

They Were Called To Preach.

Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 456–459.



BETTER

Acts 13:13-16

13 Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

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.

15 And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, “Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.”

16 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, “Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:

Antioch in Pisidia—Disputation

(Acts 13:14–52)

- Paul and Barnabas traveled to get to this famous city on the Roman road. As you follow Paul's journeys in Acts, you will notice that he selected strategic towns, planted churches in them, and went on from the churches to evangelize the surrounding areas.
- You will also see that, where it was possible, he started his ministry in the local synagogue, for he had a great burden for his people.



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Romans 9:1–5 (NKJV)

1 I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit,

2 that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart.

3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,

4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises;

5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.



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Romans 10:1 (NKJV)

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

- He found in the synagogue both Jews and Gentiles ready to hear the Word of God.
- This is the first of Paul's sermons recorded in the Book of Acts, and it may be divided into three parts, each of which is introduced by the phrase "men and brethren."



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Preparation

(vv. 16–25)

- In this section, Paul reviewed the history of Israel, climaxing with the ministry of John the Baptist and the coming of their Messiah.
- He made it clear that it was God who was at work in and for Israel, preparing the way for the arrival of the promised Messiah.



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Preparation

(vv. 16–25)

- He also reminded his hearers that the nation had not always been faithful to the Lord and the covenant, but had often rebelled.
- Every pious Jew knew that the Messiah would come from David's family and that a prophet would announce His coming beforehand. John the Baptist was that prophet.



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Declaration

(vv. 26–37)

- As Paul addressed both the Jews and the Gentile “God-fearers” in the congregation, he changed his approach from third person (“they”) to second person (“you”).
- He explained to them why their leaders in Jerusalem rejected and crucified the nation’s Messiah. It was not because they had not read or heard the message of the prophets, but because they did not understand the word.



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- Furthermore, the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth was even promised in the prophets.
- It was the resurrection of Jesus Christ that was the crucial event: “But God raised Him from the dead” (*Acts 13:30*).
- Paul has declared the Gospel to them, “the word of this salvation” (*Acts 13:26*) and “the glad tidings” (*Acts 13:32*).



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- Christ died, He was buried, and He arose again!
- Since Paul was addressing a synagogue congregation, he used the Old Testament Scriptures to support his argument.



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FIRST

He quotes Acts 13:33, Psalm 2:7 is quoted; and note that it refers to the resurrection of Christ, not to the birth of Christ.



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Psalm 2:7 (NKJV)

“I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

- The “virgin tomb” (*John 19:41*) was like a “womb” that gave birth to Jesus Christ in resurrection glory.

John 19:41 (NKJV)

Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.



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SECOND

He quoted Isaiah 55:3, referring to the covenant that God made with David, “the sure mercies of David.”



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Isaiah 53:3 (NKJV)

He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

- God had promised David that from him the Messiah would come (*2 Sam. 7:12–17*).



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- This was an “everlasting covenant” with a throne to be established forever (*2 Sam. 7:13, 16*).
- If Jesus is the Messiah, and He died and remained dead, this covenant could never be fulfilled.
- Therefore, Jesus had to be raised from the dead, or the covenant would prove false.



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THIRD

He quotes from Psalm 16:10.



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Psalm 16:10 (NKJV)

For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

- The Jews considered Psalm 16 to be a messianic psalm, and it was clear that this promise did not apply to David, who was dead, buried, and decayed.
- It had to apply to Jesus Christ, the Messiah.



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Application

(vv. 38–52)

- Paul had declared the Good News to them (*Acts 13:32*), and now all that remained was to make the personal application and “draw the net.” He told them that through faith in Jesus Christ, they could have two blessings that the Law could never provide: the forgiveness of their sins and justification before the throne of God.



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- Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous in Jesus Christ. It has to do with the believer's standing before the throne of God.
- The Jews were taught that God justified the righteous and punished the wicked.



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2 Chronicles 6:22–23 (NKJV)

22 “If anyone sins against his neighbor, and is forced to take an oath, and comes and takes an oath before Your altar in this temple,
23 then hear from heaven, and act, and judge Your servants, bringing retribution on the wicked by bringing his way on his own head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.



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- But God justifies the ungodly who will put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:1–8 (NKJV)

1 What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?

2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”



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4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

7 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;

8 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.”



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The Law Cannot Justify The Sinner; It Can Only Condemn Him.

Romans 3:19–20 (NKJV)

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.



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Galatians 2:16 (NKJV)

knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.



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- God not only forgives our sins, but He also gives us the very righteousness of Christ and puts it on our account!
- This was certainly good news delivered by Paul to that searching congregation of Jews and Gentiles who had no peace in their hearts, even though they were religious..



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- Paul closed his message with a note of warning taken from Habakkuk 1:5.

Habakkuk 1:5 (NKJV)

“Look among the nations and watch— Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you.



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- In Habakkuk's day, the “unbelievable work” God was doing was the raising up of the Chaldeans to chasten His people, a work so remarkable that nobody would believe it.
- After all, why would God use an evil pagan nation to punish His own chosen people, sinful though they might be? God was using Gentiles to punish Jews!

- But the “wonderful work” in Paul’s day was that God was using the Jews to save the Gentiles!
- What was the result? Many Jews and Gentile proselytes believed and associated with Paul and Barnabas.



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- The Gentiles were especially excited about Paul's message and wanted him to tell them more, which he did the next Sabbath.
- The people had done a good job of spreading the news because a great crowd gathered. They were probably predominantly Gentiles, which made the Jews envious and angry.



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- Paul's final message in the synagogue declared that God had sent the Word to the Jews first, but they had now rejected it.
- Therefore, Paul would now take the Good News to the Gentiles; and he quoted Isaiah 49:6 to back up his decision.



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Isaiah 49:6 (NKJV)

Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' ”

- He was ready to go to the ends of the earth to win souls to Christ!



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- Acts 13:48 gives us the divine side of evangelism, for God has His elect people (*Eph. 1:4*).
- The word translated ordained means “enrolled,” and indicates that God’s people have their names written in God’s book (*Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3*).
- But Acts 13:49 is the human side of evangelism: if we do not preach the Word, then nobody can believe and be saved.



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2 Thessalonians 2:13–14 (NKJV)

13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,

14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.



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Romans 10:13–15 (NKJV)

13 For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”



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The unbelieving Jews
were not going to sit
back and let Paul and
Barnabas take over.



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- They disputed with them, and then brought legal action against them and expelled them from their borders.
- The missionaries were not discouraged: they shook off the dust of their feet against them.

Luke 9:5 (NKJV)

And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them.”

From there they went to the next town, leaving behind them a group of joyful disciples.



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