



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Study 21: **COURAGE AND FAITHFULNESS IN THE MINISTRY** **Acts 13:13-52**

Barnabas and Saul had been chosen and sent by the Holy Spirit to evangelize the Gentiles. The Church in Jerusalem had been successfully engaged in witnessing to the Jews in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria but **“the uttermost part of the earth”** had been largely neglected. **“They which were scattered abroad preached the word unto the Jews only.”** Even when the Lord revealed Gentile evangelization to Peter, his initial response was, **“Not so, Lord.”** The Lord prevailed over the resistance and ignorance of the leadership of the church and the evangelization of the Gentiles began. The church in Antioch was planted and established. The leaders and members of the church in Antioch were well taught, transformed and trained. In this sanctified and responsive church, the Holy Spirit led and directed that Barnabas and Saul should reach out to the regions beyond. They obeyed as the church released them to fulfil the will of the Lord. **“And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region”** (Acts 13:49).

THE PRESENTATION OF THE CORNERSTONE AND FOUNDATION OF OUR SALVATION

Acts 13:13-22,23-29; 1 Peter 2:4-8; Acts 2:30-36; Isaiah 11:1,10; Jeremiah 33:15-17; Luke 1:31-33,68-79; 24:25-27,44-47; Acts 3:19-26; Isaiah 53:3-12.

Immediately after the will of God was revealed, the Church released the appointed ministers and the preachers responded in obedience. **“They sent them away.” “So they departed”** (Acts 13:3,4). **“And they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews”** (Acts 13:5). This was the practice and pattern of Paul. In going to the synagogues of the Jews first, Barnabas and Saul were fulfilling the divine injunction that the gospel should be preached to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; Romans 1:16). The Jews, **“men and brethren”** (verses 26,38) already had and read the Scriptures of the Old Testament; so, it was proper to begin the evangelistic outreach with them. They read the Scriptures which were to point them to Christ, their only Saviour, but their spiritual eyes were blinded, **“having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart”** (Ephesians 4:18).

Paul preached and led them from the Scriptures to the Saviour. **“God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus. Men and brethren, to you is the word of this salvation sent”** (Acts 13:23,26).

THE PROCLAMATION AND CALL TO FAITH IN THE ONLY SAVIOUR

Acts 13:30-41; 4:10-12; 10:39-43; Luke 24:36-48; Psalm 2:7-12; Romans 10:8-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Hebrews 9:11-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Hebrews 2:1-3.

“Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience” (Acts 13:16). **“They knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day”** (Acts 13:27). The Jews claimed to fear God but they did not have faith in God who gave His Son, Jesus to be their Saviour.

They professed to reverence the Scripture and they read it religiously regularly, yet they did not put their trust in Christ, the only Saviour, the heaven-sent Saviour, the sufficient Saviour, revealed in the Scripture. Not believing in Christ, the Saviour, made them worse than those who never had the Scripture to read. Not having faith in Christ as Saviour exposed them to greater condemnation. **“But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee”** (Matthew 11:24). Sodom had no Bible, yet they were judged for their sins. **“Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of ETERNAL FIRE”** (Jude 7). If Sodom and Gomorrhah who did not have the Scripture to read are suffering eternal punishment, those who have, read, know the Scripture and yet reject the Saviour, will suffer more severely in eternity. **“Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 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”** (Acts 13:40,41).

THE PERSEVERANCE AND COURAGE FOR FAITHFULNESS BY OVERCOMING SAINTS

Acts 13:42-52; 28:23-28; Psalm 22:16-18,27-29; Isaiah 55:4-7; Jeremiah 16:19; Acts 2:21; 10:43; Romans 10:13; 14:17-19; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 5:3-5; Revelation 2:25-29.

“Many of the Jews and religious proselytes” believed and they were encouraged and exhorted ***“to continue in the grace of God”*** (Acts 13:43). Salvation, by faith in Christ, is a wonderful experience. It grants the recipient forgiveness, peace, freedom, redemption, sonship in God’s family. Experiencing the grace that brings salvation leads to victory; continuing in that grace leads to daily, greater, eternal joy and blessedness. ***“Continue in the grace of God”*** (Acts 13:43). ***“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world”*** (Titus 2:11,12). We must persevere and continue in God’s grace - His saving grace, His sustaining grace, His sanctifying grace, His sufficient grace, His strengthening grace, His steadfast grace, His superabundant grace. Continue. Continue (John 8:31), continue (John 15:9), continue (Acts 2:42), continue (Acts 13:43), continue (Acts 14:22), continue (Romans 11:22), continue (Colossians 1:23), continue (1 Timothy 2:15), continue (1 Timothy 4:16), continue (2 Timothy 3:14), continue (James 1: 25), continue (1 John 2:24). Continue, make it a personal decision; continue, maintaining a progressive direction; continue, moment by moment, with permanent devotion.

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