a regular feature.



I hope that sets the scene a little. Let's read Acts 13:4-52.

### **Bible Reading – Acts 13:4-52**

#### **Prayer**

*Lord and Father,*

*It was by your Spirit that the first Christians understood and believed the good news about Jesus and we ask that you would work by your Spirit now as we come to look both at the history and the proclamation of the gospel to the first gentiles.*

*May we see what you have done to bring us into your kingdom.*

*In Jesus name AMEN.*

- There is a reason, that today we should consider this history.
- This is our story.
- Quite apart from the fact that Australia is about as far flung as you could go – and in that sense really is the ends of the earth
  - what happened as people from all nations came to hear about Jesus, and as cities heard about this Christ, and as authorities pushed back, and as churches became established – was that people believed and gave their lives in service of this Lord Jesus.
  - This ancient history has repeated in every age since that time – such that we share that same history today. [7pm - As evident in the baptism of Kima Jin tonight]
- What the early disciples did was **proclaim Israel's good news to the Gentiles for the forgiveness of sins** – and they accepted it.

**PAUSE**

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### **First Stop is Cyprus**

So let's look at Acts 13.

- The first stop is Cyprus – not a bad choice as Barnabas' home town.
- Their job – to proclaim the word of God.
- So they followed the church planting strategy that was now established by Peter and the other apostles – they went first to the Jewish synagogue.
- There they meet a Jewish sorcerer names Bar-Jesus (or Elymas) and a gentile proconsul named Sergius Paul.
- Barnabas and Saul spoke about Jesus - Bar-Jesus did what he could to oppose them.
- Here is the stand off – *New faith* in Jesus vs *old faith* in Judaism – with an intelligent (presumable objective) gentile authority figure there to decide between the two.
- It is a mark of things to come.
- Well Saul, who we find out here is also called Paul, steps up and silences Bar-Jesus. He declares him to be a child of the devil, an enemy of that which is right, deceitful, a charlatan and someone who will never stop perverting the truth.
  - And if that was not enough of a shut down, he then announced that God would confine him to the darkness and immediately Bar-Jesus went blind.
- That is a fairly dramatic way for Paul to commence ministry!!
- The result, the Proconsul believed. Paul's first gentile convert.

### *PAUSE*

- How effective would our evangelism be if we had the ability to call upon God's power to make people blind every time we heard heresy being spouted?
- Don't let the miraculous hide the substance – notice that in verse 12 - the proconsul having seen what happened, believed, but we are told it was because he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

### **Reaching the Gentiles (by addressing the Jews)...**

- On to Perga where John Mark leaves them to return back to Jerusalem – perhaps the whole idea of Gentiles becoming Christians was a bit heavy for him.
- And then Pisidian Antioch (different Antioch to where they started).
- Notice that instead of referring to 'Barnabas and Saul', Paul is given precedence and from this point on Paul will always be referred to first.
- Again following the church planting strategy – first to the Jewish synagogue and here they get an invitation to speak.
- What we have in Paul's address – is a gospel message.
  - And it is helpful for us is to look at how he approaches his evangelism (knowing that he is speaking to an audience of Jews and Gentiles. Many before him may assume that they already know what they need to know.

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- I say that, because it strikes me that often when I am trying to talk to non-believers about Jesus, the impression I get is that the person already thinks that they know all they need to know. Don't know if that is your experience.

**The Anatomy of a Gospel Message**

▪ **God appointed Leadership (13:16-22)**

- What Paul does is start with the known – Israel's history.
- Verse 16 – Men of Israel and you Gentiles
  - This is what happened in the past - verse 17 – God did something wonderful for our fathers – he saved them from slavery in Egypt and led them into the desert enroute to the promised land which he gave them about 450 years ago.
  - And then – verse 20 - he gave judges and then prophets and then kings – in fact he gave your great king David 'a man after his own heart' – verse 22.
- Can you see what Paul's done here? He has started with the known and accepted history and he has talked about how God has always appointed Israel's leaders.

▪ **Announcing 'the' Leader (13:23-25)**

- Next he announces God's most recent leader.
  - From that king David verse 23 - *God brought to Israel a Saviour* – Jesus as promised.
  - When was he promised? - well remember John the Baptist – that one who came preaching repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel – well remember what he said – that one coming after him will be far greater than him.
- What Paul's done here is connect their past to their present – and he has introduced Jesus.

▪ **The peoples' response (13:26-31) – c.f. Peter's Gospel Message e.g. Acts 2:14-41**

- Next he describes how people responded to Jesus – verse 26 – People, children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles – this news is your news, it is the message of salvation.
  - But, it has been received badly.
  - You see, the people in Jerusalem, the rulers there, they didn't recognise what I am telling you now, and they did to him exactly what their scriptures said would happen – they condemned him – they issued a death sentence upon him even though they couldn't find fault – and then they asked Pilate to have him executed – which he did – on a tree - and after his died they stuck him in a tomb.

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- And let me tell you something amazing – verse 30 – God raised him back to life – and since then he has been seen by a whole bunch of people and they are the ones who are now testifying to our people.

- Friends, this is a classic gospel message.

- You killed him (vv26-29) - God raised him (v 30) - We saw him (v 31)

It is not the first time in Acts we have seen it – in fact all of Peter’s sermons in Acts have followed the same pattern (have a look at Chapter 2 later as an example).

#### **▪ Good News (13:32-41)**

- And then to finish, Paul makes his appeal.
- Verse 32 – we tell you the good news
- That which was promised to our fathers – he has now fulfilled for us – he has given us Jesus.
- You might notice in your Bibles that there are a whole bunch of Old Testament references – in verse 33, Psalm 2 is quoted,
  - in verse 34, Is 55 is quoted,
  - in verse 35, Ps 16 is quoted, the same passage that Peter quotes in his first sermon.

*[OT Messianic text (v33 – Ps 2:7; v34 – Is 55:3; v35 – Ps 16:10 (also Acts 2:25-28); v41 – Hab 1:5] ; v47 – Is 49:6 (also Acts 1:8))*

- Each of those Old Testament references tell you something about the coming messiah – they are texts that Israel would have (or should have) clung too as they foretold of the one God would send to them as Saviour – and here Paul uses those verse to show that they are all talking about Jesus.
  - A son of the father God
  - One that God would raise from the dead
  - One who would never see decay
  - A holy one who would receive the blessing promised to King David.
- And with that Paul says to his listeners – verse 38 – ‘I want you to know – that it is through that Jesus – that forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you’.
- Through him, everyone (you Jews and you Gentiles), everyone, who believes is justified from everything – including even the things that your precious 10 commandments don’t cover.
- So friends – verse 40 – take care, because you don’t want to respond to Jesus the way that your prophets said you might – don’t scoff, don’t wonder, don’t perish because you have not believed what has happened in your day.

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PAUSE

- Paul has **proclaimed Israel's good news for the forgiveness of sins**.

### *Application*

- When someone becomes a Christian there is often a fairly rigorous thought process in place. And I wonder if it could be similar to how Paul speaks here.
  - *Leadership* - A Christian recognises that our world is led by someone much bigger than ourselves – someone over all things. A sovereign leader.
  - *Jesus* – A Christian recognises the place that Jesus plays in our world – recognising that he has at least a say over our lives.
  - *Response* - What Paul describes in his message is what the authorities did to Jesus – but that is the same as what we have done to Jesus.  
They accused him of wrong and then held him accountable to it. And he took it.  
We have done the wrong that we have, but allowed Jesus to take the consequence. And he took it.
  - *Good News* – A Christian recognises that despite all that was done, despite all that I might have done that is wrong, that it is only through Jesus that the forgiveness of our sins is declared.
- Paul has **proclaimed Israel's good news for the forgiveness of our sins**.

PAUSE

### **From Synagogue to City**

- The rest of the chapter shows you what happened.
- I don't think I need to go into much detail from here because you will see the same thing happen over and over again as the Paul moves on from Pisidian Antioch and on into Asia Minor.

#### **Invitations (13:42-43) – Jews and devout converts to Judaism urged**

- You will see Paul being invited to speak further – as the people do in verse 42.

#### **The whole city hearing the Word of the Lord (13:44-45) – Jews jealous**

- You will see large numbers of people come out to hear the gospel proclaimed – just like you see in verse 44 - when the whole city gatherings the following Sabbath.
- Yet, while this massive interest grows, you will also see the Jews getting jealous and as a result to opposing Paul – as you in verse 45.

#### **Strategy (13:46-48) – Jew first, then Gentile**



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- You'll also see the strategy that Paul uses – always to go to the Jew first, but if they reject to turn to the Gentile so that the message of salvation does not get caught up only in the ears of those who should know better.
- Paul makes that clear in verse 46.
- It is a strategy he applies to his ministry through all his missionary journeys – in his last major epistle Romans (9-11) he explains himself that his intention was always to see people saved and if it's Jews wonderful, if it's Gentiles double wonderful, and if the Jews seeing that the Gentiles were being saved by 'their' descendant Jesus, if that caused them to take a second look at him and be saved, then triple wonderful.

**Result (13:49 –53) - word of God spread in the face of opposition**

- And finally you will see the result of Paul's preaching.
- Verse 48 – the Gentiles were glad - and honoured the word - and believed – and the word of the Lord spread through the whole region.

**Reaching the Adelaide Gentiles....**

- Paul **proclaimed Israel's good news to the Gentiles for the forgiveness of sins.**
- Our job, then is to proclaim that same good news, as Gentiles, for the forgiveness of sins.
- And if it helps to use Paul approach to explain the gospel, then so be it  
God leads the World  
Jesus is his appointed saviour  
We have done wrong  
In Jesus, there is forgiveness.

**PAUSE**

**Holy Spirit**

But I have left someone out

- Go back to the beginning of the chapter.
- In verse 2 – look who it is that chooses Barnabas and Paul for the work of proclaiming the gospel – it is the Holy Spirit.
- In verse 4 – look who it is that sends them on their way – it is the Holy Spirit (following the commissioning that the church in Antioch)
- In verse 9 – who is it that gives Paul the words to speak when he comes up again heresy – it is the Holy Spirit.

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- And then look right at the end of the chapter – who was it that instilled in the disciples a joy that went with them as they travelled to proclaim the gospel – the Holy Spirit.
- **Proclaiming Israel's good news to the Gentiles for the forgiveness of sins is the mission of the Holy Spirit** – from start to finish.
- Our job, is to proclaim good news of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins – do it by the power of the Spirit.

**Closing Prayer**