

The First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:1-52; 14:1-28)

I. Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. The Holy Spirit called Saul and Barnabas (13:1-3)
2. Saul (Paul) and Barnabas proclaimed the Word of God on Cyprus (13:4-12)
3. Paul and Barnabas ministered in Pisidian Antioch (13:13-52)
4. Paul and Barnabas ministered in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (14:1-7)
5. A Crippled Man was healed (14:8-10)
6. Paul and Barnabas were deified by the people (14:11-28)

Question: Who decided that Paul and Barnabas should go on a missionary journey? In verse 2, did Paul hear an audible voice from the Lord? If not, then did people like Abraham and Moses hear audible voices?

B. The Holy Spirit places people where He wants them.

1. Once again, our goal as Christians should be to do and say what the Holy Spirit wants us to do and say.
 - a. When we go in our own strength, we are not fully equipped for the task.
 - b. When we go in our own strength and according to our own choice, we will probably fail.
 - c. When we go in our own strength and are not led by the Holy Spirit, we will many times burn out or develop the wrong attitude.
 - d. **REMEMBER:**
 - 1) ***Right action, wrong attitude equals legalism.***
 - 2) ***Right attitude, right action equals valid worship and valid service.***
2. In verse 1, several people are listed.
 - a. Manaen was described as having grown up with Herod the tetrarch.
 - b. This was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great.
 - c. According to Dr. Richard N. Longenecken, Manaen was probably an adopted brother or a close companion to Herod Antipas. ***But at some point he had become a Christian.***
3. In verse 2, these individuals ministered and fasted to the Lord.
 - a. Ministered (***leitourgeo***) - to do a service, perform a work, to serve the state at one's own cost.
 - b. The Holy Spirit instructed what was to be done.
 - c. ***Did they hear an audible voice from the Holy Spirit? If not, then when did the Holy Spirit stop speaking to men and women audibly?***
 - d. In verse 3, the men fasted and obeyed by sending Saul and Barnabas into the mission field.
 - 1) They initially went to Seleucia, Cyprus, and Paphos.
 - 2) Luke did not record much from those first two towns, so the indication is that they were not very successful.

C. In verse 5, they went to the synagogues first. Note John Mark was with them.

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- D. In verses 6-8, they encountered their first difficulty.
1. Sergius Paulus wanted to hear the gospel.
 2. A sorcerer, named Barjesus, tried to turn them away.
- E. In verses 9-11, Paul did not hesitate opposing Barjesus.
- a. He announced that the Lord's hand was on him (for bad).
 - b. He also told him that he would be blind for a season.
 - c. Notice that Saul of Tarsus is suddenly referred to as Paul. Why did Luke begin calling him by a different name.
 - 1) The name Paul means "small" or "little".
 - 2) Dr. J. Vernon McGee wrote that Paul may have changed his identity as an act of humiliation.
 - 3) Dr. McGee also suggested that he might have done so because his first convert was Sergius Paulus. **Paulus probably was not his first convert, because Paul had spent about ten years in Tarsus building churches.**
 - 4) Dr. David J. Williams wrote that Saul was his Jewish name and Paul was his Roman name. He may have switched to his Roman name because he sensed that his ministry was changing.
- F. In verse 13, they left Paphos and went to Perga in Pamphylia.
- a. **This is when John Mark returned to Jerusalem.**
 - b. No explanation is given for why he left. Tradition maintains that he became a companion of the Apostle Peter once he got there.
 - c. Dr. McGee wrote that Mark became afraid because of the "physical dangers and hardships" that he saw in Perga.
 - d. Dr. Longenecken wrote that some people believe Mark was upset because Paul had suddenly taken control of the group and Barnabas, who was his cousin.
 - e. No one knows for sure why Mark left. But because he did, we have a fourth gospel. **The lesson is that the Holy Spirit can use us regardless of our past mistakes and poor decisions.**

Question: In verse 22, why was David described as a man after God's own heart? He committed adultery and then had the wife's husband killed. Is that a picture of God's heart? Why did the Jews reject Paul's message? Why did the Gentiles receive Paul's message?

- II. In verses 14-41, Paul preached in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia.
- A. He preached in the same format as Peter in Jerusalem.
1. In verse 16, he is preaching to Jews and to God-fearing Gentiles, despite the fact that he was in a synagogue.
 2. He preached Jewish history from Abraham to David because the Jews would have been familiar with his message.

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3. Then, he preached the gospel as part of God's plan.
 4. In verse 22, he described David as a man after God's own heart.
 - a. I Samuel 13:14 says, "But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee."
 - b. Isaiah 44:28 says, "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."
 - c. David was willing to do whatever the Lord wanted him to do.
 - d. David was far from perfect, but he repented whenever he made a mistake.
 5. **To please the Lord, desire with all your heart to do and say what the Lord wants you to do. Be genuine.**
- B. In verses 42-52, the missionary journey took an unexpected twist.
1. The Jews did not want Paul's preaching but the Gentiles did.
 2. Therefore, in verses 46-47, Paul told the crowd that he would devote his ministry to the Gentiles because he already understood that that was the Lord's will.
 3. The Jews were angry, and the Gentiles were glad.
 4. In verse 48, many Gentiles got saved.
 5. In verses 50-51, the missionary group was expelled from the territory.
 6. In verse 52, the group went to Iconium.
- C. When Paul shifted his ministry to the Gentiles, that brought him into conflict with the Roman government.
1. Until now, his primary opposition had been from the Jews.
 2. The Romans allowed three types of worship.
 - a. A person could worship the emperor (Emperor Worship).
 - b. A person could worship one of the mythological gods.
 - c. A person could worship a national religion.
 3. Judaism was the religion of Israel.
 4. The Romans had associated Christians with Judaism, so up to this point, they had not had any problems with the early church.
 5. Christianity did not come under any of those, so Christianity became an enemy to Rome.

Question: Where was Paul stoned and left for dead? Do you think that he was actually dead? What did he do when he rose up?

- III. The missionary team had more opposition at Iconium.
- A. In Acts 14:1-4, Paul and Barnabas still went to the synagogues.
1. They still preached to the Jews and the Gentiles.
 2. The Jews tried to turn the Gentiles against Paul and Barnabas.

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3. In verse 4, some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles.
- B. In verses 5-7, Paul and Barnabas learned that they might be stoned to death.
 1. They left Iconium and went to Lystra and Derbe.
 2. Notice that they continued to preach the gospel despite the threats on their lives.
 - a. Because of Stephen and James, they knew that they were in real danger.
 - b. But they demonstrated the same unstoppable determination as the Apostles Peter and John.
- C. In verses 8-12, the Holy Spirit used Paul and Barnabas to heal a crippled man.
 1. The people thought that they were gods.
 2. They called Barnabas, Jupiter, and Paul, Mercury.
- D. In verses 13-18, Paul preached to them.
 1. He told them that the team was trying to turn the people from their vanities and turn them to the Lord.
 2. He preached a salvation message.
 3. With these efforts, verse 18 says that he was barely able to keep the people from doing sacrifices to them.
- E. In verses 19-22, the Holy Spirit did the remarkable.
 1. In verse 19, Paul was stoned at Lystra and left for dead.
 2. In verse 20, while the group was standing over him, he stood up and left with Barnabas for Derbe.
 3. **In verse 21, Barnabas and he returned to Lystra, the very city where they had just tried to kill him.**
 4. In verses 22-28, they sailed to a few more towns and then returned to their home base at Antioch.

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Next week's lesson: "The First Church Council Meeting" (Acts 15:1-35)

Five Day Recommended Reading:

Monday: Acts 15:1-5
Tuesday: Acts 15:6-21
Wednesday: Acts 15:22-29
Thursday: Acts 15:30-35
Friday: Acts 15:36-41

Study questions:

1. Why did the believing Jews want to cling to circumcision?
2. Who presided over the Jerusalem Council?
3. How did Paul convince those at the council to accept his position?
4. What legal-type conditions were added by the council and why?
5. How was the Holy Spirit building Jesus' church in this lesson?
6. How was the Holy Spirit showing His deity in this lesson?