

## Acts 13:

## First missionary journey (About 15 years after the Acts 2 Pentecost)

- As we look ahead to the coming first missionary journey by Paul, Barnabas and John Mark, we need to look back and examine the role of the 12 Apostles.
  - Many fundamentalists believe that Paul was raised up to reach the Gentiles because the 12 Apostles failed in completing their mission of reaching the world with the Gospel of the Grace of God.
  - The failure was not on the part of the Apostles but upon Israel and their rejection of their Messiah.
  - We see that when Gentiles came to the Lord that the Jerusalem church leaders would rejoice in their salvation (Acts 11:18, 22; 15:3). This counters criticism leveled at the Apostles for being bigots and not wanting to reach the Gentiles for Christ.
- We will see a gradual takeover of this ministry to the Gentiles by Paul. First Paul was saved and went quietly to the leaders in Jerusalem. He then went away to Arabia then to Tarsus for several years. When God sent him out, he went with Barnabas and it was Barnabas who took the lead. Shortly after while in Antioch-Pisidian that Paul was no longer called Saul and he is now listed ahead of Barnabas. He also takes the lead in preaching.

## Verses 1—5 Antioch → Selucia → Salamis

- Barnabas and Paul were ministering in Antioch to those who became saved under the scattered Jews who went to the Gentiles (Acts 11:19—26). This is the first mention of Paul going to a Gentile although there is indirect evidence he started Gentile churches in and around Tarsus.
- We see the Holy Spirit tangibly active in the process to send Barnabas and Paul.
  - It is not clear how the Holy Spirit spoke to them but because there were prophets that had come in from Jerusalem (verse 2) He probably spoke through one or all of them.
- John Mark was first mentioned to be with them on the island of Cyprus. There is no mention that the Holy Spirit was involved in John Mark traveling with them and it probably was a mistake to take him along since he will go home to Jerusalem as soon as they sail to the next port (Perga).
  - Barnabas, the soft-hearted encourager, was eager to have John Mark on their next missionary journey but Paul, the hard-nosed practical person, didn't think he was fit to minister with them. (Acts 15:36—41)
- All along the way and through the book of Acts we see Paul going to the synagogue first to preach the Gospel.
  - He would always preach Jesus Christ—common ground between the Kingdom gospel and Grace Gospel.
  - He would always give Israel the first opportunity to come to Christ. This was not necessarily a command of God but a desire of Paul because of his love for his kinsmen (Romans 9:1-5; 10:1)
  - Romans 1:16 is not a command to go to the Jew first but a statement that it did. Since it had already gone to the Jew, it could now go to the Gentiles.
    - Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
  - Paul's ministry seems to be two-fold: To pronounce the closing of God's dealing with Israel and to announce the Gospel of the Grace of God to the Gentiles. Israel rejected God three times in the New Testament and God pronounced His rejection of them three times through Paul in Acts.
    - Acts 13:46** Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

**Acts 18:6** But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

**Acts 28:28** "Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen."

- Paul's synagogue ministry was also a good way to began his ministry using the common ground between him and them. It also gave Israel absolutely no excuse to complain when the message went to the Gentiles.

Verses 6—12 Paphos → Perga → Antioch-Pisidia

A picture of Israel

- It was in Paphos on the island of Cyprus that Paul pronounces a temporary blindness on a Jew (Bar-Jesus) and through this a Gentile (Sergius Paulus) believes.
- This shows Israel being blinded (Romans 11:25) but only temporarily while the Gentiles are believing in spite of Israel's fall.
- Instead of Israel leading others, they now need to be lead.

Verses 13

- John Mark leaves Barnabas and Paul and heads back to Jerusalem.

Verses 14—43

- In the synagogue they listened to the Law and the Prophets being read and then were asked if they had a word of exhortation. This may have been because of Paul's background as a Pharisee and Barnabas' connection as a Jerusalem leader.
- Paul addressed the men of Israel (individual Jews) and you who fear God (Gentiles, but not proselytes).
  - Compare this with Peter addressing the whole house of Israel (2:36) composed of the men of Judea (the southern two tribes—2:14) and the men of Israel (the northern 10 tribes—2:22).
- After a short summary of Israel's history (verses 16—23) leading up to Jesus Christ as descendent of King David.
  - He then preaches Jesus Christ as their Savior who they put to death but God raised up.
  - This was the good news of the promise made to the fathers (verse 32). This promise was Jesus Christ as Savior as is made clear in verse 33).
- Paul ends his sermon with: "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you," (verse 38).
  - This is in stark contrast to how Peter ended his sermon in Acts 2:38 and indicates that there was a change in God's dealing with man: "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
- We can see that the Gospel is going to the Gentiles because the Jews rejected the message, not because they accepted it. This is a departure from the prophetic program where the Gentiles would be blessed through Israel's glory.

Verses 44—52

- Paul and Barnabas are invited back to preach the next Sabbath.
- By the next Sabbath the opposition has had time to organize a resistance movement all because of jealousy. They ran Paul and Barnabas out of town and they pronounce God's declaration of rejection upon the Jewish leaders. This gave them the freedom to speak to the Gentiles without Jewish complaint.

**Acts 13:46** Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles."

## Verse 48

- This is a strong verse in defense of God electing certain people to heaven. (see also Romans 8:28—30)
  - Acts 13:48** When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.
- Many feel this violates the so-called free will of man. The problem is that unless you are a sovereign, all powerful being knowing the beginning from the end, you really don't have a free will. Your options are very limited in all areas of your life. Everyone, righteous or unrighteous, are completely dependant upon God even for their very next breath. In the above verse, those through whom the Holy Spirit actively worked saw the truth of Paul' sermon and freely, without coercion, made the decision to follow Christ. The decision follows the desire and it is God, I believe, who influences the desire. Those who make a decision to follow Christ are freely able to decide not to follow Him, but they absolutely will choose to follow. Those who are not elect can also freely decide to follow Christ but the will not because they will not have the desire to do so.
  - Ephesians 1:4** just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him In love

## Acts 14

### Verses 1—6 Iconium

- Again they entered a synagogue on many Jews and gentiles believed.
- Again it was the Jews who stirred up the people to get rid of Paul and Barnabas.
- Instead of being intimidated, they stayed longer and the Lord proved Himself through many signs and wonders.
- Just like in this country there was a division between right and wrong.
- When word got out that the opposition was going to stone them, they left and went to Lystra.

### Verse 7—18 Lystra

- Having fled for their lives out of Iconium they go into Lystra and Derbe.
- In Lystra they met a man lame from birth who apparently knew of the Pentecostal powers that were being displayed everywhere the Apostles went. It's probably from seeing or hearing of others being healed that he had the faith that he too would be healed.
  - His faith was in Christ and not in the healing.
    - Matthew 9:28** When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."
- This healing convinced the Lysterians (?) that they were gods, calling Paul Hermes and Barnabas Zeus.
- It was with much difficulty that they convinced them not to offer sacrifices and worship them.

### Verses 19—21

- Those from Antioch-Pisidia probably traveled to Iconium looking for Paul and Barnabas and then they continued on into Lystra.
- When they found Paul and Barnabas, they worked up the crowd and convinced them to stone them. They went from being gods to devils.
- Paul was left for dead outside the city but revived, stood up and walked right back into the city then the next day they traveled to Derbe.
- Through all these persecutions they could see the hand of Lord working, protecting and leading.
  - 2 Timothy 3:11** persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!

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