

Outline

1. Paul & Barnabus
 1. Returned from Jerusalem with John Mark (12:25)
 2. Separated to the work set for them by the Holy Spirit
2. First Missionary Journey
 1. Depart to the island of Cyprus (Salamis to Paphos)
 1. Encounter with Elymas
 2. Conversion of Sergius Paulus
 2. To Pamphylia
 1. Loss of John Mark upon arrival
 2. No mention of preaching here
 3. To Galatia
 1. Antioch of Pisidia
 1. Initial curiosity and forbearance
 2. Sermon
 3. Follow-up lesson generates strife
 2. Iconium
 3. Lystra
 1. Miracle causes idolatry
 2. Stoned and abandoned for dead
 4. Derbe
4. Return trip
 1. Strengthened existing churches
 2. Appointed elders
 3. Preached in Perga
 4. Returned to Antioch

Commentary

In 12:25, Barnabus and Saul are most likely returning from the relief mission that they had departed Antioch for in Acts 11:30.

We see almost immediately that Saul (now called “Paul” in verse 9) and Barnabus establish a pattern of taking the gospel to the Jews first and then proclaiming the good news to the Gentiles after the Jews would reject it. But, we should be careful not to think that this was some sort of injunction from God. Rather, it just seems to be logic at work. The Jews had the Scriptures already and would have been much more familiar with the prophetic basis for declaring Jesus to be the promised Messiah.

We do not know why John Mark departs from them in Acts 13:13, but we do know that it will play a role in the split between Paul and Barnabus in Acts 15:38.

Paul gives two sermons in Antioch. The first is very well received and they are invited back again to speak on the following Sabbath. This time, however, they are rejected — not for their words but for jealousy over the crowd size (Acts 13:45 — “when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy”). It is at this point that Paul explicitly says that they will take the gospel to the Gentiles.

We should be careful not to over-read the shaking off of the dust of the feet in Acts 13:51. We often want to associate that with the command given by Jesus in the Limited Commission (Matthew 10:14, Mark 6:11, and Luke 9:5). But that commission was not given to Paul. Further, the Limited Commission talks of “that place” while Luke’s recording of this incident seems to limit the application of the action to “them,” which seems to be the Jews who were driving them forth (Acts 13:50) rather than the entire population of Antioch.

Chapter 14 begins with Iconium. Iconium seems notable for the length of time that Paul stayed there in order to preach. Even in the face of opposition, Paul continued his work. They do not leave until they are threatened with violence in the form of stoning (Acts 14:5).

We often think of the Lystrans as being silly for putting Barnabus in the position of Zeus and Paul in the position of Hermes. But, it's important to understand why they did so: Paul was the primary speaker (Acts 14:12). So, what they did was dependent upon the order of how they expected their gods to act. Their awe quickly turns to rejection and hate, though. As a result, we see here the instance of stoning to which Paul makes reference in 2 Corinthians 11:25.

As they return, they exhort the Christians regarding entering the kingdom of God "through many tribulations" (Acts 14:22). For many of these Christians, the persecutions that Paul and Barnabus had suffered would have provided a very pointed backdrop to that statement.

Please consider the following thought questions:

1. In your mind, what are the major points of chapters 13 and 14?
2. Can we fall into the same trap of "numbers envy" that the Jews did in Acts 13:45? How can we guard ourselves against that?
3. Provide a brief sketch or outline of Paul's first sermon in Antioch.
4. What is the importance of the appointment of elders in Acts 14:23?