

Acts 13:13–52 — Paul’s first journey; in Pisidian Antioch

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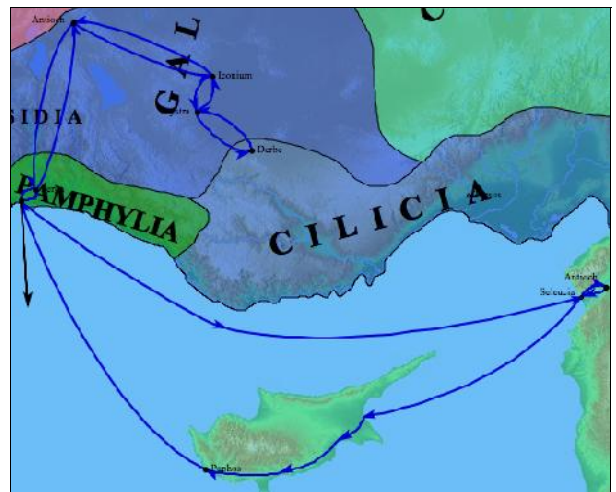
Passages are from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.

Yokhanan Markus left them in Perga and returned to Yerushalayim (Acts 13:13).

- He was a cousin of Bar-Nabbas (Col. 4:10), and identified in early manuscripts as the author of the gospel of Mark.¹
- Y-M’s desertion of Paul and Bar-Nabbas in Perga caused a split between the two apostles (Acts 15:37–39).
- All three eventually made amends (1st Cor. 9:6, 2nd Ti. 4:11, Philemon 24).

Paul preached in a synagogue on Shabbat in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14–41).

- Paul and Bar-Nabbas’ visit to the synagogue illustrates Shabbat customs that are still in use today (vv. 14–15).
 - Assembling, or “synagoging,” on Shabbat.
 - This started in earnest with the Great Assembly, led by Ezra at the end of Babylonian exile.
 - R. Yokhanan ben Zakkai, a student of both the Pharisaical schools of Hillel — mostly — and Shammai, is credited with opposing the teaching of the Sadducees in the first century and with setting up the synagogue system to allow worship to survive the destruction of the temple.²
 - Readings from the Torah and Prophets, the latter of which is called the *הַפְּטָרָה* *haftarah*, or “dismissal.”
- Paul recounted periods of stubbornness in Israel to God’s leadership (Acts 13:17–23)
 - God made Israel prosper in Egypt and put up with 40 years of insolence in the wilderness (Acts 13:17–18).
 - God fought the battles in Canaan to displace seven nations over 450 years (Acts 13:19).
 - “After these things” the LORD set up judges, ending in Sh’muel (Acts 13:20).
 - The people wanted a king instead of a judge, and “God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, a man of Binyamin, for 40 years” (Acts 13:21).
 - “After He had removed him,” He raised David as king, saying, “I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will” (Acts 13:22).
“I have found David My servant; with My holy oil I have anointed him, with whom My hand will be established; My arm also will strengthen him. “The enemy will not deceive him, Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.” (Psa. 89:20-22)
“Samuel said to Saul, ‘You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.’ ” (1st Sam. 13:13–14)
 - Claimed contradiction: Did Sha’ul reign as king two, 20 or 40 years (Acts 13:21–22)?
 - First century historian Josephus records in two places that Sha’ul reigned for 20 and 40 years (*Antiquities of the Jews* 6:14:9, 10:8:4).
 - As is common in rabbinical literature of the time, periods were rounded off to spiritually significant timeframes, such as 40.
 - Perhaps, this 40-year period involving Sha’ul includes the period of decline in respectability in the leadership of prophet and judge Shmu’el.
 - From the line of David — according to the promise to Adam (Gen. 3:15), Abraham (Gen. 12:___), Yehudah (Gen. 49:___), David and Israel (2nd Sam. 7:12; Psa. 69:6, 72:1-20, 89:35-37, 96:1-13, 132:11; Isa. 7:13, 11:1-10, 43:11, 45:15-21, 52:7-15, 60:1-22; Jer. 23:5-6, 33:15-17; Amos 9:11; Zech. 9:9, 10:9) — would come Israel’s Savior, Iesous (Acts 13:23).



Paul’s first journey. (Accordance image)

¹ Stern, David H. *Jewish New Testament Commentary*. Jewish New Testament Publications Inc., Clarksville, Md. 1996.

² “Yohanan ben Zakkai.” *Wikipedia*. Web. Aug. 1, 2009. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yohanan_ben_Zakkai>

- The Greek for *Savior* here is σωτήρα *sōtēra* (Strong’s Greek lexicon No. 4990), which is used in the Septuagint for the Hebrew words *yesh’a* and *yeshu’a*, which of which *Iesous* is a transliteration.³
- In the diaspora, the Yehudim mostly spoke Greek as their first language, according to discussions in the Talmud about the validity of the Sepuagint as Scriptures.
 - “There is no difference between sacred scrolls and phylacteries and mezuzot except that sacred scrolls may be written in any alphabet [“language”], while phylacteries and mezuzot are written only in square [“Assyrian”] letters. B. Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel [son of Paul’s teacher] says, ‘Also: in the case of sacred scrolls: they have been permitted to be written only in Greek.’” (Megilla 1:8 in the *Mishna*, regarding the celebration of Purim)
 - Some could read and speak Hebrew, but some congregations didn’t know any Hebrew at all.
- Yeshua came after Yokhanan, who said he was of much lower status than Him, had been preaching a baptism of repentance (Acts 13:24-25).
 - Paul had been mentioning names that the congregation would have been familiar with, so the synagogue likely would have heard about Yokhanan and maybe Yeshua.
- The leadership of Israel in Yerushalayim rejected “the message of this salvation” by not recognizing the Mashiakh nor what the prophets said would happen to Him (Acts 13:26–41).
 - This was the message:
 - “‘God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Iesous [i.e., “raised up Salvation”], as it is also written in the second Psalm, “YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU” [Psa. 2:7].’” (Acts 13:33)
 - “‘... through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.’” (Acts 13:38-39)
 - Though Yeshua was innocent, the leadership condemned Him to death (Acts 13:28).
 - Yeshua died and was buried, then God resurrected Him, as the prophets foretold. Yet David died, was buried and decayed (Acts 13:29–36).
 - A number of people witnessed Yeshua resurrected and have recounted their testimony.
 - Prophecies that are connected to David can’t be about David.
 - David died *and* decayed.
 - “Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.” (Psa. 16:9-10)
 - This provides evidence of a hope for resurrection.
 - Paul pointed out that David did decay and awaits “asleep” among the bones of his ancestors and descendants (Acts 13:36).
 - David was not the “Son of God.”
 - The Greek word for *begotten* in this quote is γεγέννηκά *gegennēka* (from γεννάω *gennaō*, Strong’s 1080), which is used in the Septuagint for יָלַד *yalad*.⁴
 - The Greek has two meanings⁵:
 - men producing children
 - metaphorically causing something to rise
 - “If one teaches the son of his neighbor the law, the Scripture reckons this the same as though he had begotten him.” (*Sanhedrin* 19:2 from the *Talmud*)
 - “Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, And pay attention to the words of my mouth.” (Prov. 7:24, regarding turning away from an adultress)
 - “‘They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.’” (Matt. 23:6-12)
 - Too many take a knee-jerk lesson from this statement and resist in using those titles.
 - The context of this passage are leaders of the people who serve in their roles and do what they do for power and recognition (Matt. 23:1-5).
 - Yeshua is teaching neither against tefillinot and tsitsitot, as they are

³ Thayer, Joseph H. *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

directions from the Torah and He said He wasn't changing those directions (Matt. 5:17–20), nor against having teachers (“fathers”) and leaders, because He appointed 12 leaders, who themselves developed disciples as teachers.

- Leaders and teachers need to draw their power, wisdom and recognition from God, not from themselves or people they are supposed to serve.
- “I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Iesus I *became your father through the gospel.*” (1st Cor. 4:14–15)
- In a sense, God “begot,” or exalted, Sha’ul as ruler and David as king when the prophet Shmu’el picked them at God’s direction.
 - However, both died and are “sleeping” with everyone else.
- Thus comes an interesting quotation from Hab. 1:5 as a warning for those who don’t pay attention to the workings of God (Acts 13:40–41).
 - The Septuagint, which is quoted here, is different from the Hebrew, with the former having “scorners” and the latter having “nations”:
 - ἴδετε, οἱ καταφρονηταί
 - καταφρονητής *katafronētēs* (Strong’s 2707), “despiser”⁶
 - ׀אָ ׀גוֹיִם
 - Adam Clarke notes that the difference between ׀אָגוֹיִם *ba-goyim*, “of/at/among the nations/heathen,” and ׀אָגוֹיִם *bagadim*, “treacherous ones” (Strong’s 898), is the common scribal mistake in reading the ׀ *waw*, ׀ *resh* and ׀ *dalet* in the block Assyrian script.⁷

Congregants in Pisidian Antioch beg Paul to speak further next Shabbat; opponents incite opposition and drive Paul and Bar-Nabbas out of the area (vv. 42–52).

- The congregation included “Yehudim and God-fearing proselytes,” which were “children” of traveling Pharisee evangelists (Matt. 23:15).
- The opponents of the apostles were jealous of the number of believers in the good news, which had just attacked the ruling from leaders that Yeshua was not Mashiakh.
 - “were blaspheming” – Claiming that a working of God was not of God.
- Acts 13:46-48 is often cited as justification to leave all things Jewish behind.
 - Paul quotes from Isaiah 42 (verse 6) that God protected Israel to serve this purpose, which was Mashiakh’s mission, to be “given to” the nations, to “open eyes” and “free” those in “prison.”
 - To explain Who the Creator really is and the Salvation He offers to those who turn back to Him.
 - The leadership of Israel, in rejecting God’s Salvation, Yeshua, rejected their calling.
 - Israel’s mission continued through new leadership, the apostles, as Paul wrote in a later letter:

“Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called ‘Uncircumcision’ by the so-called ‘Circumcision,’ which is performed in the flesh by human hands – remember that you were at that time separate from Christos, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christos Iesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christos. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.’” (Eph. 2:11-16)

6 *Ibid.*

7 Clarke, Adam. *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Derived from an electronic text from the Christian Classics Ethereal Library <<http://www.ccel.org>>.