



Walking Through the Scripture Together

June 29 - July 5, 2008

Acts 13:14-52

The Gospel according to Paul

Text Acts 13:14-52 (TNIV)

14 But Paul and Barnabas traveled inland to Antioch of Pisidia.

On the Sabbath they went to the synagogue for the services. **15** After the usual readings from the books of Moses and the prophets, those in charge of the service sent them this message: "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, come and give it." **16** So Paul stood, lifted his hand to quiet them, and started speaking. "Men of Israel," he said, "and you God-fearing Gentiles, listen to me. **17** The God of this nation of Israel chose our ancestors and made them multiply and grow strong during their stay in Egypt. Then with a powerful arm he led them out of their slavery. **18** He put up with them through forty years of wandering in the wilderness. **19** Then he destroyed seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to Israel as an inheritance. **20** All this took about 450 years. After that, God gave them judges to rule until the time of Samuel the prophet. **21** Then the people begged for a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. **22** But God removed Saul and replaced him with David, a man about whom God said, 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart. He will do everything I want him to do.' **23** And it is one of King David's descendants, Jesus, who is God's promised Savior of Israel! **24** Before he came, John the Baptist preached that all the people of Israel needed to repent of their sins and turn to God and be baptized. **25** As John was finishing his ministry he asked, 'Do you think I am the Messiah? No, I am not! But he is coming soon—and I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the sandals on his feet.'

26 "Brothers—you sons of Abraham, and also you God-fearing Gentiles—this message of salvation has been sent to us! **27** The people in Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize Jesus as the one the prophets had spoken about. Instead, they condemned him, and in doing this they fulfilled the prophets' words that are read every Sabbath. **28** They found no legal reason to execute him, but they asked Pilate to have him killed anyway. **29** When they had done all that the prophecies said about him, they took him down from the cross and placed him in a tomb. **30** But God raised him from the dead! **31** And over a period of many days he appeared to those who had gone with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to the people of Israel. **32** And now we are here to bring you this Good News.

The promise was made to our ancestors, **33** and God has now fulfilled it for us, their descendants, by raising Jesus. This is what the second psalm says about Jesus:

'You are my Son.

Today I have become your Father.'

34 For God had promised to raise him from the dead, not leaving him to rot in the grave. He said, 'I will give you the sacred blessings I promised to David.' **35** Another psalm explains it more fully: 'You will not allow your Holy One to rot in the grave.' **36** This is not a reference to David, for after David had done the will of God in his own generation, he died and was buried with his ancestors, and his body decayed. **37** No, it was a reference to someone else—someone whom God raised and whose body did not decay.

38 "Brothers, listen! We are here to proclaim that through this man Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins. **39** Everyone who believes in him is declared right with God—something the law of Moses could never do. **40** Be careful! Don't let the prophets' words apply to you. For they said,

*41 'Look, you mockers,
be amazed and die!*

*For I am doing something in your own day,
something you wouldn't believe
even if someone told you about it.'*

42 As Paul and Barnabas left the synagogue that day, the people begged them to speak about these things again the next week. **43** Many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, and the two men urged them to continue to rely on the grace of God.

44 The following week almost the entire city turned out to hear them preach the word of the Lord. **45** But when some of the Jews saw the crowds, they were jealous; so they slandered Paul and argued against whatever he said. **46** Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, "It was necessary that we first preach the word of God to you Jews. But since you have rejected it and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we will offer it to the Gentiles. **47** For the Lord gave us this command when he said,

*'I have made you a light to the Gentiles,
to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth.'*

48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were very glad and thanked the Lord for his message; and all who were chosen for eternal life became believers. **49** So the Lord's message spread throughout that region. **50** Then the Jews stirred up the influential religious women and the leaders of the city, and they incited a mob against Paul and Barnabas and ran them out of town. **51** So they shook the dust from their feet as a sign of rejection and went to the town of Iconium. **52** And the believers were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Small Group Discussion Guide

Lean In

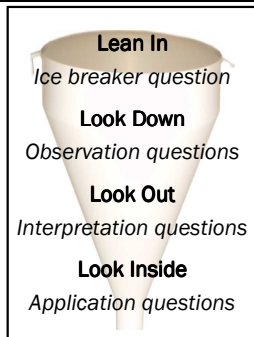
- What's the most ambitious "mission" you've ever embarked upon — whether it took you across the street or around the world? What happened?

Look Down / Look Out

- It's about 350 miles from Cyprus to Antioch of Pisidia by land and sea. What does Paul and Barnabas traveling that far say about them and their commitment?
- What kind of reception did they initially receive in the synagogue in Antioch? As Paul begins sharing his "word of encouragement," where does he start in telling the gospel story? Why do you think he started here?
- Having started with the Exodus story, Paul now visits the first two kings of Israel, Saul and David. Why do you think he is dwelling on all this? What is its relevance to Jesus?
- How could people who knew the Bible so well and heard it read to them so often miss the very one it was pointing to all those years — and in fact fulfill those very prophecies/promises by rejecting Jesus? What warning do you see here?
- What is Paul's "gospel" in a nutshell? What is the bottom line of his message in the synagogue?

Look Inside

- Which do you find more challenging — walking across the street to share Jesus and his message or to travel across the world? Why? Where do you hear God calling you to go now?



details, details...

They traveled inland to Antioch of Pisidia

Pisidian Antioch was founded by Seleucus I Nicator about 281 B.C. It was situated a hundred miles north of Perga on a lake-studded plateau some thirty-six hundred feet above sea level. The foothills between Perga and Pisidian Antioch largely ruled out any extensive east-west traffic until one reached the plateau area, but following the river valleys one could move northward from the Pamphylia area. On the plateau Antioch stood astride the Via Sebaste, the Roman road from Ephesus to the Euphrates. The city had been incorporated into the expanded Roman province of Galatia in 25 B.C. by Augustus, who at that time imported into it some three thousand army veterans and their families from Italy and gave it the title of Colonia Caesarea. Antioch was the most important city of southern Galatia and included a rich amalgam of Greek, Roman, Oriental, and Phrygian traditions. Acts tells us that it also had a sizable Jewish population.

As many as were appointed for eternal life believed

No doubt some of Paul's influence rubbing off on Luke! Though often a matter for intense debate over the centuries, the doctrine of "predestination" was intended to be an assuring, liberating ground of truth (you can see it developed at more length in Paul's writings in Ephesians 1:3-14 and Romans 8:28-30 among other places). The fact that God chose us before we were even born should cause us a collective sigh of relief.

They wiped the dust from their feet

The Jewish custom here reflected was the shaking out of one's garments and brushing off the sandals to remove all "gentile" dirt and contamination. For Paul and Barnabas to do this before an unbelieving Jewish community would have been a very strong statement — something along the lines of "the only 'gentiles' I see around here are you." Most likely it was not appreciated.

Family Discussion Guide

Day One Acts 13:14-20

How shy are you when it comes to telling others about Jesus? Is it easier at some times and places than others? Why? What do you learn from Paul's example in the synagogue?

Day Two Acts 13:20-26

Which of the following words best describes how you usually feel about reading the Old Testament: a. fun b. easy c. hard d. boring or e. _____
What do you think might help make it more interesting to you?

Day Three Acts 13:27-33

How could people who knew the Bible so well not realize who Jesus was or what they were doing when they rejected him? How can we be sure we don't study our Bibles all day but miss the whole point?

Day Four Acts 13:34-43

If you had to summarize the story of Jesus in a brief paragraph of, say, thirty words or less, how would you summarize it? How would you tell the story of Jesus to a friend or classmate?

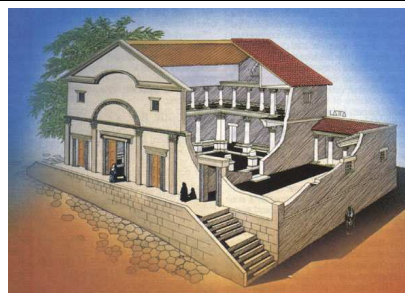
Day Five Acts 13:44-52; Ephesians 1:3-5

Why did some people suddenly start getting mad at Paul? How did he respond to them? What do you learn from his example?

Life in Bible Times

The synagogue

"Synagogue" simply means "gathering." As an institution among the people of Israel it most likely had its origin during the Babylonian captivity after the destruction of Solomon's temple in 586 B.C. As centers of Jewish faith, synagogues were formed around ten families who gathered for two primary purposes: to pray and to read the Scriptures. The synagogue housed the scroll of the Law (Torah) and the other scrolls that made up the Hebrew scriptures. The scriptures were read through systematically, year after year — being read in the original Hebrew and then translated, often with immediate commentary, in the common language (in first century Israel, probably Aramaic).



The meeting room in a synagogue consisted of stone benches along the walls, with an open space in the middle for a "pulpit" or platform from which to read the scriptures. Only adult males were allowed in the meeting — women and children were generally confined to a gallery or balcony from which they could quietly observe.

The general pattern of a synagogue service such as Paul and Barnabas attended was probably along these lines:

1. Recitation of the *Shema* ("Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one..." Deuteronomy 6:4)
2. Prayers (men standing, lifting up hands, heads covered with a prayer shawl)
3. Reading from the Torah (with translation and on the spot commentary and discussion — they didn't come for a sermon, but for what we would call Q&A)
4. Reading from the Prophets (same as with the Law)
5. Benediction — "word of blessing" or encouragement (generally delivered standing with outstretched hands). This is probably where Paul was asked politely if he would like to close the service — and what a closing he gave!