

**Commentary on Acts chapter 13 verses 13-52 by Chuck Smith 4.2.23**

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**April memory verse Romans 10:17 (NKJV)**

So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

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Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and there John departing from them returned to Jerusalem ([Act 13:12-13](#)).

Why John Mark departed is not told. It did upset Paul. He got very upset that John Mark would leave. Insomuch that when they started out on the second missionary journey and Barnabas wanted to take Mark again, Paul said, "No way, I don't want him to go." And the contention between Paul and Barnabas became so great over Mark that Barnabas took Mark and took off towards Cyprus again and Paul got Silas and he headed out in another direction towards Asia Minor. And it brought a separation between Paul and Barnabas, the issue over Mark, because Paul was still upset that Mark had left them here in Pamphylia. However, whatever breach did exist for a time was healed and Paul later on writes concerning Mark, and he says, "Please send Mark with me and have him bring the parchments. He's been a great comfort and a help to me." So whatever problems existed were ultimately resolved and there was a beautiful relationship developed between Paul and Mark in years to come.

Now they did not preach in the area of Pamphylia. The area of Pamphylia was the coastal plains. The reason why they did not preach there is because Paul became quite ill at this point. The coastal plains around Pamphylia were filled with malaria fever. And it is thought by many that Paul got a good case of malaria fever, and thus, they did not stay in the coastal area of Pamphylia, but they headed on up into the high plateau region around the area of Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, and those areas up in the higher plateau regions about 3,600 feet elevation. In order that he might recuperate from the malaria fever that he picked up there on the coast.

Later on, when Paul wrote to these churches of Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia and all, in a letter known as the epistle to the Galatians, for this whole area was known as Galatia, when he wrote his Galatian epistle, he said, "You remember how sick I was when I was there with you and how out of my sickness I was declaring to you the truths of God and all." And he made reference to his great sickness that he had when he was with them there in Galatia. So because of this, they believed that he probably got malaria fever and that particular strain of malaria fever caused a person to have extremely severe headaches. In fact, one man described it as though there was a sword being thrust through your temples, the headache that accompanied this particular strain of malaria fever. And it caused just a tremendous pressure on the eyes. So they did not

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stay in the coastal regions but headed on up into the highlands, the plateau area of Pisidia, coming unto Antioch.

So they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets ([Act 13:14-15](#)),

And, of course, the synagogues they have each Sabbath day they read a portion out of the law and they read a portion out of the prophets. And even to the present day, they follow the little ritual and they read both out of the law and prophets every Sabbath day. And you can actually tell what Sabbath day it was in the year from where they were reading, because they continue the same reading patterns today. So after they have read from the law and the prophets,

the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, speak up. So Paul stood up, and he beckoned with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God ([Act 13:15-16](#)),

Because there were not only the Jews that were there, but there were the Gentiles who had proselyted into the Jewish faith.

ye that fear God, give me an audience. 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 a high arm brought he them out of it. And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cush, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. 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 fulfill all my will ([Act 13:16-22](#)).

Now Paul is just rehearsing for them briefly their history. God was with your fathers and delivered them by miracles out of the bondage of Egypt. After putting up with them for forty years in the wilderness, he brought them into the land that He had promised to give to them. Then He established judges over them who ruled over them for about 450 years. Until the time of Samuel the prophet when the people asked that they might have a king that they might be like other nations.

Up until this point, Israel had been a theocracy, a people ruled by God. But they were no longer satisfied with the theocracy, and the saddest day in the history of the nation of Israel is when the people requested to go from a theocracy to a monarchy that they might be like the nations around them. "We don't want God to rule over us, we want a king to rule over us."

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And we remember the tragic story in I Samuel of the request of the people that they might have a king like the other nations. Samuel, of course, was deeply disappointed over this, but God said, "Samuel, don't be so disappointed. They have not rejected you, they have rejected Me from ruling over them." And so God had Samuel anoint Saul, the son of Cush, to be the first king over Israel and he reigned for about forty years.

Near the end of his reign, Samuel was now an elderly man, could hardly see, but the word of the Lord came unto Samuel to go to Saul and to tell him to go down and to utterly exterminate the Amalekites. Kill all of the animals, kill everything. Don't let anything remain alive. So Saul went down against the Amalekites and the Lord delivered the Amalekites into the hands of Saul. But when he saw the healthy, strong cattle and sheep, he decided not to destroy them, though he did utterly hack in pieces all of the sickly animals. But he saved the healthier animals alive and he brought them back along with king Agag.

Samuel came out to meet him. And Saul said, "As the Lord liveth, I have done all that the Lord commanded me to do." "As the Lord liveth" is part of the religious jargon of that day. It's much like the religious jargon of today, "Oh, praise the Lord" or "Bless God." It's just religious jargon. It can be meaningful and it can be meaningless. There are a lot of people who use religious jargon.

It's good to use these terms if we use them sincerely, but we have to be careful that they don't become just a manner of speech and meaningless. Now this phrase, "as the Lord liveth" was a spiritual jargon. If you wanted to impress somebody, how spiritual they are, you say, "As the Lord liveth, brother!"

So Saul was using this spiritual jargon. "As the Lord liveth, I've done everything God commanded me." And Samuel said, "If you've done everything God commanded you, how come I hear the sheep and I hear the cattle." "Oh," he said, "you know, they were so healthy and strong and good looking. We decided we would bring them back and sacrifice them to God." And it was then Samuel said, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" ([I Samuel 15:22](#)). "Do you not realize that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft? And because you have rejected God from ruling over you, God has rejected you from ruling over His people. And God is going to seek for a man after His own heart who will do His will."

That seems to be the case throughout history. God is always seeking for a man after His own heart who will do His will. Too many times we have self at the center of our lives, as did Saul. And because self is at the center of our lives, we're more interested in doing our will than we are doing God's will, and we often rebel against the will of God when it comes to a choice, my will or God's will. Too often we take our will over God's. For God was seeking for a man after His own heart.

During the time of Ezekiel, he declares, "And God sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should

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not destroy it: but found none" ([Ezekiel 22:30](#)). God's searching for a man after His own heart who would do His will. In the time of Ezekiel He could not find any. But not so at this period of history. God found one, even David. So Paul declares, "And God found David, a man after his own heart who would do His will."

Not a man who is perfect. God can't find him; he doesn't exist, but a man who will put God at the center of his life. And when the issue arises and the showdown comes, the man will choose the will of God over his own. A man who will do God's will is the man after God's heart.

"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will."

Of this man's seed ([Act 13:23](#))

Now you see, Paul is rehearsing their history a bit, but he's coming to Jesus. And so he takes now a big leap. He comes to David in a very brief survey of their history and as soon as he comes to David, he leapfrogs over to Jesus. For to David God said,

Of this man's seed God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus ([Act 13:23](#)).

At the time in David's career when he decided to build the temple for the Lord, he came to Nathan the prophet and he said, "You know, I've got a desire to build a house for God. It's got to be glorious. Here I'm dwelling in this beautiful palace, God's still living in a tent. That's not right. God should be living in the greatest building that man could erect, and I'm going to build a house for God and it shall be glorious." And Nathan said, "Great, David, do all that is in your heart." But that night the Lord came to Nathan the prophet and said, "Nathan you've spoke too quickly. You've got to go back now and tell David that I can't have him building Me a house. His hands are too bloody. But you tell him I will build him a house. Because I took him out of the sheepcoat from following after the sheep and I made him the king over My people. And from his seed, there will sit one on the throne of Israel forever." That is, the Messiah will come through David.

So Nathan came back to David the next morning and said, "David, I've got some bad news and some good news. The bad news first: you can't build a house for God. Your hands are too bloody. But the good news: God's going to build you a house David. And from your seed there will be one who will sit upon the throne of Israel forever." David knew exactly what God was saying. The Messiah is going to come from my lineage. And David went in before the Lord and he said, "Oh, God, I was a nobody. I was just a kid out there in the hills of Bethlehem following after the sheep and you took me from that sheepcoat and you made me the ruler over your people. You've done so much for me God already and now You speak of the time to come, the Messiah, the King. God, what can I say?" And David, the man of words, was speechless. So wiped out was he by the grace of God.

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And those, I think, are some of the greatest experiences in my own life, when I've been wiped out by the grace of God and I become speechless. You know, what can you say? "God, You're so good! Oh, Lord, I can't believe it!" And you just...there are no words to express your feelings of gratitude and thanksgiving and all, for all that God has done. Speechless before God. It's a good place to be. Someone said, "When prayer reaches it's ultimate, words are impossible. When praise reaches it's ultimate, words are impossible." You just open up the Spirit and you just let it flow. You're just there in silence before God in the deep communion of the Spirit. Wiped out by grace.

So Paul makes mention that God has promised that from David the Messiah's going to come. He leapfrogs now to the Messiah.

Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his ministry, he said, Whom do you think 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. Men and brethren [Paul is now addressing them], children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you fears God, to you is the word of this salvation sent ([Act 13:23-26](#)).

God has kept His promise. God has sent the Messiah. He sent the forerunner John the Baptist and he has sent the Messiah, who is Jesus.

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 the prophecies in condemning him ([Act 13:27](#)).

Now, though they have the prophets read to them every day, yet, they didn't really know the prophets and they fulfilled the word of the prophets, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" ([Isaiah 53:3](#)). And they rejected Him, fulfilling the prophecies concerning Him.

And though they found no cause of death in him, yet they desired Pilate that they should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree ([Act 13:28-29](#)),

[Psalm 22](#) has now been fulfilled. [Isaiah 52](#) and 53 have been fulfilled. When they have completed the prophecies of the scripture, they took Him down from the tree

and they laid Him in the sepulcher. But God raised him from the dead ([Act 13:29-30](#)):

This is the only full sermon of Paul the apostle that we have. Interesting sermon. You remember as we pointed out in Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, the simple theme of the resurrection of Jesus. And so with Paul's sermon. Working towards the resurrection, because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and

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believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is essential to salvation, because a dead Savior can save no man. Resurrection is essential to salvation, and thus, they always came around to the central theme of the message, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which proved His deity, which proved the validity of His atoning death.

And he was seen many days of them who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto this people. And we declare unto you [the Gospel] glad tidings, how the promise which was made unto the fathers, 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. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said in this way, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins ([Act 13:31-38](#)):

So Paul is really getting into his message, quoting the scriptures to them, showing them from the Psalms the promises of the resurrection, the body not seeing corruption. This, David could not be speaking of himself, because his own body did see corruption, but not so with Jesus. God raised Him from the dead and through Him we are preaching to you the marvelous possibility of the forgiveness of sins. Man's greatest need can be fulfilled in Jesus Christ because your greatest need is the forgiveness of sins. Because you cannot have oneness or fellowship with God apart from the forgiveness of sins. So preaching unto them the possibility of man becoming one with God through the forgiveness of sins, available through Jesus Christ, because He fulfilled the prophecies: He died and He rose again.

And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses ([Act 13:39](#)).

He is superior to the law. Through Him you can have justification. Something the law cannot offer you. But those who believe in Him are justified. So Paul's favorite theme, justification by faith, which, of course, we have covered quite thoroughly through our study in the book of Romans. But Paul gets to this theme; he loves the theme of justification by faith.

Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets ([Act 13:40](#));

That you're not as those of whom the prophets spoke.

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Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you in no way believe, though a man declare it unto you. And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 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 ([Act 13:41-43](#)).

And this is the problem that they had in Galatia. Though continuing in the grace of God, and when Paul wrote his epistle later on to the Galatians, he said, "O foolish Galatians! Who hath bewitched you, that you should so soon turn from the grace of God? Having begun in the Spirit are you going to be made perfect in the flesh?" ([Galatians 3:1,3](#)) And the very things that they exhorted them to do is the things they didn't do.

You know, God doesn't waste words with us and so many times we feel, "Well, God, You don't need to tell me about that. I know that. I don't have any problem there, Lord. You don't have to speak to me about that." But God doesn't waste words, and you can be sure that if He speaks to you about something, that's the very place where you're going to be running into some problems. God knows us better than we know ourselves and God doesn't waste words with us. He deals with issues that He knows. Though we may feel it is unnecessary, it's usually in that very area where we fail.

So with them, "Continue in the grace of God." But they didn't.

And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God ([Act 13:44](#)).

Man, word got around and everybody came out.

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas grew 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 ([Act 13:45-46](#)).

So they had brought the Gospel to the Jew first, but having been rejected, they now turn to the Gentiles. Paul said in [Romans 1:16](#), "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Paul usually followed this pattern, taking it to the Jew first in order that they might have the opportunity to reject it and then carrying it to the Gentiles.

They had judged themselves. A man judges himself. As you judge Jesus Christ. Pilate said, "What shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?" He made his judgment. But in reality, he was judging himself. That question of Pilate is one that every man faces. Every one of you must face the question. What am I going to do with Jesus? I mean, every one of you must face that question. That isn't for Pilate exclusively, that's your

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question. What are you going to do with Jesus who is called Christ? You must judge yourself what you are going to do with Him. But in reality, in judging Him to be either the Son of God or not the Son of God, the Savior or not the Savior, in reality, you are judging yourself. Because you are the one whose destiny will be determined by your decision.

Your decision concerning Jesus won't change His destiny at all. What He is He is and will always be. But your destiny is determined by what you do with Jesus. Paul said, "Since you've judged yourself unworthy of everlasting life, we're going 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. 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 ([Act 13:47-48](#)).

What a fascinating scripture. We've dealt with the subject of predestination as we were going through Romans chapter 8, and here we find it. "As many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed." I'm not going to deal with it tonight. I don't have time.

And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coast. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Spirit ([Act 13:49](#)).

So they next record for us the work in Iconium and at Lystra. But this is all the area known as Galatia. And so it's sort of like Orange County, but you've been to Anaheim and Fullerton and Garden Grove and Santa Ana and Newport Beach. You're in the area of Orange County. So in writing the letter he addresses the letter to the Galatians, the whole area, though they had ministered in many different churches in this region or they had established many churches in this region. And next week we will move on to their continued ministry there in that area.

So much for us to ponder as we go back over now in our minds the Word of God that we've studied tonight. Our ministry unto the Lord. Our service to God. Am I a man after God's heart? Do I have God at the center of my life, or is myself at the center of my life? When it comes to a showdown will I do my own will over God's? Will I reject the way of the Lord as did Saul? Will I rebel against the commandment of God and do my own thing? Or will I, as David, yield unto God? And when God calls to attention my guilt, confess my sin and repent and seek the mercy and grace of God? Have I received the forgiveness of sins? What have I done with Jesus who is called Christ? I've judged myself, but how have I judged myself? Worthy or unworthy to receive everlasting life? Have I been ordained unto eternal life by believing in Jesus?