

Fact Sheet for “A Culturally Relevant Gospel”
Acts 13:13-43

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^{ESV} ¶ **Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem,**

Perga was a seaport on the southern coast of Asia Minor, in the region of Pamphylia. Concerning John Mark leaving them see Acts 15:36-40.

¹⁴ **but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down.**

This was not Antioch in Syria.

¹⁵ **After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it."**

This reading from the scrolls was the normal practice then, and now.

¹⁶ ¶ **So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: "Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. ¹⁷ The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. ¹⁸ And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹ And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. ^{20a} All this took about 450 years.**

These seven nations are listed in Deut. 7:1. "The **450 years** (13:20) includes the oppression in Egypt (400 years), the wilderness sojourn (40 years), and the Conquest of Canaan under Joshua (10 years)."¹

^{20b} **And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. ²¹ Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²² And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart (see 1 Sam. 13:14), who will do all my will.' ²³ Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. ²⁴ Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵ And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'**

For these words of John see Matt. 3:11; Mk. 1:7-8; Lk. 3:16 and Jn. 1:26-27

²⁶ ¶ **"Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation.**

"Sons of the family of Abraham" = the Jewish descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "Those among you who fear God" = God-fearing Gentiles.

²⁷ **For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. ²⁸ And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed.**

¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 390.

Consider Is. 53, or the many OT references in the gospels surrounding Christ's crucifixion.

²⁹ **And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead, ³¹ and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people.**

For a great passage on "witnesses" see 1 Jn. 1:1-3.

³² **And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, ³³ this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU." (Ps. 2:7)**

"The good news" is literally the gospel.

³⁴ **And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, "I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY AND SURE BLESSINGS OF DAVID." (Is. 55:3) ³⁵ Therefore he says also in another psalm, "YOU WILL NOT LET YOUR HOLY ONE SEE CORRUPTION." (Ps. 16:10) ³⁶ For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, ³⁷ but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. ³⁸ Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰ Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about: ⁴¹ "LOOK, YOU SCOFFERS, BE ASTOUNDED AND PERISH; FOR I AM DOING A WORK IN YOUR DAYS, A WORK THAT YOU WILL NOT BELIEVE, EVEN IF ONE TELLS IT TO YOU." (Hab. 1:5)**

⁴² ¶ **As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. ⁴³ And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.**

Paul's address in that synagogue was a presentation of the gospel in a culturally relevant way. He began with a short history of Israel, and ended with the gospel. Consider some other instances of this pattern... Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-36), Stephen's defense (Acts 7:1-53), and the whole book of Hebrews. Here's a question. What is a culturally relevant way of sharing the gospel today? The core message of faith and forgiveness of sins in Christ is a given. But where do we start? Should we recite the history of Israel? No, not unless we are speaking to a decidedly Jewish audience.

Curt Cameron and Ray Comfort... Have you sinned? Have you lied? Have you stolen? Have you lusted after someone? Have you taken the Lord's name in vain? You are a liar, a thief, an adulterer, and a blasphemer!

The Roman Road is one tried and true method.

I like to include a discussion of how we were originally created. God created people sinless, but we messed it up and are stained by sin three ways... physical death, an inherited sin nature, and personal sin

You can begin by a discussion of the complexity in creation that points to a creator, then move to sin a presentation of the good news.

You can begin with a discussion of the Bible and its reliability.

You can start by talking about the problems that the other person is experiencing because of their sin.

You can make sure your life is a beacon that draws others to Christ.

You can speak regularly and openly of your relationship with God through Jesus, and pray that others will ask you about your faith.

Here are a few pointers. 1. Be prepared (1 Pet. 3:15-16). 2. Be relational. 3. Be creative. 4. Plan! 5. Pray! Ask God to help you, and lead you to those He is drawing to Himself.