

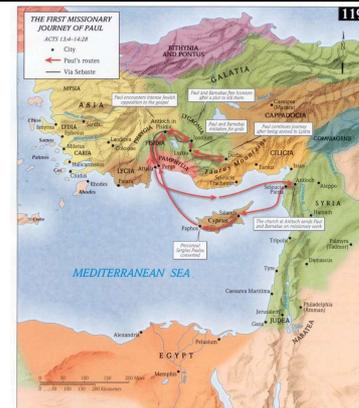
Acts 13-14

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- The narrative of Acts now shifts to Paul and his gentile mission, and his 3 missionary journeys:
 - From Cyprus and southern Galatia (Acts 13-15)
 - Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 16-18)
 - Ephesus (Acts 19-20)
 - Imprisonment in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Rome (Acts 21-28)
- Luke now uses Paul instead of Saul

Missionary Journey 1

- **Acts 13:1-14:28**
- Cyprus and Southern Galatia: Antioch-Cyprus-Pamphylia-Pisidia-Iconium-Lystra-Derbe-Antioch.



Acts 13:1-12: Cyprus

- Antioch, capital of the Roman province of Syria, sends out Barnabas and Paul for the First Missionary journey
- Leaders of the church: include prophets and teachers and Paul.
- Does the church welcome prophets and teachers today?

Acts 13:1-12: Cyprus

- God's Spirit commissions Barnabas and Paul to be missionaries, with the leaders laying hands on them (note the Luke mentions the Holy Spirit 2x in Acts 13:1-4)
- Note the sequence of the names (Barnabas and Paul), which is changed later from 13:42 onwards (Paul and Barnabas). What is the significance of this change?

Acts 13:1-12: Cyprus

- The team (Barnabas, Paul, and John Mark) sail from Seleucia (25km south), an important harbour, and sail to Cyprus
- Why Cyprus?
 - Barnabas is a native of Cyprus (4:36)
 - Some believers have begun mission work in Cyprus (11:19)
 - First mission – targeting familiar grounds?

Acts 13:1-12: Cyprus

- The team land at Salamis, a harbour on the east coast of Cyprus
- First contact: Jewish communities, preaching in synagogues.
 - This pattern is established in all of Luke's narrative concerning Paul's mission
 - See 13:14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:1-2, 10, 17; 18:4-6; 18:19; 19:8
 - Note the plural "synagogues", suggesting presence of large Jewish communities

Acts 13:1-12: Cyprus

- From Salamis to Paphos (a distance of 180km), visiting the cities in between
- Meeting with Elymas Bar-Jesus, a magician/sorcerer, a false Jewish prophet, who served the Roman Governor Sergius Paulus (inscription)
- Second incident involving a confrontation with a magician (see Peter's encounter in 8:9-24)

Acts 13:1-12: Cyprus

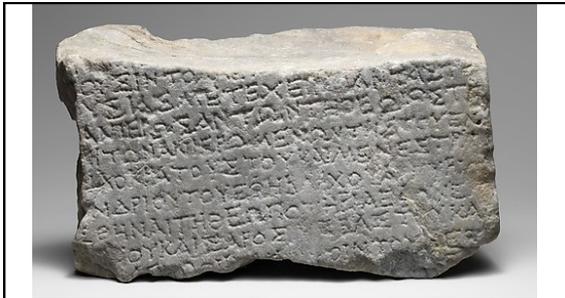
- Sergius Paulus: an intelligent man, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and wanted to hear the word of God.
- But Bar-Jesus hinders the proconsul from hearing from the apostles
- Paul (note that from here, Luke uses Paul instead of Saul) pronounces judgement on Bar-Jesus, and he is blinded

Acts 13:1-12: Cyprus

- Paul's judgement: "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? ¹¹ And now listen—the hand of the Lord is against you, and you will be blind for a while, unable to see the sun."
- Very harsh description of Bar-Jesus

Acts 13:1-12: Cyprus

- Bar-Jesus: needs help to lead him as a result of his blindness, suggesting helplessness
- Result: conversion of Sergius Paulus



Part of an decree regulating sacrifices and offerings at a temple site. Found in Cyprus. Dated 1st century CE. The name of the reigning emperor is lost but can be restored as Tiberius (r. A.D. 14-37), Gaius Caligula (r. 37-41CE), or Claudius (r. 41-54CE). The fragment also contains another Roman name, Quintus Sergius, and some scholars have tried to identify this man as the famous Roman governor of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, who befriended St. Paul. New York Metropolitan Museum



The name **L. Sergius Paulus** was found in 1912 on an inscription from Pisidian Antioch, a major military and administration base for the Romans in present day Turkey. Yalvac Museum, Turkey

Acts 13:1-12: Reflection

- Luke makes it clear that the First Missionary Journey is a result of the work of the Holy Spirit. How much of our mission work in the church today is one that is authenticated by the Holy Spirit?
- Missionary work involves confrontation with forces of evil. How much are we prepared for spiritual warfare in bringing the gospel to the lost?

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- The departure of John Mark – this becomes a major issue for Paul at the start of the Second Missionary Journey
- Luke narrates Paul’s sermon in length
- Positive and negative reaction to Paul’s mission in Pisidian Antioch

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- Departure of John Mark
 - Not happy that Paul is now the leader, and not his cousin Barnabas
 - Lost courage to continue
 - He wasn’t prepared for the gentile mission

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

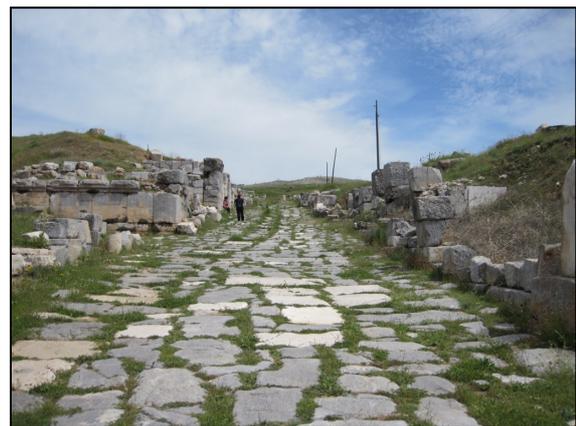
- Paul travels on the Via Sebaste through the province of Pamphylia/Lycia and the region of Pisidia and bypassing major cities like Attalia, Termessos, Arissos and Komama – strange strategy
- Why?

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

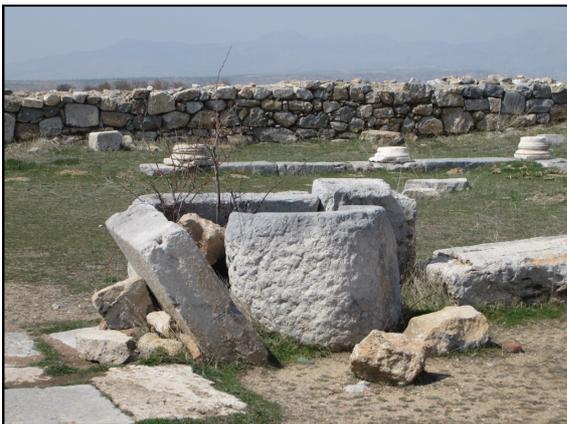
1. Paul contracting some illness (maybe malaria) and wishing to reach higher elevations of Anatolia to find relief (see Gal 4:13 where Paul states that because of an illness he first preaches the gospel to the Galatians)

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

2. Connections of Sergius Paulus with family connections in southern Galatia (recall the Sergius Paulus Inscription) – did Sergius Paulus provide letters of introduction for Paul?
 - Recall that in the 1st MJ, the team visited the hometown of Barnabas, and now Pisidian Antioch with Sergius Paulus' connection. Does this mean the team go to where they have connections, rather than a haphazardly planned mission journey?







Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- Luke chooses to focus on the events in Pisidian Antioch
- Paul enters the synagogue as his first port of call
- Invitation by the synagogue officials for Paul to speak after reading the Law and the Prophets – what texts did they read?
 - Deut 4:25-46 and 2 Sam 7:6-16 – passages that Paul alludes to in his speech?

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- So Paul stood up and with a gesture began to speak
 - Paul's actions denote that he expects the audience to pay careful attention to what he will be saying

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- Paul's Speech resembles that of Peter's and Stephen's
 1. Salvation history (13:17-22)
 2. God's fulfillment of his promise in Jesus (13:23)
 3. John the baptist (13:24-25)
 4. Salvation is now offered to all (13:26)
 5. Reference to Jerusalem leaders who refused to acknowledge Jesus and killed him (13:27-28)
 6. Resurrection of Jesus as prophecies fulfilled (13:29-37)
 7. Offer of salvation and warning (13:38-41)

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- Response: the people are open to hear again the following Sabbath
- After the meeting: some followed Paul and Paul continues to preach to them

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- Following Sabbath: "almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord" (13:44) – hyperbolic statement?

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- Jealousy of the Jews (13:45): they were filled with jealousy (or zeal - ζήλος); and blaspheming, they contradicted what was spoken by Paul.
- ζήλος – could mean jealousy – the Jews are jealous of Paul's success OR zeal – their zeal for the law. What is the intended meaning here?

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- ζήλος
 - better to retain the significance of religious and social identity of the Jews,
 - explains their reactions
 - Jews are concerned to preserve their social and political rights and privileges enjoyed under Julius Caesar – rights might be jeopardise if Rome sees the early Christ movement as rebellion
 - Financial threats?
 - hence zeal makes better sense.

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- Paul's response: "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you reject it and judge yourselves to be unworthy of eternal life, we are now turning to the Gentiles. (13:46)
 - Priority to preach to the Jews first (cf Romans 1:16-18)
 - Paul has not given up on the Jews (see Romans 9-11)

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- 13:47 – quotation of Isa 49:6
 “I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”
 - The rejection of the Jews means salvation to the gentiles?
 - Paul applying the Servant in Isaiah to himself?

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- Response of the gentiles (13:48):
 “When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and praised the word of the Lord; and as many as had been destined for eternal life became believers.”
 - Predestination?
 - Some not destined to eternal life?

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- 13:49 – positive: Thus the word of the Lord spread throughout the region.
 - Not confining to the city of Pisidian Antioch only

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- 13:50 – negative: But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region.
 - Use the elites, wealthy, and influential for personal gain
 - Perhaps this group have the most to lose if their rights and privileges were revoked by Rome should Rome react to the early Christ movement

Acts 13:13-52: Pisidian Antioch

- 13:51: So they shook the dust off their feet in protest against them, and went to Iconium.
- 13:52: And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Paul later revisits Pisidian Antioch in 14:22-23 to strengthen the disciples, encourage them to continue in the faith, and appoint elders, suggesting a separate distinct community has been established in this city.

Acts 13:13-52: Reflection

Consider the content of the ‘gospel’ preached by Paul in Pisidian Antioch. Compare it to our typical evangelistic sermons.

1. List down the contents of the evangelistic sermons preached in your church/you heard recently.
2. How much of our evangelistic sermons today contains the content of Paul’s sermon?
3. Have we watered down our evangelistic sermons?
4. What do you think must be included in a typical evangelistic sermon today?

Acts 14

- Proclamation of the gospel in Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Perge, and return journey
- Pattern: preaching the gospel first in synagogue, opposition and persecution, signs and wonders, religious confusion among the gentiles; both positive and negative response to the gospel

Acts 14:1-7: Iconium

- First port of call: synagogue.
 - Paul often works with local communities first, and if they reject him, then he moves on to the gentiles and start a community there.
 - How is this being practised today in mission? Do we work with local communities?

Acts 14:1-7: Iconium

- Both Jews and Greeks (most likely god-fearers) believed Paul's message
- Unbelieving Jews stir up problems:

"But the unbelieving Jews stirred up (ἐρετείρω) the Gentiles and poisoned (κακώω; Literally: BDAG: to cause someone to think badly about another, *make angry, embitter*) their minds against the brothers"

Who are the brothers? Paul and barnabas? The new believers?

Acts 14:1-7: Iconium

- Opposition does not stop Paul and Barnabas – they stay in Iconium for sometime, preaching, accompanied by signs and wonders.
- The result: "But the residents of the city were divided (σχίζω – to tear apart a group through conflicting aims or objectives, become divided/disunited; schism); some sided with the Jews (who? The opposing Jews?), and some with the apostles."

Acts 14:1-7: Iconium

- Persecution planned by both Jews and gentiles (possibly city officials), together with their rulers
 - Interesting that both Jews and gentiles are now united against Paul!
- Paul learns about the plot and escapes to surrounding region – Lystra and Derbe (under Lycaonia) – about 34km and 150km away respectively

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- Luke focuses on the healing of a lame man who had never walked.
- The lame man listens to Paul.
- "And Paul, looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." (14:9-10)
 - The manner of Paul looking at the man and saying in a loud voice probably leads the city to believe that the gods have come down. Stare and loud voice are indicators of the action or presence of gods.

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- The man responded to Paul's command, and "sprang up and began to walk." – a man (Jew? Gentile?) who has never walked can now walk.

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- The response of the crowd: "the gods have come down to us in human form"
 - The crowd recognise a miracle has taken place as they could see it in the healed man
 - The crowd believe this is from god
 - The crowd acknowledge Barnabas as Zeus and Paul as Hermes.
 - Hermes is Zeus's son. Zeus is the highest god

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- Recognising human as God is attested in Greco-Roman culture.
Local legend in neighbouring Phrygia relates two local gods wandered through the region as human beings. Nobody provided them with hospitality until Philemon and Baucis shared their supplies with the gods. The gods rewarded the elderly couple, making them priests in the temple of Zeus, and eventually transforming them into scared trees while inflicting judgement on others (Ovid, *Metam.* 8.626-724)

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- The legend may explain the manner the people respond to Paul and Barnabas
- The priest of Zeus even bring bulls and garlands to offer sacrifices, probably organising a procession to the temple of Zeus
- They probably never listen to Paul's preaching about Jesus!

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- Reactions of Paul:
 - Tear (διαρήγνυμι) their clothes – as a sign of grief and horror (see LXX Gen 37:9, 34; 44:13; Lev 10:6; Num 14:6; Josh 7:6; Judg 11:35; 2 Sam 1:11; 3:31; 1 Kgs 20:27; 2 Kgs 22:19; Ezra 9:3; Est 4:1; Judith 14:16-17 – all using the same verb
 - Stop the proceeding by rushing to the crowd
 - Take the opportunity to present the gospel (εὐαγγελιζόμενοι – bringing the good news)

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- Paul's sermon:
 - Presents the good news
 - Calls the people to turn away from "worthless things" (τούτων τῶν ματαίων) to the living God. The sacrifices and the processions to Zeus are described as "worthless things"- BDAG: pertaining to being of no use, *idle, empty, fruitless, useless, powerless, lacking truth.*
 - Echoes OT language where LXX uses same word to describe pagan worship – see Lev 17:7; 1 Kgs 16:13, 26:2; 2 Kgs 17:15; Isa 2:20; 30:7, 15, 28; 31:2; 44:9; Jer 2:5; 8:19; Ezek 8:10

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- Paul's sermon:
 - Suggests even the greatest greek God, Zeus, could not heal the man lamed from birth since the gods do not interfere in human affairs. As such, they must turn to the living God.
 - Testifies God is the creator of all
 - Proclaim God gracious acts by providing for people even if they have not worshipped him – rain, food, fruit, harvest, and joy. (natural theology – see Rom 1:19-21)

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- Even with these words, they scarcely restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them (14:18)
 - Paul's words do not convince the people easily.
 - Why is this so?

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- 14:19: Jews came there from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.
 - Opposition and persecution
 - How did the Jews win over the crowd (presumably the gentiles as well?)

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- 14:19: Jews came there from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.
 - Opposition and persecution
 - How did the Jews win over the crowd (presumably the gentiles as well?)
 1. Proclaiming another King?
 2. Ways of worship that is contrary to Roman law (see 18:13)?

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- Stoning of Paul – he can be stoned since he admits he is a mere human, and dragged outside the city to be left to die
- Another miracle – Paul survives the stoning (see 2 Cor 11:25 – stoning mentioned refers to the incident in Lystra)?

Acts 14:8-20: Lystra

- Paul gets up and moves to Derbe the following day, proclaiming the gospel and winning many people for Christ (14:20-21)
 - Paul never seems to rest!

Acts 14:21-28: Return to Antioch

- Paul then returns to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch to strengthen, encourage the believers to persevere in the faith. He also appoints elders
 - Paul is never fearful of persecution, as he returns to cities he has been earlier persecuted and chased out
 - Church hierarchy and organisation structure emerged

Acts 14:21-28: Return to Antioch

- Paul travels through Pisidian Antioch to Pamphylia (Perge as the capital), and Attalia to sail back to Antioch

Acts 14:21-28: Return to Antioch

- Paul travels through Pisidian Antioch to Pamphylia (Perge as the capital), and Attalia to sail back to Antioch, “where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had completed.”
 - End of 1st missionary journey

Acts 14:21-28: Return to Antioch

- 14:27-28:
 - When they arrived, they called the church together and related all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. And they stayed there with the disciples for some time.
 - Accountability to the sending church by reporting on the 1st Missionary Journey
 - God as the actor – never Paul or Barnabas
 - Gentiles have come to faith

Acts 14: Reflections

- The role of signs and wonders in mission
- Opposition and persecution as a norm
- Religious ideas/ideology that confuse God and the world
- The relationship between the sending and new churches