

I. EVENTS IN CYPRUS

- A. In the Church in Antioch the disciples were fasting and praying when the HS spoke with new instructions.**
- 1. "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2)**
 - a. Saul (or Paul) had been made an apostle on the road to Damascus but now he was being sent as a missionary; it would be a difficult and dangerous work, but through it God would save His people.
 - b. Barnabas and Saul got ready to leave; and they took with them John Mark as their assistant. This John Mark was a nephew of Barnabas, and would later write a Gospel account in the NT.
 - c. Before the new missionaries were sent, the church laid hands on them and prayed for them.
 - 2. The First Missionary Journey (see map) began with a visit to the island of Cyprus. We do not know if God specifically told the missionaries to begin there, but it was a natural place to start.**
 - a. Barnabas was from Cyprus, so he knew the area very well; and Cyprus was the closest island.
 - b. There were many Jews in Cyprus and the method of the missionaries was to start with the Jews.
 - c. But Cyprus was also a very idolatrous place: the island was dedicated to the Greek goddess, Aphrodite. Mythology said that the goddess has been born out of the sea foam of the island!
- B. To get to Cyprus, the two missionaries and their assistant, John Mark, took a ship from Seleucia.**
- 1. The first place they arrived was the sea port of Salamis.**
 - a. The missionaries immediately went to the synagogue which was a gathering of Jews on the Sabbath.
 - b. From Salamis, they crossed the island on foot (a journey of 100 miles) probably preaching as they went.
 - c. Finally, they reached Paphos, the capital city, the center of Aphrodite-worship and the home of the Roman deputy, a man called Sergius Paulus.
 - 2. Sergius Paulus heard about the preaching of the two missionaries, and, because he was interested in religious questions, he called them to preach the Word of God to him.**
 - a. But Sergius Paulus was under the influence of a Jew, a false prophet, a sorcerer called Bar-Jesus or Elymas. This man probably made money by his tricks by which he convinced SP that he was of God.
 - b. When the two missionaries preached the Gospel of Jesus crucified and risen to the deputy of the island, Bar-Jesus was afraid of losing his position if SP became a Christian so he contradicted the missionaries.
 - c. Saul (now called Paul in the book of Acts) became angry and spoke words of judgment against Bar-Jesus, "O full of all subtlety and mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:10). Immediately, *Bar-Jesus became blind!* A dark mist fell on him and he needed someone to lead him by the hand. Sergius Paulus, amazed especially by the doctrine of the missionaries, believed.

II. ON THE MAINLAND (ASIA MINOR [present-day Turkey]).

- A. After preaching in Cyprus, the missionaries took a ship to the mainland to Perga.**
- 1. In Perga, John Mark decided that he no longer wanted to be a missionary-helper and he took a ship back to Jerusalem. We do not know why, but he probably found the life of a missionary too difficult.**
 - a. From Perga the two missionaries made their way for about 100 miles through the mountains.
 - b. This was a difficult and dangerous route: those mountains were well known for robbers, and there was little shelter. Most likely, Paul and Barnabas camped in tents in the mountains, tents made of goat's hair, for that was Paul's occupation, a tentmaker.
 - c. After 100 miles through the mountains Paul and Barnabas reached Antioch of Pisidia, and on the first Sabbath Day they entered the Jewish synagogue.
 - 2. In Antioch of Pisidia the rulers of the synagogue invited Paul to speak. It was common in synagogues that a visiting Jew would be permitted to say a few words from the Scriptures.**
 - a. Paul preached to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ; he explained to them that the promise to David had been fulfilled in Jesus, that Jesus had been crucified by the unbelieving Jewish leaders, but God has raised Jesus from the dead.
 - b. "Of this man's seed," said Paul, "hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." And, "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 13:23, 38).
 - c. The people were very impressed by Paul's message and they asked Paul to return the next Sabbath to tell them more about this Jesus.
 - 3. The next week almost the whole city came together to hear the Word of God from the missionaries.**
 - a. But the unbelieving Jews were envious because the missionaries were preaching salvation to the Gentiles. Remember, the Jews believed that salvation was only for them or for those who became Jews. So, the Jews started to speak against what Paul was saying.

- b. Paul then told the Jews that the Gospel went to them first but that now the Gospel would go to the Gentiles, because the Jews “judged [themselves] unworthy of eternal life” (Acts 13:46).
- c. When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad & many believed, as many as God had chosen (v. 48).
- d. But, the missionaries could not stay in Antioch long because the Jews stirred up persecution, so they shook the dust off their feet and continued to other cities.

B. From Antioch the missionaries went about 90 miles East to the city of Iconium.

- 1. Again, the missionaries spoke in the synagogue of the Jews and a great crowd believed.**
 - a. God was opening the hearts of many, and Jews and Gentiles alike were coming to the Lord.
 - b. God even gave Paul and Barnabas the ability to do miracles, which led to a division in the city. Some of the people believed the missionaries were of God; others hated them and wanted them to leave.
 - c. But Paul and Barnabas stayed there a long time until the opposition of the people forced them out.
- 2. The enemies of Paul and Barnabas made a plot to stone the missionaries and when the missionaries heard about it they left to preach in another city. This was not cowardice. Jesus taught His disciples: “When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another ...” (Matt. 10:23).**
 - a. About 25 miles from Iconium was the city of Lystra, which was a very pagan city where there does not seem even to have been a synagogue.
 - b. In Lystra there was even a temple to the God Jupiter or Zeus, the King of the gods.

III. IN LYSTRA AND DERBE

A. In Lystra, one day as Paul was preaching, he noticed a lame man who was looking very closely at Paul, listening carefully to every word Paul preached.

- 1. Paul looked at this man and understood that this man had faith, and so he called out to him, “Stand upright on thy feet” (Acts 14:10).**
 - a. Immediately, by the power of Jesus Christ, the man was able to walk. A miracle!
 - b. The people of Lystra jumped to the wrong conclusion. They were pagans, and they believed that the gods could visit the earth as men, and they believed that Jupiter and Mercury had visited Lystra before.
 - c. Now they believed that, since Paul and Barnabas had healed the lame man, they must be gods, Jupiter and Mercury. Paul was Mercury because he was chief speaker, and Barnabas was Jupiter.
 - d. In their excitement, they called the priest of Jupiter to make a sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas and to worship them as gods.
- 2. But Paul and Barnabas, when they understood what the people were planning to do, stopped them.**
 - a. “Sirs, why do ye these things. We also are men of like passions with you and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God ...” (Acts 14:15).
 - b. So upset were Paul and Barnabas that they tore their clothes, and with difficulty they stopped the people worshipping them.
 - c. Unbelieving Jews came from Antioch and Iconium (they had been following the missionaries) and persuaded the people, if these men are not gods, they must be evil men, and so they stoned Paul and thinking he was dead, they dragged him out of the city.

B. It seemed that the 1st missionary journey would end suddenly with the death of Paul. As the disciples stood around Paul’s body he revived, stood up and went back into the city!

- 1. The next day, the missionaries left Lystra and continued to Derbe.**
 - a. After they preached in Derbe and taught many people they determined to return to Antioch, their sending church.
 - b. The route they took was to go back to all the churches in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch – dangerous places – and ordain elders in every city and teach the new believers.
 - c. Then they headed back to Perga (preached there) and then to Attalia where they took a ship to Antioch.
- 2. Imagine the joy with which the church in Antioch received Paul and Barnabas**
 - a. There were no blogs, e-mails, phone calls in those days; most likely the church in Antioch had no way of contacting Paul and Barnabas. They prayed for them, of course.
 - b. And we do not know how long the first missionary lasted, but the travel was probably slow and they may have stayed weeks or even months in each city.
 - c. But now they were back and they reported what God had done – the Gospel had begun to go to the Gentiles and there were new churches in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.