

Week 21

The Church's 1st Missionary Journey

Barnabas and Paul Are Set Apart for Missions

In chapter 13 and 14, we learn about the Church's very first missionary journey. It is often credited as the first of Paul's journey's but, it was the calling of the Holy Spirit to the church to journey forth into the world to share the good news of Jesus.

It seems, that in the beginning, it was Barnabas who was leading the effort. Barnabas was from Cypress, so it was no surprise that he would want to go to his homeland first to share the gospel.

They sailed to Cypress to preach in Salamis and Paphos. Then they set out to Perga in Pamphylia, which was a low-lying coastal region where they didn't preach due to Paul's health. Rather, they went inland to Antioch Pisidia. From there, when things became dangerous, they went on to Iconium, then to Lystra and Derbe.

The journeys often met with dangerous situations They then doubled back the way they came on the way home through Iconium, Lystra, and eventually to Antioch Pisidia and finally to Pamphylia, where they did preach the second time.

There is a great deal to learn from these heroes of the faith about how their attitudes helped shape the young church movement, as we look closely at their journeys.

The chapter opens with the names of 'prophets and teachers' of the church in Antioch. The 'prophet' was a man who was not attached to the church but was called to go and speak the truth of the gospel. Today we would call him an evangelist. The 'teacher' was one in the local church who was gifted and called for discipling the members and instruct the new converts to Christianity, especially the gentiles coming in from the pagan world.

Note that Barnabas and Saul were among the prophets. Also, if we examine the names we see that they were from a diverse set of cultures. Simeon, who was also called Niger, was from Africa. It has been speculated that perhaps he was 'Simon from Cyrene' who carried the cross for Jesus. While it can't be proved, it is a beautiful thought that his experience with Jesus' cross compelled him to carry that message forward for the rest of his life.

Here we also should note that while the chapter opens calling Paul by his Hebrew name, Saul, it changes and from this point forward he is always called by his Greek name, Paul. Perhaps because on his missionary journey he identifies so much with reaching the gentile world for the Christ, that he no longer identifies himself as a Jewish convert to Christianity.

The journey to Cypress brings Barnabas, Paul, and John Mark much success for the gospel. Their encounter with the Roman Proconsul, Sergius Paulus was marked by great boldness from Paul in confronting the sorcerer, Bar-Jesus, or Elymus in Arabic.

It was precisely this kind of boldness that won the conversion of Paulus, as he saw the power of the Spirit at work in and through Paul. And it is precisely this kind of bold, Spirit-led ministry that is so often missing in the modern church. We might ask the question, why? Why is so much of the church, seemingly absent of such power? Was it only for the Apostolic times? Can we recover such boldness as we encounter a culture that is increasingly being won to paganism?

IV. THE CHURCH ADVANCING TO THE END OF THE EARTH (12-28)

A. THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (13, 14)

1. The Holy Spirit Set Paul and Barnabas Apart (13:1-3)
2. Cyprus and the Proconsul (13:4-12)
3. Pisidian Antioch: Paul's Sermon & the Reaction (13:13-52)
4. From Iconium to Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe (14:1-7)
5. Lystra: A Lame Man Healed & the Reaction (14:8-20a)
6. The Return to and Stay at Antioch (14:20b-28)

