

I. THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL

A. THE COURSE WHICH PAUL WAS LED TO TRAVEL ON HIS FIRST JOURNEY (Acts 13, 14).

1. Paul and Barnabas departed from the city of Antioch, Syria (Acts 13:1-3).

a. Some things about this place and people

- (1) Antioch, Syria is located some 300 miles north of Jerusalem and situated on the Orontes River which is 16 miles from the Mediterranean Sea. It was founded by the Greek king Seleucus Nicator in 300 B.C. and called after the name of his father Antiochus.
- (2) Antioch became a great city and was ranked as the third city in the Roman Empire after Rome and Alexandria. Its population of Paul's day is estimated at around 200,000 inhabitants and the city held great commercial importance. Today it bears the name Antakia in Turkey.
- (3) Antioch has suffered disasters from many earthquakes. In 1822 about 20,000 people were destroyed by such an earthquake.
- (4) Antioch, Syria is the place where the first Gentile church was founded (Acts 11:20,21).
(American Tract Society Dictionary; Easton's Bible Dictionary)

b. The events which occurred at Antioch, Syria

- (1) A church was founded in this city by some who were scattered from Jerusalem when persecution arose surrounding Stephen's death (Acts 11:19-21).
- (2) When the church at Jerusalem heard about those saved at Antioch, they sent Barnabas there to help and this resulted in many more being saved (Acts 11:22-24).
- (3) Barnabas then left Antioch to find Saul (Paul) in Tarsus and brought him back to Antioch. Then the two of them met with the church and taught for one full year (Acts 11:25,26).
- (4) The believers at Antioch presented a good testimony so that disciples of the Lord were first called Christians in that place (Acts 11:26).
- (5) When prophets came to the church from Jerusalem and prophesied of a coming famine, the members of the church gave to help the brethren in Jerusalem and sent Paul and Barnabas with the gift (Acts 11:27-30).
- (6) It was out of the church of Antioch that the Holy Spirit called Saul and

Barnabas for missionary service (Acts 13:1-3).

c. Some applications we can make from these events.

- (1) Acts 11:19: Notice sometimes God uses adversity in our lives to be a blessing to others. This is also illustrated in Acts 8 when Philip went down to Samaria and preached as a result of persecution in Jerusalem.
- (2) Acts 11:22: Just as Barnabas was sent to the new believers in Antioch, so do new converts need to be instructed by others who know the truth.
- (3) Acts 11:25,26: Barnabas recognized the need at Antioch and the spiritual gifts of Paul and encouraged him to go and serve there. We can also be used to match members with ministry.
- (4) Acts 11:26: We too can and should present a good testimony like those in the church at Antioch.
- (5) Acts 11:27-30: We should also be sensitive to the needs of fellow-believers and follow the example of the believers at Antioch.
- (6) Acts 13:3: The church at Antioch prayed for Paul and Barnabas as they departed to do what the Lord had called them to do. So should we pray for our missionaries.

2. Paul and his co-laborers went to Seleucia and from there sailed to the island of Cyprus where they preached at Salamis and Paphos (Acts 13:4,5).

a. Some things about these places and people.

- (1) Seleucia was situated some 16 miles from Antioch near the mouth of the Orontes River and was practically the seaport of Antioch, Syria.

This city was also built by Seleucus Nicator and called after his name. Today it is a small village which bears the name El-Kalusi (Easton's Bible Dictionary).

- (2) Salamis was a chief city of Cyprus and the native land of Barnabas. It was situated on the east end of the Island (American Tract Society Dictionary).
- (3) Paphos was situated on the western side of Cyprus. About sixty furlongs from the city was the Temple of Venus. The modern name of the city is Baffa (American Tract Society Dictionary; Easton's Bible Dictionary).

b. The events which occurred on the island of Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12).

- (1) When Paul and his companions came to Salamis they preached the Word

of God in the synagogues of the Jews but no conversions are recorded (Acts 13:5).

- (2) When they had gone through the island they came to Paphos. There they found a false prophet named Bar-Jesus, also called Elymas, who withstood them when the deputy there wanted to hear the Word of God (Acts 13:6-8).
- (3) Paul responded to this false prophet by pronouncing a blindness upon him and when the deputy, Sergius Paulus, saw this supernatural act he believed (Acts 13:9-12).

c. Some applications we can make from these events.

- (1) Acts 13:5: Just as no conversions occurred at Salamis, there will be times when people will not respond to the gospel message.
- (2) Acts 13:6-8: As the false prophet withstood Paul at Paphos we can expect the devil to use others to oppose the Word of God and the work of God.
- (3) Acts 13:9-12: Notice while we do not possess apostolic powers to do miracles today, God will give victory to His servants who persevere and people will be saved.

3. Next Paul and his company sailed from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13)

a. Some things about this place.

Perga was located on the river Cestrus about seven miles from its mouth. It is now a ruin called Eski-Kalessi (Easton's Bible Dictionary).

b. An event which occurred at Perga.

It was there that John Mark forsook the missionary company and returned to Jerusalem. While we are not given a reason, it doesn't appear that he had Paul's blessings (Acts 15:38). He could have become discouraged in prospect of perils which lay ahead.

c. Some application we can make from this event.

Acts 15:38: Many start out in Christian service doing well but they don't always finish well. As a result we can expect some to leave us or fall by the wayside.

4. From Perga in Pamphylia Paul and Barnabas traveled north to Antioch, Pisidia (Acts 13:14).

a. Some things about this place and people.

This city was also built by Seleucus Nicator, the Greek King. In this city, Paul

and Barnabas found a synagogue and many proselytes to Judaism (American Tract Society Dictionary).

b. Some events which occurred at Antioch, Pisidia.

- (1) Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue at Antioch and preached the gospel of Christ. This resulted in many Jews believing in Christ. (Acts 13:14-43).
- (2) The Gentiles wanted to hear the gospel also and the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered. This led to opposition by the Jews and Paul and Barnabas were forced out of the city, however many Gentiles were saved there (Acts 13:42-50).
- (3) Paul and Barnabas responded by shaking the dust from their feet as the Lord had commanded earlier (Matt. 10:14) and they were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:51-52).

c. Some application we can make from these events.

- (1) Acts 13:48: Notice the word "ordained" in Acts 13:48 is a Greek word used in a military sense of marshalling troops in an orderly rank or file. It does not mean these people were saved because they were elected to salvation. The word "ordained" is also a perfect tense verb and can be translated as "having been marshaled off or ranked." So what happened was a marshaling of those who were for the truth and another rank marshaled against the truth. The scene was no doubt like opposing sides today with issues like Abortion or Gun Control. One side has it's group and the other side has it's group. Those marshaled and ranked for the truth believed and were saved.
- (2) Acts 13:50: Notice the devil opposes the work of God and oftentimes he uses religious people to hinder and persecute those who are preaching the gospel and doing the work of God.
- (3) Acts 13:52: The disciples were happy that they had been persecuted for preaching God's Word. We also see examples of this earlier (Acts 5:40-41). In the same way so should we be when we are persecuted for sharing the gospel, and there's a good reason to be (Matt. 5:11,12).
- (4) Notice where we can expect opposition to the preaching of the gospel, we can also expect some wonderful results. Note the three kinds of responses we can expect (Acts 17:32-34).

5. Being forced to leave Antioch, Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas came to Iconium (Acts 13:51).

a. Some things about this place.

Iconium was located at the foot of the Taurus mountains and bears the

modern name of Konieh (Smith's Bible Dictionary).

b. Some events which occurred at Iconium.

- (1) Paul and Barnabas preached in the synagogue and a great multitude of Jews and Gentiles believed (Acts 14:1).
- (2) Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium a long time preaching, and giving testimony of the Lord with signs and wonders (Acts 14:3).
- (3) After a division in the city over Paul's preaching, a group of both Jews and Gentiles plotted to stone Paul and Barnabas. When they became aware of it, Paul and Barnabas fled to Lystra (Acts 14:4,5).

c. Some applications we can make from these events.

- (1) Acts 14:4: We can expect the preaching of the gospel to divide people. It might be a whole city or a single family.
- (2) Acts 14:4,5: We can expect opposition from those who reject the gospel.

6. Leaving Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went to Lystra (Acts 14:6).

a. Some things about this place and people.

Lystra was a city of Lycaonia near Iconium and it was Timothy's native country (Acts 16:1).

b. Some events which occurred at Lystra.

- (1) At Lystra Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel and healed a crippled man (Acts 14:6-10).
- (2) This miracle caused the people to believe that Paul and Barnabas were gods and they sought to worship them by offering sacrifices, but they restrained the people (Acts 14:11-18).
- (3) Certain Jews came to Lystra from Iconium and persuaded the people who stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city thinking he was dead (Acts 14:19).
- (4) As the disciples stood around Paul, he rose up and went into the city and then departed the next day to Derbe (Acts 14:20).

c. Some applications we can make from the event.

Oftentimes the devil will use people to oppose the preaching of the gospel and they will stop at nothing to hinder God's work.

7. Paul and Barnabas left Lystra and went to Derbe (Acts 14:20).

- a. Some things about this place and people.

Derbe was situated some 16 miles east of Lystra at the foot of the Taurus Mountains. The disciple Gaius may have been won to Christ when Paul preached there (Acts 20:4) (American Tract Society Dictionary).

- b. Some events which occurred at Derbe.

Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel in Derbe and taught many people (Acts 14:21).

- c. Some applications we can make from this event.

Acts 14:19-25: Some people and places will be open to the preaching of the gospel and we can reap a great harvest of souls there.

8. After preaching in Derbe, Paul and Barnabas traveled back to Lystra, then Iconium, then on to Antioch, Pisidia.

- a. In these cities Paul confirmed those who had believed and exhorted and encouraged them to continue in the faith (Acts 14:21-22).

- b. As they went to the churches of these cities they ordained elders or pastors in them (Acts 14:23). Notice the Greek word "ordain" here is different from the word in Acts 13:48. Here it means to choose by raising the hand. In other words, these churches voted on certain ones to be their pastors.

9. Leaving Antioch, Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas returned to Perga and preached and then went down to Attalia, a coastal town of Pamphylia (Acts 14:25).

10. From Attalia Paul and Barnabas sailed back to Antioch, Syria.

- a. At Antioch they gathered with the church and reviewed the work which God had done through them (Acts 14:26,27). Notice herein we see the four-fold work which missionaries are called to do. They preached the gospel and won souls to Christ; secondly, they disciplined the new converts; they established churches; and finally, they appointed pastors in the churches.

- b. We are told that Paul and Barnabas stayed there at Antioch a long time (Acts 14:286).

- c. From this example we have adopted a practice of having returning missionaries to rehearse and report how God has worked through them.

