

“God’s Redemptive Purpose”  
Acts 13:14-41  
(Preached at Trinity, May 24, 2006)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After arriving at Seleucia on the island of Cyprus Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel of Christ. From Seleucia they proceeded to Paphos on the southwest side of Cyprus. From there they sailed nearly 200 miles across the Mediterranean Sea to Perga. One would expect that they would stay for a while at Perga on the coast but they did not. Instead they continued on to the mountainous region of Antioch in Pisidia.
2. Some have speculated that Paul had become ill – perhaps malaria. This would explain him leaving the coastal regions to the cooler mountains. Pisidian Antioch sits at an altitude of 3600 feet. This may be what Paul is referring to in Galatians 4:13.  
**Galatians 4:13** – “Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.”
3. The journey from Perga to Antioch was a treacherous trip. It was about 100 miles of rugged terrain with dangerous cliffs and wide rivers. The mountains were also infested with bands of robbers. Perhaps these were the ones Paul referred to in 2 Corinthians 11  
**2 Corinthians 11:26** – “*In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers. . .”
4. It was also at this time that Mark left their company and returned to Jerusalem. Paul was so angered over his departure that it ultimately led to him departing ways with Barnabas and choosing Silas as his companion.
5. Upon their arrival at Antioch they entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath, as was their custom, and sat down. It was customary to grant visiting rabbis such as Paul to address the audience. Paul was well respected as one who studied under Gamaliel.  
**Acts 13:15** And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and brethren*, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.
6. Paul took the opportunity to preach the Gospel of Christ.  
**Acts 13:16** – “Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.”
7. In modern times every good sermon has a title. If this sermon had a title it would surely be called “God’s Redemptive Purpose.” In this message Paul marches them through history to demonstrate God’s eternal plan being fulfilled and then shows clearly that it finds its full and complete fulfillment in Jesus Christ.
8. The great question of man; the endless source of debate among philosophers is, “Why are we here?” Is there any purpose in life? Is history simply the record of countless unrelated events that occur randomly without rhyme or reason?

9. The lost man finds a certain comfort in such a world for it removes all accountability. We plan our own way and do our own thing without having to face the consequences for our actions. Such a mindset, however, ultimately leads to a sense of hopelessness and futility for no man can escape the reality of God.
  10. The truth is history *is* going somewhere. Every event has been carefully planned. It all is unfolding according to purpose. God has a purpose – His ultimate purpose is to redeem His people and his purposes *will* be accomplished.
  11. That God didn't destroy Adam in the garden tells us that He has a redemptive plan  
That God didn't destroy all flesh in the flood tells us that He has a redemptive plan  
God has purposed to redeem His elect and is directing history to that end.
- I. Paul begins by directing their attention to the history of Israel
- A. God chose Israel to raise up a nation to Himself  
**Acts 13:17** – “The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers”
    1. God made His covenant with Israel through Abraham  
This was by sovereign election – God was demonstrating that He decides the affairs of men.
    2. It was through this nation that He would deliver His Word to humanity  
**Romans 3:1-2** – “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? <sup>2</sup> Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”
    3. It was through this nation that God would fulfill His redemptive plan for the world
  - B. By His might He delivered Israel from the hand of the Egyptians  
**Acts 13:17-18** – “. . . and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. <sup>18</sup> And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.”
    1. God made them to multiply in Egypt
    2. God turned the heart of Pharaoh against them that He might manifest His power  
**Romans 9:17** – “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”
    3. Then after 430 years God demonstrated that He had not forgotten His people. He will never forsake His own.
  - C. God defeated the armies of Canaan and gave Israel the land  
**Acts 13:19** – “And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.”
    1. This was according to His promise to Abraham  
**Genesis 12:7** – “And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land. . .”
    2. Israel fought long and hard in the land of Canaan, but the victory was not due to their military might. It was due to God.

3. All of Israel's victories were due to the power of God.  
This was confirmed to Jehoshaphat  
**2 Chronicles 20:15** – "And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle *is* not yours, but God's."
  4. All of our victories are due to the power of God  
We are to fight and fight hard.  
**1 Timothy 6:12** – "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."  
But it is God who fights for us – the victory is His.
- D. God raised up Israel's judges and then their kings – **Verses 21-23**
1. Each of the judges were raised up and equipped by God – their strength to rule was granted by God
    - a. Gideon, the fifth judge, was weak yet made strong by God  
**Judges 6:15-16** – "And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family *is* poor in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."
    - b. And of course, Samson received his great strength from God
  2. God also raised up the kings of Israel, the greatest being David
  3. In all of this we can see God's redemptive plan

II. After reiterating Israel's history Paul then aptly applies it to God's ultimate redemptive purpose in the New Testament – Paul demonstrated clearly that all of Israel's history was pointing to Christ.

**Acts 13:23** - "Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:"

- A. God's dealings with Israel were only meant to foreshadow God's ultimate purpose
1. To Israel God revealed His law and covenants – but they all pointed to Christ
  2. To Israel was the Gospel of Christ revealed first  
**Acts 13:24** – "When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."  
**Acts 13:26** – "Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent."
- B. Jesus IS the fulfillment of God's redemptive purpose  
**Acts 13:29** – "And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him,"
1. All of Scripture points to Christ  
**John 5:39** – "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me"

2. The Resurrection of Christ confirms God's redemptive purpose  
**Acts 13:29-30** – "And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.  
<sup>30</sup> But God raised him from the dead."  
**Acts 13:33-34** – "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. <sup>34</sup>  
And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."  
**Acts 13:36-37** – "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: <sup>37</sup> But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption."
3. Through Jesus comes forgiveness of sins  
**Acts 13:38** – "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:"

### III. Paul then preaches the stabbing truth

- A. The Jews rejected their Messiah
  1. Jesus is plainly the One foretold in the OT – He was foretold by the prophets. God's redemptive purposes are clearly revealed
  2. Sin and hardness of heart caused them to fail to recognize their Messiah, God's Redeemer – in their blindness they saw no need for Jesus Christ.
  3. They crucified Him  
**Acts 13:27-28** – "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*. <sup>28</sup> And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain."
- B. As Paul preached he brought both Good News and also a warning  
This is the nature of the Gospel – Good News and a Warning
  1. The Gospel is Good News  
**Acts 13:32** – "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers"  
    - a. The phrase, "declare unto you glad tidings" is from a single word εὐαγγελίζω – it literally means "to preach the gospel or good news."
    - b. The Gospel presents the cure for the sin that condemns us  
Through Jesus Christ we can find forgiveness  
**Acts 13:38** – "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:"
    - c. Through Christ we can be justified  
**Acts 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."

- d. Through the Law could no man be justified – our good works cannot help us
- 2. The Gospel is also a stern warning – It condemns those who continue in unbelief
  - Acts 13:40-41** – "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; <sup>41</sup> Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

IV. This is the message we bring.

- A. God has a plan for this earth – He is accomplishing His redemptive purpose
  - 1. Nations rise and fall. People are born and die. Time marches on, yet all is ordained of God and all is designed to a particular end.
  - 2. History has a purpose
  - 3. God is redeeming His elect people – This is the purpose of history
- B. The Gospel must continue to be preached
  - 1. Jesus is the hope of this world
  - 2. All of history will soon end and then eternity begins. The only thing that truly matters is what we have done with Christ in this world
  - 3. There are only two responses to Christ – belief and unbelief
    - a. Many will be justified through faith in Christ
      - Acts 13:39** – "And by him all that believe are justified from all things"
    - b. Most people will continue in unbelief
      - Acts 13:41** – "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

Conclusion:

- 1. God is a great God of grace. He has been merciful to humanity – History unfolds this mercy - mercy at a great cost.  
God is also a God of perfect justice – of righteous judgment. Sin must be judged.
- 2. The Gospel must never soften sin. It must present Jesus Christ as glorious. It must present the good news of the hope of heaven. But it must also present a stern warning to those who live in unbelief or who pretend to be righteous on their own merit.
- 3. If you know Him praise Him more and more for His mercy. If you do not know Him do not delay to turn from your wicked ways to Christ.  
The purpose of life is Christ. Paul said, "for me to live is Christ"