

## Acts 13:13-52

### God as Author, King, & Giver of Joy

#### Learning Objective(s)

- To clearly see how Jesus fulfills God's promises from the Old Testament and is the climax of the story of scripture.
- To put our trust in Christ as the ultimate king of our lives and of the world.
- To respond to Christ and other Christians in joy and not in jealousy.

Pray for your time together as a group.

#### Part One: God as Author

##### Read Out Loud: Acts 13:13-25 (NIV)

13 From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. 14 From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. 15 After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak." 16 Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! 17 The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people

"The synagogue service was structured around prayers, readings from the Law and from the Prophets, and (if there was somebody present capable of giving one) a sermon. Synagogue sermons were essentially expositions of Scripture, based on the passages that had been read. Often they brought together citations from the different passages and let them throw light on one another." -I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*

prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; 18 for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; 19 and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance.

20 All this took about 450 years. "After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. 21 Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. 22 After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.' 23 "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. 24 Before the coming of Jesus,

John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. 25 As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'

? As a group, sum up the story Paul is telling into 2 sentences and have your leader write it down. Here are some questions to consider as you work on your summary: Which things are important to highlight? What trends do you see? What does God seem to be doing throughout Israel's history? There are no wrong answers!

*Possible Answers: "God makes promises to his people and then he acts in accordance with those promises, acting powerfully as Israel's God. The climax of his action is Christ himself, the promised Messiah in David's line."*

? How does Paul tie all of these stories together? What is the outcome?

*Possible Answer: Paul wants to show that the history of Israel, which the people he is talking to are a part of (both Jew and Gentile, as he says in verse 16), are sitting at the end of a story that all ties together successively. He does it through showing that initially, God was the one who led Israel out of Egypt and led them into the Promised Land. But shortly after, Israel begged God to give them a king. After Saul's failed kingship, God raised up David, who was a good king, a man after God's own heart. God promised that he would raise up a king in David's line who would be greater than David, and that king is Jesus.*

? God appears to be the key actor in the story that Paul tells. What are some of the actions that God performs in the story?

*Possible Answers: God chooses the people, he makes them prosper, he leads them into the wilderness, he gives them land, he gives them judges, he gives them kings, and ultimately he gives them Jesus*

? Why might Paul tell the story in terms of God's actions rather than Israel's?

*Possible Answers: Because God is the one driving the whole storyline. It's clear he has a plan and has the power to accomplish it. It's also clear his intentions, while not always making sense in the moment, are very good for his people. It presents a view of God as author and sovereign Lord of the universe.*

? Do you tend to see history and even your own personal story in terms of God's actions or in terms of people's actions?

*Possible Answers: It's easy to think of history in terms of historical figures and the impact they made rather than thinking of God being above and sovereign over history. We can similarly think only of our own actions and the actions of the people around us when we think of our stories rather than how God might be working through us and those other people.*

## Part Two: God as King

### Read Out Loud: Acts 13:26-37 (NIV)

26 “Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. 27 The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. 28 Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. 29 When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead, 31 and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people. 32 “We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled 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.’ 34 God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said, “‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’ 35 So it is also stated elsewhere: “‘You will not let your holy one see decay.’ 36 “Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. 37 But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.



How does Paul use the Psalms to show that Jesus is the climax of the story he is telling?

*Possible Answers: To show that Jesus is the one whom the prophets testified about, that their message always had a forward looking component to be fulfilled ultimately in Christ. See verse 32.*



How is Jesus’ reign as king different from David’s reign as king? (v. 36-37)

*Possible Answers: David served as king in a specific time for a specific purpose, but then he died and his body decayed. Jesus serves as the ultimate and everlasting king that David was just a sign pointing towards. His purpose is to reign over all people and all the earth for all time.*



How does knowing that Jesus is the ultimate king impact your relationship with him?

*Possible Answers: It makes me feel safe and secure knowing that Jesus has authority and is sovereign. It makes me want to follow and obey him and his words in Scripture. It leaves me awe that God has had this whole story planned from the beginning and stayed faithful to his promises by giving his only son.*

## Part Three: God as Giver of Joy

### Read Out Loud: Acts 13: 38-52 (NIV)

38 “Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39 Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. 40 Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to

you: 41 “Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you.”

42 As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. 43 When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. 44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. 47 For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”

48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. 49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. 50 But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51 So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

? Why do you think the Jews were filled with jealousy when they saw the crowds (v. 45)?

*Possible Answers: Because they saw that crowds were forming around these Christians who had just condemned them. It's possible that these Jews actually similar thoughts towards Paul and Barnabas that Paul and Barnabas had towards them: that they were actually the ones who were living outside the divinely revealed message and story of God and his people by following a false Messiah, Jesus, who was a deceiver and parlour magician. This likely naturally inspired some jealousy towards them that they could attract so many people with that they thought was a heretical message.*

? What are some of the roadblocks that could cause you to feel jealous towards other Christians as they do the work of the kingdom?

*Possible Answers: Pride, prejudice, coveting something others have, self-righteousness, greed, fear/doubt*

? Compared to the jealous Jews, verse 52 says that the disciples were filled with “joy and the holy spirit” despite the fact that they were being persecuted. Why do you think they responded joyfully?

*Possible Answers: They realized that they stood at the climax of the story they had just told about God and his people. If God could bring Israel out of Egypt with power, and if God could send a savior to the world in the line of David, then they had reason to be joyful. Perhaps they also realized that in the same*

*way that God had brought Israel into the wilderness after the Exodus, they too could expect hardship. But that hardship did not negate the power of God nor the promise offered to them.*

**?** How can we practically take hold of the joy that belief in Christ offers us, when we are tempted to give in to the roadblocks we talked about above?

*Possible Answers: We can put things in perspective and think about what the gospel offers us. We are offered freedom from our sin, and new life now and forever. We are offered community with God himself, the author of all things and savior of the world. What could we ever lack? What could we ever be jealous for, or covet, or have pride in? This joy should supersede our sin! It should turn our mourning into laughing!*

### **For Discussion and Accountability**

**?** Which view of Christ do you identify most with - author, king, or giver of joy? Which view is hardest for you to identify with and why?

**?** Are there currently any areas in your life where you are responding to Christ or other Christians with jealousy instead of joy? How can your small group help you overcome this jealousy?