

Acts 13:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

After the reading of the law and the prophets (μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, meta de tēn anagnōsin tou nomou kai tōn prophētōn)—synagogue worship followed prescribed liturgy: the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-9), prayers, Torah reading (continuous lectionary), prophetic reading (haftarah), and exposition. Paul's opportunity came during the exposition portion, after Scripture had been publicly read. The law and prophets encompassed Israel's entire canonical Scripture, providing Paul's textual foundation for preaching Christ.

Word of exhortation (λόγος παρακλήσεως, logos paraklēseōs)—the technical term for synagogue exposition/homily. The noun παρακλήσεως (paraklēseōs, from παρακαλέω, 'to come alongside, encourage, exhort') indicates more than information-transfer: authoritative application calling for response. Paul's sermon (vv. 16-41) demonstrates apostolic παρακλήσεως—rehearsing salvation history, declaring Christ's fulfillment, calling for faith-response.

Historical Context

First-century synagogue worship maintained continuity with Second Temple Judaism while adapting to diaspora contexts. The invitation to visiting teachers reflected Judaism's high regard for Torah exposition and expectation that learned visitors would contribute insight. Synagogue rulers (ἀρχισυνάγωγοι, archisynagōgoi) managed worship order and extended speaking invitations.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the structured progression from Scripture reading to exposition model sound preaching methodology today?
2. What does the phrase 'word of exhortation' teach about preaching's purpose —not merely informing but calling people to respond?

Interlinear Text

μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν
after And G3588 the reading G3588 of the law and G3588
G3326 G1161 G320 G3551 G2532

προφητῶν ἀπέστειλαν οἱ ἀρχισυνάγωγοι πρὸς
the prophets sent G3588 the rulers of the synagogue for
G4396 G649 G752 G4314

αὐτοὺς λέγετε ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί εἰ ἔστιν λόγος ἐν
them say on Ye men and brethren if ye have any word G1722
G846 G3004 G435 G80 G1487 G2076 G3056

ὑμῖν παρακλήσεως πρὸς τὸν λαόν λέγετε
G5213 of exhortation for G3588 the people say on
G3874 G4314 G2992 G3004

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 13:22 (Word): And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

Acts 15:21 (Parallel theme): For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

Mark 5:22 (Parallel theme): And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

Acts 22:1 (Parallel theme): Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

Acts 18:17 (Parallel theme): Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

Acts 13:27 (Prophecy): 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.

Romans 12:8 (Parallel theme): Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.
