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THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY

A SURVEY OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT
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Study Number Nine / THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES Part Two / February 25, 2009

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The book of Acts is THE PATTERN BOOK for the New Testament Church, that is, the church today that claims to be the body of Christ. That most certainly would include First Assembly of God Ministries in Fort Myers and Southwest Florida. Remember that the Book of Acts is the story of the Holy Spirit's work primarily through Peter and Paul. It is the "Tale of Two Cities," that is, Jerusalem and Antioch and the Pentecostal churches of each one. It is the Church at Antioch that concerns us and after which we pattern First Assembly of God in Fort Myers.

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Acts 13 gives us the springboard for MISSIONS. Note carefully the report of the scripture: **Acts 13:1-3**

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Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. [2] As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. [3] And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Thus the first two missionaries for Christ were Barnabas and Paul. The two remained together for their first missionary journey and then split up for the second and third. Here is a synopsis of Paul's three sojourns, which we will study as thoroughly as we can in this study:

FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Acts 13 and 14: Paul and Barnabas headed for Cyprus and then Turkey (Asia Minor). At first their method of evangelism was to preach in the town synagogues. But when they were rejected there, the attention of the missionaries was drawn to the Gentiles. Because of Paul's bold witness, Saul the Persecutor became Paul the Persecuted. He was arrested again and again, beaten, imprisoned and even stoned and left for dead. But

1 through all these sufferings, Paul steadfastly continued preaching Christ. **2 Cor. 4:8-12**

2 **We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in**
3 **despair; [9] Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; [10] Always**
4 **bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus**
5 **might be made manifest in our body. [11] For we which live are always delivered**
6 **unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our**
7 **mortal flesh. [12] So then death worketh in us, but life in you.**

8
9 Paul's ministry to Gentiles brought controversy over who could be saved and how to
10 become a follower of Christ. *Between his first and second journey, he participated in a*
11 *conference in Jerusalem discussing this issue. The final consensus was that the*
12 *Gentiles could receive Jesus without submitting to Jewish customs.*

13 14 **SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

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16 Acts 15:36 - 18:22: Paul stayed in Antioch for a time, strengthening the believers there,
17 but the Holy Spirit kept prompting him to make another missions trip. He asked
18 Barnabas to join him, revisiting the churches of their first missions outreach. However,
19 a disagreement over Mark (Barnabas' relative), who had dropped out of the first missions
20 journey, caused the two men to separate their efforts. Barnabas and Mark returned to
21 Cyprus while Paul chose Silas to go with him as they invaded Europe for the first time
22 with the Gospel. In northern Greece, at Philippi, Paul and Silas were beaten and
23 imprisoned. At midnight, they sang to the Lord. A God-sent earthquake opened the
24 doors of their dungeon and freed them. Many converts came to the Lord through this.

25
26 From there Paul went to Thessalonica and Berea, establishing works for God, and then he
27 headed south to Athens where he preached on Mars Hill, adjacent to the Acropolis. Paul
28 then went to the great city of Corinth and established perhaps the strongest Pentecostal
29 church of that time in that city.

30 31 **THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

32
33 Acts 18:23 - 20:38: During Paul's third journey (perhaps there were others, but we
34 don't know for sure), he preached across Turkey. In the huge city of Ephesus, there was
35 such a revival that the silversmiths (idol-makers) fomented a riot in the stadium. At the
36 end of Paul's third journey, he realized that he would one day be imprisoned and
37 executed. Meeting for the last time with the Ephesian believers, Paul said: **Acts**
38 **20:18-24**

39 **And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day**
40 **that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, [19]**

1 **Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations,**
2 **which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: [20] And how I kept back nothing**
3 **that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly,**
4 **and from house to house, [21] Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks,**
5 **repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. [22] And now,**
6 **behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall**
7 **befall me there: [23] Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that**
8 **bonds and afflictions abide me. [24] But none of these things move me, neither count**
9 **I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the**
10 **ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of**
11 **God.**

12 13 **CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

14
15 I often refer to Acts 13 as a “watershed” chapter, that is, a “transitional” move in the
16 scripture.

- 17
- 18 • Notice in verse 1 the divergence of those in the Antioch church: you have rich and
19 poor, various races, and social strata differences. That’s the way the Church of our
20 Lord should be, a true reflection of the society around it.
 - 21
 - 22 • During this time, the Holy Spirit made it clear to the congregants that God wanted
23 their pastors, Barnabas and Paul, to begin global evangelism. Acts 13:4 Sent off
24 on their new assignment by the Holy Spirit, Barnabas and Saul went down to
25 Seleucia and caught a ship for Cyprus.
 - 26
 - 27 • On the Island of Cyprus, Barnabas, Paul and Mark were invited to appear before the
28 Roman ruler, Sergius Paulus, who was interested in their message. When a court
29 attendant, a demon-possessed man named Elymas, attempted to circumvent Paul’s
30 witness, he was stricken blind. That was enough for Sergius Paulus! He believed!
31
 - 32 • From Cyprus, the missionary troupe sailed north into Pamphylia (Turkey). *It was at*
33 *this point that young John Mark left them and went home to Jerusalem, an act which*
34 *cut short Paul’s appreciation of him and would cause the dissension at the start of the*
35 *second missionary journey between Paul and Barnabas. It was not until the last act*
36 *of his life, when he was on death row in Rome, that Paul was willing to re-consider*
37 *Mark again as a worthy missionary.*
 - 38
 - 39 • Read Paul’s message to the lost in Perga, verses 16-41. Result: Acts 13:44-45
40 **When the next Sabbath came around, practically the whole city showed up to**

1 **hear the Word of God. [45] Some of the Jews, seeing the crowds, went wild with**
2 **jealousy and tore into Paul, contradicting everything he was saying, making an ugly**
3 **scene.**

- 4
- 5 • Verses 50 and 51 tell us that when Paul and Barnabas were asked to leave the city to
- 6 avoid conflict, “they shook the dust of their feet against them and came to
- 7 Iconium.”
- 8

It is my feeling that people who have had an adequate witness of the Gospel should not expect to keep hearing it over and over until everyone has had the opportunity to hear it at least once.

9 CHAPTER FOURTEEN

- 10
- 11 • Today Iconium is a city in Turkey of about 1.5 million people. In Paul’s day it was
- 12 much smaller, but still vital. Here Paul and Barnabas faithfully declared the Gospel.
- 13 While many were convinced of Christ, still others rebelled and started to riot. So:
- 14 **Acts 14:5-7 One day, learning that both the Jews and non-Jews had been**
- 15 **organized by their leaders to beat them up, they escaped as best they could to the**
- 16 **next towns—Lyconia, Lystra, Derbe, and that neighborhood— [6] [7] but then**
- 17 **were right back at it again, getting out the Message.**
- 18
- 19
- 20 • The next stop was Lystra: **Acts 14:8-11 There was a man in Lystra who couldn't**
- 21 **walk. He sat there, crippled since the day of his birth. [9] He heard Paul talking,**
- 22 **and Paul, looking him in the eye, saw that he was ripe for God's work, ready to**
- 23 **believe. [10] So he said, loud enough for everyone to hear, "Up on your feet!"**
- 24 **The man was up in a flash—jumped up and walked around as if he'd been**
- 25 **walking all his life.**
- 26 **[11] When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they went wild, calling out in their**
- 27 **Lyconian dialect, "The gods have come down! These men are gods!"**
- 28
- 29

30 One thing that is consistent about people is this: they are not consistent. In the former town of Iconium the people wanted to kill Paul and Barnabas; but in Lystra they called Barnabas the god Jupiter and Paul Mercury. (Verse 11) Every Christian leader learns quickly not to pay much attention to either accolades or criticisms.

1 Paul and Barnabas made it clear they were simply people “like you,” they said. SO
2 HOW INCONSISTENT WERE THE PEOPLE? In verse 11 they thought the
3 missionaries were gods; in verses 18 and 19 they stoned them, leaving Paul “for dead”
4 by the side of the road.

- 5
- 6 • Now the missionaries backtracked across southern Turkey and returned to Antioch to
7 give a verbal report to the church that sent them.
- 8

9 CHAPTER FIFTEEN

- 10
- 11 • Back in Antioch, an envoy was sent to the church from Jerusalem made up of
12 believers who were legalists and said that no one could become a Christian without
13 being circumcised - a religious rite that has to do with surgery on genitalia -
14 especially that of males in Jewish religion.
- 15
- 16 • It was Paul’s contention throughout the book of Acts that it was Christ and His shed
17 blood that saves us, not some medical procedure. The Apostle Peter rose to make a
18 rather long speech defending this principle: verses 7 - 21.
- 19
- 20 • The bottom line was that the church ruled out circumcision as a salvation method, but
21 insisted upon holy living, once the convert came to Christ.
- 22

23 THE SPLIT BETWEEN PAUL AND BARNABAS

24 Acts 15:36-41 (The Message)

25 After a few days of this, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit all our
26 friends in each of the towns where we preached the Word of God. Let's see how
27 they're doing."
28

29 [37] Barnabas wanted to take John along, the John nicknamed Mark. [38] But
30 Paul wouldn't have him; he wasn't about to take along a quitter who, as soon as the
31 going got tough, had jumped ship on them in Pamphylia. [39] Tempers flared, and
32 they ended up going their separate ways: Barnabas took Mark and sailed for
33 Cyprus; [40] Paul chose Silas and, offered up by their friends to the grace of the
34 Master, [41] went to Syria and Cilicia to build up muscle and sinew in those
35 congregations.

- 36
- 37 • Differences of opinion on non-essentials of the Gospel should not hinder the church
38 nor alienate those on either side. While the Gospel itself cannot and must not be
39 changed, methods of implementing the Gospel vary widely.
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CHAPTER SIXTEEN
The Second Missionary Journey

- Now Paul and Silas leave Antioch, going overland back through Tarsus, returning to places from their first journey - Derbe, Lystra and Iconium (Galatia) - but also hitting some new territories farther west and eventually becoming **THE FIRST MISSIONARIES ON THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE**. It was early in this journey that Paul encountered the young man who would become his protégé, Timothy.
- On this journey, his second, now with Silas and Timothy - soon to be joined at Troas (port city) by the Greek physician Luke, Paul was determined to make some changes on this time around. He would stay longer in each city, if possible, to make sure the converts had their roots planted deep into the soil of scripture and faith. And he hoped to develop young missionaries who would continue his work where he could not reach.
- Paul wanted to go 250 miles west in Turkey to the great city of Ephesus. But the Holy Spirit said, “No,” and directed them instead to Europe through the Macedonian city of Neapolis (present-day Kavala) and on over the mountains to Philippi. The missionary troupe left Asia Minor (Turkey) from the port city of Troas.

At Troas Luke slips into the picture. In the best tradition of historians he never thrusts himself forward and thus leaves his origins open to speculation. It is known that he was a doctor: Paul calls him the “beloved physician” and he shows close attention to medical detail. He was a Greek. Early tradition makes him a citizen of Antioch in Syria. It has been suggested that Titus was Luke’s brother whom he did not wish to mention unless it seem family pride. He must have met Paul, Silas and Timothy at Troas by coincidence, for they had no intention of going there.

THE MAN WHO SHOOK THE WORLD / JOHN POLLACK / VICTORY BOOKS / PAGE 91

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The addition of Luke would be a great boon to Paul, whose health was deteriorating and often hindered him from travel. Now the little quartet of missionaries leave Turkey and sail for Neapolis, Greece.

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They landed the second evening at Neapolis, a new harbor tucked close under a ridge of the Pangaeian range which they climbed next day with the broad Via Egnatia (an incredible highway built by the Romans, starting in Rome in the west and ending in Istanbul in the east - DB). From the top of the pass they saw the city of Philippi.