

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its Spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

E. Christ's Use Of The Apostle Paul To Spearhead Worldwide Outreach, Acts 13:4-28:31

4. Christ's Use Of Paul To Shift Ministering From Rejecting Jews To Receptive Gentiles (Acts 13:14-52)

I. Introduction

- A. At times the ministry opportunities that open to us or the direction our ministry takes **shift** from fitting our initial plans, tempting us either to doubt that they are from God or to become dissatisfied with them.
- B. However, providing the direction is **Biblically sanctioned**, we must accept that shift as being from God, a lesson revealed in Acts 13:14-52 (as follows):

II. Christ's Use Of Paul To Shift Ministering From Rejecting Jews To Receptive Gentiles, Acts 13:14-52.

- A. When Paul and Barnabas attended the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch, and after the customary reading of the law and the prophets, when they were asked to give a message typical of fellow visiting Jews (Acts 13:14-15; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 389), Paul used the opportunity to preach the gospel with every intention of leading those present, especially the Jews, to faith in Christ, Acts 13:16 with Romans 10:1.
- B. To that end, Paul's address was similar in form and content to Peter's address to his Jewish audience on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem in Acts 2, and to Stephen's address to the Sanhedrin in Acts 7:
 1. In Acts 13:16-25, Paul reported from Israel's ancient history her anticipation of the coming of her Biblically promised Messiah, and of its fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
 2. In Acts 13:26-37, Paul told how Israel had rejected Jesus, crucifying Him, but how He had risen from the dead in line with both Peter's sermon (Acts 2:22-36) and Stephen's sermon (Acts 7:51-53, 55-56).
 3. In Acts 13:38-41, Paul applied this message to His hearers as had both Peter: much like Peter's application in Acts 2:36-39, Paul told his hearers to have it known that through Jesus is proclaimed the forgiveness of sins and justification by faith apart from the deeds of the Law, Acts 13:38-39. His claim that salvation came apart from the deeds of the Law (Acts 13:39) also fits Peter's claim in Acts 2:37-38.
- C. The initial response to this message was the great interest of many of the hearers to Paul's gospel, and the gathering of nearly the entire city the next Sabbath Day to hear that gospel once again, Acts 13:42-44.
- D. However, this huge gathering sparked jealousy in the unsaved Jews of the synagogue, for they had never been able to acquire such a following. They thus spoke abusively of Paul's message to dissuade the crowd from heeding his preaching, Acts 13:45-46 NIV.
- E. Thus, Paul and Barnabas claimed they were turning from these rejecting Jews to reach receptive Gentiles (Acts 13:46), for this shift fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy in Isaiah 49:6 in its context that God would make the Messiah a Light to the Gentiles when Israel rejected Him, Acts 13:47; Isaiah 49:4-6.
- F. The result of this shift from Gentiles to Jews is played out in the text of Acts 13:48-52 as follows:
 1. The Gentiles who wanted eternal life believed the gospel with joy, and the gospel spread, 13:48-49, 52.
 2. Opposite this, the rejecting Jews (13:46) expelled Paul and Barnabas, who in turn heeded Christ's command to repudiate this rejection by dusting off their shoes (Acts 13:50-51a with Matthew 10:14), and they left Pisidian Antioch for the city of Iconium to preach the gospel there, Acts 13:51b.
- G. Thus, the original intent of Paul and Barnabas to disciple Jews was thwarted, but their effort to disciple Gentiles was received and augmented under Biblical direction, so they accepted this switch as from God.

Lesson: *The SHIFT in ministry from rejecting Jews to receptive Gentiles was NOT caused by any wrong ministry activity on the part of Paul and Barnabas, for they gave the gospel as had Peter in Acts 2 and Stephen in Acts 7. Rather, the rejection of the gospel by Jewish hearers as predicted in Isaiah 49:4 and the shift to reaching receptive Gentiles as predicted in Isaiah 49:5-6 show this SHIFT was of GOD! The shift from only a Jewish to a mainly Gentile Church is therefore SANCTIONED by GOD!*

Application: *(1) May we accept the predominantly Gentile nature of the Church as GOD-sanctioned! (2) By application today, may we ACCEPT the BIBLICAL DIRECTION God has our ministries take REGARDLESS if they fit OUR initial plans or NOT, for THAT is GOD'S WILL FOR US!*