



A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- We will look this morning, in Acts 13,

at the

first recorded sermon

of the Apostle Paul.

- This man has changed the course of world history.

- He did so by preaching the word of truth, and here we have a good example of how he did it. **(2 Timothy 2:15)**

- It was preached in a synagogue on a Sabbath morning and it shook a whole city -- so much so that in Verse 44 we read,

- "The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered together to hear the word of God."

- That must have been **a powerful message** so let us examine it to see why it made such an impact
- And what elements make it so **radical** and **revolutionary** yet today.

- Acts 13:1-52 – Acts 14:1-28

tell the story of the

first missionary journey.

- Paul and Barnabas
set out from Antioch.

- The whole journey occupied
about three years.

- It was Barnabas who had set out as
the leader of this expedition.

- But now it is Paul and Barnabas.

- Paul has assumed the leadership of the expedition;
- And the lovely thing about Barnabas is that there is from him no word of complaint.
- He was a man prepared to take the second place so long as God's work was done.

- They came into the synagogue because God had said that the gospel was to go to the Jew first, then to the Greek.
(**Romans 1:16**)

- And, according to the custom of the synagogue, as strangers they were invited to speak.

- Paul's speech was of very great importance.
- This is the message which *shook that whole city.*

- You will notice that Paul's introduction is of the same style as Stephen's great message, recorded in Acts 7.

- Stephen had stood before the Sanhedrin, of which Saul of Tarsus was a member, and had recounted the history of Israel

in order to awaken the Jews to an understanding of God's love and concern.

- Paul's introduction is history,
but not history
as we usually read it.
- Most of the history books
center upon certain men.
 - Men who
leave their mark
upon an age.

- History, as we usually read it, is a study of the deeds and influence of men,
 - but not this history.
- You will notice that this history centers on God.
 - It is God who is working.
 - Now, this is history as it ought to be written!

- The apostle points out 13 different instances of what God did:

- Acts 13

15 After the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, “Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.”

- 16 So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: “Men of Israel, and you that fear God, listen.”

- (1) **Saul** reigned over Israel for forty years,
- (2) **David** was both the fleshly and spiritually ancestor of the Savior,
- (3) **John** preached a baptism of repentance to prepare the way for Christ,
- (4) the **Jews** were the first to know of God's promises to Abraham,

- (5) the Jews condemned Jesus to death,
 - (6) Jesus was buried,
- (7) God raised Him from the dead,
 - (8) We bring you "glad tidings" (the gospel of Christ),
- (9) Jesus arose from the dead to die no more,

- (10) Jesus was not left in the grave long enough to see corruption,
- (11) Through Jesus and only through Him is the forgiveness of sins preached,
- (12) The law of Moses could not bring the justification that is possible by belief in Christ, and
- (13) he warned of the coming Judgment Day.

- And then he cites John's testimony to the greatness of Jesus.
- This was a telling blow as John the Baptizer was regarded as a great prophet.
- Here Paul quotes John: One was coming after him who was so great that John said he was not worthy to untie His shoe.
(Mark 1:7)

- Paul preaches **the timeless facts**

of the gospel:

- His **ministry**,
- His **crucifixion**,
- His **resurrection**.

- Liberal theologians are quick to point out that it is almost impossible to define the gospel clearly.

- Paul did not have any such trouble.

- To him the gospel was very clear.

- It consisted of the **great acts of God in history**
- The **coming** of the Lord Jesus,
 - His **ministry** among men,
 - His **crucifixion** because of sin,
 - His **resurrection** as the Scriptures had promised.
 - Remember how he puts it in **First Corinthians 15?**

- **Now I would remind
you, brethren,
in what terms
I preached
to you the gospel,
(1 Corinthians 15:1 RSV)**

- **For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received,**
- **that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,**
 - **that he was buried,**
- **that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures,**

(1 Corinthians 15:3-4 RSV)

- Paul gives us here the answer to a question that many people are asking.
- **"How is it, if Jesus was the Messiah predicted by the Old Testament Scriptures, and if he fulfilled these when he came, that the Jews did not recognize him when he came?"**
- There were two reasons, he says:

- **First**, they did not **recognize** him, (they did not pay attention to him).
- They were misled by **His simplicity**.
 - They looked at his **trade** and **background**,
 - And saw that he was but **a carpenter's son**.
 - They saw that he had
 - No **money** and
 - No **influence** or
 - No standing in **society**.

- They saw that he had no prestige.
- He had never been to school,
 - Had been taught at no great scholar's feet,
- And so they wrote him off and paid no attention to his words or miracles.

- He lived the most magnificent life that had ever been lived before men,
- But his contemporaries never saw it.
 - A lot of people are still blind that way today.

- The **second reason**:
- They did **not** understand the Scriptures.
 - Here were people who had heard the readings of the prophets **every Saturday in the synagogue.**
- They **knew** many of them by heart,
- But they **did not understand** them.

- The reading of the Scriptures had become just **a religious rite,**
- **A perfunctory performance** gone through automatically every Sabbath.
- People did their thing in synagogue, **and then went home again.**
- And there are people like that **in church today.**

- That was the reason why **they missed the coming of** the Son of God and did not recognize him as the Messiah:
- They did not understand **their own Scriptures.**
- And so, as Paul says, **they fulfilled the prophecies** by condemning him and turning him over to Pilate.

- Paul takes these **two great truths,**
- **# 1** the ministry of Jesus,
- **# 2** and his resurrection,
- and he nails them down **by quoting the Scriptures to them:**
- **"And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus..."**
(Acts 13:32-33a RSV)

- That does not mean **"by raising him from the dead."**
- It is an expression very much like the one in Verse 22, **"he raised up David,"**
- which **does not mean** that David was resurrected, **but that he was brought into office.**
- He raised up Jesus, i.e., **brought him into humanity.**
(John 1:14)

- "...as also it is written in the second psalm,
 - 'Thou art my Son,
- **today I have begotten thee."**
(**Acts 13:33b** RSV)
 - The promise in the psalm was that the Son of God would be begotten as a man and would come into humanity.

- Then the **second** fact:
 - **"And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he spoke in this way,**
 - **'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.'**
 - **Therefore he says also in another psalm,**
 - **'Thou wilt not let thy Holy One see corruption.'**
- (Acts 13:34-35 RSV)**

- **Psalm 16**

clearly predicted that
there would come a man
whose body
would not decay,
would not disintegrate
in the grave.

- "For David, after he had served the counsel of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid with his fathers, and saw corruption;
- but he whom God raised up saw no corruption."
(Acts 13:36-37 RSV)

- That someone was Jesus Christ.
- Witnesses saw him alive after he died; he saw no corruption.
- And with that telling blow he nails down the fact of the resurrection.

- Now we come to the heart of the message.
- "Let it be known to you therefore, brethren, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him every one that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses."

(Acts 13:38-39 RSV)

- That was a shattering statement.

- Here were men who honored the Law of Moses,

- Who thought the Ten Commandments were the greatest word that God had ever given to men.

- They were trying their best to live up to them and many of them realized that they were failing.
- But they still thought that the way to God was to obey the Ten Commandments
 - To try their best to be good.

- But now Paul declares to them that they will never make it on those terms.
- They will never find acceptance by God in that way.
- You cannot be accepted by God on the basis of trying to be good.

- The Ten Commandments will not help you a bit;
- They will condemn you, because you will not fulfill them, no matter how hard you try!
 - Galatians 3:19

**Wherefore then serves the law?
It was added because of
transgressions**

➤ Man cannot have
a true concept of sin

but by means of the law of God.

➤ The one design of the law
was to show the
abominable and destructive
nature of sin.

- It is impossible
for mankind

**to see the necessity of
the death of Christ.**

- Man on his own is

**too arrogant to admit
his own failings.**

- Paul now tells them,
God has found a way
to accept mankind
even though man cannot
be good enough in himself,
- But there is a way
through Jesus Christ.

- Now, we are accustomed to hearing that.
 - But you can imagine how it shook these people.
 - They had never heard anything like this before
 - This amazing news that God would accept them!

- **Acts 13:38 ASV**

Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

- **13:39** **And by him all that believe are justified from all things,**

- **from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.**

- What does it mean to be justified?
 - Most people think it means to have your sins forgiven.
 - It does mean that,
 - But it means a great deal more than that.
 - Justification means to have your sins forgiven in such a way that God's honor and integrity are preserved by it.

- **If** God forgave in the way that most people think he does:

- **You just come to him, and he is such a great, loving God that he says,**

- **"Oh, forget about it, that's all right, don't worry about it; you're such a great fellow and I love you so much that I'm just going to ignore it"**

- **If that were the case,**

then God's honor would be impugned.

- His character **would be defiled** by that kind of forgiveness.
- He could no longer be regarded as the God of **justice** and **truth**;
- He would be a **partaker** in my sins and yours.

- But God has found a way, through Jesus, to lay our sins upon his own Son.

- Thus he can preserve his honor and integrity,
- While at the same time he is free to show his love to us.
 - That is justification.

- Because of the cross, nobody will ever be able to point to God and say,
- **"Oh, you let people off who are guilty!"**
- In the cross of Jesus, God poured out all his justice upon him.

- And in the agony and anguish of the cross the world can see how faithfully God does obey his own laws, and carries out justice to the nth degree.
- And the wonder of all is that God's love is available for all.

- Paul evidently saw some frowns as he spoke, because he immediately adds these words:
 - "Beware, therefore, lest there come upon you what is said in the prophets,
 - 'Behold, you scoffers, and wonder, and perish;
 - for I do a deed in your days,
 - a deed you will never believe, if one declares it to you.'"
- (Acts 13:40-41, Habakkuk 1:5)

- The apostle is saying here that when you hear this **incredible word of grace**
- That God has found a way to **love you by virtue of nothing that you have done,**
- But by what Christ **has done for you**

- That is a **moment of crisis** in your life.

- You can either **accept it** or **reject it.**

- But, if you reject it and turn away, you will find yourself **tremendously in danger:**

- Because only God's love **can rescue man!**

- And that is why this message hit with such power in this city.
- Look at the results of this message:

- As they went out,
the people begged
that these things
might be told them
the next sabbath.
(Acts 13:42)

- **And when the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.
(Acts 13:43)**

- **The next sabbath**
almost the whole
city gathered
together to hear
the word of God.
- **(Acts 13:44 RSV)**

- **But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted what was spoken by Paul, and reviled him.**

(Acts 13:45 RSV)

- **And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying,**
- **"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you.**
 - **Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life,**
 - **Behold, we turn to the Gentiles.**
- **For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,**
 - **(Acts 13:46-47 RSV)**

- 'I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles,
- that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.'"
- And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

(Acts 13:47-48 RSV)

- **As many as were ordained to eternal life believed ...**
(**Acts 13:48**)
- **Before the world was,**
God ordained that people who would **hear** his word and **submit** to His will would receive eternal life,
(**1 Corinthians 2:7**)
- And **those who would not,**
could not receive eternal life.
(**Mark 16**)

- There is nothing in this reference suggesting specific individuals,
(**Acts 13:47**)

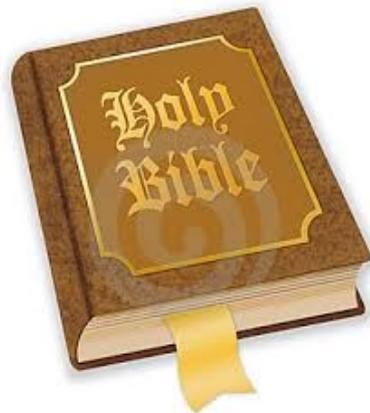
- Paul's reference is to classes of people
(Jews-Gentiles)
and not to individuals.

- The final result is given in the closing verses:
 - **And the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region.**
(Acts 13:49)
- The last sentence is beautiful.
- The disciples who remained:
"were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."
(Acts 13:52)

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



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