

**STORY**

Paul's First Missionary Journey - Acts 13-14)

TEACHER PRAYER

O dearest Jesus, You have called me to "feed Your lambs." As I study Your saving Word and prepare my lesson, enable me to lead the children to You, their Lord and Savior. Help me to share the good news of salvation with them and instill in them a fervent zeal for Your Word and a sincere desire to share it with others. "Your Word is Truth." Amen.

VOCABULARY

synagogue - a church or place of worship

sorcerer - a false prophet who tries to predict the future

proconsul - the Roman governor

proselytes - converts to the Jewish faith

OUTER AIM

The Lord called Paul and Barnabas to preach the Gospel in far-off lands.

INNER AIM

The Lord blesses the preaching of the Gospel with fruits.

BACKGROUND Rupprecht *Bible History References, Vol. 2*, pp. 539-555.

Paul the apostle, by God's grace, became one of the greatest missionaries of all time. He was once known as Saul, the great persecutor of the church. After his conversion on the road to Damascus, Saul became known as Paul, one of the great missionaries of the church. A Jew by birth, he was called by God to spread the Gospel of Christ to Jew and Gentile alike. He is known to us as the "apostle to the Gentiles." In this lesson, we follow him on his 1st great missionary journey.

Acts 13:1-12 Paul and Barnabas on Cyprus

vs. 1-3 A growing, thriving early Christian congregation was located in Antioch in Syria. Led by the Holy Spirit, this congregation called and sent Saul (Paul) and Barnabas to do foreign mission work. It was at Antioch that Jesus' followers were first called Christians. This church at Antioch had five great prophets and teachers in its midst. The Lord chose Paul and Barnabas to help spread the Gospel to lands and people far away.

vs. 4-12 The island of Cyprus was the first place they went. Cyprus was Barnabas' home. He had originated from there. John Mark accompanied them on their journey. They preached in the synagogue of the Jews. While on Cyprus, a man named Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor of the island, was brought to faith. A Jewish false prophet and sorcerer, named Bar-jesus, or Elymas, was struck with blindness by Paul. The Lord used this miracle together with Paul's testimony to convert the Roman governor.

Acts 13:13-52 Paul and Barnabas in Pisidia

Paul and Barnabas left the island of Cyprus and headed to Asia Minor (present-day Turkey). John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. Perhaps he was unwilling to go to the Gentiles with the Gospel at this time. Their first stop was Perga in Pamphylia, then they headed for Antioch in Pisidia.

v. 14 Their first stop was the synagogue of the Jews.

vs. 15-41 The rulers of the synagogue invited Paul and Barnabas to speak. They stood up and proclaimed Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord. Paul preached, outlining Israel's long history, God's abundant grace, and His precious promises. Paul's sermon began with Abraham and touched on such things as Israel's enslavement in Egypt and deliverance, the 40 years in the wilderness, the occupation of Canaan, the period of the judges, kings, and prophets . . . down to the days of John the Baptist and Jesus. He spoke at length concerning Jesus' bitter sufferings and death and glorious resurrection. He urged all to repent of their sins and to believe on Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Some of the Jews were hesitant to believe, but the Gentiles wanted to hear more. The Jews opposed Paul and Barnabas and their testimony. Paul and Barnabas announced that they would bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Word of the Lord spread. Paul and Barnabas were persecuted and moved on to Iconium.

Acts 14:1-7 Paul and Barnabas in Iconium

v. 1 They first spoke at the local synagogue. Many Jews and Gentiles believed.

v. 2-3 Unbelieving Jews stirred up opposition. Paul and Barnabas continued preaching and teaching and doing miracles there for some time.

v. 4-7 More opposition and persecution came from some Jews and Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas fled to Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding countryside.

Acts 14:8-20 Paul and Barnabas at Lystra

Paul healed a crippled man. The heathen in that city viewed Paul and Barnabas as gods and prepared to worship them. Paul proclaimed the true God. More persecutions arose. Paul was stoned but miraculously survived. He and Barnabas departed.

Acts 14:21-28 Paul and Barnabas at Derbe

They preached at Derbe also. Many believed. They then retraced their steps and returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. They sought to strengthen and confirm the brethren in their faith. They also labored in other cities and towns along the way, finally coming to Perga. Then they returned to Antioch in Syria to give a full report to the church. The door of faith had been opened to the Gentiles. Their missionary trip had been a great success. The Lord was building His church.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dearest Lord Jesus, Your precious gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes." Therefore, richly bless the preaching of the Gospel far and wide. "Add to the Church daily such as should be saved." Help us love Your Word more and more. Move us to pray for our missionaries and their work. Move us all to do what we can to "preach the Gospel to every creature and thereby make disciples of all nations." In Your saving name we pray. Amen.

PRESENTATION

The Lord's great Commission is very clear. . . "make disciples of all nations". . . "preach the Gospel to every creature." Jesus was not only "the Glory of His people Israel, He was a Light to lighten the Gentiles." In this lesson we see just how true this was. Paul and Barnabas reached out to Jew and Gentile alike. Wherever they went, they first sought out the Jews. Then they reached out also to the Gentiles.

As you present this lesson to your children, a map outlining where Paul and Barnabas went would be very helpful and meaningful. The map would help them pinpoint the places mentioned in this lesson.

As the lesson proceeds, remind your students that the Lord was guiding Paul and Barnabas, and also blessing their efforts.

Note also that the preaching of the Gospel invited opposition from Jews and Gentiles alike. The Lord was with His servants. . . blessing and keeping them.

APPLICATION

The Lord calls His people to preach the Gospel. He also sends them to the places He Himself has chosen. He opens certain doors; He closes others. “The Lord adds daily to the church such as should be saved.”

The Lord called Paul and Barnabas to preach the Gospel at Antioch. He has called each of us into His service as well.

We are called to preach the Gospel. “The Lord will give the increase.”

Whenever and wherever the Gospel is proclaimed, opposition is certain to arise. It can be expected. Our Lord has said, “If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”

The Lord will bless and keep His people today, as He did Paul and Barnabas long ago.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Beginners

Mark 16:15 - “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

Romans 10:13 - “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Middle

Matthew 28:18-20 - “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always,”

Romans 8:14 - “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

I Cor. 12:3b - “No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”

Upper

Isaiah 55:11 - “So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

I Tim. 2:4 - “God our Savior desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

II Pet. 3:9 - “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise . . . but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any

should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

HYMN CHOICES

From Greenland's Icy Mountains - TLH #495

Hark! the Voice of Jesus Crying - TLH #496