

The Acts of the Apostles

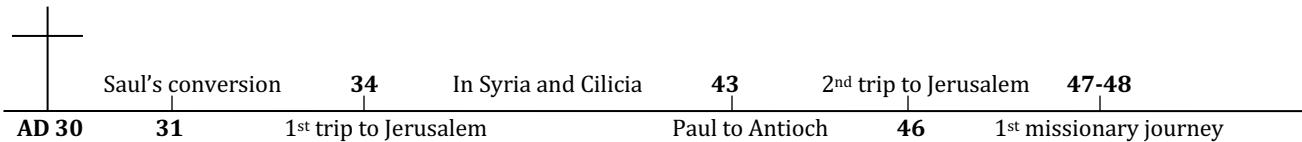
Lesson 7 – Paul's First Missionary Journey

Introduction

In an age of practically uninterrupted internet connection and social media along with it, it's no surprise that news travels fast. Imagine if Paul could have updated his Facebook status from Damascus, "*Saul from Tarsus is saved by Grace and called to be an apostle of Christ.*" What if Peter could have tweeted from Cornelius' house "#*hangingwithgentiles #nothingthelordhasmadeisunclean #salvationisforallpeople*" or at the very least Snapchat a selfie of him and Cornelius back to the apostles in Jerusalem.

Nonetheless, the good news about Jesus Christ spread just like he promised it would. Jesus' parting words to his apostles on the day of his ascension were, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the world." Infrastructure was by no means primitive in the Roman Empire during the time of the early church. During this time, the empire enjoyed a long period of peace (*Pax Romana*) and boasted a sophisticated road system. Relatively speaking, news traveled safely and efficiently in the early church. It is in this historical setting that the Apostle Paul would play a key role in spreading the good news overseas to different countries and cultures.

Timeline



Search the Scriptures

Read Acts 11:19-30 and 12:25-13:3. How had the good news reached the people in Antioch?

Why did the apostles send Barnabas to Antioch?

Prophets are mentioned twice in this section. Are they what we would call preachers? Pastors?

What is the significance of placing or laying hands on Saul and Barnabas as they are set apart? Do we have a similar practice today?

The church in Jerusalem was concerned about the church in Antioch and vice versa. What blessings were there in having that kind of partnership with other churches near or far? What are the benefits of being part of synod?

Read Acts 13:4-15. Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark arrive in Cyprus (see map). Why was the synagogue a good first point of contact?

What challenges did Paul and his companions encounter as they traveled throughout the whole island? What blessings did they witness?

Whether we are talking about the early church or the present day, what is the source of false teaching? What is the purpose? What is the antidote? (Verse 10).

In Pisidian Antioch, the synagogue rulers invite Paul and Barnabas to speak (John Mark returned to Jerusalem). What follows is Paul's message. Summarize Paul's sermon from **Acts 13:16-41** and discuss the following:

- How does this sermon help me better understand and explain the connection between Old and New Testament?
- How does this sermon help me see Jesus more clearly in the Psalms?
- If I were listening to this sermon in Antioch, the part that would impress me the most is...

Read Acts 13:42-52. How was Paul's sermon received by the people in Antioch?

Paul would later write in his letter to the Romans, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: ***first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.***" How do you understand the latter thought of that passage based on what happens in Pisidian Antioch?

Was Paul claiming to be the "light to the Gentiles" prophesied in Isaiah 49:6?

When you proclaim the truth about Jesus and his word to someone, at what point do you shake the dust off your feet?

Read Acts 14:1-20. What similar pattern do we see in Iconium as Paul and Barnabas carryout mission work?

What differences do we see in Lystra as Paul and Barnabas carryout mission work?

When Paul shared the gospel with Jews, his starting point for discussion was Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah. He didn't have the same advantage with the Gentile audience in Lystra. What was his starting point for discussion in order to preach the gospel?

The riot in Lystra is a good example of how fickle humans can be, especially when it comes to religion. What similar attitudes do you see with religion in America?

Map out Acts 14:21-28. Paul and Barnabas go to Derbe before they backtrack. Little is said about Derbe other than, "They preached the good news... and won a large number of disciples." On their way back, they stop at the congregations in the cities they previously visited. The purpose of revisiting each city was twofold: encouragement and orderliness. They encouraged the brothers and sister to remain strong and they appointed elders in each church for the sake of order and spiritual leadership. Paul and Barnabas make one last preaching stop in Perga before they sail back to their home base, Syrian Antioch.

