

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 42 | ACTS 13:32-43

ACTS 13:13-43 | PAUL'S FIRST ADDRESS TO THE SYNAGOGUE IN PISIDIAN ANTIOCH

- Verses 13-16 included on session 40
- Verses 17-31 included on session 41
- Verses 32-37 –
 - The **promise which was made unto the fathers** is the resurrection, specifically.
 - This is made clear in the context, with promises / prophecies quoted from Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 55:3, and Psalm 16:10.
 - If one makes **the promise which was made unto the fathers** be the Pauline Gospel, then several problems arise, including:
 - Paul claims in several places that his gospel was an unsearchable mystery.
 - None of the Scripture passages quoted support this theory.
 - Paul's conclusion in verse 37 does not support this theory.
 - The Jewish fathers did receive promises, and they were promises of salvation, but the salvation was always in and through the nation and always earthly and physical.
- Verses 38-39 –
 - I submit to you this proposition: *that the good news of these two verses has never previously been proclaimed.*
 - This conclusion is fundamentally different from that preached by Peter, who taught the Law and a baptism of repentance unto Salvation. That is, Peter taught the same as John (see v. 24).
 - Peter did not preach:
 - Forgiveness of sins in this manner-
 - Peter taught through a baptism of repentance one could come "unto the forgiveness of sins"
 - Only a stretch of imagination can remove the works aspect of Peter's sermon. The words themselves demand obedient works.
 - Peter was not incorrect, he was just speaking to a different dispensation.
 - Everyone who believes is **justified from all things**.
 - Peter's message was not for everyone but for "as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."
 - Peter's message was not a justification from all things, but rather a justification when there was obedience to the Law. Compare Luke 18:14 and Romans 2:13.
 - Was this the first time we have this Gospel message?
 - No Pauline epistles had been written at this point.
 - John 3:15-16 speaks of a *future* event, which is a prophesied time of salvation by belief, but is salvation through the Kingdom (note John 3:3).
- Verses 40-41 –
 - Because a new message is given, the synagogue should **beware, therefore**, and then Paul gives warning of prophetic judgement, then paraphrases Habakkuk 1:5.

- A couple of hermeneutic lessons:
 - When quoting Hebrew Scripture in the New Testament, the original meaning of passage cannot be twisted or removed from the quotation in the New Testament.
 - Verbatim identically is not required to have inspired Word of God - compare Habakkuk 1:5.
- A Biblical teaching that we cannot break: *the age of grace is not prophesied in advance* (Col. 1:26).
 - Therefore, any interpretation which applies the Habakkuk passage to be prophetic of the age of grace would be a misapplication.
 - The Habakkuk passage is in relation to a punishment of Israel by the “heathen.”
 - The gospel of grace comes when the nation of Israel is rejecting her Messiah and His Kingdom, and therefore is facing destruction (Compare Rom. 11:15, and note the **casting away of them** which opens the way for **the reconciling of the world**).
- So, this verse is *not* saying “the age of grace is **a work which ye shall in no wise believe,**” but there is a coming punishment that is beyond belief. I would point out that the year 70A.D. is probably the most well-recognized year in the human calendar.
 - In spite of this, many preachers/commentaries make this *unbelievable work* to be a prophecy about the rejection of the Gospel in the age of Grace, when it is actually about the rejection of the Kingdom that was the impetus of the age of Grace.
 - Example: “*I work a work in your days*, in the casting off of the Jews, God’s covenant people, and in the calling in of the Gentiles to be fellow-heirs and partakers of all the promises. This was *a work* so counter to all the prejudices of the Jewish people that they refused to believe in it, and turned away from the teaching of the Apostles on this subject whenever they declared it unto them.¹”
- Verse 42 –
 - With this new Gospel message of vv. 38-39, the Gentiles were the most eager (it appears) to hear the good news, for **The Jews were gone out but the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.**
 - Note that this does not speak ill of the Jews (see the following verse), but rather speaks to the eager anticipation of the Gentiles, who, up to this point, had been **without hope** (Eph. 2:12).
 - Note that at this point there is no Sunday worship.
- Verse 43 –
 - After the dismissal of the synagogue (the word **congregation** is a translation of συναγωγή [synagoga], the **Jews and religious proselytes** (thus all of the Jewish faith) desired to hear more, and Paul **persuaded them to continue in the grace of God**, which required persuasion / convincing because it was *new!*

¹ W. Denton, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 2 (London: George Bell and Sons, 1876), 28.