

Acts Chapter 13

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[0 : 00] Well, Muslims do not recognize Jews as God's chosen people. And Jews do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

Protestants do not recognize the Pope as the leader of the Christian world. And Baptists do not recognize each other at the liquor store.

If the shoe fits. Poor old Baptists take it on the chin a lot of times.

Okay. Does anybody need a map of Paul's missionary journeys? I gave them out, but not all of you perhaps have one. Would you just pass them back and see that whoever needs them gets one just over there?

Frank, take these. Guys over there need one. Welcome to our final class for the month of April. And we are engaging the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul.

[1 : 09] But I told you up front that this is going to go a lot faster. I don't remember when it was that we started the book of Acts, but it was quite some time ago. However, once we are into the missionary journeys of Paul, which is now, the studies will be a lot less in depth.

We will cover a lot more territory. Simply because the missionary journeys of Paul do not involve as much doctrine as they do narrative or storytelling. So some of it is just a matter of reading the verses.

They are pretty much self-explanatory. But we will be happy to stop at any point in time for any elaboration that is needed. So don't hesitate to interrupt me as we move on through this portion beginning in Acts chapter 13.

The map that you have contains two of Paul's missionary journeys. And you will note the key down in the left-hand corner. The first journey was somewhat limited.

It is represented with the dotted line. They both begin from Antioch, where it says journeys start here. Antioch is not in Israel, of course.

[2 : 21] It is in Syria. Antioch is not in Israel. This became the missionary headquarters for early Christianity. It was not Jerusalem, but it was Antioch of Syria.

And all of Paul's missionary journeys are going to begin there. So you can follow the dotted line.

And you see the lower dotted line goes right down to the Isle of Cyprus, which is in the news today because they are having real economic problems of major proportions.

They go right through the island of Cyprus, proclaiming the gospel, then up to Italia, and then back over to Antioch from there.

So it's going to be a rather abbreviated journey, this first one. And yet they will make some very important contacts and establish some churches there and people.

And it is safe to say, I think, that through all of the annals of history, the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul is one of the very most significant things that has ever happened in the history of the world.

[3 : 29] Because this really represented the first major expansion of Christianity. But bear in mind, it came through the efforts of just one two-man team that is later going to develop into two two-man teams.

Because Paul is going to begin with Barnabas. They're going to have a rift and the team will split.

And they will end up with two missionary teams. One of which will be Paul and Silas.

And the other will be Barnabas and John Mark. But they're both going to be proclaiming the same thing. And it is through these missionary efforts of these early believers that the gospel penetrated into the continent of Europe.

And we'll see that when we get to Acts chapter 16. So for now, we are in chapter 13. Let's read the first few verses here. There were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers,

and Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manan, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul.

And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed, and we talked a little bit about fasting, laid their hands on them, we explained the significance of that, they sent them away.

[5 : 02] So being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they reached Salamis, which is one of the principal cities in Cyprus, they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.

Remember, Paul will say in Romans, I think it's chapter 1, that the gospel is going to go forth to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile.

And I think that is very significant, because repeated attempts are made to get the nation of Israel on board. And actually it started with the Messiah himself.

We read in John 1 that Christ, the Messiah, came unto his own, and his own received him not. And his own consists of his countrymen, the Jewish people, the Jewish nation.

And from the time John introduced, John the Baptist introduced Jesus, and proclaimed him to be the Messiah, that became the issue among all of Israel.

[6 : 17] Was he or was he not the one spoken of by Moses and the prophets? Because the implications, with whichever answer you give, are absolutely staggering.

And you have to invoke here what philosophers refer to as the law of the excluded middle.

There is no way that Jesus Christ can be the Messiah, that he is the Messiah, and at the same time he is not the Messiah. That is an impossibility.

The middle is excluded. He either is or he is not. And whichever way you answer it, if you say that he is not the Messiah, then his death on the cross could not have accomplished what Christians think it accomplished, because he wasn't even who he claimed to be.

On the other hand, so you can just safely dismiss him as a fraud, as an imposter, or as someone who was self-deluded, who really thought he was the Messiah, but in fact he wasn't.

[7 : 24] And if you take that position, the end result, of course, is obvious. You would not put your faith and trust in such and one. On the other hand, if he is the Messiah, then everything that is said about him and everything he said about himself is true.

He is worthy of being believed. He needs to be honored and worshipped and proclaimed throughout the world. The possibility of there being somewhere in between does not exist.

That's why it's called the law of the excluded middle. It is not acceptable to say that Jesus Christ is the promised one of Moses and the prophets. He is the Messiah, kind of.

There is no kind of. He is or he is not. He is against me.

And for anyone who says, well, actually, I'm not with him, but I'm not against him either. Yes, you are. There again, there is no excluded middle.

[8 : 27] Because until you are with him, you are apart from him. You are in reality against him, whether you realize it or not. But today we engage in so much sloppy thinking that people just don't understand the terms of logic and how they are used.

And that's something that has pretty much gone by the wayside, along with a lot of other things in our public schools that we should be paying attention to. So this became the burning issue, whether or not Jesus was the Messiah.

Families were divided over it. Households were divided over it. Because there are people who line up on one side or the other. And they had knock down, drag out arguments. Because for many, many years, and we read this earlier, all the way up to Acts chapter 10, the only ones who were believers in Jesus as the Messiah were Jews.

You've got to remember that, guys. This is one of the greatest keys to understanding the whole of the Bible, especially the New Testament. They were all Jews. The day of Pentecost began.

It was a Jewish feast day attended by Jews. The only exception would have been for proselytes who were there or for God-fearers who were there.

[9 : 43] And we've explained who the God-fearers were and who the Jews were. Cornelius was a God-fearer. He was a Roman army officer. And when he came to faith in Jesus, not only as the Messiah, but as the Savior, it caused a big ruckus, a big stir.

And some found it difficult to believe that God was actually reaching out to non-Jews. And the one who had the most difficulty getting a hold of that was Peter with that sheet let down from heaven. And when he went to the house of Cornelius, proclaimed the gospel to him, and the Spirit of God came down and authenticated the reality of that by enabling these people who had language barriers among them to speak so everyone heard in their own language, just like they did in Acts chapter 2.

Peter was dumbfounded.

We have it within us to want to Christianize everything in the Bible and make it all Christian. Most of the Bible, guys, most of the Bible is not Christian. It is for Christians, but it is not Christian.

[11 : 19] Most of the Bible is Jewish. That doesn't take anything away from Christianity. It really highlights it because in the book of Acts, it's made quite clear that God has a chosen people with whom he has entered into an eternal covenant.

They remain his chosen people, but because of their disobedience and unbelief, God has set them aside for divine discipline. They are undergoing discipline right now as we speak as a nation.

Paul said, blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles become in. So Israel in their unbelief set aside and God is doing something that the Bible calls a mystery.

He is bringing on board a whole new entity never existed before, never thought of before. And Paul tells us in Ephesians that in times past, this mystery, which would be synonymous with secret, this secret, this mystery, was not made known to the sons of men in times past.

But it was always in the plan and program of God. And that mystery has to do with Ephesians 2 and 3, with Jew and Gentile being melded together into one new body.

[12 : 45] Them twain, Jew and Gentile, making one new man. And that new man is the church, which is the body of Christ.

Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female, all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. That was absolutely unheard of to the Jew. Absolutely unheard of.

Richard? So how does the Jewish faith, how do they explain Jesus? Well, how do you put that? It's part of their history. You're right.

Most of the Jews today, and this too is an impossible situation. And I've talked to Jews about this here in the United States and in Israel. And it is, you talk about, this is a perfect, their response and their attitude toward Jesus today is a perfect example of what it means to be spiritually blind.

And Paul said, blindness in part has happened to Israel. That doesn't mean in totality. Because part of Israel, pockets of believers here and there, and we all know, we all know Jews who have become believers.

[13 : 54] They did not stop being Jews. You become a Jew with your biology. You cannot stop becoming a Jew anymore and you can stop becoming a German.

But when they came to faith in Jesus as the Messiah, it was a monumental thing for them. And we're going to see this right here in this one chapter. But most Jews today, interestingly enough, most Jews today regard Jesus as a great rabbi, a great moral teacher, one of the more notable people that Israel has produced.

But, of course, he is not the Messiah. So, for Jews today, who are at all biblical, they are still looking for the first appearing of their Messiah.

We regard Jesus as the Messiah and as the Savior of the world who came the first time and is coming again. And if you really talk to a Jewish person about this, you don't want to intentionally embarrass anyone, but they need to know this.

And I think we have an obligation to share this with them. When they say that Jesus was a great moral teacher and a great rabbi and had a great following, etc., but he was not the Messiah, they need to be reminded, but are you not aware that he was introduced by John the Baptist as the Messiah and he himself claimed to be the Messiah?

[15 : 37] And Peter, who was the leader of the twelve and Jesus' right-hand man, said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

How can you assign to Jesus being a great moral teacher if he was not who he claimed to be? And then sometimes they say, well, he didn't claim that.

He didn't claim to be them. Oh, yes, he did. But then, then the only way you can demonstrate that is to take them to the New Testament, but they reject the New Testament.

The Jewish scriptures, as far as they are concerned, the whole of the Bible consists of the Old Testament. We call the Old Testament the Old Testament. They call the Old Testament the Bible. That's it. That's the whole thing. Never mind that when you read Genesis through Malachi and you finish those 39 books in the Old Testament and you've just read Malachi, it leaves you with a feeling, so, it leaves you with a feeling you're just hanging in thin air.

[16:50] Where's the rest of the story? Because it's an unfinished story. When you read the Old Testament and put it down, you wonder, is that it? Where's the rest of it? What's the finality of this?

Well, that's the New Testament. But that's, of course, what they do not accept. So, I think Jews should be lovingly, compassionately confronted with the blatant contradiction that they have even among their own people that many of them do not realize.

If Jesus Christ was not who he claimed to be and who his followers claimed he was, then he is an imposter and a liar and a fraud, then how can you say he was a great moral teacher?

So, that consistency needs to be brought out. This is a real, a huge issue and it is one, I must confess my ignorance to this.

I overlooked this for years. I, I never saw this at all. I, for instance, I would take the book of Acts for many, many years, probably 15 years after I was a believer.

[17:55] I would take the book of Acts and say, here on the day of Pentecost, that's a wonderful, wonderful illustration of what the church is supposed to be.

Our model for a church should be right here in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost. Except, for the tongues. We don't buy the tongues thing.

Now, I'm giving you what was, what was my position, which is the typical Baptist position. That's, I was, I was saved in a Baptist church, married in a Baptist church, baptized in a Baptist church, ordained in a Baptist church, a deacon in a Baptist church.

I've got a thoroughgoing Baptist background. So, I know what I'm talking about. And, I had been taught and had taught myself that Acts chapter 2 is to be the pattern for the church.

With the exception of the speaking in tongues because we don't believe that's for this age.

Because, Baptists don't want to do that. So, the Pentecostals say, no, well, Acts chapter 2 is the norm for the church and the speaking in tongues is supposed to be part and parcel of the church today.

[19:12] And, the only reason that Christians don't speak in tongues is because we are not filled with the Holy Spirit and we are not serious enough and we are not committed enough and we don't have enough faith.

Because, if we did, we would be able to repeat the Acts chapter 2, the Pentecost, the tongues, the healings, the miracles, and all the rest. So, there you've got the Pentecostal position and the typical Baptist position and they are at odds which one is right, which one is wrong.

I have come to the firm, settled conclusion they're both wrong. They're both wrong. Acts chapter 2 is not Baptist and it is not Pentecostal.

It is Jewish and it is a fulfillment. And when all these people saw this miraculous thing and people speaking in other tongues in languages that they hadn't learned, there was a huge crowd gathered there and some of them were saying, what is this?

What's going on here? What is this? And somebody says, these guys are all drunk. They're just babbling like a drunk babbles. And Peter stood up and said, hey, these men are not drunken as you suppose.

[20:29] Seeing it is only the third hour of the day. It's nine o'clock in the morning. But this, and I can't believe how many times I read this and never put it together.

Peter says, this, this that you are seeing and hearing is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel. What that whole Pentecostal experience was that happened in connection with the feast of Pentecost was the fulfillment of a promise that God gave to Israel through the prophet Joel.

Read it there in Joel chapter 2. And Peter says, this is the fulfillment of that. You all know that passage in Joel and every Jew there knew Joel and his prophecy.

And Peter says, that's what this is. This is the fulfillment of what God promised to Joel. And now it is coming to pass. And I just read over that and read over it and never made the connection.

It is not something to be repeated. We do not need another Pentecost. There is but one Pentecost and that was that which happened on the day of Pentecost.

[21 : 42] That's what made it the day of Pentecost. It was on the Jewish calendar. And that's when the Spirit of God came in that unusual way. And the miraculous manifestation, the speaking in tongues, the miracles and everything, that's not what made it Pentecost.

It would have been Pentecost if that never happened. And it was Pentecost every year, at the same time, before and after. It is Jewish, Jewish, Jewish. And I could not believe how that impacted my whole understanding of the Bible.

It really made things start to fit where they wouldn't fit before. So what we've got here is this gospel going in fulfillment to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

And what Paul the Apostle is doing is making good on that. Because remember, he himself was a Jew. Tribe of Benjamin. Hebrew of the Hebrews. Circumcised the eighth day. He was as Jewish as you could get.

So, let's get into this chapter 13. They reached Salamis. They began to proclaim the Word of God which consisted only of what? Only the Old Testament.

[22 : 50] New Testament didn't exist. Began to preach the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. This is partially in fulfillment of the gospel.

The good news going to the Jew first. In other words, the Jew is being given first dibs on the gospel. And the essence of the gospel has to do with Jesus Christ is the long-awaited Messiah and Israel crucified their Messiah.

But God raised Him from the dead and now if you Jews will do what most of the Jews did not do on the day of Pentecost that was embrace Jesus as the Messiah being baptized in His name.

If you will do that God will send Jesus back again. And He had only been gone. What? 50 when Peter preached that second message in Acts chapter 3 Christ had only been gone from the earth 50 days.

He had been gone 40 days. The ascension took Him up in Acts chapter 1. He was alive on the earth for 40 days after His resurrection. The day of Pentecost happened 10 days later.

[24 : 13] That's why it's called Pentecost the Pente P-E-N-T-E standing for 5 or 50. And then in Acts chapter 3 Peter in essence preaches the same message that he preached in Acts chapter 2 just a little elongated and he says God has fulfilled His part of sending the Messiah and now if you Israel will repent and embrace Jesus as your Messiah the one whom you crucified God will send Him back.

God will send Him back. and He will begin the process of establishing the kingdom that you thought He was going to establish when He came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

So much of this is key for Israel's cooperation. And again let me emphasize this. Why is Israel the center focus of this?

It all started with Genesis chapter 12 the promise God made to Abraham. God has got to make good on His promise or He has to resign from the universe.

God promised to Abraham Isaac and Jacob He continued the promise through David He continued the promise through His own Messiah that He would sit on that throne of David judging the world in righteousness.

[25 : 40] God has got to make good on what He's promised or He has to get out of the business. That's why Israel is such a key. So there are two prongs to the realization of the kingdom.

The first is Jesus the Messiah has to die to give God the judicial right the legal right to lift the curse on the earth and Israel has to embrace Jesus as their Messiah and when they do then this kingdom business that the scriptures speak so much of will become a reality.

Right now it is postponed. It is in obedience. This is not the kingdom. Roger? What part of the tribulation do they actually accept Jesus? Well there is going to be if I understand this correctly and I could be wrong but it wouldn't be the first time but I think as the time grows nearer the end times and we may be in it now because there are a lot of signs that indicate that.

On the other hand I am vehemently opposed to setting dates and things like that. We may be in it now. It looks like we are in it now but it may be another 50 or 100 years away.

I don't know. I don't know. But I do know that there is going to be a real upsurge of interest on the part of Jews in Christianity and Jesus as the Messiah.

[27 : 07] I do not know this from first hand but I have been hearing reports and they continue about a real movement among Jewish young people in Israel having a renewed interest in Jesus as their Messiah and a number have embraced him and that is huge huge news.

That is really significant. If that trend continues I think there is going to be a real upsurge of interest and evangelization taking place among Jewish people worldwide and when they return to Israel you know for the first time in what for the first time in probably 100 years there are now more Jews living in Israel than there are in New York City.

That wasn't true for a long long time but now it is and there seems to be more and more of an influx of Jews from all over the world because of the law of return that is established by the Jewish Knesset more and more of them are returning to the land of Israel and this is going to be a really big item so I will just shorten this as much as I can but scripture has made clear that in the latter days there is going to be a massive revival among Jewish people we may be just seeing the beginnings of it now of Jews coming to faith in Jesus and Israel Israel as a nation is going to be right on the brink of annihilation but if you know anything about history they have been there three times since their founding in 1947 they have been on the brink of annihilation because all of these Arab nations around Muslim nations around them that attack them if the Muslim nations lose the war with Israel they just pack up their stuff and go home and pick up business as usual whether it's Egypt or Syria or Jordan or wherever it is and they just crawl away licking their wounds and they're internationally embarrassed because they got their butt swept by a smaller nation that's not supposed to be doing anything but they just continue right on but the first war that Israel loses she's gone that's it there is no more Israel they are out of business as a national entity they will not exist anymore so they are fighting for their survival as a nation every time that happens so this is why this is so key guys and I just get so so burdened for so many of my Christian friends who just think you can't give that much to the Jew well all I can say is God does God does and you get on board and what you do you understand the key role that Israel plays in all of this it will give you a heightened increased appreciation for the uniqueness of the church of real Christianity nothing is taken away from Christianity by recognizing the legitimacy of the Jew it enhances both and it allows you to see their distinctions and their similarities but as long as you try to Christianize everything you got real problems it just won't fly Richard yeah yeah yeah Because every generation that thought they lived in the last days and the past days, they were so bad now they've never been that bad.

[31 : 23] Yeah. Well, this is a very important point. It's a very important point that you've made, and a lot of people don't understand that. But you are absolutely correct.

The latter days began with the resurrection of Christ. The former days was before Christ came. We are living in the last days.

The Apostle Paul lived in the last days. We are living in the last days. That's because Jesus Christ and the cross upon which he died is the mediating event of all history and of all times.

Everything in the plan and program of God is measured from before the cross or after the cross.

And everyone who has ever lived from the time Jesus was resurrected lived in the last days.

These are the latter days. The latter days have been with us for 2,000 years. And yet there is a larger period of time assigned to the former days on the other side of the cross.

[32 : 25] At least 4,000 years. So that is the great demarcation point between the former days and the latter days. And in these latter days, during this tribulation period, it's going to be a bloodbath of proportions of which you can't even imagine.

Israel is once again going to be on the brink of annihilation. And then their Messiah will come. Matthew 24 and 25 talks about his coming.

And Zechariah talks of the Jews who are alive at that time. And it's a precious passage. And it says, And they will look upon him whom they pierced.

Who their ancestors pierced on that cross. And they will mourn as one mourns for an only son.

Israel then will come to a wholesale national belief.

And Christ will fight for his as he fought for Israel of old. And it will be the demise of the Antichrist and all his hordes.

[33 : 33] Well, you wouldn't know it from what I just said. But we're studying the missionary journeys of Paul. And we've just barely gotten to Cyprus. Okay, Richard. You know, we've had a professional basketball player from out of the park.

And he was just, you know, even the administration, you know, come behind this guy. Yeah. A big laser.

Uh-huh. Yeah. And yet somebody like Tim Tebow. In fact, this is a big Christian. Yeah. He's worked down on them. And every day, they also proved the work of the herbal of the morning after Phil.

A little town in a 50-year-old. It's a bar over the town. This does not have a thing. Yeah. It's a little upside down. Yeah. Well, fellas, I'll tell you what. You might as well get used to it in case you haven't noticed.

And it's hard not to notice. But biblical, traditional Christianity, as we have known it and as it has been practiced in the Western world for the last couple of thousand years, is falling more and more into disrepute.

[34 : 50] It's coming under more and more criticism, more and more unacceptance, viewed more and more as narrow, as bigoted, as whatnot. And I'm telling you, expect more of the same.

It's going to intensify even as time goes on. And I don't think we've seen anything yet. Jim. I want to say that the goodness is, a number of companies, two companies in the district I get to represent, who are suing the government over the infringement on their deliverability, they take their faith seriously.

Yeah. Freshwaite Foods in Sydney, Ohio, Franklinville, Givarti are suing the government. Yeah. I mean, with the help of conservative legal organizations. Yeah. Johnson, Golden Products and Urbano, Ohio, doing the same thing.

Well, put to Obama's. So, the nice thing is, there's a few seconds. Yeah. And you can expect more and more of this. I think it's going to intensify. And the lines of demarcation are going to be more sharply drawn.

And Christians are going to be viewed with more and more intolerance. Intolerance. And so much of that intolerance will be coming from the crowd that has been preaching tolerance.

[35 : 57] Which is quite interesting. So, it all depends on whose ox is being gored. You know. John? It's amazing that all the secular world don't attack Islam or Buddhists or anything else.

They attack Jews. They be through Christians and Jews. You're right. Yeah. The whole secular world does that. And that's significant. You stop and think about it and ask, why is this?

Yeah. It's very significant. Well, thank you guys for being here.