

THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

TRAVEL NOTES

- A. The team arrived in Perga (13a), *Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia.*
1. Paul and Barnabas traveled from Cyprus to Perga in Pamphylia which is west of Cilicia, Paul's home province.
 2. They would spend time in Perga on their return but for now, they were heading to Antioch in Pisidia.
- B. John Mark returned to Jerusalem (13b), *And John left them and returned to Jerusalem,*
1. John Mark decided to return to Jerusalem before their departure to Pisidian Antioch.
 2. Some reasons proposed for John Mark's departure
 - a. Homesickness - concern for his widowed mother, Acts 12:12.
 - b. Fear of sickness - it is believed that Paul became seriously ill with malaria in Perga, Galatians 4:13, *You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first.*
 - c. Fear of travel - the road from Perga through the Taurus mountains to Antioch Pisidia was dangerous.
 - d. Change of leadership - Paul is now the team leader instead of Barnabas, John Mark's cousin.
 - e. Full acceptance of Gentiles - John Mark was from the church at Jerusalem where there was still concern over direct evangelization of non-Jews. He may have decided that such activity was not appropriate.
 3. Paul disapproved of John Mark's decision and considered it a defection, Acts 15:38, *But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.*

AT PISIDIAN ANTIOCH: ACTS 13:14-52

- A. Paul and his companions attended a service at the synagogue (14-16)
1. They went to the synagogue on the Sabbath (14a), *but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia.*
 - a. It is approximately 100 miles from Perga to Pisidian Antioch which is in the Roman province of Galatia.
 - b. The elevation went from sea level in Perga to 3,600 feet in Antioch Pisidia and was on the Via Sebaste, a Roman road that went from Ephesus to the Euphrates River.
 - c. Pisidian Antioch had a large Jewish population.
 - d. Merrill Unger, *In bringing the gospel to Pisidian Antioch, Paul and Barnabas were planting Christianity in the communication nerve center and heart of Asia Minor.*
 2. The synagogue officials asked if anyone wanted to speak (14b-16)
 - a. Paul and Barnabas went to they synagogue on the Sabbath, as was their custom (14b), *And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down.*
 - 1) Paul had a burden for his fellow Jews.
 - 2) The Jews had a theological background that would make them more familiar with Paul' message.
 - 3) God-fearing Gentiles would be there and their response might open up more opportunities in the non-Jewish community.
 - b. It was customary for the synagogue officials to invite guests to speak (15), *After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it." So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: "Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen.*
 - 1) They would first read from the Law (first five books of the Old Testament) and then from a prophetic book.
 - 2) Paul accepted their invitation to give a word of encouragement.
 - a) He addressed those in attendance: *Men of Israel* - Jews and *you who fear God* - Gentiles (non-Jews).
 - b) He asked them to listen.
 - c) Tom Constable, *This sermon is very similar to Peter's sermon in 2:14-40 and Stephen's in 7:2-53.*
 - 3) Luke recorded three of Paul's evangelistic messages in Acts: in Pisidian Antioch, Acts 13:17-41, in Lystra, Acts 14:15-17 and in Athens, Acts 17:22-31.
 - 4) Paul's messages show how they were tailored for the audience. This message was for those who knew Hebrew Scriptures.

- B. Paul's sermon in the synagogue (17-41)
1. God prepares the way for the coming Messiah (17-25)
 - a. God chose Israel as the people through whom He would bring salvation (17a), *The God of this people Israel chose our fathers*
 - 1) The only true God is the God of Israel.
 - 2) The redemption of mankind comes through the nation of Israel.
 - 3) God's written word was entrusted to Israel.
 - b. God blessed the people while they were in Egypt and delivered them (17b), *and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it.*
 - 1) God blessed the nation of Israel while in Egypt.
 - 2) God delivered them from captivity.
 - c. God led them patiently through the wilderness (18), *And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness.*
 - 1) God provided for all their needs while in the wilderness.
 - 2) He remained faithful to them despite their unfaithfulness.
 - d. God placed them in the land He had promised them (19-20a), *And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. All this took about 450 years.*
 - 1) God destroyed seven nations to make a place for them in Canaan, Deuteronomy 7:1, *When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you.*
 - 2) To this point, God had invested 450 years in the nation of Israel.
 - a) In Egypt, 400 years.
 - b) In the wilderness of Sinai, 40 years.
 - c) In the conquest of Canaan, 10 years.
 - e. God provided judges who delivered them (20b), *And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.*
 - 1) Judges were provided by God to deliver Israel from her enemies.
 - 2) The last judge, Samuel, was a prophet, as well.
 - f. God gave Israel kings as they requested (21-22)
 - 1) Under Saul, *Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.*
 - a) The people wanted a king to lead them like the nations around them.
 - b) God provided Saul who was not of the line from which Messiah would come.
 - 2) Under David, *And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.'*
 - a) Saul was removed because he lacked the desire to fully serve God.
 - b) David would be the man who pleased God and through whom God would provide Messiah.

- g. God sent Messiah Who is Jesus (23), ***Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.***
- 1) The name of Messiah is Jesus.
 - 2) This promise is the one in view in Isaiah 11:1-6, *There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.*
 - 3) God's care for Israel finds its fulfillment in Jesus, the Messiah.
- h. The ministry of John the Baptist (24-25), ***Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'***
- 1) John was the last Old Testament prophet to proclaim repentance and baptism.
 - 2) He acknowledged that he was not the Messiah but one proclaiming His soon appearing.
 - 3) Messiah is greater than all the judges, prophets and kings that came before Him.
 - 4) Thomas Constable, *Most of the Jews of the dispersion knew of John the Baptist's ministry. Often the early Christian preachers began the message of Jesus with John the Baptist, who announced and prepared for His coming (cf. Mark 1:2-8). John clarified that he was not the Messiah but was His forerunner (Luke 3:15-18).*
2. The Messiah came and was rejected (26-31)
- a. Paul addressed his hearers by groups and noted that the Gospel is for both (26), ***Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation.***
 - 1) Again, Paul personally addressed those in attendance.
 - 2) Of course, *Sons of the family of Abraham*, were Jews.
 - 3) *You who fear God* were non-Jews attracted to the God of Israel.
 - 4) The message of salvation is for Jew and Gentile, all people.
 - b. The response to His coming (27-31)
 - 1) Jesus was rejected by the Jews and they asked that He be executed even though He was innocent (27-28), ***For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed.***
 - a) Jews in Jerusalem rejected Jesus as Messiah because they did not understand Scripture which was fulfilled in Jesus.
 - b) Jesus was executed at the request of Jewish leaders even though Roman officials found him innocent.
 - 2) He was executed by Romans but raised from the dead by God (29-31), ***And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people.***
 - a) Jesus fulfilled the reason for which He came, payment for the sins of mankind.
 - b) God vindicated Jesus' innocence by raising Him from the dead.
 - c) His resurrection was seen by many witnesses.

- c. This section presents a fourfold Christian confession similar to that found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.*
- 1) Jesus was crucified.
 - 2) He was buried in a tomb.
 - 3) God raised him from the dead.
 - 4) He was seen by many witnesses.
- d. Paul pictures grace shining through darkness in this message of man's failures as noted by G. Campbell Morgan, *That is the infinite music of the Gospel. When He brought the Savior into darkness and blindness even among the people of His own choice and exaltation and government they did not know Him. They read the law and the prophets, which led up to, and promised this great Saviour; but when He came, they were blind, and did not understand Him. There is no more wonderfully illuminating word, revealing at once the Divine government and the Divine grace, than that in which the apostle declared that God compelled the folly and sin of these people to fulfill His purpose. They fulfilled the Scriptures they did not understand, by condemning Him Who stood in their midst, according to the purpose of God.*
3. The necessity of Messiah's resurrection (32-37)
- a. In Psalm 2:7 (32-33), *And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you."*
- 1) Jesus has always been God the Son but this passage refers to Jesus being raised from the dead to fulfill His role as the Davidic ruler.
 - 2) 2 Samuel 7:12-14a, *When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.*
- b. In Isaiah 55:3 (34), *And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.'*
- 1) Jesus' resurrection enables Him to provide the blessings promised to David, tying verse 34 back to verses 22 and 23.
 - 2) These blessings are based on an everlasting covenant, Isaiah 55:3, *Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.*
- c. In Psalm 16:10 (35-37), *Therefore he says also in another psalm, 'You will not let your Holy One see corruption.' For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, but he whom God raised up did not see corruption.*
- 1) The resurrection of Messiah must occur if God is to fulfill His unconditional promises to David.
 - 2) Jesus' resurrection is what ties Old Testament promises to New Testament grace.
4. Salvation is in Messiah alone (38-41)
- a. Forgiveness of sins comes through Jesus, the Messiah, and not through the Law (38-39), *Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.*
- 1) Paul made it clear that Jesus came to make payment for the sins of others.
 - 2) The law of Moses can't free us from sin because its purpose is to condemn.
 - 3) The law makes us realize that we need a Savior not better behavior.

- b. A warning to not reject the good news concerning Jesus (40-41), *Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about: "Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you."*
 - 1) Paul warned them not to miss out on salvation that only comes from Jesus, the Messiah.
 - 2) The Gospel may seem to be too good to be true but it is true and it is good news.
 - 3) The quote from Habakkuk 1:5 emphasizes coming judgment for those who disregard this message of hope.
- C. Responses to Paul's sermon (42-52)
1. The message was well-received by many in the synagogue (42-43), *As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.*
 - a. The people begged Paul to speak again concerning Messiah on the next Sabbath.
 - b. Many Jews and Gentile converts were encouraged to continue in the grace of God.
 - c. It appears that some listeners had already seen God's plan of salvation in the Old Testament and responded to Paul's message which showed that Jesus is the fulfillment of those promises.
 2. The focus of the Gospel message turned from Jews to Gentiles (44-47)
 - a. Large crowds of Gentiles responding to the message made the Jews jealous and they turned against Paul (44-45), *The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.*
 - 1) Those at the synagogue encouraged Paul and Barnabas to return on the following Sabbath but did not expect large crowds.
 - 2) The Jews were jealous of the large crowds and turned against Paul, blaspheming him and his message.
 - 3) The message of salvation for all peoples must not have set well with the Jews, Richard Longenecker, *The majority of the Jews, including undoubtedly the leaders of the Jewish community, were apparently unwilling to countenance a salvation as open to Gentiles as it was to Jews.*
 - b. Paul declared that the Gospel must be proclaimed to Jews first but since they rejected the message, he would take the message to Gentiles (46), *And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.*
 - 1) Paul and Barnabas explained that they had to present the Gospel to the Jews first.
 - a) Jewish acceptance of Messiah must come before the Messianic Kingdom.
 - b) Jesus is the Messiah whom God sent to deliver the Jews.
 - 2) The Jews' rejection of Jesus caused Paul to focus fully on his calling as apostle to the Gentiles.
 - c. Paul confirmed his calling to the Gentiles through an Old Testament quote (47), *For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."*
 - 1) Paul and Barnabas were fulfilling God's call on their lives, to take the Gospel to the Gentiles.
 - 2) They emphasized their obedience to God by quoting Isaiah 49:6.
 3. Many Gentiles believed the message and came to faith (48-49), *And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.*
 - a. Gentiles rejoiced that the message of the Gospel was available to non-Jews.
 - b. Those called by God believed.
 - 1) This is a strong statement of predestination.
 - 2) Kent, *Once again the human responsibility of believing is shown to coincide exactly with what God in his sovereignty had planned.*

4. Jews incited community leaders against Paul and Barnabas (50-51), ***But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium.***
 - a. Jews stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas.
 - b. Paul and Barnabas were forced to leave the district by following Jesus directions, Luke 10:11, *'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'*
 - c. They went to Iconium which was 80 miles away.
5. The disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit (52), ***And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.***
 - a. The disciples were probably Paul and Barnabas but it could refer to new converts, as well.
 - b. They were not disturbed by rejection but were filled with joy.
 - c. Joy is not based on circumstances but on truth.
 - d. The presence of the Holy Spirit is a reminder of Whose we are. The One who is in control of history is the One who has control of my heart.

<i>CONCLUSION</i>

- A. God is in control of history as seen in the nation of Israel.
- B. All of God's promises find fulfillment in the Messiah, Jesus.
- C. The message of the Gospel is faith in Jesus plus nothing.
- D. There will always be mixed results when the Gospel is proclaimed.
- E. Our joy is not in what we do but in Whose we are.