

LESSON 7: ACTS 13
MAY 4, 2016

OVERVIEW

- . Introduction to Acts II
- . The beginning of the missionary movement – Acts 12:25-13:4
- . Visit to Cyprus – Acts 13:5-14
- . Visit to Galatia – Acts 13:14-52

INTRODUCTION TO ACTS II

- . Acts 13 introduces the next phase of the growth of the church with a different emphasis along three lines
 - . Preaching to Gentiles rather than Jews
 - . The main scene is the great Roman Empire lying outside the Holy Land
 - . The audience is pagan people with little understanding of scripture
 - . The church at Antioch (in Syria), instead of Jerusalem
 - . In the first chapters of Acts the focal point was Jerusalem with preaching initiated by the twelve disciples
 - . Now the preaching will be done by missionaries who will report back to the church in Antioch
 - . The work of Paul rather than that of Peter
 - . For the remainder of Acts (with the exception of Acts 15), Peter is barely mentioned
 - . Now the author, Luke, will focus mainly on Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles
- . Paul's three missionary journeys
 - . First journey: Cyprus to southern Asia Minor – Acts 13-14
 - . Took place about eleven years after his conversion
 - . Dates were approx. 45-48 A.D.
 - . Total time of mission was three years before returning to Antioch
 - . This mission was made entirely by sea and foot, walking over 1250 miles, over rough mountain terrain
 - . Second journey: Macedonia and Greece – Acts 16-18
 - . Third journey: Western Asia Minor – Acts 19
 - . During his third journey he decided to go to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost

- . He was barely in Jerusalem for a week when he was imprisoned and ultimately taken in chains to Rome – Acts 21-28
- . It was during his time of imprisonment that God caused him to record some of his deepest revelations in Paul's writing ministry

THE BEGINNING OF THE MISSIONARY MOVEMENT – ACTS 12:25-13:4

- . The spiritual vitality of the Antioch church
 - . Strong emphasis on prayer
 - . Strong emphasis on maintaining a close relationship to God which led to a close relationship with each other
 - . The church came to the realization that they needed to send their two strongest leaders, Barnabas and Paul out in to the field
- . Luke describes the Holy Spirit almost as a true person who was present in the church and active in making decisions for the church
 - . "The Holy Spirit said, . . . " – Acts 13:2
 - . "The two of them sent on their way by the Holy Spirit" – Acts 13:4
- . Paul's companions – Acts 12:25
 - . Barnabas
 - . Started out as the senior missionary on the trip
 - . Was one of the earliest Jerusalem converts
 - . A man of means from Cyprus
 - . Barnabas was the one who introduced Paul to the disciples
 - . Barnabas was the one sent to establish the church in Antioch
 - . Barnabas was the one who sought out Paul in Tarsus
 - . John Mark
 - . Cousin of Barnabas
 - . Early church would meet often in his home
 - . Was a gifted writer who was involved in the Jewish Christian movement almost from the beginning
 - . Was being trained by Barnabas and Paul for future missions

VISIT TO CYPRUS – ACTS 13:5-14

- . Salamis – Acts 13:5
 - . Left the mainland for the 130 mile sea voyage in the spring, when the navigational season began
 - . Barnabas' homeland
 - . Largest city and best port on Cyprus
 - . Preached to the Jews in the synagogues
 - . No result or fruit recorded by Luke
 - . Left on foot for the 100-mile walk to Paphos

. Paphos – Acts 13:6-13

- . Birthplace of Venus, the goddess of love
- . Pagan city known for its superstition and sorcery
- . The Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, was based there and employed a renegade Jew, Bar-Jesus (Elymas), as a court astrologer and sorcerer
- . When Elymas heard the missionaries were coming, he was determined to prevent Sergius Paulus from coming to faith
- . This is the first time we see God giving Paul extraordinary power
 - . The Holy Spirit worked through Paul in a powerful way that blinded Elymas and stopped him cold in his tracks
 - . Sergius Paulus was so overwhelmed by what he witnessed that it drew him in to the faith
- . The author Luke, officially transitions the name of Saul to Paul – Acts 13:9
- . From this point on Luke refers to the mission team as “Paul and his companions” – Acts 13:13

. Important decisions on leaving Cyprus – Acts 13:14

- . Paul wanted to head back to the mainland, to Asia Minor, because it was more strategic to the region
- . Their ultimate destination was Antioch in Pisidia, not to be confused with Antioch in Syria
- . This town was located at a strategic trade crossroads
 - . To the west, roads led to Ephesus, in western Asia
 - . To the north, roads led in to the heart of Galatia
 - . To the east, roads led to Syria
 - . By planting the seed of the gospel in this strategic area, there was maximum chance of the seed spreading along these crossroads

. John Mark decides to return home

- . We don't know a lot about the reasons for John Mark's decision
- . One speculation is that he loved his homeland too much and wanted to go back to ministering to the Jews
- . He may have been so entrenched in Jewish exclusiveness that he wasn't ready for Paul's present concentration on the Gentile population
- . Maybe he wasn't up to the strenuous trip ahead or the dangers they faced along the way
- . His decision led to a strain in the relationship between Paul and John Mark that will challenge both of them later on in Acts
 - . We will also see how the Holy Spirit works in a powerful way in both men and ultimately strengthens their relationship

VISIT TO GALATIA – ACTS 13:14-52

- . Arrival at Pisidian Antioch – Acts 13:14
 - . Antioch belonged to the district of Pisidia, which was part of the large Roman Province called Galatia
 - . Other key towns in the area where Paul preached were Lystra and Derbe, in the district of Lycania
 - . All these communities were in southern Galatia, which made up the mountainous area of modern day Turkey
 - . Scholars believe when Paul later wrote his letter, Galatians, to the churches of Galatia, he was referring to the churches he planted in these towns during his first mission trip there
 - . During this trip Paul was beset by some physical sickness that greatly troubled him – Galatians 4:13-15
- . First stop in Antioch was the Jewish quarter and the Jewish synagogue
 - . Although the population of this area was predominately pagan, there was a Jewish quarter where there was a strong base of faith
 - . In addition to the Jews, there was a group of god fearing non-Jews who also worshipped here
- . Paul is asked to preach to the crowd – Acts 13:15-41
 - . Well versed in the Old Testament and wanting to establish credibility with the predominately Jewish crowd, he launches in to the history of the Old Testament – Acts 13:16-25
 - . God's choice and call
 - . Israel's ingratitude and unbelief
 - . God's provision
 - . Introducing the gospel – Acts 13:26-37
 - . Christ's cross – Acts 13:27-29
 - . Christ's resurrection – Acts 13:30-37
 - . The gospel applied – Acts 13:38-41
 - . Forgiveness of sin
 - . Condition of forgiveness
 - . An act of faith – Acts 13:39
 - . One must choose to belief that Christ is God's uniquely appointed Savior and Lord
 - . True faith involves the complete reorientation of one's life to live by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - . Consequences of unbelief
 - . To refuse to be saved is to choose to perish because one despises, ignores or refuses God's offer through Jesus Christ

- . Results of Paul's sermon – Acts 13:42-52
 - . Paul was asked to speak again the following Saturday
 - . Over the week the word spread and the following Saturday the synagogue was filled with almost all of Antioch
 - . The following week a furious debate broke out, led by a large group of orthodox Jews
 - . The apostles boldly turned away from the Jews, leading a larger group of gentiles outside to whom they gave their full attention
 - . That day there was a large outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon pagan Gentiles
 - . The Jewish authorities in Antioch pulled political strings publically expelling Paul and Barnabas from Antioch
 - . Despite the persecution and public humiliation, the Holy Spirit filled the apostles with joy
 - . When they returned to Antioch on their way home they found their first disciples had remained faithful and were even ready for elders to be ordained to lead their local church – Acts 14:21-23

NEXT LESSON, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2016 – ACTS 14