

The Book of Acts

Chapter 15

Growth of the New Testament Church

Quiz

2

- Who was it that stirred up the people in Iconium?
 - Unbelieving Jews
- Where did Paul go after leaving Iconium?
 - Lystra
- What miracle did Paul do in Lystra?
 - Healed the crippled man who had never walked
- How did the Lystra people first respond to the miracle?
 - Prepared to worship Paul and Barnabas as gods

Quiz

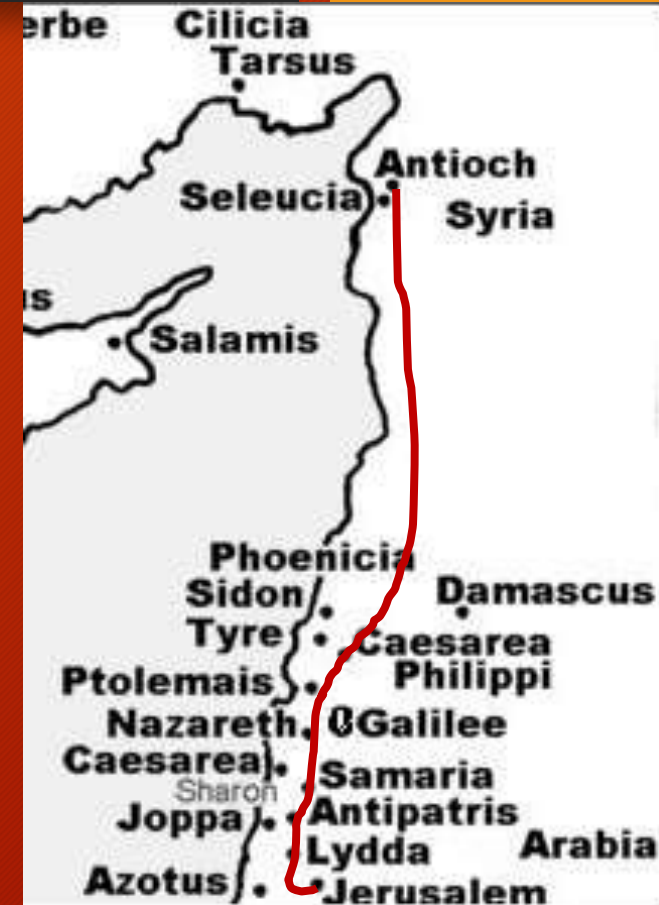
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- How did the Lystra people later respond to the miracle?
 - They stoned Paul after being agitated by Antioch and Iconium rebels
- What does the word “ordained” (Ac 14:23) mean?
 - to vote by stretching out the hand
- After being stoned what did Paul do?
 - Went to Derbe and then back to Lystra, Iconium, Antioch then home.
- In what town was Paul and Barnabas’ sending church?
 - Antioch of Syria

Troublemakers from Judaea, v.1-5

4

- Some required circumcision before salvation, v.1
 - Such would add to God's salvation.
 - Paul and Barnabas argued strongly against this, v.2
- The Antioch church sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, v.2
 - They preached in Phenice and Samaria on their way, v.3
 - Reaching Jerusalem they reported, v.4
 - Opposition also spoke up against them, v.5



Jerusalem Counsel Met, v.6

5

- The apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.
 - The apostles were the disciples
 - The elders were other preachers present including Pastor James
- Seeking the help of the apostles, elders and Jerusalem church does not mean that the Jerusalem church was the head of all the other churches.
 - This is not a hierarchy being built.
 - This is still during the transitional period and doctrine was still being established. Counsel is wise!

Peter spoke first, v.7-11

6

- Peter told how God had sent him to Cornelius, v.7
 - God gave the Gentile believers the Holy Spirit, v.8
 - God put no difference between Jew and Gentile believer, v.9
- Peter believed that demanding circumcision was tempting God, v.10
 - Demanding circumcision would be questioning God's saving work.
 - Peter believed that God saved Jews and Gentiles in the same manner.

Barnabas and Paul spoke next, v.12

7

- Everyone listened quietly as Barnabas and Paul reported on God's amazing work among the Gentiles.
 - Perhaps Barnabas is listed first because he was the older believer.
 - The Holy Spirit did not have Luke record any of the details of their report for us.

Pastor James added comments, v.13-18

8

- Many believe that this James was the Lord's brother. He appears to be the head pastor of the Jerusalem church.
- He supported Simeon (Peter's) words with scripture quotes
 - He quoted loosely Amos 9:11-12
- James affirmed that God knows all things from the beginning to the end, v.18

Pastor James states his suggestion, v.19-22

9

- Of the believing Gentiles he said “trouble them not”.
- He suggested only four basic requirement for the new believers. These are not salvation demands but separation.
 - Abstain from 1) idols, 2) fornication, 3) eating strangled meat, 4) eating blood
 - Though forbidden in the Law, it is likely that these four vices are listed because of their connection with pagan idol worship (cf. v.29)
- This pleased the apostles, elders and the whole church
 - Judas and Silas were chosen to carry this message.

Letter to Antioch, v.23-29

10

- The letter was written to correct the trouble caused, v.24
- Judas and Silas were sent as living witnesses, v.27
- They believed the Holy Spirit had guided their decision, v.28
- The list of vices is written with word order changed.
 - The word “pollutions” was changed to “meats” and blood and strangled are now connected with the meats. Fornication was also part of pagan worship.
 - Believers were to abstain from these pagan idol worship vices. This was not a Jewish rule. It was a Christian separation.

Letter taken to Antioch, v.30-35

11

- The four men (Paul, Barnabas, Judas and Silas) travelled up to Antioch.
- The reading of the letter brought rejoicing, v.31
- Judas and Silas confirmed this with many words, v.32
- After some time, the church let them go, but Silas chose to remain, v.33-34
- Paul and Barnabas continued teaching and preaching in Antioch

The word “teaching” means, to teach one; to impart instruction, to instil doctrine into one, to explain or expound a thing. Here the word “preaching” means, to proclaim or announce good news. Another word for preaching (2Ti 4:2) means to herald, publish or proclaim. In Eph 4:11, the pastor (shepherd) and teacher is the same person. Preaching and teaching are also used together in Acts 28:31. Teaching tends to focus on relating facts while the focus of preaching is explaining a truth, making an application and calling for action. Preaching is more confronting. It is easier to teach than to preach, yet we need both. “A preacher must not be satisfied merely to instruct the mind; he must also stir the heart and motivate the will to apply God’s truth personally.” Wiersbe, *The Elements of Preaching*, p. 23

How do teaching and preaching differ?



12

Second missionary trip planned, v.36-39

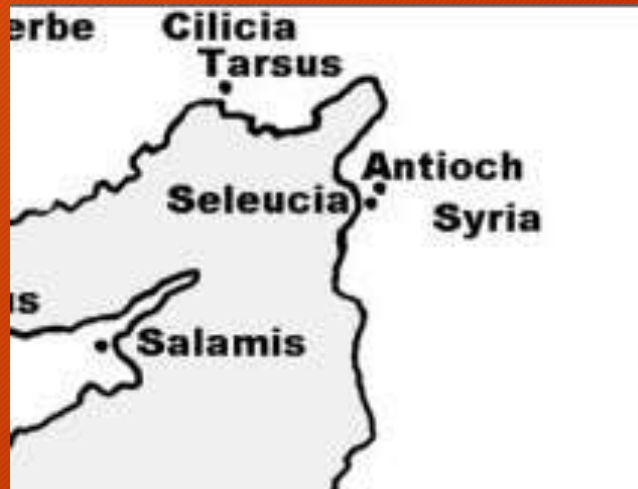
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- Paul desired to make a second missionary trip, v.36
- Barnabas resolved to take Mark with them, v.37
- Paul disagreed as Mark had quit the first trip, v.38
- Paul and Barnabas sharply disagreed, v.39
 - Their disagreement was not over biblical issues but personality
 - Barnabas thought Mark had matured, Paul did not.
 - Later, Mark did fully repent and mature and Paul changed his mind about him (Col 4:10; Phlm 1:24; 2Ti 4:11)
 - Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus. God used this division.

Paul and Silas began their trip, v.40-41

14

- Paul chose Silas as his partner and they departed.
- They began their travel on foot through Syria and Cilicia.
- Their goal was in part to confirm (strengthen) the churches.



Applications for us today

15

- The Antioch church sought counsel of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.
 - When we have to make decisions, God tells us in Proverbs 11:14; 24:6 that in a multitude of counselors there is safety.
 - We must not be too proud to seek counsel when we need advice.
- 1st Century Christians saw the need to separate from evil vices.
 - Separation from evil is for our good and for God's glory, 1Co 15:33.
- God ordained both teaching and preaching of His Word.
 - We need both teaching and preaching to help us grow spiritually. That is why we have three or more services weekly. Sunday AM is mostly preaching. Sunday PM is a mixture of preaching and teaching. Wednesday night is mostly teaching.
 - Encourage those who do not attend all the services to come along. Share with them what you learn. Pray for them.
 - By this you can help our church grow.