

● Lesson 18

PAUL'S FIRST PREACHING JOURNEY

The Christian Church began in Jerusalem with Peter as its leader. But after the stoning of Stephen, the persecution of believers increased, and the Christians were scattered (Acts 11:19). Many fled to Antioch, the capital of Syria. Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire with a population of about 500,000 people. A wide variety of people traveled through Antioch since it was on a major travel route at that time.

1. What happened in Antioch as the believers told people the good news about the Lord Jesus? Acts 11:21b _____

News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, which then sent Barnabas to Antioch. As he witnessed God's grace at work there, Barnabas rejoiced and encouraged the new believers.

Soon Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and together they went back to Antioch.

2. How long did they remain there, and what were they doing? Acts 11:26 _____

ANTIOCH: THE BIRTHPLACE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Read Acts 13:1-12.

3. As members of the church in Antioch were worshiping the Lord and fasting, God's Spirit said to them, "Set apart for Me _____ and _____ for the work to which I have called them" (v.2).

4. Look at verses 3-5. What was the work to which Saul and Barnabas were called?

5. How were they sent off? vv.3-4 _____

Saul and Barnabas were the first people in the New Testament to be formally sent out as missionaries.

A **missionary** is simply one who is sent on a mission.



Memory Verse

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.
I Corinthians 15:58

FIRST STOP: THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

Saul (who became known as Paul) and his friends went on several journeys to preach the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas first sailed about 65 miles west to the island of Cyprus, where Barnabas had been raised. They landed on the eastern side of the island and traveled

33 A.D.

...Pentecost

36 A.D.

Paul converted ...

39 A.D.

Peter brings Gospel to Gentiles in Judea ...

40 A.D.

Barnabas brings Paul to Antioch ...



across to the capital city of Paphos. Although many Jews lived on this island, there was also a pagan influence and idol worship. In Paphos, Paul and Barnabas met a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus, or Elymas, who practiced magic and **sorcery**.

Sergius Paulus, the government **proconsul**, wanted to hear the Word of God from Barnabas and Paul. However, Elymas opposed them because he did not want the proconsul to believe the truth.

6. Paul, led by the Holy Spirit, used strong words to confront Elymas. What were they? Acts 13:10

7. What judgment happened to this evil prophet? v.11

8. How did witnessing this event affect the proconsul

Sergius Paulus? v.12 _____

FROM CYPRUS TO ASIA MINOR

Barnabas and Paul sailed from Cyprus to Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), where they landed in Perga, a coastal town in a swampy area. Perga was infested with mosquitoes, and malaria was very **prevalent**.

Continuing their journey, Barnabas and Paul traveled hundreds of miles either by foot or on animals. They came to Pisidian Antioch, a highland city away from the threat of malaria. In the synagogue there, Paul was invited to preach. He told the people that through Jesus “forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you” (Acts 13:38). His message was so well-received that they invited him to speak again the following week (v.42).

On the next Sabbath, “nearly the whole city” gathered to hear the Word of God (v.44). But some of the Jews responded to Paul’s preaching with jealousy and anger, and they argued with him (v.45). So Paul and Barnabas brought the Gospel to the Gentiles, as they had been commanded by God (vv.46-47).

9. What happened? vv.48-49 _____



“CHRISTIAN”

- Comes from the Greek word *christianos* meaning “belonging to Christ” or “little Christ.”
- One who is a follower of Jesus Christ and has a personal faith in Him.
- First used to describe believers in Antioch.
- Used only three times in the New Testament.
- A more common biblical term for a Christian is “believer” or “disciple.”

Fast Fact: Antioch of Syria

- Founded in 301 B.C. by Seleucus, a general of Alexander the Great.
- All three of Paul’s missionary journeys began at Antioch of Syria.
- The people of Antioch were known for assigning nicknames. The title “Christian” was a nickname given to early believers and may not have been intended to be complimentary.
- The city suffered from earthquakes. One of the most deadly earthquakes on record occurred there in 526 A.D. when 250,000 people died.

Catechism Corner

1. Paul and Barnabas taught the message of Jesus Christ and baptized the people who believed in Him. According to the catechism,
What do you mean when you say, “I believe in Jesus Christ”? (Q. 149)
Trusting in Jesus Christ with all my heart, I surrender myself to Him as my only Savior from sin, and death, and the power of Satan.
2. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commissions His followers to disciple all nations (people). What two things are involved in making disciples?

3. What can you do to help others become disciples of Jesus?

Due to Jewish opposition, Paul and Barnabas moved on about 80 miles to Iconium, which was located in a large fertile plain known for its agriculture. As they preached in the synagogue, a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed their message.

10. What happened that forced Barnabas and Paul to leave Iconium? Acts 14:4-6 _____

Then they went about 20 miles to Lystra, which was the home of Timothy. There Paul and Barnabas were given quite a different reception.

11. Why did the people there believe that these two missionaries were “gods”? vv.8-11 _____

12. When the people tried to worship Paul and Barnabas, how did they both respond? vv.14-15

More trouble arrived with Jews from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium. Paul was stoned and left for dead, but he got up, entered the city, and later went to Derbe.

Think about it: If you were in Paul’s situation, how would you respond? Would you be ready to keep going, or would you want to give up?

Read Acts 14:21-23.

Even though Paul and Barnabas were persecuted and encountered difficulties, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch. They knew the congregations in these cities needed encouragement. They reminded the believers that experiencing **tribulation** was to be expected and encouraged them to remain faithful to the Lord.

13. How can you encourage your Christian friends to remain faithful to the Lord when they are going through difficult times? _____

Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch in Syria where they had begun their journey. There they reported to the church all the things God had done and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts 4:26-27). This marked the end of their first preaching or missionary journey.