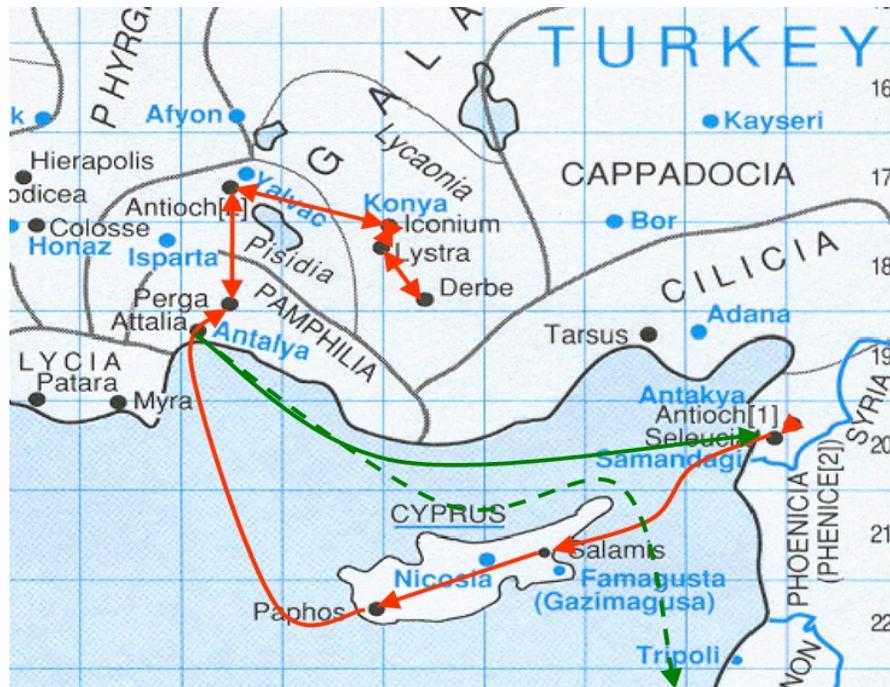


THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY Acts.13 -14

- from Antioch, 15 miles up the River Orontes to Seleucia.
- sailed from Seleucia, its port.
- by sea to Cyprus preaching at Salamis and Paphos.
- sailed from Paphos to Perga in Pamphylia , a low-lying coastal province. They did not preach there as it did not suit Paul's health.
- inland to Antioch in Pisidia. - things grew too dangerous
- went west 90 miles to Iconium. - their lives were threatened.
- moved on to Lystra, about 20 miles south - experienced a serious and dangerous attack.
- went on to Derbe, (the site of has not yet been definitely identified.)
- From Derbe they set out for home - going back to visit Lystra, Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia on the way.
- On the trip back they preached in Perga in Pamphylia,
- Sailed from Attalia, the principal port of Pamphylia to Seleucia and back the 15miles upriver to Antioch.

The whole journey took about three years.



ACTS CHAPTER 14 - 3 cities in Galatia: Iconium, Lystra, Derbe.

Acts 14:1-7

"It happened in Iconium that they went in the same way into the synagogue of the Jews and spoke to such effect that a great crowd of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. But the Jews who did not believe inflamed the minds of the Gentiles against the brethren. So then, they spent some considerable time boldly speaking in the name of the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace by causing signs and wonders to happen through their hands. The population of the city was torn in two. Some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. When the Gentiles and the Jews with their leaders combined in a movement to assault and stone them, they discovered what was afoot and fled for safety to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding district. And there they continued to preach the good news."

Paul and Barnabas went on to Iconium, about 90 miles from Antioch.

It was a city so ancient that it claimed to be older than Damascus.

In the dim past it had had a king called Nannacus and the phrase "since the days of Nannacus" was proverbial for "from the beginning of time."

In Iconium - Evangelistic success in Iconium

1) At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.

Again, notice that they follow the familiar pattern for evangelism: beginning in the Jewish synagogue.

They have success among the Jews and the Greeks,

"A great multitude believed":

Luke gives us fruits only from here on...

The success is refreshing, because they had just been kicked out of Pisidian Antioch, after much success there.

2) But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3) So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. 4) The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. 5) There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. 6) But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country,

“Disbelieving (unpersuadable) Jews...”

Paul and Barnabas were more and more taking their lives in their hands.

What was proposed in Iconium by the unbelieving Jews was a lynching.

The further Paul and Barnabas went, the further they moved from civilization.

In the more civilized cities their lives at least were safe because Rome kept order; but out in the wilds Paul and Barnabas were under the direct threat of mob violence from the excitable Phrygian crowds who were stirred up by the Jews.

These were brave men;

it always takes courage to be a Christian.

Gospel is intended to be divisive (Mat 10:34).

Matthew 10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

When they encountered resistance they spent MORE time there.

Possibly in Iconium 6 months.

Why did Paul and Barnabas decide to stay a long time if there was opposition arising?

They stayed as long as they could, despite the opposition, leaving only when it was absolutely necessary.

They knew that these Christians would need all the grounding they could get to stand strong in a city with much opposition.

Paul and Barnabas preached the word of His grace, because that is the only word by which both Jews and Gentiles can be saved on an equal basis.

Presented the same gospel to both: salvation is in Jesus, and we appropriate it by our belief (trust in, reliance on) in Him.

"The gospel is here called the message of his grace because divine grace is its subject matter."

Apostles? *Acts 14:4, 14.*

Barnabas is referred to here as an apostle.

God appointed one Apostle: Jesus Christ;

Jesus appointed twelve apostles: His disciples;

The Holy Spirit continues to appoint numerous apostles:

Church-planters, founders, and spiritual statesmen like Barnabas.

Opposition in Iconium finally forces Paul and Barnabas out of town

Paul tended to want to stay in a region for a long period of time, strengthening the churches and working where evangelistic efforts had already borne fruit,

this kind of persecution may have been God's way of moving him on to other fields.

When forced to, they left Iconium for Lystra and Derbe;

Paul and Barnabas were not anxious to be martyred.

MISTAKEN FOR GODS AT LYSTRA

Acts 14:8-18

"There was a man who sat in Lystra who had no power in his feet. He had been a cripple from his birth and he had never walked. He was in the habit of listening to Paul speaking. Paul fixed his gaze on him. He saw that he had faith that he could be cured and he said to him in a loud voice, 'Stand up straight on your feet.' He leaped up and kept walking about. When the crowds saw what Paul had done they exclaimed in the Lycaonian dialect, 'The gods have taken the form of men and have come down to us.' They called Barnabas, Zeus; and Paul, Hermes, because he was the leader in speaking. The priest of Zeus whose shrine is in front of the city brought oxen and wreaths to the gates and he and the crowd wished to offer sacrifice to them. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they rent their clothes and rushed in among the people shouting, 'Men, what is this you are doing? We too are men of like passions with you. We are bringing you the good news which tells you to turn from these empty things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all nations to go their own way. And yet he never left himself without a witness, for he was kind to men, and he gave you rain from heaven and the fruitful seasons and he filled your hearts with food and gladness.' As they said these things they could hardly stop the crowds sacrificing to them."

In Lystra and Derbe - The healing of a lame man

7) Where they continued to preach the good news. 8) In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. 9) He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed 10) and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

Lystra: was 20 miles to the South of Iconium.

Derbe: was 60 miles to the East of Iconium.

There might not have been a synagogue at Lystra as they start out right away to preach the gospel.

Physical, emotional or spiritually lame:

You are held in bondage until you begin to obey the Word of God about it..

Paul saw that this man had faith to be healed;

God is not obligated to heal because of our faith,

but many people do not receive from God simply because they do not have faith.

How could Paul "see" this man's faith?

God gave him the gift of discernment (and seeming, considering his boldness, the gift of faith) at that moment to minister to this man.

"That this lame man had faith was made plain by his ready obedience to Paul's command to stand up."

Obedience – not common sense

An excited crowd in Lystra wants to proclaim Paul and Barnabas gods (Zeus and Hermes to be exact)

11) When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" 12) Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. 13) The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

Lycaonia – was a wide district of Asia Minor, lying between Phrygia, Cilicia, and Cappadocia.

The people in Lystra had a legend:

Once in the past, Zeus and Hermes had visited their land disguised as mortals.

No one would show them any hospitality except for one older peasant couple - Philemon and his wife Baucis, took them in.

In their anger at the people, Zeus and Hermes wiped out the whole population, except for the old couple.

Philemon and Baucis, were made the guardians of a splendid temple erected there and were turned into two great trees when they died.

No wonder the people of Lystra were so quick to honor Paul and Barnabas!

In Greek mythology, it was common for the "gods" to come to earth in human form, though they did not always do so for the good of man.

So when the crippled man was healed at the word of Paul, the people of Lystra were determined not to make the same mistake again.

Barnabas must have been a man of noble presence so they took him for Zeus the king of the gods.

Jupiter (Roman), Zeus (Greek): father of the gods, tall and dignified.

Hermes was the messenger of the gods and, since Paul was the speaker, it made sense to the Lystrans that Paul (the more talkative one) would be Hermes.

Mercury (Roman), Hermes (Greek): (winged feet..) was the attendant and messenger of Jupiter: the spokesman.

The miracle merely attracted attention, and an errant assumption,

The miracle itself saved no one – it was the message that was delivered – the words accompanying the deeds.

So much for a purely silent 'lifestyle evangelism'

The crowd's use of Lycaonian explains why Paul and Barnabas did not grasp what was afoot until the preparations to pay them divine homage were well advanced.

Paul appeals to the crowd to recognize the true God instead of worshipping Paul and Barnabas

14) But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: 15) "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. 16) In the past, he let all nations go their own way. 17) Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." 18) Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

Called Apostles again? More than the 12+ Paul...

"Tore their clothes"

Both out of a desire to show, "hey, we are human too"

but also out of an instinctively Jewish reaction to terrible blasphemy – the classic Jewish way of showing grief, or upset.

"Vanities" – "worthless things" = expressive name for idols of every sort.

This passage gives us Paul's approach to those who were completely heathen and without any Jewish background to which he could appeal.

Paul did not preach to these pagan worshippers the same way he preached to Jews or those acquainted with Judaism;

He quotes the Old Testament to them, but never states it is a Hebrew scripture but instead appeals to natural revelation.

Psalm 146:6 Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever:

Not a single reference to "Hebrew" history or Jewish position before God

Not a canned presentation or prepared speech that his 'foreign' hearers may or may not comprehend...

Paul's 2 points:

1) creation = one "living God..." v 15

He started from nature to get to the God who was behind it all.

He started from the here and now to get to the there and then.

We do well to remember that the world is the garment of the living God.

Paul calls the Lystran crowd to consider the real God, the One who stands behind all creation, not one of the lesser (and imaginary) Greek gods.

Rain is very scarce in Lycaonia.

God's kindness to all men (in giving rain and fruitful crops) should be seen as a witness of His love and power, something theologians call common grace.

2) free choice = allows evil... v 16

Paul and Barnabas still had an extremely difficult time challenging the wrong conceptions of God held by these Lystrans.

Persecution follows Paul from Pisidian Antioch and Lystra

19) Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. 20) But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

Conjecture: Timothy may have been among them (Acts 16:1-3)

Acts 16:1-3 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: [2] Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. [3] Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

In the midst of all the excitement at Lystra certain Jews arrived.

The account does not say why they arrived just that they did arrive:

They may have been deliberately following Paul and Barnabas in a set attempt to undo the work that they were doing.

They may have been corn merchants.

The region round Lystra was a great corn growing area and they may have come to buy corn for the cities of Iconium and Antioch.

If so, they would be shocked and angry to find Paul still preaching and would very naturally stir up the people against him.

Lystra was a Roman colony; but it was a Roman outpost

We do not know if the people of Lystra knew it or not but Paul was a Roman citizen and he used it whenever it would further his ministry..

When the people saw what they had done they were afraid.

They dragged what they thought was Paul's dead body out of the city.

They were afraid of the strong hand of Roman justice and they were trying to get rid of Paul's body in order to escape the consequences of their riot.

These Jews were not content to kick Paul out of their own region (Acts 14:5-6), they

Incited the people of Lystra against Paul and Barnabas,

Instigated the stoning of Paul.

Note how fickle the crowd is; apparently, the impact of the miracle was extremely short-lived.

Paul was miraculously preserved here; some think that he was even actually killed and raised to life again (because stoning was a pretty reliable form of execution).

Paul must have thought of Stephen when he was being stoned, and how he had been a part of Stephen's stoning.

Paul later writing to the Galatians says I bear in my body the marks of Jesus, he must be referring to the scars from this incident.

Galatians 6:17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

The Letter to the Galatians is written before Paul's other trials and troubles during his ministry.

Paul certainly later refers to his stoning in 2 Corinthians 11:25.

2 Cor. 11:25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

Conjecture: Is this time of Paul's "Out of body experience"?

2 Cor. 12:2-4 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. [3] And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) [4] How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

The outstanding feature of this story is the sheer courage of Paul.

When he came to his senses, his first act was to go right back into the city where he had just been stoned, dragged outside the wall and left for dead.

There could be no braver thing than Paul's going straight back amongst those who had tried to murder him.

A deed like that would have more effect than a hundred sermons.

Men were bound to ask themselves where a man got the courage to act in such a way.

The next day, Paul leaves Lystra for Derbe, where they find more evangelistic success

If the Lystrians thought the healing of the lame man was something – what do you suppose their reaction to Paul

walking back into town and spending the night in their midst would have been?

CONFIRMING THE CHURCH

Acts 14:21-28

"When they had preached the good news to that city and had made a considerable number of disciples they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch. As they went they strengthened the souls of the disciples and urged them to abide in the faith, saying, 'It is through many an affliction that we must enter into the kingdom of God.' In each church they chose elders, and, when they had prayed with fasting, they offered them to the Lord in whom they had believed. When they had gone through Pisidia they came to Pamphylia. When they had spoken the word in Perga they went down to Attaleia. From there they sailed away to Antioch, from which they had been handed over to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. On their arrival there, when they had called a meeting of the church, they told them the story of all that God had done with them and that he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. They spent a long time with the disciples."

Their message and work on the return home

21) They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch 22) Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. 23) Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

In Derbe, the apostle gains a friend, companion, and fellow-helper: Gaius (Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14; 3 John 1).

Romans 16:23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

1 Cor. 1:14 I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

3 John 1:1-14 The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

[2] Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. [3] For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. [4] I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth. [5] Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; [6] Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: [7] Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. [8] We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.

[9] I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. [10] Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

[11] Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. [12] Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and ye know that our record is true.

[13] I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: [14] But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

The message Paul left with them was simple and honest.

Being and Living a Christian life, following Christ is not easy. Paul offered them no easy way and he provided his own commitment, experience, and life as a living example.

"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

He acted on the principle that Jesus had come "not to make life easy but to make men great."

Joh 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Many people consider any kind of tribulation completely counter-productive to Christian living, failing to note the significant place suffering has in God's plan for us.

The goal of this message was also simple:

strengthening the souls of the disciples;

Paul set apart elders in all the little groups of newly-made Christians.

Christianity must be lived in a fellowship with other believers to support and strengthen each other.

Paul was never content to get merely a decision for Christ,

he was committed to establishing people in their walk after God – MAKING DISCIPLES – teaching them to observe all things...

Mat 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Paul and Barnabas were committed to not just making new Christians, but in establishing new churches,

Churches = places where Christians can grow and be established in the Lord.

They knew that these churches must have proper administration, so they appointed elders in every city where there were Christians.

"It has more than once been pointed out that more recent missionary policy would have thought it dangerously idealistic to recognize converts of only a few weeks' standing as leaders in their churches; perhaps Paul and Barnabas were more conscious of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the believing communities."

Mat 16:15-19 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Their great concern for the health of these churches is demonstrated by their prayer and fasting.

Paul and Barnabas never thought that it was their strength which had achieved anything.

They spoke of what God had done with them.

They regarded themselves only as fellow-laborers with God.

In the end, they trusted in God's ability and promise to keep these churches healthy, having commended them to the Lord,

It is in the Lord they had believed, not in Paul or Barnabas or the elders;

The church belongs to Jesus.

We begin to have the right idea of Christian service when we work, not for our own honor, but from the conviction that we are tools in the hand of God.

Their itinerary on the way home

24) After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, 25) and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

26) From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.

Returned via Lystra (20 miles) Iconium (40 miles) and Antioch (60 miles)

Rather than the quick (and safe) sea route home..
...confirming, exhorting, organizing...

Attaleia: seaport on the Gulf of Pamphylia, which drew commerce from Egypt and Syria.

"the work which they had completed"

only partially true,

although their immediate mission was accomplished, the work of planting new churches and strengthening existing ones has never ended and is continuing yet today.

Arrival back in Antioch

27) On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. 28) And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

"All that God had done with them..."

Note: No numbers: Gentile converts are never counted!?

Acts 2:41 and Acts 4:4 = 3000, 5000:

Jewish only are numbered.

Mystery: Fullness of the Gentiles

Romans 11:25-28 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. [26] And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: [27] For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. [28] As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

Their success with evangelism among the Gentiles, and the blessing of God that it demonstrated, showed that the work which was being done in Antioch was not unique.

God wanted to replicate it all over the world.

Long time: furlow = 4-5 years;

the journey = 2-3 years.

Back at their home church in Syrian Antioch, we can assume that Paul and Barnabas took a long break and found plenty of ministry to do back there.