



Lessons from the Life of David: A Man after God's Own Heart (Acts 13:13-43)

Notes: Week Nineteen

Acts 13:13-43 (HCSB)

Paul's Sermon in Antioch of Pisidia

¹³ Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. John, however, left them and went back to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They continued their journey from Perga and reached Antioch in Pisidia. On the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵ After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any message of encouragement for the people, you can speak."

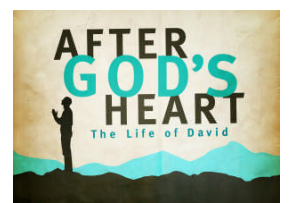
¹⁶ Then Paul stood up and motioned with his hand and said: "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen! ¹⁷ The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors, exalted the people during their stay in the land of Egypt, and led them out of it with a mighty^[a] arm. ¹⁸ And for about 40 years He put up with them^[b] in the wilderness; ¹⁹ then after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave their land to them as an inheritance. ²⁰ This all took about 450 years. After this, He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. ²¹ Then they asked for a king, so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for 40 years. ²² After removing him, He raised up David as their king and testified about him: 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man loyal to Me,^[c] who will carry out all My will.'

²³ "From this man's descendants, according to the promise, God brought the Savior, Jesus,^[d] to Israel. ²⁴ Before He came to public attention,^[e] John had previously proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵ Then as John was completing his life's work, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the One. But look! Someone is coming after me, and I am not worthy to untie the sandals on His feet.'

²⁶ "Brothers, sons of Abraham's race, and those among you who fear God, the message of this salvation has been sent to us. ²⁷ For the residents of Jerusalem and their rulers, since they did not recognize Him or the voices of the prophets that are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled their words^[f] by condemning Him. ²⁸ Though they found no grounds for the death penalty, they asked Pilate to have Him killed. ²⁹ When they had fulfilled all that had been written about Him, they took Him down from the tree and put Him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised Him from the dead, ³¹ and He appeared for many days to those who came with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now His witnesses to the people. ³² And we ourselves proclaim to you the good news of the promise that was made to our ancestors. ³³ God has fulfilled this for us, their children, by raising up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm:

*You are My Son;
today I have become Your Father.^{[g][h]}*

³⁴ Since He raised Him from the dead, never to return to decay, He has spoken in this way, I will grant you the faithful covenant blessings^[i] made to David. ^[j]³⁵ Therefore He also says in another passage, You will not allow Your Holy One to see decay. ^[k]³⁶ For David, after serving his own generation in God's plan, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and decayed. ³⁷ But the One God raised up did not decay. ³⁸ Therefore, let it be known to you, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and everyone who believes in Him is justified from everything that you could not be justified from through the law of Moses. ⁴⁰ So beware that what is said in the prophets does not happen to you:



⁴¹ Look, you scoffers,
marvel and vanish away,
because I am doing a work in your days,
a work that you will never believe,
even if someone were to explain it to you.”^[1]

Paul and Barnabas in Antioch

⁴² As they^[m] were leaving, the people^[n] begged that these matters be presented to them the following Sabbath. ⁴³ After the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who were speaking with them and persuading them to continue in the grace of God.

Footnotes:

- a. [Acts 13:17](#) Lit *with an uplifted*
- b. [Acts 13:18](#) Other mss read *He cared for them*
- c. [Acts 13:22](#) [1Sm 13:14](#); [Ps 89:20](#)
- d. [Acts 13:23](#) Other mss read *brought salvation*
- e. [Acts 13:24](#) Lit *Before the face of His entrance*
- f. [Acts 13:27](#) Lit *fulfilled them*
- g. [Acts 13:33](#) Or *I have begotten You*
- h. [Acts 13:33](#) [Ps 2:7](#)
- i. [Acts 13:34](#) Lit *faithful holy things*
- j. [Acts 13:34](#) [Is 55:3](#)
- k. [Acts 13:35](#) [Ps 16:10](#)
- l. [Acts 13:41](#) [Hab 1:5](#)
- m. [Acts 13:42](#) Paul and Barnabas
- n. [Acts 13:42](#) Other mss read *they were leaving the synagogue of the Jews, the Gentiles*

Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*¹

Acts 13:13-43

13:13 John Mark (son of Mary, [12:12](#)) left them at Perga and went back to Jerusalem. No reason is given for his leaving, but it must have seemed unwarranted to Paul, for on the second missionary journey Barnabas suggested that they take John along, but Paul refused, pointing out that John had previously abandoned them ([15:37-38](#)).

13:14 There were some 16 cities named Antioch in this era, and so Luke says in Pisidia to specify which "Antioch" is in view. This Antioch was technically just across the border in Phrygia rather than Pisidia, but ancient readers would have known this.

13:14-15 Paul continued his pattern of visiting the local Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath. He was invited to bring a message of encouragement largely due to the fact that opposition among unbelieving Jews had not yet been stirred up on that town ([v. 45](#)).

13:16-41 This is Paul's first public speech and his first missionary speech in the book of Acts. It is the longest speech by him in a Jewish synagogue, and it probably represents a style of speech he used on many such occasions. Paul recounted the history of Israel to place the coming of Jesus Christ in historical perspective. He made it clear that the coming of Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise ([v. 23](#)), as His resurrection confirmed ([v. 33](#)).

13:22-23 According to the promise refers to [2 Sam 7:12-16](#), where God promised through the prophet Nathan that He would raise up from David a descendant whose throne would be established "forever."

13:27 Though the prophets were read in synagogues every Sabbath, those in Jerusalem did not recognize that these words were fulfilled in Jesus. They instead condemned Him, their only hope.

13:30-31 The resurrection of Jesus was confirmed by witnesses who had followed Him from Galilee to Jerusalem. Luke frequently emphasizes the role of eyewitnesses ([1:3](#); [Lk 1:1-4](#)).

13:33 Jesus' resurrection confirmed that God had fulfilled His promise (citing [Ps 2:7](#)).

13:34-35 Others who had been raised from the dead would return to decay, for they were still subject to death. Not Jesus. He destroyed "the one holding the power of death" ([Heb 2:14](#)).

13:38-39 Through Jesus is offered forgiveness of sins, something the law of Moses can never accomplish ([Rm 3:20](#)).

13:41 Paul cited [Hab 1:5](#) as a fitting conclusion to his speech. This passage from the prophet referred to the work that God was doing and recognized that some people would scoff and refuse to believe what God was doing, even if it was explained to them.

13:42-43 Whether due to the speech's novelty or their genuine spiritual hunger, the people wanted to hear more. It was probably in the "downtime" outside the synagogues, in small groups or individual meetings, that Paul and Barnabas accomplished their most effective teaching.

1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Acts 13".

English Standard Version - Study Bible²

Acts 13:13-43

13:13-41 Paul Preaches in the Synagogue of Pisidian Antioch.

From Cyprus the missionaries sailed to the southern coast of what today is Turkey.

Itinerary of Paul's First Journey

City	Province/Region	Reference
Antioch	Syria	13:1-3
Seleucia	Syria	13:4
Salamis	Cyprus	13:5
Paphos	Cyprus	13:6-12
Perga	Lycia (<i>region of Pamphylia</i>)	13:13
Antioch	Galatia (<i>region of Pisidia</i>)	13:14-52
Iconium	Galatia	14:1-6
Lystra	Galatia (<i>region of Lycaonia</i>)	14:6, 8-19
Derbe	Galatia (<i>region of Lycaonia</i>)	14:6, 20-21
Lystra	Galatia (<i>region of Lycaonia</i>)	14:21-23
Iconium	Galatia	14:21-23
Antioch	Galatia (<i>region of Pisidia</i>)	14:24
Perga	Lycia (<i>region of Pamphylia</i>)	14:24-25
Attalia	Lycia	14:25
Antioch	Syria	14:26-28

13:13 Perga was 8 miles (13 km) inland. Paul does not seem to have remained there long but witnessed there on his return journey ([14:25](#)). The reason for John Mark's departure is not specified, though Paul's later conflict with Barnabas ([15:36-41](#)) shows it did not sit well with Paul. Among the extensive archaeological remains at Perga, the city gates, theater, sports arena, and an unidentified temple date to the time of Paul.

13:14 Antioch in Pisidia was one of 16 cities that the Syrian king Seleucus had named for his father Antiochus. The city had a large Jewish population and the high status of being a Roman "colony." It is to be distinguished from Antioch in Syria, from which Paul and Barnabas had begun their journey (see [v. 1](#)). Excavations at Pisidian Antioch have revealed much from Paul's day: city walls, a theater, large streets, a temple to the Anatolian god Men Askaenos, and a large temple platform probably related to emperor worship. **synagogue**. See notes on [v. 5](#); [Rom. 1:16](#).

13:15 The regular synagogue service centered around the reading of Scriptures from the **Law and the Prophets**. **rulers**. Worship was led by the ruling elder.

2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "Acts 13".

13:16-41 Paul's sermon ([vv. 16-41](#)) consisted of three parts: a sketch of OT history ([vv. 16b-25](#)), God's ultimate provision in Jesus Christ ([vv. 26-37](#)), and an invitation ([vv. 38-41](#)). With its historical sketch, the sermon is reminiscent of Stephen's. Both sermons emphasize God's raising up leaders for Israel, but with a major (though complementary) difference: Stephen pointed to Israel's rejection of its God-sent leaders, while Paul stressed God's grace in providing the leaders. **You who fear God** ([v. 16](#)) is a reference to the "God-fearers" in the synagogue (see note on [10:2](#)).

13:17-21 A quick summary of Israel's history from the exodus to King Saul emphasized God's merciful provision for his people.

13:20 The reference to **about 450 years** seems to cover the period from Israel's time in Egypt (400 years) through the wilderness (40 years) and conquest (about 10 years), to the judges. This brief summary of Israel's history thus shows the step-by-step unfolding of God's plan first realized in King David but later fulfilled in the promised Son of David the promised "Savior, Jesus" ([v. 23](#)).

13:31 **For many days he appeared** suggests that there were more resurrection appearances of Jesus than are recorded in the Gospels.

13:36 **After he had served the purpose of God in his own generation** reveals a confidence in God's sovereign direction of history: David's kingdom was not meant to be final or ultimate but served a specific purpose for its time, as it anticipated the greater Messiah to come. Though he was not sinless, David was for the most part faithful to God, and thus he fulfilled God's purpose for his life. Faithfulness should be the goal of every Christian in every generation.

13:38-39 **freed**. The Greek (*dikaioō*) is often translated "justified" and means "to declare innocent, to justify." Jews sought to deal with their sin through living by the **law of Moses**. But the law cannot free a person from sin, not only because all people fail to keep it but also because it was never designed to bring about effective atonement for sins ([Gal. 3:10-14](#); [Heb. 10:1-14](#)); only the one who **believes** in Christ and his saving sacrifice is free from sin and acceptable to God.

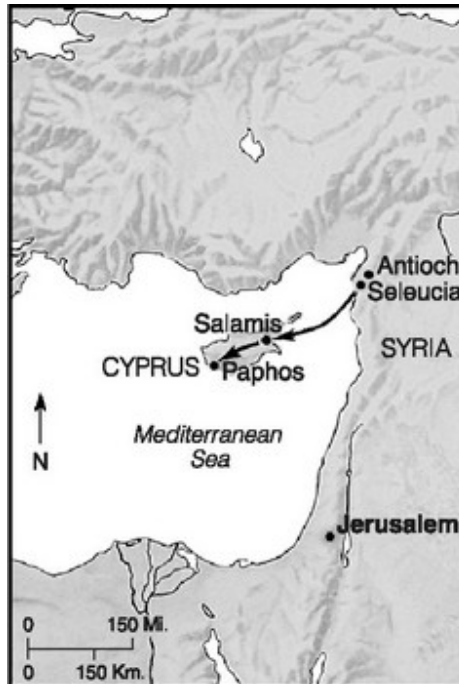
13:42-52 **Paul Turns to the Gentiles**. Although the response at the synagogue was favorable, with Paul being asked to preach again, the Jews turned against him the next Sabbath when a large group of Gentiles showed up. Paul responded by turning to the Gentiles, a pattern he would continue in every city he visited: beginning with the Jews, then turning to the Gentiles when opposition forced him from the synagogue.

13:43 **converts**. The Greek (*prosēlytos*) is sometimes translated "proselyte."

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

Acts 13:13-43

13:13 No reason is given why John Mark left Paul and Barnabas. Some suggestions are: (1) He was homesick; (2) he resented the change in leadership from Barnabas (his cousin) to Paul; (3) he became ill (an illness that may have affected all of them); (4) he was unable to withstand the rigors and dangers of the missionary journey; (5) he may have planned to go only that far but had not communicated this to Paul and Barnabas. Paul implicitly accused John Mark of lacking courage and commitment, refusing to take him along on another journey. It is clear from Paul's later letters, however, that he grew to respect Mark ([Colossians 4:10](#)) and that he needed Mark in his work ([2 Timothy 4:11](#)).



Ministry in Cyprus

The leaders of the church in Antioch chose Paul and Barnabas to take the gospel westward. Along with John Mark, they boarded ship at Seleucia and set out across the Mediterranean for Cyprus. They preached in Salamis, the largest city, and went across the island to Paphos.

13:14 Antioch of Pisidia was a different city from Antioch of Syria, where there was already a flourishing church ([11:26](#)). This Antioch, in the region of Pisidia, was a hub of good roads and trade, with a large Jewish population.

13:14 When they went to a new city to witness for Christ, Paul and Barnabas would go first to the synagogue. The Jews who were there believed in God and diligently studied the Scriptures. Tragically, however, many could not accept Jesus as the promised Messiah because they had the wrong idea of what the Messiah should be. He was not, as they desired, a military king who would overthrow Rome's control but a servant-king who would defeat sin in people's hearts. (Only later, when Christ returns, will he judge the nations of the world.) Paul and Barnabas did not separate themselves from the synagogues but tried to show clearly that the very Scriptures the Jews studied pointed to Jesus.

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 1848-1851.

13:14, 15 What happened in a synagogue service? First, the *Shema* was recited (this is [Deuteronomy 6:4](#), which Jews repeated several times daily). Certain prayers were spoken; then there was a reading from the law (the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy), a reading from the Prophets intending to illustrate the law, and a sermon. Those in charge of the service decided who would lead the service and give the sermon. A different person was chosen to lead each week. Since it was customary for the synagogue leader to invite visiting rabbis to speak, Paul and Barnabas usually had an open door when they first went to a synagogue. But as soon as they spoke about Jesus as Messiah, the door would often slam shut. They were usually not invited back by the religious leaders, and sometimes they would be thrown out of town!

13:16ff Paul's message to the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch began with an emphasis on God's covenant with Israel. This was a point of agreement, because all Jews were proud to be God's chosen people. Then Paul explained how the Good News fulfilled the covenant. Some Jews found this message hard to swallow.

Barnabas

Every group needs an "encourager" because everyone needs encouragement at one time or another. However, the value of encouragement is often missed because it tends to be private rather than public. In fact, people most need encouragement when they feel most alone. A man named Joseph was such an encourager that he earned the nickname "Son of Encouragement," or Barnabas, from the Jerusalem Christians.

Barnabas was drawn to people he could encourage, and he was a great help to those around him. It is delightful that wherever Barnabas encouraged Christians, non-Christians flocked to become believers!

Barnabas's actions were crucial to the early church. In a way, we can thank him for most of the New Testament. God used his relationship with Paul at one point and with Mark at another to keep these two men going when either might have failed. Barnabas did wonders with encouragement!

When Paul arrived in Jerusalem for the first time following his conversion, the local Christians were understandably reluctant to welcome him. They thought his story was a trick to capture more Christians. But Barnabas proved willing to risk his life to meet with Paul and then convince the others that their former enemy was now a vibrant believer in Jesus. We can only wonder what might have happened to Paul without Barnabas.

It was Barnabas who encouraged Mark to go with him and Paul to Antioch. Mark joined them on their first missionary journey but decided during the trip to return home. Later, Barnabas wanted to invite Mark to join them for another journey, but Paul would not agree. As a result, the partners went separate ways, Barnabas with Mark and Paul with Silas. This actually doubled the missionary effort. Barnabas's patient encouragement was a huge boost for the effectiveness of Mark's eventual ministry. Paul and Mark were later reunited in missionary efforts.

As Barnabas's life shows, we are often presented with situations where there is someone who needs encouragement. Our tendency, however, is to criticize instead. It may be important at times to point out someone's shortcomings, but before we have the right to do this, we must build that person's trust through encouragement. Will you take the opportunity to encourage those with whom you come in contact today?

Strengths and accomplishments

- One of the first to sell possessions to help the Christians in Jerusalem
- First to travel with Paul as a missionary team
- Was an encourager, as his nickname shows, and thus one of the most quietly influential people in the early days of Christianity
- Called an apostle, although not one of the original 12

Weakness and mistake

- Like Peter, temporarily stayed aloof from Gentile believers until Paul corrected him

Lessons from his life

- Encouragement is one of the most effective ways to help
- Sooner or later, true obedience to God will involve risk
- There is always someone who needs encouragement

Vital statistics

[13:23-31](#) Because Paul was speaking to devout Jews, he began by reminding them about the covenant, Abraham, David, and other familiar themes. Later, when speaking to the Greek philosophers in Athens ([17:22-32](#)), he would begin by talking about what he had observed in their city. In both cases, however, he centered the sermon around Christ and emphasized the Resurrection. When you share the Good News, begin where your audience is—then tell them about Christ.

[13:38, 39](#) This is the focus of the Good News: Forgiveness of sins and freedom from guilt are available through faith in Christ to all people—including *you*. Have you received this forgiveness? Are you refreshed each day by the thought that you are right with God?



Ministry in Pamphylia and Galatia

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark left Paphos and landed at Perga in the humid region of Pamphylia, a narrow strip of land between the sea and the Taurus Mountains. John Mark left them in Perga, but Paul and Barnabas traveled up the steep road into the higher elevation of Pisidia in Galatia. When the Jews rejected his message, Paul preached to Gentiles, and the Jews drove Paul and Barnabas out of the Pisidian city of Antioch.

[13:42-45](#) The Jewish leaders undoubtedly brought theological arguments against Paul and Barnabas, but Luke tells us that the real reason for their hostility was that "they were jealous." When we see others succeeding where we haven't or receiving the affirmation we crave, it is hard to rejoice with them. Jealousy is a natural reaction. But how tragic it is when our jealous feelings make us try to stop God's work. If a work is God's work, rejoice in it—no matter who is doing it.