

HOW DID THE APOSTLE PAUL SHARE CHRIST?

Acts 13 (ESV) / April 48AD to September 49AD

After Peter's miraculous rescue from the murderous hands of King Herod in 44AD, Luke fast forwards three years to 47AD. The Holy Spirit had a special assignment for the Church of Antioch, Barnabas and Paul.

Acts 12:25 Barnabas and Paul Returned to Antioch

Barnabas and Paul had been tasked to deliver to the Jerusalem Church famine relief money collected by the Church of Antioch (11:30). They returned from Jerusalem to Antioch sometime between the Fall of 47AD and the Spring of 48AD. They brought with them John Mark whom we met in Acts 12:12.

Soon after their return, the Holy Spirit, called the Antioch Church to send out Barnabas and Paul.

Acts 13:1-4 Barnabas and Paul Called and Sent

Barnabas and Paul were called to their first missionary journey. The call was given to both the church leadership and to Barnabas and Paul. This passage is one of many that clearly reveals the Holy Spirit is a person, not a force. First, the Holy Spirit spoke. Second, He used the personal pronouns, "me" and "I" to refer to Himself. Third, Barnabas and Paul were called to accomplish the Holy Spirit's work.

Acts 13:5-12 Barnabas and Paul Evangelized Cyprus

From the Island of Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas sailed to the mainland to a town named Perga in the region of Pamphylia. There were Jews from Pamphylia in Jerusalem on Pentecost 33AD. Pamphylian was one of the languages Jewish believers were speaking when they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit and empowered to speak in tongues (Acts 2:10).

We don't know why, but at this point John Mark left and returned to Jerusalem. This caused a rift between Paul and John Mark that would take years to heal.

Acts 13:13-41 Paul's Presentation to a Jewish Audience

(Acts 13:15-41) Why were there Jews and Jewish synagogues outside of Israel? It was God's intent His people all live in the Promised Land. But as we will see, there were synagogues throughout the provinces where Paul traveled.

The answer dates back to 586BC, the year the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem, destroyed Solomon's Temple and deported the greater part of the surviving Jews throughout the Babylonian Empire. This is called the Diaspora. Through the prophet Jeremiah, God revealed the Diaspora would last 70 years after which the Jews would be allowed to return to Israel (Jer. 29:10-14). Many Jews did not return but remained where they had set down roots for a generation. Though living outside the land, many remained devoted to the Hebrew Scriptures and observance of the Law. As we see in Acts 2, many traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feasts of the Lord as commanded in Leviticus. As a result, these Jews living outside the Land stayed informed about happenings in Jerusalem. As we will see, Paul assumed his Jewish audience was familiar with John the Baptist who was recognized as a prophet. We believe that if they were familiar with John the Baptist, they were also familiar with Jesus of Nazareth; some perhaps even saw Him or listened to Him when He taught in the Temple compound during the Feasts. We believe they knew about Jesus' crucifixion and that they accepted the Sanhedrin's explanation that Jesus' body was stolen by His followers. In what follows we have a sample of Paul's presentation of the gospel to a Jewish audience as, in a sense, he gives them the rest of the story.

As will always be the case, the response to the Gospel was mixed.

Acts 13:42-52 The Gospel Both Received and Rejected

What joy it was for Barnabas and Paul to spend the week in Antioch teaching and discipling the new believers. But opposition arose the following Sabbath.

Here are the main points of Paul's Gospel presentation to a Jewish audience.

- God promised a Savior from King David's line.
 - The Prophet John the Baptist testified the Savior was coming on the heels of John's ministry.
 - By rejecting and executing Jesus of Nazareth, their Jewish rulers actually fulfilled prophecy which proved Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Savior.¹
 - God raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead in fulfillment of prophecy and in fulfillment of His promise to King David.
 - Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Savior through Whom there is the forgiveness of sins.
 - Believe on Jesus of Nazareth and be saved.
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Voice of the Martyrs Needs for October: Foam nerf balls / Chapstick.

Womens' Worship Night, Tonight! 6PM in Sanctuary (bring a snack to share).

Brenda Shirley Memorial Service, Saturday, October 15th, 11AM here at Grace.

¹ Cf. Psalms 16 & 23; Isaiah 53 and Zechariah 12:10.

