

Acts 13:13-52

God as Author, King, & Giver of Joy

Part One: God as Author

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.”

“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*

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 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 your 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!

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

? 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?

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

? 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?

Part Two: God as King

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?

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

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

Part Three: God as Giver of Joy

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)?

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

? 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?

? 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?

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?