

In Pisidian Antioch



1. Some great speeches in history are worth committing to memory, at least in part. What famous lines or stanzas from a famous speech can you recall?
2. Are you the kind of person who can commit things (names, birthdates, phone numbers, clothing sizes) to memory easily? Who in your group can recall the phone number of a previous residence where you once lived?
3. What failure of memory is most embarrassing to you?



Acts 13:13-52

¹³From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. ¹⁴From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak."

¹⁶Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! ¹⁷The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt, with mighty power he led them out of that country, ¹⁸he endured their conduct for about forty years in the desert, ¹⁹he overthrew seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to his people as their inheritance. ²⁰All this took about 450 years.

"After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. ²¹Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. ²²After removing Saul, he made David their king. He 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. ²⁴Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. ²⁵As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you think I am? I am not that one. No, but he is coming after me, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'

²⁶"Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. ²⁷The 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. ²⁸Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised him from the dead, ³¹and 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 fathers ³³he 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.`"

³⁴The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words:

"`I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.`"

³⁵So it is stated elsewhere:

"You will not let your Holy One see decay.'^e

36"For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed.³⁷But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

38"Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.

39Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.⁴⁰Take 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.'^f"

42As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. ⁴³When 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.

44On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying.

46Then 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.⁴⁷For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

"I have made you^g a light for the Gentiles,

that you^h may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'ⁱ"

48When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

49The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. ⁵⁰But the Jews 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. ⁵¹So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. ⁵²And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

a [18] Some manuscripts and cared for them

b [33] Or have begotten you

c [33] Psalm 2:7

d [34] Isaiah 55:3

e [35] Psalm 16:10

f [41] Hab. 1:5

g [47] The Greek is singular.

h [47] The Greek is singular.

i [47] Isaiah 49:6



Bible Study

1. From Cyprus to Pisidian Antioch is about 350 miles by sea and land. What does their willingness to travel so far show about Paul and Barnabas? Why do you think John Mark (12:12; 13:5) may have left them to go back to his home? What consequence will this have for Paul and Barnabas later (see 15:36-41)?

2. What is significant about Paul's audience (v. 15)?

3. From verses 17-23, list all the things Paul says God has done. How do God's actions prepare the way for Paul to speak about Jesus in verse 23?

4. Compare verses 22-23 and 36-37 with Romans 1:3 and Acts 2:29-31: What is the connection between David and Jesus? Why is this so important to Paul and Peter?

5. What things about Jesus is Paul emphasizing by recalling three famous quotes in verses 33-35? The Resurrection is mentioned four times in verses 30-37. How does the Resurrection confirm the meaning of these quotes?
6. In verses 38-39, what does Paul say is the central meaning of the Resurrection for his listeners? Compare verse 39 with Romans 3:20-24 and 8:3-4. From these verses, how would you explain what Paul means by being "justified"?
7. Why does Paul end his sermon with this Old Testament quote, "a warning of judgment" (v. 41)?
8. What feelings and emotions are created by this sermon in the various groups of people mentioned in verses 42-51? How do you explain such a variety of reactions and responses?

Reference Notes

13:13-14 A 160-mile boat trip followed by a difficult journey of over 100 miles across the Tarsus Mountains brought the missionaries to Antioch. **Paul and his companions.** Up to verse 7, Barnabas was regarded as the leader of this team; from here on Paul is given the ascendancy. This also indicates that there was a team of men involved in this journey, not just Paul, Barnabas and John (v. 5). **John left them.** No reason is given, but Paul's reaction in Acts 15:38 indicates that he at least viewed this as some sort of failure on John (Mark's) part. **Antioch.** In the third century B.C., the Seleucid king Nicator founded 16 cities that he called by this name in honor of his father Antiochus.

13:18 he endured their conduct. Literally, "he bore with them" (the noun "conduct" is added by the NIV translators to make sense of this reading). Other Greek manuscripts have a variant reading that differs only by one letter but which is translated "cared for." This makes better sense in this context and does not require any additional words.

13:20 450 years. "The sojourn in Egypt (400 years), the wilderness wanderings (40 years), and the occupation of Israel (10 years)" (Marshall).

13:22 Paul combines parts of 1 Samuel 13:14, Psalm 89:21-22 and Isaiah 44:28 to form this saying that sums up God's testimony to David as Israel's ideal king.

13:23 as he promised. "The promises in question are those made to David that he would have offspring who would rule after him forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 89:29,36f; 132:11f,17)" (Marshall). Paul asserts these promises have now been fulfilled in the reign of Jesus.

13:24-25 Acts 18:24-25 and 19:3 hints that the influence of John the Baptist had spread among Jews throughout the empire, from North Africa through Asia Minor. It may be that at Pisidian Antioch there were those who acknowledged that John was a prophet sent by God.

13:26 The wall between Jew and Gentile is broken down as Paul proclaims that the message of God's salvation is sent to the "children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles." These God-fearing Gentiles would form a natural bridge from the synagogue to pagan Gentile society.

13:32 What God promised. The resurrection of Jesus is the key to understanding the prophecies about the eternal reign of the descendant of David. Because he lives forevermore beyond the reach of death, his reign is literally forever and ever. Jesus is the one who fulfills the role of the idealized king of Israel (v. 22) far more than David (who died) ever could.

13:33 This quote is from Psalm 2:7, used as well in the accounts of Jesus' baptism (Luke 3:22). In the psalm, the idea of sonship is not a matter of literal begetting but a way of expressing God's relationship to Israel's king. Despite the opposition he experiences from the leaders of rival nations, the king is assured that God will protect and love him as a father would his son. While Jesus did not become God's Son at the Resurrection, the Resurrection was proof he was indeed the Son of God in a unique way (Romans 1:4). The Jews long regarded this psalm as messianic and Christians freely applied it to Jesus.

13:34-35 The next two quotations from Isaiah 55:3 and Psalm 16:10 are closely linked in that the Greek word translated as "the holy ... blessings" (literally "the holy things") is the same as the word in verse 35 translated as "Holy One." Paul's point was to show that all the holy blessings God has promised to give his people flow from the resurrection of the Holy One, Jesus. It is this fact that makes the story of Jesus such good news (v. 32) for Paul's hearers.

13:36-37 As did Peter in Acts 2:29, Paul reminds his listeners that David's death and subsequent decay proves that the quoted passages refer to another, to one who would not be left to "rot in the grave" (GNB).

13:38 *the forgiveness of sins.* This phrase sums up all that salvation involves. It means the believer's guilt is atoned for so that he or she enjoys a restored relationship with God free from shame or anxiety over the past; it means the believer is being freed from the power of sin as his or her desires conform more and more to God's will; it means the believer can experience a relationship of peace and intimacy with God since that which has blocked that relationship has been removed.

13:39 *everyone.* Whereas in Acts 2:39, Peter undoubtedly thought his "all" meant all Jews, Paul literally means "everyone," Jew or Gentile. The message of the Gospel of Jesus is not restricted any longer to any one group of people. justified. This term, borrowed from the legal system of Paul's day, is a favorite way for Paul to describe what God has done for us in Jesus (Romans 3:24; 5:1; Galatians 3:8). The word stirs up a courtroom scene in which a judge, after hearing the accusations against a defendant, declares that the person is not guilty. In Paul's mind, this is closely tied to his view of the atonement (Leviticus 16; Romans 3:25). Because Jesus' death was a sacrifice of atonement for sin, the believer is set right before God and pronounced not guilty of sin. ***from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.*** The point is not that people could actually be justified from some things by keeping the Law and only needed Christ to make up for those areas one had trouble with, but that the Law really never served to justify anyone. In Christ, a way of being right with God is proclaimed that the Law could never give since the Law only made people more aware of their failure to keep it (Romans 3:20; 8:3; Galatians 3:23-24).

13:42 The response of the people was generally favorable as Paul and Barnabas were asked to speak again the following week. Whether the enthusiasm shown here was widely shared or mainly found among the Gentile God-fearers is not clear. By the following week, it is clear that the Jews by and large did not like the implications of the message being shared by Paul and Barnabas (v. 45).

13:43 *devout converts to Judaism.* These would have been Gentiles who had fully submitted to the Jewish traditions regarding circumcision, dietary laws and Sabbath observance.

13:46 *We had to speak the word of God to you first.* There is no command from Jesus that the apostles had to first address Jews in their trips, but Paul followed the maxim "to the Jew first" in his missionary trips (Romans 1:16; 2:10). Perhaps this was to honor the fact that the Jews had an established history with God and he wanted deeply for them to know the joy of embracing Jesus as

the Messiah. Only as he encountered Jewish resistance did he turn to concentrate on the Gentile communities.

13:47 The quote from Isaiah 49:6 was originally pronounced to Isaiah's servant of the Lord. While the servant in Isaiah 44 is identified as Israel, the passages in Isaiah 49 and 53 look to an individual who would bless Israel and the nations. The early Christians identified this servant as Jesus (Acts 3:13; 8:32-35). Paul further applies it to himself and Barnabas (and all believers) as those through whom Jesus continues his work of drawing people to God.

13:48 *all who were appointed for eternal life believed.* Bruce cites evidence that the verb translated "appointed for" means "to be enrolled" or "to be inscribed" as in a book. "The idea of being enrolled in the book of life ... is found in several biblical passages (e.g., Exodus 32:32f; Psalm 69:28; Isaiah 4:3; Daniel 12:1; Luke 10:20; Revelation 13:8; 20:12ff; 21:27) ... and in rabbinical literature." The fact that these Gentiles responded to the Gospel with faith is the evidence that they too have been written in God's figurative book of life.

13:50 *God-fearing women of high standing.* While Palestinian women were allowed little social mobility, women in these regions could hold official offices and run businesses. These were Gentile women who respected the Jewish teachings and had ties with the synagogue. leading men. Luke may have the magistrates in mind. These were officials, appointed annually, who were charged with keeping order in the community.

13:51 *shook the dust from their feet.* Typically, Jews entering Palestine from a Gentile area wiped off their feet as a symbol of cleansing themselves from any traces of Gentile contamination picked up before entering the Holy Land. Thus they would not share in God's judgment when he poured out his wrath upon the Gentile's land. Paul and Barnabas adapt this gesture to indicate that they are exempt from the judgment to come upon the Jews at Antioch who rejected the gospel. **Iconium.** A city about 100 miles east of Pisidian Antioch.

13:52 Despite the persecution, the disciples knew the Spirit-inspired joy of sharing in the sufferings of Jesus (Matthew 5:11-12).

Caring Time

1. If you were to emphasize one central truth about the Gospel, what would it be? Why?
2. What difference would it make to your faith if there were no Easter to celebrate, but only Good Friday to remember?
3. How do you think Paul would respond to a modern-day skeptic who felt Jesus was a noble, but misguided, martyr? What role would the Old Testament play in Paul's answer? How would knowing the Old Testament, even memorizing it, help you to understand and share your faith better?
4. What kind of opposition have you faced because of your faith? How do you usually respond to opposition? Does it make you stronger? Why? Would it be tougher for you to face opposition from community leaders or from family members? Why?
5. Do you "honor the word of the Lord" (v. 48)? Why or why not?
6. What has God given you that causes you to consider yourself worthy to have eternal life (v. 46)? The Spirit? Spiritual gifts? Forgiveness? A place in God's purpose? Other?

