

Chapter 5

Paul's First Missionary Journey

Acts 13

- ▶ Acts 13 - 14:28
- ▶ Length – 2 years
- ▶ 45 - 47 A.D.
- ▶ Total miles traveled – Approximately 1,235

A. THE JOURNEY BEGINS IN ANTIOCH

1. The church at Antioch was blessed with good teachers. **Acts 13:1** – “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. “
 - a. Saul (Paul)
 - b. Barnabas
 - c. Simeon
 - d. Lucius of Cyrene
 - e. Manaen
2. When it concerns the church, Antioch was a city of firsts.
 - a. It was the first recorded city to have a Gentile congregation.
 - b. It was the first recorded city to send out missionaries.
 - c. It was the first recorded city to provide relief for another congregation.
 - d. It was the first city in which followers of Christ were called “Christians.”
3. It was in Antioch that:
 - a. Paul withstood Peter to his face. **Galatians 2:11-16**
 - b. The controversy over circumcision stirred to the surface. **Acts 15:1-2**
4. The city of Antioch.
 - a. The New Testament lists two Antiochs.
 1. Antioch in Syria.
 2. Antioch of Pisidia.
 - b. History mentions a total of sixteen Antiochs existing at the same time.
 - c. The approximate site for the city was selected by Alexander the Great.
 1. After Alexander the Great's death in 323 B.C., Selucus became the ruler of Syria.
 2. Antioch was founded in 301 B.C. by Selucus Nicator, ruler of Syria, and it was one of sixteen cities he named after his father.

3. Selucus Nicator also constructed Antioch's port, Selucia, 16 miles down the Orontes River on the Mediterranean Sea, which he named after himself.
4. Under Roman rule, Antioch was the capital of Syria.
 - a. In many way the most impressive city in the Middle East.
 - b. Was the crossroads of the East and West.
 - c. Was a bustling commercial center.
 - d. Was "no mean rival of Rome in splendor".
- d. The New Testament Antioch of Syria:
 1. Hosted a population of approximately 300,000 to 500,000 people.
 3. Only and Rome and Alexandria were larger.
- e. Antioch of Syria was ideally located.
 1. Located on the banks of the Orontes Rive at the top of the Fertile Crescent.
 2. Mount Silpius formed its background.
 3. Favorable climate
 5. Numerous Cypress trees
- f. Antioch and its surrounding area hosted:
 1. A royal palace
 2. A marble-paved street four miles long with colonnades on either side
 3. Lamp-lighted streets and buildings
 4. Acqueducts
 5. Waterfalls
 6. Fountains
 7. Olympic Stadium that hosted Olympic Games that rived those of Greece.
 8. Theaters
 9. Private baths
 10. Expensive villas
 11. "Houses of Pleasure"
 12. Roman emperors and Hellenistic kings like to spend their summers in Antioch
 13. The nortoriously immoral pagan temples of Jupiter and Daphne
 14. Ornate gardens of which were 10 miles in circumference
- g. The Romans beautified Antioch.
 1. The city was lavish with colonnades
 2. Roman fountains
 3. Public buildings
 4. The basilica of Julius Caesar
- h. Antioch was jolted by a severe earthquake in 37 A.D. Caligula sent help at once to repair the damage.

5. Antioch was located some 300 miles north of Jerusalem.
6. When the seven were chosen in Jerusalem to help with the daily distribution of goods, one of the seven was "Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch." **Acts 6:5**
7. Chrysostom estimated that there were 100,000 Christians in Antioch by the fourth century.
8. Antioch was the starting point of all three of Paul's three evangelist tours
9. Saul (Paul) and Barnabas are chosen for a special work. **Acts 13:1-3** – "Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'

3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away."

- a. Barnabas is mentioned before Saul (Paul). That would soon change.
 1. "Paul and his party" **Acts 13:13**
 2. "Devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas" **Acts 13:43**
 3. "Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold." **Acts 13:46**
- b. The Holy Spirit made the selection of the two men to be sent.
- c. Four things were done by way of preparation:
 1. The brethren prayed.
 2. The brethren fasted.
 3. The brethren laid their hands on them. (Expressed their fellowship with them.)
 4. The brethren sent them forth on their mission.
- d. The travelers were:
 1. Saul (Paul)
 2. Barnabas
 3. John Mark

B. FROM ANTIOCH TO SELUCIA, A SEAPORT TOWN 16 MILES AWAY.

C. AT SELUCIA THEY BOARDED A SHIP AND SAILED TO CYPRUS, SOME 90 MILES AWAY.

1. Cyprus was a large island located in the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and was the home of Barnabas.
 - a. 50 to 60 miles wide. Narrowest width is about five miles.
 - b. 140 miles long
 - c. 3,584 square miles
 - d. 60 to 70 miles off of the Syrian coast.

- e. 41 to 46 miles from Cilicia in Asia Minor (modern Turkey)
- f. Two major cities:
 - 1. Salamis, the largest city of Cyprus on the east coast of the island.
 - 2. Paphos. The capital city.
- 2. In Salamis they preached in the synagogue of the Jews.
- 3. From Salamis they traveled approximately 140 miles southwestwardly to Paphos
 - a. Sergius Paulus, the deputy of the country, called for Barnabas and Saul, desiring to heard the word of God.
 - b. **NOTE:** Paul's first recorded miracle. **Acts 13:8-11**
 - 1. Struck a Jewish false prophet, and sorcerer, (Elymas) with blindness for a season. **Acts 12:11**
 - 2. Elymas had sought to turn Sergius Paulus away from the faith.
- 4. **NOTE:** The first time Saul is referred to as Paul. **Acts 13:9**
- 5. **NOTE:** From this point on it is now "Paul and Barnabas" rather than "Barnabas and Saul."

C. **FROM PAPHOS THEY SAILED 150 MILES TO PERGA IN PAMPHYLIA.**

- 1. After having traveled some 390 miles, John Mark turned back to return home. No reason is given as to why he did so. **Acts 13;14**
- 2. This incident would later bring contentions between Paul and Barnabas as they contemplated a second missionary journey. **Acts 15:36-40**
- 3. Perga was a gateway city to many Gentile cities of Asia Minor.

D. **FROM PERGA THEY TRAVELED BY LAND SOME 100 MILES TO ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA.**

- 1. Paul preached at least two Sabbaths. **Acts 13:42**
- 2. **NOTE:** Paul's first recorded sermon is preached at Antioch in Pisidia. It is interesting to compare this sermon with Peter's Pentecost sermon (**Acts 2**) and Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin (**Acts 7**), observing that all three followed the same line of thought and reasoning. The sermon contained:
 - a. The providential dealings of God with Israel which culminated in the coming of the Savior, Jesus Christ. **Acts 13:16-25**
 - b. By His death and resurrection, Jesus proved to be the Savior of the world. **Acts 13:26-27**
 - 1. In accordance with Old Testament prophecy, Jesus was crucified and buried. **Acts 13:27-29**
 - 2. God raised Him from the dead and presented Him alive. **Acts 13:30-31**
 - c. The proclamation of forgiveness of sins. **Acts 13:38**

- d. Rejected by the Jews, Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles. **Acts 13:42-49**
 - e. Paul's physical affliction and the kindness of the Galatians. **Galatians 4:13-15** – "You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first.
 - 14 And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.
 - 15 What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.
 - f. Paul concluded with a warning that if they rejected the gospel of Christ they would have no hope. **Acts 13:40-41**
3. Many Gentiles obeyed the gospel. **Acts 13:48**
 4. Persecutions arose which expelled them from the region. They shook the dust off their feet and went to Iconium, some 60 miles from Antioch in Pisidia.

Acts 14

F. PAUL AND BARNABAS IN ICONIUM. Acts 14:1-5

1. Iconium was located some 60 miles east of Antioch of Pisidia.
 - a. iconium was the capital of the province of Lycaonia.
 - b. The city was surrounded by a high wall.
2. Paul preached in the synagogue of the Jews. **Acts 14:1**
3. Both Jews and Greeks believed. **Acts 14:1**
4. Paul and Barnabas stayed a long time. Worked signs and wonders. Acts 14:3
5. **NOTE:** First time Paul is called an apostle. **Acts 14:4**
6. Unbelieving Jews and gentiles attempted to stone them. **Acts 14:4-6** – "But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles.
 - 5 And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them,
 - 6 they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region.

G. **FLED FROM ICONIUM TO LYSTRA, A CITY OF LYCAONIA, SOME 18 MILES FROM ICONIUM. Acts 14:6**

1. A lame man was healed. **Acts 14:8-10** **NOTE:** Paul's first recorded healing miracle.
2. The people thought they were gods. **Acts 14:11-12**
 - a. Barnabas – Zeus
 - b. Paul – Hermes (“Because he was the chief speaker.”)
3. Jews from Antioch in Pisidia (some 80 to 100 miles away) and from Iconium (some 18 miles away), came and stirred up trouble, and in the process stoned Paul. Supposing him to be dead, they dragged him outside the city.
(One cannot help but to wonder if in this process Paul took time to reflect upon the stoning of Stephen. **Acts 7**)
 - a. Brethren gathered around Paul. Paul rose up, went back into the city, and departed the next day for Derbe. **Acts 14:20**
 - b. These enemies of the cross traveling so far to persecute Paul and Barnabas and to keep people from accepting the truth, underscore Satan's determination to oppose the truth.
4. These Jews from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium were perhaps acting with the same zeal against Paul and Barnabas that Paul had used against the church before his conversion.

H. **FROM LYSTRA TO DERBE WAS SOME 20 MILES BY LAND. Acts 14:20-21**

1. Derbe was also a city of Lycaonia. **Acts 14:6**
2. Paul and Barnabas reached the gospel and made many disciples. **Acts 14:21**
3. **NOTE;** Derbe is the farthest point of travel on the first missionary journey. From here Paul and Barnabas will turn around and revisit many of the places they have already visited as they make their return trip to Antioch in Syria from whence the first missionary journey had begun.

I. **THE RETURN TRIP TO ANTIOCH IN SYRIA. Acts 14:22-26**

1. The revisited Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia. **Acts 14:22-24**
2. Three major things were accomplished on the return journey:
 - a. The strengthened the disciples. **Acts 14:22** – “Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.’”
 - b. Exhorted them to continue in the faith. **Acts 14:22**
 - c. “Appointed elders in every church.” **Acts 14:23** – “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

NOTE: This is the first mention of Paul's appointing elders.

3. They returned to Perga in Pamphylia, where John Mark had turned back, and preached the word of God there again. **Acts 14:24-25**
4. Paul and Barnabas did what they were supposed to do. **Acts 15:26** – “From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.”
5. Paul and Barnabas reported on the work they had done. **Acts 14:27** – “Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.”
6. Paul and Barnabas abode two years in Antioch.

NOTE: From Antioch in Syria to the turn-around point at Derbe, Paul had traveled approximately 604 miles, of which some 240 miles were by water. The first missionary journey covered a total of some 1,208 miles wherein Paul and Barnabas established more than a dozen congregations. In all, they had been gone a little over two years.

End of 1st Missionary Journey

- J. Paul's comment to Timothy regarding the first missionary journey.
1. **2 Timothy 3:10-11** – “But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra - what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.
 2. When Paul wrote Timothy, it had been over twenty years since these events had occurred.