

Introduction

1. On 4 July 2018 we had just begun a study of Paul's First Missionary Journey.
2. Paul's first missionary journey



3. Like each of Paul's journeys, the point of departure was Antioch Syria.
4. Sailing from the port of Seleucia, Paul and his companions landed on Cyprus at its eastern end. From Salamis they traversed the entire length of the island, preaching in various synagogues.
5. Paul's first meeting with Roman officialdom occurred in Paphos, the capital city and residence of the proconsul Sergius Paulus. Paul met with a certain deputy in charge of the island. Paul witnessed to the deputy but was opposed by an occultist named Barjesus. The occultist apparently served the deputy in some capacity.
6. Paul witnessed to the deputy both in word and deed.

Acts 13:6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus ...
Acts 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.
Acts 13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him

Acts 13:10 And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

Acts 13:11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Acts 13:12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

7. Putting out to sea, the party next came to Attalia/Perga in Pamphylia.

7.1 Up to this point Barnabas had been the leader, Paul the main speaker, and John Mark (the cousin of Barnabas) the apostles' helper. But leaving Cyprus Paul assumed leadership, whereupon Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. The timing seems hardly accidental. Was he jealous? or offended? or just homesick?

Acts 13:13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

8. Moving northward, the pair entered the province of Galatia, and their visits extended to four cities: Antioch (in Pisidia), Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The events may be briefly summarized:

8.1 In Antioch, Paul preached in the synagogue, discoursing on the history of Israel and the fulfillment of God's promises in the coming of the Savior, Jesus. His closing emphasis was upon forgiveness of sins and justification through faith in Christ, a note sounded again later in the Epistle to the Galatians.

Acts 13:38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

Acts 13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

8.2 When the Jews opposed him, Paul said, "We are turning to the Gentiles," a usual procedure in Paul's ministry.

Acts 13:43 When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

Acts 13:44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.

Acts 13:45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying.

Acts 13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.

9. Driven out of Antioch Pisidia, they came next to Iconium, one of the most beautiful sites in the ancient world and repeated the familiar pattern.

Acts 14:1 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.

Acts 14:2 But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.

Acts 14:3 So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.

Acts 14:4 The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles.

Acts 14:5 There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them.

Acts 14:6 But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country,

9.1 One new note was added: The Lord bore witness to His word by "certain signs and wonders."

10. The third city visited was Lystra, a city in which there was no synagogue, probably a sign that few Jews resided there. Lystra was then a native settlement, populated mainly by Lycaonians from central Anatolia.

10.1 The worship of Zeus and Hermes was popular there, and the language was principally Lycaonian rather than Greek.

Acts 14:11 When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!"

Acts 14:12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker.

10.2 After Paul healed a man "lame from his mother's womb," citizens of Lystra worshiped the two apostles.

10.3 Even after order had been restored, the peace was short-lived, for "Jews came from Antioch and Iconium" and Paul was stoned and went to the Third Heaven. Paul was left for dead. It would certainly seem, Paul visited Heaven where he was sworn to secrecy.

10.3 1 The event and the reason for Paul's recounting can be found in Acts 14:19-21 and 2Co 12:2-6. I first heard an explanation of this event from Col. R.B. Thieme. It was Thieme's position that Paul went to heaven where he was sworn to secrecy concerning the heavenly events he witnessed. Later I read what H. A. Ironsides had to say and I shall quote:

Unedited Lecture Notes on the Book of Acts by H.A. Ironsides

"And they dragged that seemingly lifeless body outside the city and threw it on the refuse heap. Let the jackals devour it. They were done with Paul. But God was not done with him. I like to think this is the very time Paul had the experience of which he speaks in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (2Co 12:2-4): 'I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whither in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); such an one caught up in the heaven ... caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.'

"I believe that at the very moment they thrust Paul's body away, the real Paul--the man who lived inside of that body--was in the third heaven. God said, as it were, 'I want to show you what I have in store for you.' Up there Paul did not know whether he was in the body or not. If in his body, he did not know it; if out of his body, he did not miss it. He was in paradise and heard unspeakable things which it is not lawful for a man to utter. How long he was there we do not know. We do read that as the body lay there the disciples stood round about, evidently making plans for a funeral, probably with tears streaming down saying "what shall we do? We shall have to lay his poor broken body away." But he suddenly rose up! I should like to have seen that.

"It is such a graphic picture. Here gathered about the body of Paul were Barnabas and the other believers, saying, doubtless, "Is it not a pity that he had to die right in the midst of his wonderful ministry? If only he could have lived longer." Then suddenly, I think, Paul opened his eyes, rose to his feet, brushed off his clothes and said, "It is all right. You dear brothers will have to put off the funeral a little longer!"

"He was ready to start again. Persecution thwarted him none. He must continue preaching the gospel of the grace of God. "He rose up, and came into the city, and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. There was much which was said between Paul and his former friend. What else went on there we do not know."

11. At Derbe the journey reached its terminal point, from which they returned through the various cities visited on the first journey. After checking on the spiritual well-being of their converts (Acts 14:21-23), they eventually returned to Antioch Syria.

Acts 14:21 They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch,

Acts 14:22 strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

12. The second journey was made by Paul and Silas. It was intended to be a revisit of "every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord" according to Paul's statement to Barnabas.



Acts 15:36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing."

12.1 But the pair, disputing over whether to take John Mark who had deserted them the first time, decided to go their separate ways, and Paul, taking Silas with him, traveled by the land route northward through Syria and Cilicia, and thus began the Second Missionary journey.

13. Taking Timothy with them as they passed through Lystra (Acts 16:3), the travelers came at last to the port city of Troas on the Aegean Sea. In response to a vision, the company embarked for Macedonia, thus inaugurating the work on European soil.

Acts 16:1 He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek ...

Acts 16:3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek ...

Acts 16:6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.

13.1 In Macedonia, the work centered in three key centers: Philippi (Acts 16:12-40), Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9), and Berea (Acts 17:10-14), while in Achaia, two cities were visited: Athens (Acts 17:15-34) and Corinth (Acts 18:1-18).

13.2 Philippi was a colony, and a city in which Luke showed a great deal of interest, judging by the specific description and the length of the total narrative. This interest has led some to suppose that Luke was himself a Macedonian.

Acts 16:12 From there (Neapolis) we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

13.3 As in Antioch (Pisidia), Paul encountered many positive Jews and many vocal and negative Jews. Paul and his team also encountered many negative and positive Jews in Macedonia.

13.4 In Philippi Paul met Lydia, "a worshiper of God."

Acts 16:14 One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

13.4.1 Paul, Silas and Timothy encountered many Gentiles who had been "prepared" by God the Holy Spirit. Many responded positively to the gospel of Christ, and thus were saved.

13.5 Soon, however, Paul caused a stir by casting a demon out of a talented occultist. The owner of the talented lady sought Paul's arrest.

Acts 16:16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.

Acts 16:17 This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."

Acts 16:18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

Acts 16:19 When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

13.6 Paul and Silas were "tried" and placed in prison.

Acts 16:20 They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar

Acts 16:21 by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

Acts 16:22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten.

Acts 16:23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.

Acts 16:24 Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Acts 16:25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

Acts 16:26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.

Acts 16:27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.

Acts 16:28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

Acts 16:29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.

Acts 16:30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Acts 16:31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household."

Acts 16:32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

Acts 16:33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

13.7 In Philippi Paul felt the sting of active religion and manifest negative volition. It was here that Paul appealed to his Roman citizenship, a possession that legally should have prevented the beating. (Acts 16:37-39)

Acts 16:37 But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

Acts 16:38 The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed.

Acts 16:39 They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city.

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