

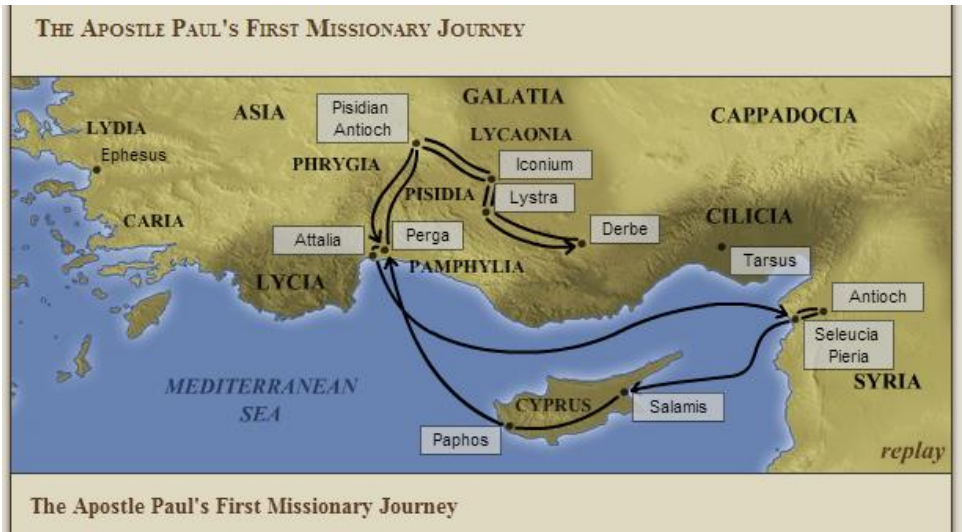
Text: Acts 13:13-22

Title: Preaching in the Synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia

Truth: Missionaries travel, find people, and proclaim God to them.

Date/Location: Wednesday April 24, 2013 and 4/10/2024 at FBC

Introduction



<http://www.apostlepaulthefilm.com/paul/journeys.htm>

I. Further Travels, v. 13-14

- A. The missionary team left Cyprus from Paphos, a main western city of the island. They sailed about 200 miles to reach Perna in the region called Pamphylia. Luke does not record any ministry events there, whether Paul taught in a synagogue, etc.
- B. At this point, John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem, from which he came. The reasons for his leaving are unknown, so we can only speculate.
 1. Later this became a major sticking point between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:38). Their disagreement probably biases our speculation about John to a negative position in which we think that he left for wrong reasons, but that is only because we assign preeminence to Paul instead of Barnabas, and assume that Paul must be right and Barnabas wrong, or at least

Barnabas is just a softie because he wants to be an encourager all the time.

2. But that assumption may well be wrong. As with the case of someone leaving a church today, or a job, their reasons are not always simple; they may be multi-factorial and complex. Some who remain in the church may understand these reasons; others may not. The two will hold different opinions about the person from that point forward.
3. Perhaps Paul was concerned that past history may be a good predictor of future events, and he did not want a repeat where he could not rely on a partner that they needed to help in the work. Barnabas may have had other concerns, such as developing the young John Mark because he had a lot of potential.

C. The team left the southern coast of Asia minor by traveling north about 100 miles to Antioch. This is not the Antioch from which Paul and Barnabas were sent in Acts 13:1-4. That Antioch is in Syria. This Antioch is the one in the region of Pisidia, Asia Minor. Incidentally, Asia Minor was called *Anatolia*, “east”, the land where the sun rises, from the perspective of the capital of the empire, Rome.

II. Sabbath Synagogue Service, v. 14-15

A. Sabbath is Saturday, the day for synagogue service.

B. Paul and Barnabas sat among the attenders that normally came. Their status as visitors was probably obvious to all there, as is the case in smaller churches today.

Note that the company traveled to various places to preach the word. They went where the people were. They went to the synagogue where they would encounter people with some background in the Scriptures.

C. The regular synagogue service included the reading of the Law and the Prophets. Down to the present day, the synagogue readings include a portion of the Torah each week, so that the synagogue can read through those books once every year. It also includes

selected readings of the prophets that in some way correlate to a portion of the Torah.

“Each week in synagogue, we read (or, more accurately, chant, because it is sung) a passage from the Torah. This passage is referred to as a parashah. The first parashah, for example, is Parashat Bereishit, which covers from the beginning of Genesis to the story of Noah. There are 54 parashahs (parashiyot), one for each week of a leap year, so that in the course of a year, we read the entire Torah (Genesis to Deuteronomy) in our services. During non-leap years, there are 50 weeks, so some of the shorter portions are doubled up. We reach the last portion of the Torah around a holiday called Simchat Torah (Rejoicing in the Law), which occurs in September or October, a few weeks after Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year). On Simchat Torah, we read the last portion of the Torah, and proceed immediately to the first paragraph of Genesis, showing that the Torah is a circle, and never ends.

“In the synagogue service, the weekly parashah is followed by a passage from the prophets, which is referred to as a haftarah. Contrary to common misconception, "haftarah" does not mean "half-Torah." The word comes from a Hebrew root meaning end or conclusion. Usually, the haftarah portion is no longer than one chapter, and has some relation to the Torah portion of the week.”

[\[http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/readingp.htm\]](http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/readingp.htm)

- D. After the reading of Scripture, it was, at least in this synagogue, customary to invite men give exhortations from the Scriptures for the people.
- E. Verse 15 mentions the synagogue leaders – multiple “elders.”
- F. The phrase “sent to them” indicates that evidently the synagogue leaders invited the “brothers,” the new visitors, to speak up if they had an exhortation or encouragement for the audience. The text suggests something more specific than a wide-open invitation to the whole assembled congregation. Perhaps they invited the guests to speak first.

1. A church leader today (or a synagogue leader back then) never knows what he might get when he invites unknown speakers to speak. These synagogue leaders got a bit more than they expected! They did get good sound doctrine, life-giving words for their souls.
2. This is a practical reason that we keep impromptu speaking to a minimum at FBC and are careful before we have someone come and speak to the church. The reality is that if you take a selection of random people, the majority will not hold sound doctrine, and you do not want them teaching the church. Furthermore, we are told that not many should be teachers, so we must be careful about multiplying the number of teachers.
3. I make a distinction between exhortations and testimonies or prayers.
4. In the case where a visitor or attendee or member says something that is off base, the presiding officer, usually the pastor, assistant, or one of the deacons, are responsible to gently correct those who have said something in error, for the benefit of that person as well as for the entire church. Note that if the error was stated publicly, it is generally necessary to address it publicly as well. It is not a “go to your brother privately first” kind of issue.

III. The Sermon, v. 16-22, and beyond

- A. Audience addressed – “men of Israel, and you who fear God.” *Men of Israel* refers to Jews and *you who fear God* refers to God-fearers (Gentiles, not-quite proselytes), 13:16.
- B. History of Israel, 13:17-22. Notice the God-centeredness of it.
 1. God chose the Hebrew fathers.
 2. God exalted the people in Egypt when he brought them out.
 3. God put up with them in the 40 wilderness years.
 4. God overthrew seven nations in the land of Canaan.
 5. God gave and distributed the promised land to Israel.
 6. God gave them 450 years of judges until Samuel the prophet.
 7. God made Saul their king and then removed him.
 8. God made David king, a man after God’s own heart.