

Acts 074
Character Test
Acts 13:13-22
April 30, 2025
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Let us take our Bibles this evening and open them to Acts 13:13. We are continuing our verse-by-verse teaching through the Book of Acts. Jesus said in Acts 1:8,

"but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

That little statement that He made there—really not a little statement, but rather a big statement—gives us our outline for the Book of Acts. "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem" (Acts 1-7); "you will be My witnesses in Judea and Samaria" (Acts 8-12); "you will be My witnesses to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 13-28).

Structure of the Book of Acts (Acts 1:8)

- Jerusalem (Acts 1-7)
- Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12)
- Remotest part of the earth (Acts 13-28)
 - 1st missionary journey (Acts 13-14)
 - Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1-35)
 - 2nd missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22)
 - 3rd missionary journey (Acts 18:23-21:17)
 - Trip to Rome (Acts 21:18-28:31)

The first part of section three is that first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). We have already started studying that first missionary journey. We saw the appointment of Paul and Barnabas to be the church's ambassadors, leaving Antioch to participate in this first missionary journey into southern Galatia (Acts 13:1-3). The first place that they went to is an island off the coast of Israel there in the Mediterranean Sea—an island named Cyprus. We saw that ministry in Acts 13:4-12. There was great spiritual warfare in that section; but there was great victory as the proconsul, the governing authority over that island of Cyprus, became a believer.

1st Missionary Journey (Acts 13-14)

- I. Paul & Barnabas' appointment (13:1-3)
- II. Cyprus ministry (13:4-12)
- III. Pisidian Antioch ministry (13:13-52)
- IV. Iconium ministry (14:1-7)

- V. Lystra ministry (14:8-20a)
- VI. Derbe ministry (14:20b-21a)
- VII. Return to Antioch (14:21b-28)

Now, as Luke is documenting this for us, we have the ministry in the place called Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:13-52). The ministry in Pisidian Antioch has three parts to it. First of all, there is the journey to Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:13-15). Secondly, there is Paul's message (Acts 13:16-41). That is exciting because there, as Paul speaks in the synagogue, is really the first teaching that we have of the apostle Paul, in detailed form.

- III. Pisidian Antioch Ministry (Acts 13:13-52)
 - A. Journey to Pisidian Antioch (13-15)
 - 1. Cyprus to Perga journey (13a)
 - 2. John Mark's departure (13b)
 - 3. Journey to Pisidian Antioch via Perga (14a)
 - 4. Occasion for Paul's message (14b-15)
 - B. Paul's message (16-41)
 - C. Results of Paul's message (42-52)

We are going to learn a lot about Paul as we read the Bible. That synagogue message that he gives there is his first, our first introduction to Paul's theology. After that message, as he is speaking in the synagogue there in Pisidian Antioch, you will see the results of Paul's message (Acts 13:42-52).

The first thing we look at here is the journey to Pisidian Antioch. Notice, first of all, the journey from Cyprus to Perga. Acts 13:13 says,

"Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia;"

You will notice what it says here: "Paul and his companions." It did not used to say that; it used to say "Barnabas" early on, but because it says "Paul and his companions" you get the idea that now Paul has moved to the forefront of leadership. I have given you this quote from Arnold Fruchtenbaum. It says,

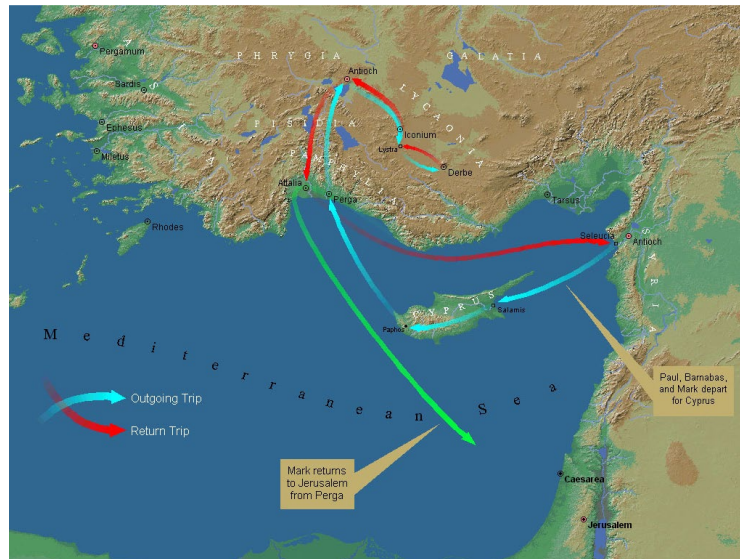
*"Paul now took the lead, and only in rare exceptions would his name appear after Barnabas'."*¹

And then Arnold Fruchtenbaum gives some places where Barnabas' name would occur first, but those are just rarities at this point. Paul seems to be the main man or the leader.

Of course, the Bible is a book of geography. Cyprus is a big island in the Mediterranean. Paphos is where Sergius Paulus, who is mentioned in archeology, lived. He was won of

¹ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 286-87.

the Lord through great spiritual conflict. Now Paul, Barnabas, and Mark leave Paphos and they go to Perga. They are leaving Paphos, and they are going up here to Perga by sailboat.



How long is that journey? You look at these maps and you do not really get a grasp at the journey, but that is a journey of 180 miles by water. These guys are putting themselves at risk as they are pursuing God's calling in this first missionary journey. It is at this point that John Mark, who is part of the missionary team, bails out. That is in the second part of Acts 13:13. It says,

"...but John left them and returned to Jerusalem."

John Mark, for whatever reason, decides this is not for him, and he leaves. Why did John Mark leave? The answer is: We do not know, but we know that he left. Dr. Stanley Toussaint, in the "Bible Knowledge Commentary," gives some possibilities, but this is just speculation.

"So Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia. But John (i.e. John Mark) left them and returned to Jerusalem. What caused Mark to desert is open to speculation: (1) Perhaps he was disillusioned with the change in leadership. After all, Barnabas, the original leader, was John Mark's cousin. (2) The new emphasis on the Gentiles may have been too much of an adjustment for a Jew like John Mark. (3) Possibly he was afraid of the dangerous road over the Taurus Mountains to Antioch which Paul was determined to travel. (4) There is some evidence Paul became quite ill in Perga, possibly with malaria, as the city of Perga was subject to malarial infections. Furthermore, Paul preached the gospel to the people of Galatia 'because of an illness' (Galatians 4:13). The missionary party might have gone inland to higher ground to avoid the ravages of malaria

and Mark in discouragement over this may have returned home. (5) Some think Mark was homesick. His mother may have been a widow (Acts 12:12); perhaps Mark became lonesome for her and home. Whatever the reason, Paul considered it a defection and a fault because cf. 15:38)."²

When Barnabas says, "We are going to go on missionary journey number two, and let us take John Mark with us." Paul says, "Forget it." Barnabas says, "He is coming with us." Paul says, "He is not coming with us." They disagreed. That is how we get two missionary teams beginning at the end of Acts 15. Acts 15:37-41 says,

"Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a sharp disagreement..." (Acts 15:37-39a).

The way the Greek reads, it is one of the strongest disagreements you could have with somebody. Not everybody agrees with each other in the body of Christ. People that love Jesus equally see things differently. Sometimes that can be a good thing, because in this case it led to a split which meant that the gospel could travel different directions through two missionary teams rather than one.

"And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches" (Acts 15:39a-41).

That may be the reason Luke records this disagreement, as he is trying to document the birth and the growth of the church. He is probably trying to explain why the church covered more ground because of a disagreement. We look at church splits as if they are the worst thing that can happen, but actually God can use a split because then you have two churches instead of one, and they can settle in different areas and do their work. It is encouraging to note that God can work even through conflict amongst Christians.

I think I mentioned this last time, but there is some good news in all of it—Paul and Mark were reunited. Paul mentions Mark frequently in his letters written from Rome. Whatever the disagreement was, they reunited in the end. God has the ability of taking a relationship that is torn and stitching it back together. That is a hopeful thing, particularly when you go through conflicts with people within the body of Christ.

It is one thing to have a conflict with an unsaved person or family member; it is very different when the person that you have this conflict with is a fellow brother or sister in Christ. I prayed to the Lord a long time ago that I could avoid such things. The Lord

² Toussaint, S.D. (1985). *Acts*. In J.F. Walvoord & R.B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: And Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 388-389). Victor Books.

impressed upon my spirit that, "No, that is part of the calling. You do not get a run around that; that goes with the territory."

As Paul says,

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men"
(Romans 12:18).

But there are circumstances that arise where conflict, it looks like relationally, is inevitable, and that creates a split. That is what is documented here for us in the Book of Acts. Paul did not think Mark's excuse for bailing out was a good one, whatever that excuse was. He conflicted with Barnabas in the decision to take Mark on the second missionary journey.

Next is the journey to Pisidian Antioch via Perga. They hit the mainland in what we call modern-day Turkey, at a place called Perga. They leave Perga and they head to this place called Pisidian Antioch. There it is described for us:

"...but John left them and returned to Jerusalem. But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch..."
(Acts 13:14)

Perga is where this split happened, and once Mark leaves Paul and Barnabas head up north to a place called Pisidian Antioch. That journey is treacherous. There are about 100 miles between Perga and Pisidian Antioch; and not just 100 miles, but there are mountains. The fact that Paul and Barnabas want to keep moving despite the terrain shows their determination to get to this place called Pisidian Antioch; and Paul is going to give one tremendous talk there in the synagogue.

By this time you are learning that there are two Antiochs. We have the Antioch in Syria, where God built a church, the Antioch church—that is the sending church. All three missionary journeys are going to launch from Syrian Antioch at the northern tip of Israel. Then you run into another Antioch here in modern-day Turkey, where they are headed on missionary journey number one—that is called Pisidian Antioch. It would be like any other city in the United States. I once googled "Duluth". My friends are in Duluth, Minnesota, but there are a lot of other cities named Duluth in the United States of America. It was the same thing in the ancient world. There was Pisidian Antioch, and there was Syrian Antioch.

You notice that they leave Perga, and they do not really evangelize Perga. They are all about moving up into Pisidian Antioch. Why didn't they spend time in Perga? Probably because Perga is going to get heavily evangelized by this group on the way back. Acts 14:25 says,

"When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia."

So there is going to be evangelism in Perga coming back, but not now. The name of the game now is to get up into Pisidian Antioch. They get up there after a 100-mile journey through the mountains. Now we have the introduction to how Paul got an invitation to speak at a synagogue (Acts 13:14-15).

The first thing you will notice is the synagogue's location. Every major city had a synagogue. Philippi did not, but most of the rest of these places did. It says there in Acts 13:14,

"But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day, they went into the synagogue and sat down."

Now this would be a Saturday, because the Jews celebrate Sabbath the last day of the week. They do not know anything about a risen Christ up there in Pisidian Antioch, but Paul is going to tell them.

Why would Paul go to a synagogue of all places? Because that is what Paul always does. Everywhere he goes, he goes to the synagogue first. Why does he do that? First of all, Israel is a chosen nation, so they are always given the first opportunity to accept or reject the gospel. Sadly, they typically reject it; Paul will then leave the synagogue. This happens almost everywhere he goes. He reaps a great harvest amongst the Gentiles, but he goes to the synagogue first because they are the chosen people.

This is what he would write in Romans 1:16 concerning his evangelistic strategy:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

He goes to the synagogue first because they are the chosen nation. The second reason he always goes to the synagogue first is that he has the most common ground with them because they believe in something called Hebrew Bible—the Tanakh. T—Torah, law; N—Nevi'im, prophets; K—Ketuvim, writings. These Jewish words are abbreviated as "TaNaKh." Because they revered Tanakh, which is what we call our Old Testament, he always felt that he could have common ground with them because he could show them how Tanakh points to Jesus.

When he does not bear any fruit and he goes to the Gentiles, he does not start with Tanakh or Hebrew Bible or Old Testament, because the Gentiles do not have any real reverence for Hebrew Bible. He starts with the Bible that they know, which is general revelation—Creation, conscience, and things like that—and uses that as common ground to point towards Jesus. Paul has completely different evangelistic strategies based on whether he is talking to a Jewish audience or a Gentile audience.

The synagogue is located in Pisidian, Antioch, and this synagogue gives Paul and Barnabas, Paul being the leader, a chance to talk. You see the invitation being given in Acts 13:15. It says,

"After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, 'Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.'"

You notice that the synagogue, like all synagogues, is reading Hebrew Bible. They are reading the Law, Torah; they are reading the prophets, Nevi'im. Paul, as an evangelist, probably starts to salivate a little bit. This is his big opportunity because he knows that Hebrew Bible points towards Jesus.

Jesus, when He was on the earth, made this point several times. He said to the students of Hebrew Bible, the Pharisees,

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me" (John 5:39).

Jesus also said in John 5:46,

"For if you believed Moses [author of Torah—Law], you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me."

When Jesus rose from the dead, He was walking with the disciples on the Emmaus Road, and He showed them that all the elements of Hebrew Bible pointed towards Him. He said in Luke 24:27,

"Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

Then in Luke 24:44, in His resurrected body, it says,

"Now He said to them, 'These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.'"

The Law of Moses is Torah, Law; the Prophets is Nevi'im; the Psalms is an abbreviation for the writing section of Hebrew Bible, Ketuvim. Psalms was the most popular book in Ketuvim, so Psalms and Ketuvim were used as synonyms.

What He is saying is, "Tanakh—Torah or Law, Nevi'im or prophets, Ketuvim or writings; TNK—all point toward Me." Jesus was a big believer in Messianic prophecy, and so was Paul. Later on when Paul goes to Thessalonica in Acts 17:1-3, you will see the exact same pattern. This is a later missionary journey—missionary journey two. It says,

"Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And

according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures" (Acts 17:1-2).

The Scriptures there are not the New Testament; the New Testament was barely being compiled and written at this point. This is Tanakh that we call the Old Testament. The Jews, the Hebrews, organized the books differently than we organize them, but it is the same material.

"explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.'" (Acts 17:3).

He tries to show that the whole story of Jesus is predicted in the pages of the Old Testament. What Scriptures did he use? You could ask yourself that because it does not say. I would think he started with Genesis 3:15, which is the first Messianic prophecy in the Bible. He might have used Isaiah 53, which is a very clear Messianic prophecy. He might have used Daniel 9:26, which indicates that at a specific day—the Triumphal Entry—the Messiah would be cut off. He might have used Psalm 16:10, which we are going to see him use here in Acts 13, which is a prophecy of Christ's resurrection.

His point was that the whole thing is revealed in the pages of the Old Testament. Paul the Apostle would later say in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4:

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

What Scriptures is he referring to? He is referring to Tanakh, Hebrew Bible, something we call the Old Testament. Here is Paul, up there in this synagogue in Pisidian Antioch. This is the material that they are reading. They are reading about all of these prophecies, not having the foggiest idea who these prophecies are about. Paul is chomping at the bit, and he cannot wait for an opportunity to tell them that these prophecies point to Jesus Christ.

In Acts 13:15, he gets an invitation to talk:

"After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, 'Brethren...'"

"Brethren" there I think is used the same way it is used in Romans 9:3 of fellow Jews. Sometimes the word "brethren" can be used of fellow believers as in Matthew 12:46-50. Obviously that is not the way the word is being used here, because the people that he is dealing with here are not believers yet. "Brethren" is just a statement of fellow Jews. That is how Paul uses the word "brethren" in Romans 9:3. He says,

"For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,"

"Brethren" can be used of fellow Jews. That is how it is being used here.

Going back to Acts 13:15,

"After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, 'Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.'"

Why did Paul get the invitation? These guys, Paul and Barnabas, look serious. They probably look distinguished. They looked learned. It was a common practice in the synagogue to be able to stand up and explain the truth of God's Word more fully. Paul sees this as an opportunity for evangelism. He gives a speech (Acts 13:16-41). As I said earlier, this speech is a big deal because this is the first formal teaching we have from Paul.

Paul is going to go on and he is going to write 13 New Testament books. Those have not been written yet. You get a great glimpse of Paul as you move through the New Testament, but here is how it all begins. This is where Paul's doctrine and Paul's teaching starts. As far as I can tell in the Book of Acts, this is the only full-length synagogue sermon that we have of Paul. That is another reason why this message that he is about to give, impromptu, is a big deal.

These are all things coming out of Paul's mind. It does not say that he had notes. He did not. He certainly did not have PowerPoint. What he had was whatever he had committed into his mind by way of memory. Maybe he had a copy of Tanakh there, but it is very different from what we have today. Today we have everything nicely divided between verses and chapters, so that if I want to find a verse I can have in my head the right scriptural address to find the verse. We do not get that whole division of chapters and verses until, I do not know, 1200 or 1300 A.D.

Paul does not have anything like that. Whatever he was able to point to, he had to have committed to memory. Jesus did that a lot. He went into the synagogue in Nazareth, and He opened Isaiah 61:1. He pointed to the Scripture, and He said, *"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"* (Luke 4:21). The only thing Jesus had was a giant roll—roll it out, no chapter divisions, no verse divisions. Yet Jesus knew Tanakh so well that He could open a scroll with no numerical markings on it whatsoever, and point to the exact passage that He was looking for.

The capacity of these people to commit massive sections of Scripture to memory should not be underestimated. That is what Paul is doing here. This is a beautiful sermon, but it is all recall. It is very similar to Stephen's sermon in Acts 7, given under pressure—all recall. It was the same with Peter in Acts 2, given under pressure—mental recall.

Somehow the Holy Spirit was able to use these guys, impromptu, to stand up on a whim—seemingly something totally spontaneous—and to detail something of this quality showing how Hebrew Bible points towards Christ. I just say, "Wow! This is a true work that is happening here."

It goes from verse 16 through verse 41, and the first thing you get is an introduction to the whole thing (Acts 13:16):

"Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, 'Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen.'"

Who is he talking to? Israelis—"men of Israel." That is why he is using Hebrew Bible. It is something that they understood and knew. You will also see here he talks about the God-fearers. It says, *"you who fear God."* Now who are they? We know who the Israelis are; they are Jewish people, physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are going through a normal ritual in Pisidian Antioch, in a synagogue.

Who are these God-fearers? They are probably proselytes, Gentiles that wanted to follow Yahweh, and to do so they had to convert to Judaism. One of the most famous proselytes in the whole Bible is someone named Ruth. You remember early on in the Bible she was from Moab, which was adjacent to the Land of Israel, east of the Jordan River and the Transjordan.

She said to her mother-in-law Naomi, "Your God will be my God, your people will be my people" (Ruth 1:16). In so doing, she was becoming a proselyte. There are many proselytes in the Old Testament. The Queen of Sheba from Saudi Arabia made a journey of 1,200 miles to sit at Solomon's feet and to learn of his wisdom.

Jesus criticized the Pharisees when He said,

"You travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves"
(Matthew 23:15).

In other words, "You took this poor proselyte and you put them into legalistic bondage." That is probably who these God-fearers are. They are either proselytes or people that are about to become proselytes—Gentiles that feared God and were attracted to Israel because of their fear of God. That is who Paul's audience is.

If you got an invitation to speak at a Jewish synagogue, what would you emphasize? What would you say? What Scriptures would come to your mind? You are going to get a ton of it right here in Acts 13. The first thing Paul starts with is historical background (Acts 13:17-22); and he begins with the Exodus.

2. Historical Background (Acts 13:17-22)
 - a. Exodus (17)

- b. Wilderness wanderings (18)
- c. Conquest (19)
- d. Judges (20)
- e. Saul (21)
- f. David (22)

Notice, if you will, Acts 13:17:

"The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it."

The first thing Paul starts with is: God chose our forebears through the Abrahamic Covenant, and then they went into their sojourn in Egypt, and there they became great—they multiplied. That is no shock because God said to the patriarchs, "Your descendants will be as the sand of the seashore." They multiplied so much that they became a threat to the powers that existed in Egypt. That is why they were incarcerated for 400 years. Exodus 1:7 says,

"But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them."

So literal was God's promise that He would multiply the Jews, that they became a threat to the Egyptians. There arose a Pharaoh that did not know Joseph, so the Jews were subjugated for a period of 400 years. But God brought them out with a mighty hand. That is referring to the Exodus event, right? It says there,

"...and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it." Acts (13:17)

Now the uplifted hand, you will see a reference to that in the writings of Moses. Deuteronomy 26:8 says,

"and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great deeds of terror and with signs and wonders;"

As we know from the Book of Exodus, there were ten plagues that were used to break the back of Pharaoh and the Egyptian authorities, to let God's people go. That is where Paul starts in his sermon. From there he goes into the wilderness wanderings. It says in Acts 13:18,

"For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness."

Paul makes a point that God put up with His people for 40 years because they were acting like a bunch of spoiled brats. They were acting like your kids and grandkids do when you take them on a trip. The first thing out of their mouths, once you pull out of the

driveway is, "Are we there yet?" You are going to hear that all the way from there until your ultimate destination. I do not know how to describe them, they were just fearful. They did not trust God for 40 years.

Moses disappeared onto Mount Sinai to receive the Law, and they said, "He is not coming back." So they built a golden calf; and Moses confronted Aaron the high priest, who was leading the parade. Can you imagine that? The high priest is supposed to be standing for God, and he is leading the people into making this golden calf; and when Aaron is confronted in the Book of Exodus, he says, "I do not know how it happened. We just took a bunch of metal and we lit a fire, and this calf just popped out."

He would not take any personal responsibility for his actions, just like Adam and Eve did in Eden. Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent; the serpent did not have a leg to stand on, as the saying goes. That is what was emulated there for 40 years. They came out of Egypt after 400 years, and they are at war with leadership and God the whole time.

They get the Law at Mount Sinai, and all they have to do is trust God for eleven days, and they are in Canaan. They could not even do that, even though they had seen the plagues and everything; and they became grasshoppers in their own eyes (Numbers 13:33).

Finally God says, "I am sick of it. I am going to start working with your kids." He waited for 40 years until that whole generation, that older generation, died in the wilderness. Do not say they went to hell, because if you say that, then you would have to say Moses went to hell because he was part of that group. They were saved, but they were examples of what we would call immature, carnal Christians.

Paul makes a brief reference to that 40-year hiatus in the wilderness. Then God started to work with the younger generation, which was much better because they trusted God for the most part. They were not perfect, but that is the group that God, under General Joshua, led into Canaan—the whole land of Canaan filled with Canaanite city-states. Joshua would execute a war plan and Canaan would be conquered. For the most part, all of those Canaanite city-states were eradicated, and the Canaanites were eradicated. God was very clear that "you have to get rid of all of them. Don't let any of them live."

The Joshua generation obeyed God about 95%. They let a few hang around. God says in the Book of Judges, "Because you did that they are going to fester amongst you, and one day they are going to subdue you." That is what the Book of Judges is about. The Nation of Israel is under bondage for about 300 to 350 years to various Canaanite forces, and the whole thing could have been avoided if the Joshua generation did exactly what God said—get rid of the Canaanites, eradicate all of them. Because they followed God about 95%, the 5% came back and bit them. The Book of Judges, a 300- to 350-year period, materializes as a result.

Do you think there is an application for us today? God looks at our personal life and says, "This sinful pattern needs to go. You are saved, but you have got some sinful patterns in your life. You are looking at the wrong stuff online or whatever the issue is. You have a worry problem; you have an anger problem. We are going to subdue that under the resources that I give." We tell God, "I will do it about 95%, because at the end of the day, I really like my sin and I want to hang on to some of it."

What we discover over the course of time is the tail starts to wag the dog. What we thought we could control cannot be controlled. If you have sin in your life, folks (and we all run into that), don't be deceived into thinking you can control it. You cannot control it. If you could control it and subdue it on your own, or let it live on your own, why in the world would Jesus have to go to the cross to fix sin? If sin could be controlled? We have no concept of how powerful sin is.

God says, "Eradicate it, just like the Canaanites. Deal with it right now. I will give you the power to do it." We deceive ourselves into thinking that we do not need to. I saw a quote from J.C. Ryle not long ago, and it said,

"...men fall in private long before they fall in public."

Think about that. When someone publicly falls into some kind of financial scandal, sexual scandal, whatever it is, long before that happened, they were making compromises that nobody could see. The pathway to immorality, it is said, is paved through gradual compromises. Nobody wakes up one day and says, "I am going to be immoral." What we do is we make gradual compromises which pave the way to greater, immorality.

The conquest generation, because they did not take the land exactly like God said, led to the Judges era of Acts 13:20. Before we get to the Judges era, here is a little bit about the conquest generation. It says in Acts 13:18,

"For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness."

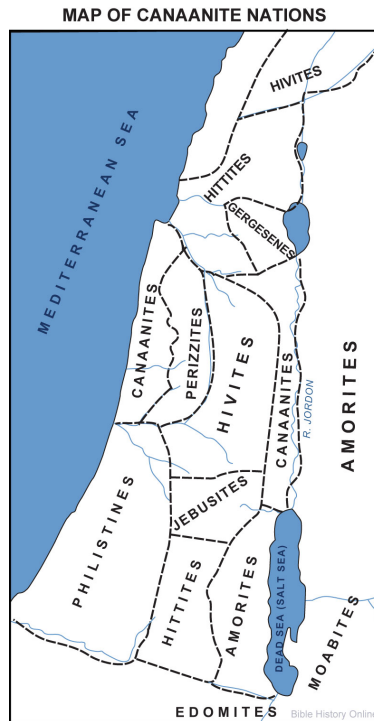
That is speaking of the wilderness wanderings. Then in Acts 13:19 it says,

"When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance—all of which took about four hundred and fifty years."

Notice the first part of this: "When He had destroyed seven nations." What seven nations is he speaking of? There were seven dominant Canaanite groups in the land. When God sent Joshua in, He said, "You have to get rid of these seven nations." Deuteronomy 7:1 lists the seven. It says,

"When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to possess it, and clears away the many nations before you, the Hittites

[number one] *and the Girgashites* [number two] *and the Amorites* [number three] *and the Canaanites* [number four] *and the Perizzites* [number five] *and the Hivites* [number six] *and the Jebusites* [numbers seven], *seven nations greater and stronger than you,"*



These were people that were living in the land when Abraham sojourned there. That is why God's promise to Abraham that "I am going to give you this whole land" did not make a lot of sense to him, because the land had been taken over by the Canaanites. These were the descendants of Noah's son Ham who became that Canaanite group. God says, "You have to kill every single one of them."

God gave those people 400 years to repent because He loved them too; but they would not repent. It is not a racial issue. Do not look at this as a racial issue. It is a moral issue because Leviticus 18 and 20 Describe the detestable acts that these people were involved in. God says, "If you do not get rid of every single one of them, you will think you are going to influence them, but they are going to influence you more than you influence them." That is exactly what happened. That is why the Book of Judges reads the way it does.

Those are the seven nations; and once the seven nations are displaced, it says,

"...He distributed their land as an inheritance" (Acts 13:19).

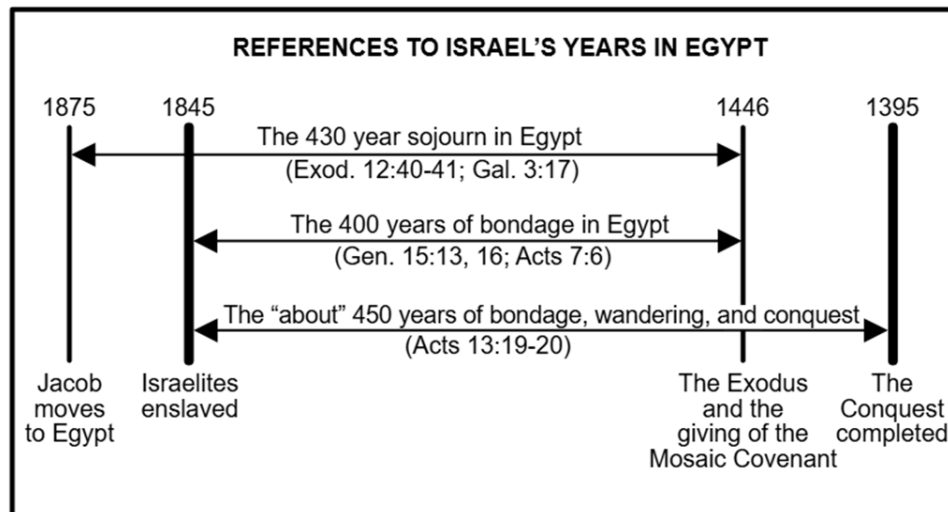
Once these Canaanites were mostly gotten rid of, the Nation of Israel came in with its Twelve Tribes. That is how the land became divided under Joshua after he conquered the land. That is what Paul is summarizing there in Acts 13:19.

Now, what about this 450 years? This is a chronological nightmare right here.

"...all which took place of about four hundred and fifty years."

From the time of Moses to the conquest was about 450 years. You see that number here in Acts 13:19-20, but if you were to read Genesis 15:13 and Acts 7:6 they do not give you a time period of 450 years, it gives you a time period of 400 years. When you were to read about the same time period in Exodus 12 and Galatians 3 it does not say 450 years or 400 years, it says 430 years. Math was not always my greatest subject, but I know this much: 450 is not 400, neither is 400 is not 430—those are all different numbers.

So which is it? This chart from Dr. Thomas Constable's online notes is an indispensable resource.



How do we get 450 years? It is from the time the Israelites were enslaved (1845 BC) until the completion of the conquest (1395 BC). Well, then where does 400 years come from? It comes from the time the Israelites were enslaved to the time of the Exodus—not the conquest, but the Exodus. That is where 400 years comes from. Then where does 430 years come from? It comes from the time that Jacob moved to Egypt (Genesis 46) up until the Exodus. It just depends when you start and when you stop. All three numbers are talking about the same period of time.

My point is, there is no reason to throw up your hands in despair and say, "I do not understand. The Bible is contradicting itself." There are chronologists that have thought through these issues for a long time, and I find Dr. Constable's chart very helpful.

Paul here is talking about 450 years—the time of enslavement to the time when the conquest was completed—but not all biblical references will do that. They will have a slightly different starting and stopping point. There is a way to harmonize these numbers

without hearing a bunch of atheists on the talk shows and cable television screaming and yelling, saying, "The Bible contradicts itself." It really does not contradict itself; there are ways to harmonize these alleged contradictions.

The Joshua generation really did not do it exactly right. They did not get rid of all of the Canaanites, and this led to the Judges era mentioned in Acts 13:20.

"After these things He gave them judges..."

It is a horrible cycle that you see in the Book of Judges. Israel would be oppressed by a Canaanite power that the Joshua generation should have gotten rid of; then they would call out to God for deliverance, and God would listen and raise up a judge; the judge would overthrow the Canaanite power and the people would enjoy a period of relative peace; but they would go right back into sin, following the next Canaanite power, and go right back into bondage. They would cry out to God again for a deliverer, and God would raise up a new judge, and the whole cycle would start all over again.

This cycle goes seven times in the Book of Judges. It is the most monotonous book of the Bible to read, quite frankly. It is like, "What is wrong with you guys? You could have just gotten rid of the problem at the beginning, and you could have avoided these seven cycles of discipline." Then you read that and the Holy Spirit says to you, "Don't be too hard on them. Look at your own life." I say, "Thank you, Lord, I needed that." It is really easy to look down on people in the Bible until the Lord applies it to your own heart.

That is what went on for about 300-350 years. The Judges era (Acts 13:20) ends with Samuel, who was the last judge and the first prophet. It is around this time that God is getting ready to install kings. The function of a prophet primarily is to call a wayward king, who is violating the Mosaic Law, back to the Mosaic Law. That is why all the prophets had short careers, because the king who had the power did not necessarily like what the prophet was saying. The prophet would be killed in most instances.

Samuel is the last judge and the first prophet. We need a prophet because God is getting ready to anoint kings. They put Saul into place. Acts 13:21 says,

"Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin..."

Whoops! The kings are supposed to come from which tribe? Judah (Genesis 49:10). That is something that Jacob said before he died.

If the Kings are supposed to come from Judah, why in the world would they anoint a king that came from the wrong tribe? Very simple: they got tired of waiting on God. Everybody else had a king; all the other ancient Near Eastern powers had a king. "We want a king!" If they had waited on God, they could have had David; but they did not wait on God. They were in a hurry.

What does the New Testament say about leadership in a church? *"Do not lay hands on anyone too hastily..."* (1 Timothy 5:22). Wait on the Lord. God will bring the right person at the right time.

I am just like you, though. I am in a hurry. "We have to get this done. We have to wrap this up." When God tells me to wait, I hate it every single time. I say, "God, give me patience and give it to me right now because I want You to operate by my schedule." I cannot tell you how many churches get themselves into trouble looking for a pastor, and they get the wrong guy. They could have had a David and they wound up with a Saul because they are in a hurry.

Saul had all the right apparel. He looked good on the outside—he was handsome, and he was tall. Yay for tall people, but a tall person may not be your best option. Saul was tall, and they got the wrong guy because they went on physical appearance rather than looking at a person's heart, which is what God looks at.

You move into that time period of the united kingdom. This is before the kingdom was divided. It had three kings: Saul reigned 40 years, (1051-1011); David, the right king, reigned 40 years (1011-971); then Solomon reigned for 40 years (971-931). It was in this time period that the temple was built, under Solomon's reign.

The problem with Solomon is his many wives. Doesn't the Book of Deuteronomy say the king is not supposed to multiply wives (Deuteronomy 17:17)? Why did Solomon have 700 wives and 300 concubines? He just wanted to do things his own way. Sounds like us, right? After he left the throne, as a consequence of that sin the kingdom was divided between the ten northern tribes and the two southern tribes. This is the time period that Paul is summarizing here. It says in Acts 13:21,

"Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man from the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years."

Then you have a bright spot there in Acts 13:22.

"After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will do all My will.'"

As you move into the books of the kings, 1 Kings and 2 Kings, you will see that it is called "Kings" because there are a ton of kings. The Northern Kingdom will have 19 kings, and not one of them will be good. If your team goes 0 and 19, you are not having a good year. The Southern Kingdom always had a bit more grace on it, because Judah was in the Southern Kingdom and the Messiah would come from Judah. They would have 20 kings and only 8 of them would be good.

On what basis are they called good or bad? Does it have anything to do with the economy, interest rates, or gas prices? No, it has to do with whether the king wanted to

follow God's heart and do God's will or not. They have that time of grace under David, and it was under David that the Davidic Covenant was given.

God promised Israel land, seed, and blessing. The seed (Genesis 15) is the promise. It is developed in the Davidic Covenant, where God in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 promises David a forever throne. This is the chapter where David said to God, "I want to build You a house, a temple." God said, "No. You cannot build me a temple because you are a man of war. That privilege is going to go to your son Solomon. By the way, David, you are not going to build me a house, but I am going to build you a house." It is a different wordplay on the word "house"—"bayit" in Hebrew. "I am going to build you a temple, an eternal dynasty. There is coming from your own lineage, an eternal, forever throne."

Why is Paul going through all this history? He is trying to show that all of this history is ultimately going to point toward Jesus Christ. He will start getting to that in Acts 13:23-25; give the gospel (Acts 13:26-29); resurrection (Acts 13:30-37). He is trying to show them that Hebrew Bible points toward Jesus.

He was invited to speak in a synagogue, and they probably had no idea what they were getting. Probably the longer he talked, they said to each other, "Who invited this guy in here?" Because he is giving them a tremendous history lesson and Messianic prophecy.