



## Witnessing in Antioch of Pisidia

Acts 13:14-52

### The journey to Antioch (v. 14)

The ninety-mile journey north from Perga to Antioch, a Galatian city 3,600 feet above sea level, was difficult and dangerous. The journey carried them through the rough terrain of the Taurus Mountains. The area was barren and frequently was subjected to flash floods. Although the area was part of the Roman province of Galatia, the soldiers had not completely subdued bandits who threatened any traveller through the area.

If Paul's Epistle to the Galatians was addressed to the churches of the southern region, the information in Galatians 4:13ff. would apply to his visit to Antioch on the first missionary journey. Galatians 4:13 implies that Paul originally planned to journey to another city, but his sickness forced a change in his plans. The "infirmity of the flesh" may have been a disease of his eyes (cf. 4:15).

Scholars are divided on the question of the location of the churches to which the Galatian letter was addressed. Some believe that the letter was sent to the northern region of Asia Minor and others say it was sent to the southern region which included Antioch. Galatia was named for the war-like Gauls who inhabited a section of the interior of Asia Minor which included the Halys River Valley near the Black Sea. The barbarian tribes were eventually conquered by the Romans and formed into a province named Galatia. To the original Galatia was added the regions of Phrygia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia, in which were located the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The original area of the Gauls is known as North Galatia. South Galatia is the region which the Romans added to the province.

Antioch was a city of Hellenistic influence. The Seleucid kings had planted Jewish colonies there for business, cultural, and political reasons. When Paul arrived, he visited the synagogue and was enthusiastically received by the liberal-minded Jews.

### The sermon at Antioch (vv. 15-41)

The first Sabbath after their arrival, Paul and Barnabas attended the synagogue services. In typical fashion, sections from the Law and the Prophets were read, and the synagogue president invited the distinguished visitors to interpret and apply these Scriptures for the people who were present. Paul responded to the invitation and used the Old Testament Scripture to present Jesus as the Saviour. Paul believed that Jesus Christ was the consummation of Judaism since the Old Testament predicted His coming.

**The Davidic descendant** (vv. 16-23).—Paul's audience would have been acquainted with Old Testament history. Both Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles were present (v. 16). Paul reviewed the history of Israel in order to magnify the promise to David that the throne would be established with his descendant. Paul did not stress the military-political role of the Messiah who would deliver Israel from her enemies, but he emphasized the work of the Deliverer or Saviour who would establish righteousness. David had been famous for his military victories and for his loyalty to Yahweh—"a man after mine «Yahweh's» own heart."

Paul showed how God's plan had not been subverted by the rebellion of Israel. God had elected the people of Israel for definite purposes: to worship Him, to live righteously before Him, and to be a blessing to the nations of the world. God deserved the worship and obedience of the people because He delivered them from Egyptian bondage. In spite of their rebellion in the Wilderness, Yahweh did not forsake them. He gave them the land of Canaan in fulfilment of the promise He had made to Abraham.

According to Galatians 4:13, apparently Paul had planned to go to another city instead of \_\_\_\_\_, but his \_\_\_\_\_ forced a change in his plans.

(Antioch, sickness)

IS THIS STATEMENT TRUE OR FALSE?

In Antioch, Paul was received enthusiastically in the synagogue by the liberal-minded Jews.

\_\_\_\_\_

(true)

Paul used \_\_\_\_\_ Scriptures to present Jesus as the \_\_\_\_\_.

(Old Testament, Saviour)

Paul magnified the promise to \_\_\_\_\_ that the throne would be established with his \_\_\_\_\_. He emphasized a messiah who would establish \_\_\_\_\_.

(David, descendant, righteousness)

After the people received the land, they needed a leader. Judges were provided to guide them in solving social problems, but Yahweh was their King. When the people asked for a king in order to be like other nations, Samuel opposed the request, but God gave them Saul, the son of Kish. Saul, who was selected by the people, had to be rejected because of his unrighteousness and rebellion. Yahweh chose David who worshipped only the one God ("a man after my heart") and who attempted to live righteously by doing the will of God. The promise was given to Israel that the throne would be established with a descendant of David. In fulfilment of that promise, God gave Israel the Saviour or Deliverer, Jesus.

**Jesus as Saviour: the body of the sermon (vv. 24-37).**— The subject of Paul's sermon is "Jesus as Saviour." The outline of his sermon is typically apostolic.

1. The life and ministry of Jesus (vv. 24f.)

The Rabbis stated that if Israel kept the Law perfectly for one day, Yahweh would send the Messiah. John the Baptist proclaimed that the time had arrived for the Messiah. Preparation for His coming consisted not in law-keeping but in repentance which was expressed outwardly by baptism. The Jews responded to John in large numbers; some thought that he was the Messiah. John informed them that he was not the Messiah but the one who was to prepare the way for the Messiah. Paul's sermon gives indication of his knowledge of the Gospel which he may have received from Mark (cf. vv. 24ff.). Paul's statements are similar to Mark 1:4, 7 and John 1:19f.

Paul did not present Jesus as the Messiah who would bring political deliverance or establish an earthly kingdom. He emphasized that Jesus was the Saviour who would bring repentant men to a right relationship with God.

2. Jesus is the fulfilment of the Old Testament (vv. 26f.)

The Jewish leaders who lived in Jerusalem did not recognize Jesus as the fulfilment of the Prophets which they read every Sabbath; therefore, they put Him to death as an impostor. Even their action of condemning Jesus was a fulfilment of Scripture. Paul did not indicate which Scriptures were fulfilled in the rejection of Jesus. Jewish failure to recognize Jesus as God's anointed indicated their blindness. Isaiah spoke frequently of the Servant.

3. The unjust death and burial of Jesus (vv. 28f.)

Paul's sermon indicates that he was well acquainted with the events surrounding the death of Jesus. Jesus had been tried before Pilate, and the charges against Him were groundless. The Jews requested Pilate to execute Jesus even though Pilate had found no wrong in Him. Pilate yielded to their demands in order to keep peace and he carried out the pre-death punishment and His crucifixion (cf. Isa. 53). Paul mentioned that Jesus was laid in a tomb to emphasize the certainty of His death.

4. God raised Jesus from the dead (vv. 30f.)

The proof that Jesus is God's chosen Saviour came in the resurrection when God undid the work of evil men. The many appearances of Jesus to His disciples from Galilee left no doubt of the actuality of the resurrection. Those who witnessed his post-resurrection appearances became witnesses to the people.

5. The fulfilment of God's promise (vv. 32-37)

Paul emphasized that God had fulfilled His promise "to us," the children of the fathers to whom the promise was made. The promise was to establish a descendant of David on the throne of his kingdom forever (cf. 2 Sam. 7:13). This promise was fulfilled

The outline of Paul's sermon is typically\_\_\_\_\_.

(apostolic)

The first point of his sermon is \_\_\_\_\_

(The life and ministry of Jesus)

The second point is \_\_\_\_\_

(Jesus is the fulfilment of the Old Testament)

The third point is \_\_\_\_\_

(The unjust death and burial of Jesus)

The fourth point of Paul's sermon is \_\_\_\_\_

(God raised Jesus from the dead)

in Jesus. The promise of an everlasting throne could not be fulfilled through a human who would die and decay. Paul interpreted Psalm 2:7, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee," to mean that Jesus is God's divine Son who was begotten by the divine act of raising Him from the dead. The promise that the descendant of David would be established on an everlasting throne could be kept only if the descendant did not decay. Paul found Old Testament support in Psalm 16:10 that the promise required the resurrection for fulfillment: "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." The Psalm had been applied to David, but Paul pointed out that David could not have been the person to whom it applied since he died and his grave indicated that his body had decayed. The Holy Spirit had spoken prophetically through the Psalm to refer to David's descendant. Although Paul did not use the word kingdom, he talked about the everlasting Kingdom promised to a descendant of David. This descendant whose body would not undergo decay is Jesus whom God raised from the dead.

**The admonition to believe: the invitation (vv. 34-41).**—Paul emphasized the responsibility of David and his descendants to lead the people in righteousness before God. The Law of Moses could not free the people from their sins and restore them to fellowship with their heavenly Father, but Jesus offered forgiveness of sins which Paul proclaimed to the people: "Everyone who believes is freed from all things" (v. 39—NASB). This first sets forth Paul's great doctrine of justification or righteousness by faith. Everyone who believes "in this One" (v. 39) receives a new standing with God and a new quality of life. Paul quoted Habakkuk to warn his hearers of the danger of being blind to the work which was being accomplished in their day. Perhaps Paul recalled his own blindness previous to the Damascus road experience.

**The response of the people (vv. 42-52)**

Apparently Luke recorded only a synopsis of Paul's sermon. As he and Barnabas left the synagogue, the people begged him to speak again to them concerning Christ on the next Sabbath (v. 42). Many of the Jews and converts to Judaism (Gentile proselytes) continued to discuss the subject with Paul and Barnabas after the conclusion of the service (v. 43).

During the week, word spread rapidly concerning the Good News brought to the synagogue by Paul and Barnabas. Many from the city assembled to hear the Word of God (v. 44). The Gentiles probably had responded to the promise that "everyone who believes is freed from all things." They interpreted the "everyone" to include themselves. They came to the synagogue to hear more of the message of Paul.

God-fearing or proselyte Gentiles had been accepted by the Jews of the synagogue, but when the Jews saw the pagan Gentiles coming to hear Paul, "they were filled with jealousy" (v. 45). They contradicted the interpretation and application which Paul had given to the Old Testament Scriptures. The Jews became enraged during the debate and even "blasphemed" or cursed Christ (v. 45). They may have contended that "everyone that hangeth on a tree is accursed" (Gal. 3:13).

The Apostles saw that it was impossible to give further witness to the Jews whose jealousy had caused them to close their minds. They spoke boldly concerning their convictions. It was necessary to preach to the Jews first because of the order of God's election, but then the Gospel would be taken to the Gentiles. The Jews had proved themselves unworthy of God's grace since they repudiated His Son who offered them eternal life (v. 46). Paul showed from Scripture (Isa. 49:6) that it was the will of God for the light of the Gospel to be taken to the Gentiles (v.

The fifth point is \_\_\_\_\_

What promise to David did Christ fulfil?

(The fulfilment of God's promise, God would give David's descendant an everlasting kingdom)

Paul admonished his audience to \_\_\_\_\_

(believe)

What was the response of the people to Paul's sermon? \_\_\_\_\_

(They begged him to speak again on the next Sabbath.)

What changed the Jews' attitude? \_\_\_\_\_

(Jealousy of the pagan Gentiles who came to hear Paul)

Paul preached first in the \_\_\_\_\_, but when the \_\_\_\_\_ drove him out, he went directly to the pagan \_\_\_\_\_.

(synagogue, Jews, Gentiles)

47). Jesus had commanded that the Good News of salvation be carried to the ends of the earth. The jealousy and prejudice of the Jews revealed their unworthiness of God's love and forgiveness.

The Gentiles were aware of the attitude of the Jews. They rejoiced and praised God when they heard that the Word of the Lord included them. Luke notes that God's predetermined purposes cannot be hindered. The Gentiles who had been chosen also to eternal life responded to the message of Paul by belief (v. 48).

The Gospel had finally reached those farthest from it—pagan Gentiles. The Gentile response brought both notes of joy and sorrow. The fact that the Gentiles were included in salvation brought rejoicing, but it resulted in the self-exclusion of the Jews. They refused to be put on an equal level with Gentiles in the realm of religion.

Luke notes that the Word of God continued to meet a favourable response in the region (v. 49). The receptivity of the Gentiles can be compared to that of the Jews on the Day of Pentecost and the days immediately following. The jealousy of the Jews did not stop with self-exclusion. They determined to destroy the ministry of Paul and Barnabas even as Paul had attempted to destroy the early Church. The Jews stirred up the leaders of the city, probably the "First Ten" who were a board of magistrates in charge of the Greek city. They also influenced the ladies of the aristocracy who were probably attached to the synagogue (v. 50). These women may have had political connexions. Luke does not describe the persecution against Paul and Barnabas, but it is possible that they were accused of causing public disturbances and were imprisoned. After various sufferings (perhaps a beating of forty stripes save one), they were banished from the city and the surrounding district (v. 50).

After Paul and Barnabas left the district of Antioch, they "shook off the dust of their feet against them," an act of repudiation against the inhospitable city (v. 51). Although persecution had forced Paul and Barnabas to depart from Antioch, the results of the persecution were contrary to what the antagonistic Jews had intended. The believers who remained in the city were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. Paul had not mentioned the Spirit in his message; neither did Luke indicate that the pagan Gentiles who believed had received the Holy Spirit until verse 52.

**Events in Iconium**  
Acts 14:1-7

After they arrived in Iconium, the Apostles once again entered the synagogue and preached Christ. Luke does not give the outline of the sermon, but he does say that a great multitude believed, both of Jews and Greeks. The Greeks were probably God-fearing Gentiles. The experience at Antioch was repeated in Iconium. After initial success in the synagogue, the disbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and embittered them against the brethren (v. 2). The presence of the Spirit is evident through the boldness of the witness of the Apostles and the signs and wonders done by their hands.

Although the Gentiles (perhaps the city leaders) were turned against Paul and Barnabas, they spent a long time there in their ministry (v. 3). Luke's statement may indicate that they were brought before the magistrates but acquitted.

Eventually the city became divided after Paul and Barnabas spent an extended period of time teaching the Gospel. Those who opposed Paul plotted with their rulers to instigate a public riot during which the Apostles were to be stoned. They had been unsuccessful in bringing court charges against the Apostles. Information concerning the plot came to the Apostles, and they fled to the cities of Lycaonia—Lystra and Derbe.

<p>The including of the Gentiles in salvation resulted in the self-_____ of the _____ (exclusion, Jews)</p>
<p>The response of the Gentiles can be compared to that of the Jews on the _____ of _____ (Day, Pentecost)</p>
<p>What did the act of shaking off the dust symbolize? _____ (Repudiaton against the hostile city)</p>
<p>The experience at Antioch was repeated at _____ (Iconium)</p>
<p>Paul and Barnabas had to leave Iconium because their opponents plotted with the rulers and started a _____ which led to _____ (riot, stoning)</p>

## The Miracle at Lystra

Acts 14:8-20

There was no synagogue at Lystra, but there were a few Jews. The Jewess Eunice had married a Greek who may have been a man of position and wealth, but had died. Eunice lived with her mother Lois and her son Timothy. Their home may have offered hospitality to the Apostles when they first visited Lystra. Timothy had never been circumcised.

Without the availability of a synagogue, the preaching of Paul and Barnabas was conducted on streets and in homes. Perhaps at the entrance of a temple in the market-place, they encountered a poor beggar who had been a cripple from his mother's womb. The cripple may have heard of the God of the Jews. He listened to Paul's message with great interest. Perhaps the Apostle was speaking of being saved through faith in Jesus. Paul's attention was attracted to the cripple and he perceived that the man had enough faith to be healed. Paul commanded him to stand upright. The cripple leapt up and began to walk.

Being a pagan society, the people concluded that the gods had become like men and had come to their city. With their background of the myths of the Roman and Greek gods, it was natural for them to conclude that gods could visit them in human form. Barnabas was the older and more reserved; therefore, he was identified with Zeus (Jupiter—chief Roman god), the supreme deity and special guardian of their city. Paul was the spokesman and the younger of the two; therefore, he appeared to be Hermes (Mercurius—the Roman equivalent), the messenger of the gods (v. 12). Since the people began to speak in the Lycaonian language, possibly Paul and Barnabas did not know what they were saying when they were identified as Zeus and Hermes (v. 11).

The temple of the city's patron god lay outside the walls. The priest of Zeus, a chief person in Lystra, determined to offer a sacrifice to celebrate the great occasion. He brought bulls adorned with garlands to the gateway which led into the temple area (v. 13). The Apostles immediately intervened and tore their garments as a sign of extreme repugnance at such a blasphemous performance (v. 14). They pointed out that they too were men who preached the Gospel in order that the people would turn to the living God (v. 15).

Paul used the occasion to teach the people about the living God (vv. 15-17). He began with the fundamental truth of religion that there is only one God who is Creator. He explained that he was the messenger of that one living God. The gods of the Lycaonians, Zeus and Hermes, were vain, that is, they had no real existence. This one God had not left Himself without witnesses. His benevolent acts, manifested in rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, brought food and gladness to them. In times past, this God had permitted nations to follow their own desires. The time had arrived, however, when every nation was responsible to respond to the Creator in worship and obedience. It was wrong for people to offer their worship and loyalty which belonged to the Creator to men or idols.

News of the work of the Apostles at Lystra reached Antioch and Iconium. Jealous Jews who opposed the success of the Gospel among the Gentiles moved among the emotional and fickle crowds and persuaded them that the Apostles were in error (v. 19). The masses were easily incited to stone the Apostles. Since Paul was the spokesman, he was the primary object of the stoning. He was dragged from the city by his opponents who thought he was dead (v. 19). While the disciples stood around the body of the beloved Paul, perhaps planning his burial, he arose and returned to the city (v. 20). The next day he, with the help of

There was no synagogue in\_\_\_\_\_.

(Lystra)

In Lystra, Paul and Barnabas preached on

\_\_\_\_\_, in\_\_\_\_\_, and in the \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_, where they healed a \_\_\_\_\_.

(streets, homes, market-place, cripple)

The people decided Paul and Barnabas were\_\_\_\_\_.

(gods)

Match the missionary with the god he was identified with.

Hermes

Barnabas

Zeus

Paul

(Zeus-Barnabas, Hermes-Paul)

Paul taught the people:

1. There is only one\_\_\_\_\_ who is \_\_\_\_\_.

2. He has made Himself known through His \_\_\_\_\_ acts.

3. All people must\_\_\_\_\_ and\_\_\_\_\_ Him.

(God, Creator, benevolent, worship, obey)

Again the jealous Jews of\_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_ stirred up the people. Paul was\_\_\_\_\_ and left for dead.

(Antioch, Iconium, stoned)

Barnabas, went to Derbe thirty miles away. Although Luke avoids any statement which implies Paul had been killed, the fact that he was able to travel the next day suggests a miraculous recovery.

**Visits on the Return to Syrian Antioch**  
Acts 14:21-28

Derbe was a small town where Paul and Barnabas preached without significant incidents which Luke thought worthy of recording. He does mention that many disciples were made in Derbe, implying that a large percentage of the people of the small city turned to Christ.

After completing the work at Derbe, Paul visited again the new disciples at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (vv. 21-23). Since the churches were newly established in those cities, it was important to give them further instruction concerning the Gospel, to help solve any problems which may have arisen, and to encourage them as they faced persecution. The new Christians needed to understand that their faith would not prevent persecution. Entrance into the Kingdom of God was by a strait (difficult) and narrow gate. The Kingdom of God, a Jewish concept, was seldom used among Gentiles.

Another reason for revisiting the new churches was to appoint elders. The churches required some organization, especially those (among Gentiles) which were independent of the synagogues. Luke mentions that "they appointed elders for them in every church" (v. 23—NASB). The word appointed (ordained) originally denoted election by show of hands. The original meaning of the word might have been used to refer to a popular election. It seems likely that the selection was guided by the Apostles. The organization of the Church under the leadership of presbyters or elders was probably patterned after the Jewish synagogue. The elders were responsible for guiding Church services. After the elders were selected, the Church spent time in prayer and fasting. Luke does not mention the laying on of hands. Paul and Barnabas commended the elders and the entire Church to the Lord before continuing their journey back to Antioch of Syria.

The return from Pisidian Antioch to Perga required only a few days. The Apostles utilized their time by preaching the Gospel in Perga while waiting for a ship at Attalia, the port of Perga (v. 25). They returned to Antioch of Syria after an absence of eighteen months or more. They had accomplished the task for which they had been commissioned. They gave a report of their mission to the Church which had shared in it with them. Luke does not mention the dangers nor opposition encountered by the Apostles. Neither does he emphasize statistics. The opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles was the goal and the accomplishment of the mission (v. 27). The Gentiles had entered the Kingdom through the door, not of circumcision and the Law, but of faith in Jesus Christ. Paul and Barnabas continued in fellowship with the Church at Antioch for an extended period of time.

How successful were Paul and Barnabas in Derbe?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Many disciples were made or a large percentage of the population turned to Christ.)

List three reasons Paul revisited the churches in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Compare your answer with the text.)

Another reason he revisited the new churches was to \_\_\_\_\_  
Appoint originally meant \_\_\_\_\_  
by show of \_\_\_\_\_  
(appoint elders, election, hands)

What was the goal and accomplishment of Paul and Barnabas' mission? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles.)

## Home Study Assignment

**Basic study** (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. Why did the Jews protect the synagogues from Gentile intrusion? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What happened at Perga? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did Paul go to Antioch? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What was the promise to David which Christ fulfilled? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Outline the body of the sermon at Antioch.
  - (1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (4) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (5) \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the response of the people to Paul's sermon? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What caused the Jews at Antioch to turn against Paul? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How did the Jews respond to the taking of the Gospel to the Gentiles? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Where did Paul first preach the Gospel in Antioch and Iconium, and why did he later find different places? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Why did Paul and Barnabas have to leave Iconium? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Briefly summarize Paul's activities in Lystra. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Outline Paul's sermon at Lystra.

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_

13. What happened to Paul at Lystra? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Was the work of the Apostles successful at Derbe? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Give three reasons Paul revisited the new churches.

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) \_\_\_\_\_

16. What did the word "appointed" originally denote? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

17. According to the Apostles' report upon their return, what was the goal of their mission? \_\_\_\_\_

**Supplementary activities (Levels 2 and 3):**

1. Why was resurrection necessary for the fulfilment of God's promise to David?
2. Distinguish between North Galatia and South Galatia.

**Advanced activities (Level 3):**

1. Read pages 140-152 in *The Book of Acts* by Frank Staggs.
2. Compare and contrast the outlines of the sermons of Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:14ff.) and at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10) with Paul's sermon at Antioch of Pisidia.

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**Seminar Discussion**

1. Why did the Jews tolerate God-fearers but not pagan Gentiles?
2. What explanation did Paul give to convince the Jews that Jesus is the fulfilment of the promise to David?
3. Did Paul use the concept or terminology of the Kingdom of God in his preaching? Why?
4. What truths in the Scripture of this lesson are applicable today?