



SERMON NOTES

US N^o. 112

Date: August 18th, 2013

Title: Paul's First Missionary Voyage, pt. 2

#20 in the Series on the Acts of the Apostles

1. From Syrian Antioch to Antioch of Pisidia
 - a. Perga in Pamphylia was more tropical and may have been the reason that they moved north through the mountains. John Mark leaves them for Jerusalem at Perga.
 - b. Arriving in Antioch of Pisidia they go to the synagogue on the Sabbath. After the readings the rulers of the synagogue gave Paul the customary invitation to speak which he was happy to take advantage.
 - c. Paul's speech (*cf.* Acts 13:16-42)
 - i. Paul focuses on an abbreviated survey of Israel's history. His audience is Jewish or Gentile proselytes, so concentrating upon God's hand within Israel's history was logical. Jesus is the goal of history, and as we are in Jesus, we are in the flow of God's great plan of redemption.
 1. The choosing of the patriarchs from among the nations,
 2. The deliverance from Egypt where they were strangers,
 3. The time in the wilderness and the destruction of the 7 nations,
 4. The conquest of Canaan and the allotment of land to each of the tribes,
 5. The time of the Judges who were given by God for the people,
 6. The creation of a monarchy and God's raising up and establishment of David,
 7. The seed of David fulfills the promise of God to give us a Savior in the person of Jesus,
 8. The forerunner to the Messiah in the person of John the Baptist who clearly testified that he was not the One,
 9. To the sons of Abraham, and those who fear God, has been sent this word of salvation,
 10. The Jerusalem leadership despite having all the writings of the prophets, unwittingly fulfilled prophecy by putting *Him* to death on a tree,
 11. But God raised Him from the dead, and He was seen by many witnesses.
 12. Summary: Israel serves as a type of the Church.
 - a. Chosen (*cf.* Jn. 15:16, Eph. 1:4),
 - b. Exalted (*cf.* Luke 1:52, Eph. 2:6),
 - c. Emancipated (*cf.* Jn. 3:16-17, Gal. 3:13),
 - d. Borne (*cf.* Mt. 16:18, Luke 21:18, 2 Thess. 3:3),
 - e. Endured (*cf.* Rom. 2:4, 2 Pet. 3:9, 15),
 - f. Protected (*cf.* 1 Pet. 3:13),
 - g. Settled (*cf.* Jn. 17:24).
 - ii. Paul declares here & now the glad tidings that God has fulfilled His promise to their forefathers. *"Christianity is not just a philosophy or a set of ethics, though it involves these*

things. Essentially Christianity is a proclamation of facts that concern what God has done."

(Boice) Jesus fulfills the prophetic promises and His resurrection...

1. means that Jesus truly is the unique Son of God (cf. Ps. 2:7),
2. proves that He was utterly holy even in His work on the cross (cf. Ps. 16:10).

iii. David served well his own generation.

1. Man's earthly history is for a limited period,
2. A man has a lasting, personal relation to the time upon which his earthly history is cast,
3. A man is called to note and to know the peculiar character of his own time,
4. A man is summoned to do the best for his own time.
5. What a great epitaph, "*He served well his own generation.*"

iv. Paul plainly proclaims that justification (*to make one just or righteous*) is uniquely acquired by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ (not our own), proceeds not from works but faith, and perfectly satisfies the laws' demands.

v. Paul then warn his listeners from Habakkuk 1:5 which speaks of the danger of failing to recognizing the true hand of God at work; originally speaking of the Chaldean invasion but Paul *updates* it. Beware of rejecting the gospel and so bringing guilt and then doom upon ourselves from refusing to see the hand of God in the events taking place.

d. The response to the Gospel

- i. When the gospel is frankly, fully, and fearlessly preached, it will seldom fail to make an impression.
- ii. They're begged to come back the next week by the Gentiles. Some who could not wait that long and followed after Paul & Barnabas, and they were encouraged to continue in the grace of God.
 1. *Continuing* in grace is as important as *beginning* in grace; we must never leave it as the basic principle of our relationship with God. Far too many only think of grace as the introduction to the Christian life, but God wants grace to remain as the foundation for our life with Him.
- iii. On the next Sabbath "*almost the whole city came together to hear the Word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.*" Official Judaism was rejecting the message of Jesus.
 1. When someone else is more popular, they become filled with envy. We can't all be popular to the same degree, but we can all serve and please God to the same degree in Jesus Christ.
 2. Some people end up rejecting Jesus because of the way He changes our relationship with other people. Some would rather hold on to their bitterness and animosity towards others than turn to Jesus and be reconciled.

3. Some refuse to embrace the salvation of Jesus in the secret place of their heart, because they want a salvation of their *own* making. They want to be saved the old-fashioned way, they want to *earn* it.
 - a. Paul writes a letter to these churches in Galatia, dealing with these same themes of being justified by God's grace, and not by keeping the law.
4. Wherever there is revival, the second group to be revived is the Devil. Jewish opposition was strong enough to force Paul and Barnabas to leave the area.
- iv. However, the Gentiles responded to Paul's invitation with enthusiastic belief, learning with joy that God *does not* hate Gentiles, but offered them salvation in Jesus. Gentiles were excited that Christ was to be a Light to the nations. Paul showed wisdom in not spending all his time trying to persuade hardened hearts. They also responded with more evangelism to open hearts, now directing their efforts to the Gentiles, in obedience to God's command (*cf. Rom. 1:16*) and in fulfillment of prophecy (*cf. Is. 49:6*).
 - e. Paul and Barnabas rebuke those who rejected Jesus, letting the Jews know that it was a privilege that this message should come to them first, a privilege they were now rejecting.
 - f. The Jews stir up prominent women whose husbands, the chiefs of Antioch, expelled them from the region. So Paul and Barnabas shake the dust off their feet, as if it were a pagan town.
 - g. The letter to the Galatians was written about 49 A.D. from Antioch to churches in southern Galatia. Paul wrote the letter to disprove the claims of the Judaizers, who said Christians must follow the Jewish laws, including circumcision, to be saved. Although it targets churches in the first century, it was included in the Bible for the instruction of all Christians of every generation.
2. Iconium, about 90 miles from Antioch of Pisidia; about a 4-5 day journey.
 - a. Luke seems to want us to know that it was precisely due to the increased opposition that stayed on longer (*v. 2-3*)
 - b. The Gospel divides: believers from unbelievers and true disciples from hypocrites.
 - c. Paul was granted power to perform miracles. *"For no apostle could work a miracle by himself; nor was any sign or wonder wrought even by the greatest apostle, but by a special grant or dispensation of God. This power was not resident in them at all times."* (A. Clarke)
 - d. *Acts 14:4* is the first and only time Paul and Barnabas are called apostles in the Book of Acts.
 - e. *Acts 14:5-6*, *"when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region."*
3. Lystra, about 18 miles from Iconium.
 - a. William Ramsay demonstrated that Lystra and Derbe were indeed together in the Roman province of Lycaonia, but only from 37 to 72 AD, the exact period these events in Acts took place. This kind of accuracy persuaded Ramsay that the Biblical account was true, especially in an age when they were all thought to be fables and made-up stories.

- b. Paul and Barnabas automatically begin proclaiming the Gospel. *"The apostles did not go into these cities to do miracles, and then to preach. Rather, it was the other way around: they went to preach; then sometimes there were healings."* (Boice)
- c. Among the listeners was a cripple who was listening intently to Paul and had the faith to be healed or literally *"saved."* Paul speaks out and the man is miraculously healed, to the utter amazement of the crowds.
- d. The Lystrans are shocked and proclaim that Hermes & Zeus have come again (see *Ovid's story of Baucis and Philemon*), preparing to offer sacrifices at the Temple of Zeus to them. This shocks Paul and Barnabas who, when they learned what was going, intervened and spoke passionately to the crowds.
 - i. Paul & Barnabas proclaim the true nature of God, *"the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,"* and his forbearance *"in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways."*
 - ii. It is noticeable that Paul did not preach to these pagan worshippers the same way he preached to Jews or those acquainted with Judaism. He did not quote the Old Testament to them, but instead appealed to natural revelation beginning with the story of creation and to the things that even a pagan could understand by looking at the world around them. A subject of immediate interest to Gentile peoples in all countries and in all ages.
 - iii. God's kindness to all men (in giving rain and fruitful crops) should be seen as a witness of His love and power, something theologians sometimes call *"common grace"* as opposed to *"special or saving grace"* which extends only to those whom God has chosen to redeem.
 - 1. It curbs the destructive power of sin,
 - 2. It maintains in a measure the moral order of the universe, thus making an orderly life possible,
 - 3. It distributes in varying degrees gifts and talents among men,
 - 4. It promotes the development of science and art,
 - 5. It showers untold blessings upon the children of men."
 - iv. *"Superstitious as the proposition was (Zeus & Hermes come again) it rebukes the lack of enthusiasm on the part of those who, though they know God, glorify Him not as God."*
- e. As Paul explains that they are not gods but that there is a God, the Jews from Iconium and Antioch come (*nearly 100+ miles*) to arouse the rage and anger of the population. From their perspective, Paul was an apostate and had to be stopped.
 - i. Crowds are fickle; go from worshipping to stoning.
 - ii. *"Bad people will often travel further to do evil than good people will to do good; and wicked people often show more zeal in opposing the gospel than professed Christians do in advancing it."* [A. Barnes]
 - iii. *"So strong is the bent of the corrupt and carnal heart, that as it is with great difficulty that men are kept back from evil on one side, so it is with great ease they are persuaded to evil on*

the other side. If Paul would have been Mercury, he might have been worshipped; but if he will be a faithful minister of Christ, he shall be stoned, and thrown out of the city." [M. Henry]

- f. Paul is seized and stoned, maybe because he was the chief speaker.
 - i. When Paul later wrote, *"I bear in my body the marks of Jesus"* (cf. Gal. 6:17), he may have had in mind the scars from this incident and he certainly referred to this stoning in 2 Cor. 11:25.
 - ii. Paul wrote in 2 Tim. 3:10-12, *"But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra – what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."*
- g. Paul survives; either was not entirely dead or was brought back from the dead. Nonetheless, getting up and going back into the city shortly after a stoning is a miracle.
 - i. Timothy
- h. Leaves the next day for Derbe.
- 4. Derbe, about 55 miles from Lystra.
 - a. Their stay is uneventful other than the fact they *"made many disciples."*
- 5. After nearly 4 years, they turn towards Antioch again by way of Lystra, Iconium and Perga.
 - a. Along the way home, they stopped and encouraged the disciples to keep the faith. Paul and Barnabas wanted to do far more than gain conversions; they had a passion to make disciples.
 - i. Paul and Barnabas knew that these churches must have proper administration, so they appointed elders in every city where there were Christians. They were committed not only to making new Christians, but in establishing new *churches*, places where these new Christians could grow and be established in the Lord.
 - 1. New Testament elders, *"presbuteros,"* were godly, mature men who exercised spiritual leadership in the local church. They are also spoken of as bishops and overseers who...
 - a. have a delegated authority from Christ (cf. Eph. 4:11),
 - b. are called to oversee the membership (cf. Acts 20:28),
 - c. are ordained (cf. 2 Tim. 1:6, 1 Tim. 4:14)
 - 2. We have the qualifications of elders in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 so each local assembly should be able to recognize those men in it who meet God's requirements as under-shepherds of the sheep.
 - ii. Many Christians need strengthening in their souls. Many need exhorting... to continue in the faith. It is no small thing to walk with the Lord, year after year, trial after trial. It takes a strong soul and an encouraged faith.
 - b. Reminding them that they would suffer tribulations and that they are called to enter into the faith and to continue in the faith (i.e. you can stop)
 - i. Enter thru faith and regeneration
 - ii. The dangers:

1. indwelling sin,
 2. fascinations & temptations of the world,
 3. ills & tribulations of the world,
 4. false teachers & teachings,
 5. self-righteousness & spiritual pride.
- c. Reached home and rendered report around 45/46 AD. Stayed a long time again in Antioch until the Jerusalem Council 51/53 AD; letter to the Galatians written around 49 AD.
6. Take-aways
- a. Jews not converting, Gentiles converting
 - b. Redemptive analogy is the idea that each culture has some story, ritual, or tradition that can be used to illustrate and apply the Christian gospel message.
 - c. Common grace
 - d. Continuing in the grace
 - e. Revival and growth awakens the devil's opposition also