



# The Apostle Paul, Servant of Christ

## Overview Study Guide Unit II, Chapter 5 "The First Missionary Journey"

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### Introduction

After Paul and Barnabas arrived back at Antioch, along with John Mark, some time passed before the next major event that would change Christianity forever. The breakthrough to the non-Jewish world with the Gospel had largely started at Antioch. And now this group of believers would launch a movement toward Gentiles that would revolutionize Christianity. This event was the beginning of the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas.

What is that? The more common label is 'missionary journey.' But increasingly today a wide variety of labels are being applied to the scripture texts in Acts that describe the three trips<sup>1</sup> of the apostle and various associates.<sup>2</sup> The importance of this is largely that how the writer labels these activities of Paul will reflect certain perspectives about the nature and value of them in the author's thinking. Some of the older issues about the reliability of Luke's account regarding three such trips or not are being replaced in current scholarship with other issues related to how Christianity could have spread so quickly and so extensively. One of the continuing contributions of the older "History of Religions" studies of the early nineteen hundreds is to see Paul's travels in comparison to the efforts of other religious and philosophical groups in spreading their teachings in the ancient world. One must recognize that Luke's inclusion of these three journeys is for more than either chronological or historical purposes. He has a theological objective in mind, as well as other intentions. Uncovering these will be helpful to grasping his presentation of Paul's missionary ministry in chapters thirteen through twenty-one.

*The impact of Paul's missionary activities* is substantial in many ways. **First**, it provided the setting for all of his writings found in the New Testament. All but the Prison Letters and the Pastoral Letters were written 'on the mission field' by Paul while he was caught up in doing missions where ever he happened to be when writing the letters. Additionally, the Prison Letters (Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians) were written while Paul was a prisoner of Rome and not active in missionary service. But these letters were written to congregations established either directly or indirectly by his missionary labors. Among the Pastoral Letters, First Timothy and Titus were written while the apostle was actively engaged in missionary activity after release from his first imprisonment at Rome. Second Timothy was written from imprisonment in Rome to Timothy while laboring at Ephesus, along with First Timothy. Thus Paul's letters are genuinely 'missionary letters' by a missionary on the field of mission service.

**Second**, the implication of this for Paul's thinking theologically is enormous. The theological formulation of the Gospel in Paul's thinking is hammered out on the mission field, not in an isolated monastery somewhere

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Acts 13:1-14:28 (First); 15:36-18:22 (Second); 18:23-21:16 (Third).

<sup>2</sup>Among these alternative labels are 'missionary trips,' 'travels,' 'mission,' 'evangelizing trip,' etc.

cut off from real life. To understand Paul as a theologian means understanding him first as a missionary.<sup>3</sup> Christian doctrine is functional, rather than theoretical. This is a major reason why no writing of the apostle looks anything like a modern textbook on theology. His religious understanding was applied in small bits and pieces to individual situations being faced by differing churches and individuals. Only those aspects relevant to each particular situation were articulated by Paul in his letters. Even though Romans comes the closest to a systematic presentation of the Gospel of any of Paul's letters, even it is very limited in its coverage because it stands as a letter of introduction to the church at Rome for Paul and thus was shaped by inclusion only of those elements deemed important for the Roman Christians to understand about Paul and his missionary ministry.

**Third**, the way Paul went about doing missions has served as an important model for Christian expansion for nearly two thousand years. Various aspects of how Paul approached doing missions have importance for modern understanding: his strategy in choosing the places he went to<sup>4</sup>; his approach of 'Jew first, then Gentile';

<sup>3</sup>"Paul's permanent historical significance is commonly taken to be that he was the first to give theological articulation to the early Christian proclamation and to work out reflectively the issues which it raised. But the historical significance of Paul's missionary labors must not be underestimated. At all points the apostle's theological articulations were called forth from within the context of his Gentile mission. By means of that mission Paul also contributed to the remarkably early transposition of the new faith from the limited sphere of Judaism into the broader frame of the Gentile world, thereby making it possible for Christianity to survive and flourish as a distinct movement after A.D. 70. And in the process Paul's mission became for all religious history a preeminent model of organized missionary outreach." [Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 609.]

<sup>4</sup>Did Paul and the other apostles work off the "table of nations" (sons of Noah listing) in Genesis 10 with their missionary travels? Or, did Paul base his decisions on where to travel from the prophecy in Isaiah 66:19 about the nations?

**Isaiah 66:18-19.** *18 For I know their works and their thoughts, and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory, 19 and I will set a sign among them. From them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud—which draw the bow—to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations.*

Scholars have advocated both of these assumptions over the years as a critical aspect of the Pauline missionary activity, as is noted by E. J. Schnabel in his article "Mission, Early Non-Pauline":

The apostles could have thought of the "nations" (*ethnē*) of the world, including Israel (cf. LXX), in terms of "all the nations" in distinction from the nation Israel (cf. Pss. Sol. 9:9) or in terms of the individual "Gentiles" or non-Jews (cf. 4 Bar. 6:19). A messianic mission to "all the nations" would remind the apostles, in terms of geography and ethnography, of the table of nations in Genesis 10 and its continuing significance as the "Jewish" description of the world (cf. Scott 1994, 492–522; Scott 1995, 5–56). That their geographical horizon was not limited to the Roman Empire is demonstrated by the evidence in Acts that mentions regions independent of Rome: Parthia (Acts 2:9) in the east and Ethiopia (Acts 8:27) in the south. As regards a feasible policy to fulfill the Great Commission, the apostles would have thought in terms of specific nations or "tribes" or, from a political perspective, in terms of Roman provinces (cf. Rom 16:4 with Gal 1:2; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Cor 8:1; Gal 1:22).

An exclusively biblical-Jewish outlook might interpret the phrase "end of the earth" in terms of the extent of the Jewish Diaspora (cf. Acts 2:9–11), whereas a wider perspective would extend the geographical horizons to the furthest points on the edge of the inhabited world: the Indians in the east (or even the Seres, the "silk people" further east, as the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* of the first century A.D. reflects existing commercial contacts with China?), the Scythians in the north, the *Germani* at the Atlantic in the west (or *Britannia*, known to the Mediterranean world from at least the third century .B.C.. and annexed by Claudius in A.D. 43?) and the Ethiopians in the south (*Homer Odys.* 1.23 calls the "distant Ethiopians" "people at the edge [of the earth]"; cf. *Herodotus* 3.25.114). The singular eschatos (*tēs gēs*) in Acts 1:8 should not be understood in terms of a single goal of the disciples' mission (pace Ellis, who thinks of Spain); it affirms that there is no spatial limit to their mission.

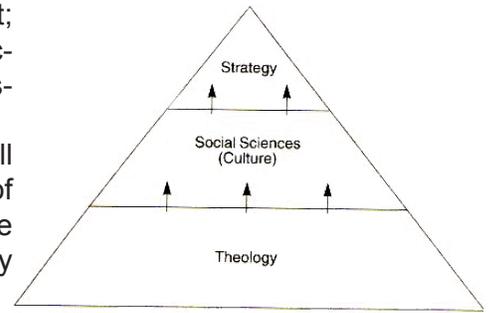
It appears that the early Christians had the broader perspective: for the Scythians see Colossians 3:11 (Michel, 7:449–50, seems to assume a converted Scythian in the Colossian church); for Spain see Romans 15:24, 28; for Ethiopia see Acts 8:27–39. India is not mentioned in the NT (but is referred to in Esther 1:1 [LXX] passim; 1 Macc 6:38). Would such a perspective mean that the apostles planned to travel to all territories known at that time? Considering the audacious courage of at least some of the apostles, this possibility should not be discarded. Intriguing are the later traditions that speak of missions to India, Scythia and Ethiopia (see 2.8 below).

J. M. Scott has advanced the thesis that according to the evidence in Acts and in Paul's letters the early Christians had a missionary policy based on the table of nations. The apostles seem to have decided on territorial jurisdictions in their respective missions drawn along the lines of the sons of Noah (which Luke supposedly adopts in the literary structure of Acts): Peter was responsible for the mission to "Shem" (Acts 2:1–8:25), Philip is involved in the mission to "Ham" (Acts 8:26–40), Paul is responsible for the mission to "Japheth" (Acts 9:1–28:31; Scott 1994, 522–44; 1995, 135–80). This proposal seems convincing from a tradition-historical point of view, and it illuminates various aspects of Paul's travels, although it is impossible to verify whether Paul consulted the table of nations tradition when making tactical decisions. His responsiveness to divine guidance seems to point to a high degree of flexibility, and Scott's view that an infringement of Peter and the "men of James" on Japhetite territory (Gal 2:11–14) caused Paul's strong reaction is doubtful. The dispute was not about territorial jurisdiction but about proper relations between converted pagans and messianic Jews.

R. Riesner suggested a different OT background for Paul's mission strategy. As Paul regarded himself part of the eschatological missionary enterprise to the nations portrayed in Isaiah, it is perhaps no coincidence that the movement in Isaiah 66:19, begin-

his use of associates for the work; centering on key population centers first; etc. Increasingly, studies especially when done from a sociological perspective are throwing more helpful light on to the approach of Paul in doing missions.

Because of this, our study of each of the missionary journeys will seek to analyze the presentation by Luke, thoroughly looking for signals of strategy, cultural sensitivity, and theological formulation expressed. Where in his letters Paul touches biographically on any aspect of his missionary work, these will be included as well.



## 5.0 First missionary journey (AD 46-47), Acts 13:1-14:28

One important aspect of the beginning missionary activity of Paul is how and where it all began. For Luke this provides a crucial theological foundation for what Paul will do in the coming years of missionary labors.<sup>5</sup> Acts 13:1-3 provides the introduction to the first missionary journey through the vehicle of a divine commissioning of the missionaries for service in spreading the Gospel.

**Acts 13.1** Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

13.1 Ἦσαν δὲ ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ κατὰ τὴν οὔσαν ἐκκλησίαν προφῆται καὶ διδάσκαλοι ὁ τε Βαρναβᾶς καὶ Συμεὼν ὁ καλούμενος Νίγερ, καὶ Λούκιος ὁ Κυρηνάιος, Μαναὴν τε Ἡρώδου τοῦ τετραάρχου σύντροφος καὶ Σαῦλος. 2 λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ νηστευόντων εἶπεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον· Αφορίσατε δὴ μοι τὸν Βαρναβᾶν καὶ Σαῦλον εἰς τὸ ἔργον ὃ προσκέκλημαι αὐτούς. 3 τότε νηστεύσαντες καὶ προσευξάμενοι καὶ ἐπιθέντες τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῖς ἀπέλυσαν.

**Setting.** In these three rather short sentences in the Greek text, Luke provides us with a setting for this missionary trip. The shift in writing strategy here probably signals Luke’s heavy use of a source, either oral or written or both, for his brief introduction to the beginning missionary endeavor. The perspective shifts somewhat, along with some of the vocabulary. Thus some propose an ‘itinerary source’ into which Luke inserts episodic narrative reports of activities.<sup>6</sup> But this is less than clear in the text.



What is clear is that Luke understood a profound shift to take place in early Christianity at this point, and his narrative strategy reflects that understanding.<sup>7</sup> Up to this point, Barnabas has been dominant in the rela-

ning in Tarshish (Tarsus) and turning in a northwest semicircle to Javan (Greece) and the “distant islands,” corresponds to Romans 15:19 and thus to Paul’s mission, explaining at the same time why Paul evidently did not plan a mission in the provinces between Rome and Spain, especially Gaul (Riesner, 216–25). A problem with this view is the fact that Isaiah 66:19 does not mention the two geographical limits of Paul’s mission (Rom 15:19) and that Put is more naturally linked with Libya than with Cilicia.

[Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000).]

<sup>5</sup>Older streams of interpretive understanding often questioned whether the first missionary journey was a fictitious creation by Luke, since in their assumptions it is not mentioned anywhere in the letters of Paul. As Fitzmyer notes, however,:

The places through which Paul passes on Mission I raise a question about the lack of anything to correspond to them in Paul’s letters. This raises in turn the question of the historicity of Mission I. More than the other two, Mission I is the one that some commentators claim to be a Lucan construct, with no basis in the ministry of the historical Paul. That mode of interpreting Mission I, however, is far from certain.

[Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 495.]

Later on we will challenge such assumptions on the basis of the political definition of ‘Galatia’ found in Paul’s letter to the Galatians and Luke’s use of the same term. The older assumption assumes the term to be ethnic rather than political, and thus assigns the region specified to an area far to the north of the southern segment of the Roman province of Galatia. Although widely held this ethnic meaning of the term runs contrary to a number of signals in both Luke and Paul.

<sup>6</sup>“The question of sources used by Luke in this account of Mission I is a matter of debate. Bultmann assigned vv 3–4, 13–14, 43–44, 48–49, and 52(?) to the Itinerary source. I prefer to assign vv 1–3 in this episode to the Pauline source.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 495.]

<sup>7</sup>“This short paragraph marks a major departure in Luke’s story. Up to this point, contacts with Gentiles (one might almost say, missionary activity in general) have been almost fortuitous. Philip was despatched along an unusual road not knowing that he would encounter an Ethiopian eunuch reading Scripture; Peter was surprised by the gift of the Holy Spirit to an uncircumcised and unbaptized Gentile; the missionaries to Antioch did not set out with the intention of evangelizing Gentiles. Here, however, though the initiative is

tionship with Paul, but now that is going to reverse itself. The random actions reaching out to non-Jews earlier were conducted by leaders either in the Jerusalem church, or under authorization of the Jerusalem church. The Antioch Christian community by sending out Paul and Barnabas launch their own agenda to spread the Gospel without any prior consultation with Christian leaders in Jerusalem. As Luke stresses, the higher authority of God lay behind their action through the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

From a literary standpoint, Luke employs here a 'commissioning' narrative<sup>8</sup> as the introduction to the missionary journey.<sup>9</sup> This literary pattern has its roots in the Old Testament prophetic call narratives.<sup>10</sup> Theologically, the more important point is Luke's desire to stress that God continued to speak directly to individuals and to His church in the pattern of Israelite history at pivotal moments in order to make clear His desire that specific job assignments were understood and carried out. The specific tone of each such narrative will be shaped by the circumstance in which God appears to individuals or groups of individuals, but the general pattern will have basic points of commonality. Here the divine appearance comes through the words of the Holy Spirit while the church, and especially its leaders, are at worship, seeking understanding of the will of God. For Luke, such an encounter demonstrated the divine validation of the Pauline mission to the non-Jewish world. Given the profound importance of this paradigm shift in the spreading of the Gospel, such divine affirmation of its correctness would be essential. Added to this was the controversy of the proper method for receiving Gentiles into the Christian community that would explode out of this Pauline mission (cf. chapter fifteen). That God approved what Paul and Barnabas did on this initial missionary journey became all the more important for Luke's readers to understand.

**Text Meaning.** As a commissioning narrative, the elements of the narrative fall into four categories: introduction, confrontation, commission, and conclusion. These will serve as the framework of our examination of these verses, as per Talbot's assessment:

**Introduction:** Ἦσαν δὲ ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ κατὰ τὴν οὖσαν ἐκκλησίαν προφῆται καὶ διδάσκαλοι ὁ τε Βαρναβᾶς καὶ Συμεὼν ὁ καλούμενος Νίγερ καὶ Λούκιος ὁ Κυρηναῖος, Μαναὴν τε Ἡρώδου τοῦ τετραάρχου σύντροφος καὶ Σαῦλος. λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ νηστευόντων.... In this introductory sentence Luke identifies several aspects which serve to set up the scene.

**First** comes the specification of location: ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ, in Antioch. This links the statement back to 12:25 and the return of Paul and Barnabas to Antioch after delivering the relief offering at Jerusalem.<sup>11</sup> This in turn is linked to 11:27-30, which describes the collecting of the relief offering in Antioch.<sup>12</sup> The ancient city of Antioch was

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still ascribed to the Holy Spirit (v. 2), an extensive evangelistic journey into territory in no sense properly Jewish (though there was a Jewish element in the population, as there was in most parts of the Empire) is deliberately planned, and two associates of the local church are commissioned to execute it." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 598-99.]

<sup>8</sup>Acts 1:4-11; 5:17-21a; 8:26-40; 9:1-19a; 10:1-23a; 11:1-18; 12:6-11; 13:1-3; 16:6-10; 18:1-11; 23:11; 27:21-26. Cf. "commissioning narratives," at cranfordville.com [http://cranfordville.com/Actsgenl.htm#Commissioning%20Narratives]

<sup>9</sup>Acts 13:1-3 is a commissioning story consisting of four components: (1) introduction (vv. 1-2a; cf. Gen 11:31-32); (2) confrontation (v. 2b; cf. Gen 12:1a); (3) commission (13:2c; cf. Gen 12:1b-3); and (4) conclusion (13:3; cf. Gen 12:4-5a) (Hubbard 1977, 103-26; and Hubbard 1978, 187-98)." [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 116.]

<sup>10</sup>Form-critical discussions of the call narratives found in Exod. 3:1-4, Judg. 6, Jer. 1, Isa. 6, and Ezek. 1 have focussed on the basic structural similarity of these texts, and have arrived at a variety of conclusions about the nature and origin of these stories. While there is general agreement as to the commonality of a number of elements in most of the texts, the precise number and definition of these elements remains in dispute. Thus N. Habel proposed six such elements: divine confrontation, introductory word, commission, objection to the commission, reassurances and promise of assistance, and the sign. He reached the conclusion that the formal model of the charging of a messenger lies behind the prophetic narratives. In Habel's estimation this charge is best exhibited by Gen. 24 (despite the absence of theophanic elements in that text), and this 'secular' form was adapted to the prophetic call narrative. W. Richter denned a similar set of components, but saw the purpose of the form as establishing a model for the commissioning of a saviour for Israel, and includes the account of the choosing of Saul in 1 Sam. 9-10. W. Zimmerli, sensitive to variations in the narratives, developed a two-tiered model, the first reflected in the narratives of Moses, Gideon, Saul and Jeremiah, and the second revealed in the calls of Isaiah, and Micaiah ben Yimlah in 1 Kgs 22.<sup>13</sup>" [George W. Savran, *Encountering the Divine: Theophany in Biblical Narrative* (London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 8-9.]

<sup>11</sup>25 Βαρναβᾶς δὲ καὶ Σαῦλος ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ 3 πληρώσαντες τὴν διακονίαν, συμπαραλαβόντες Ἰωάννην τὸν ἐπικληθέντα Μάρκον. Then after completing their mission in Jerusalem Barnabas and Saul returned and brought with them John, whose other name was Mark.

<sup>12</sup>27 Ἐν ταύταις δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις κατήλθον ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὺμ προφῆται εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν. 28 ἀναστὰς δὲ εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν ὀνόματι Ἄγαβος ἐσήμανεν διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος λιμὸν μεγάλην μέλλειν ἔσεσθαι ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην, ἣτις ἐγένετο ἐπὶ Κλαυδίου. 29 τῶν δὲ μαθητῶν, καθὼς εὐπορεῖτό τις, ὥρισαν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν εἰς διακονίαν πέμψαι τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἀδελφοῖς· 30 ὁ καὶ ἐποίησαν ἀποστείλαντες πρὸς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους διὰ χειρὸς Βαρναβᾶ καὶ Σαύλου.

27 At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit

located in the Roman province of Syria, and it was a large important city politically, economically, and militarily in the ancient world.<sup>13</sup> From the available records, a large and influential Jewish community existed at Antioch.<sup>14</sup> Thus the Christian community there was flourishing in the middle 40s when this commissioning of the missionaries took place.<sup>15</sup> By this point it was made up of both Jews and non-Jews, and thus was developing a more inclusive understanding of the Gospel for all nations.<sup>16</sup> A reflection of this surfaces in the appointment of Nicolaus, that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. 29 The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; 30 this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

<sup>13</sup>Antioch of Syria was built on the Orontes River (36°14'N; 36°07'E; now in modern Turkey) about 300 B.C.E. by Seleucus I. It continued to grow in size and influence during the Hellenistic period. Legends and some archaeological remains suggest that pioneering Greeks had settled in the area before the city was founded. Its lush river valley and the plain to the north—which included a lake—normally provided ample supplies of grain, olives, grapes, and fish. From springs to the south in Daphne, the favored summer home of the wealthy, fresh water reached the city via two aqueducts. Antioch flourished, despite its vulnerable military position between the mountains north of it and the broad valley around it. Seleucia Pieria, its port, lay less than a day's walk from Antioch. The two cities were connected by the Orontes, which usually carried cargo from the port to the metropolis. A break in the Lebanese mountains fostered trade with the East. Chinese porcelain was discovered in the excavations and a silk industry still exists in the village of Samandağı, not far from the site of Seleucia. Antioch also became an important military center after it was incorporated into the Roman Empire in 64 B.C.E. and served as a staging area for wars between Rome and its eastern adversaries.

“When Seleucia Ctesiphon was destroyed in 165 C.E., Syrian Antioch ranked as the third largest city of the Roman world next to Rome and Alexandria. Ancient and modern estimates of its size vary. Ancient sources range from 600,000 (Pliny *HN* 6.122 for Seleucia Ctesiphon's population) to 200,000 (Chrysostom *Pan. Ign.* 4). Modern historians suggest about 100,000 in the 1st century C.E., but if the metropolitan region as well as slaves are included, the number well may exceed this conservative estimate.”

[Frederick W. Norris, “Antioch (Place): Antioch of Syria” In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 265.]

<sup>14</sup>“After the coming of the Romans, Jews at Antioch showed their continued importance, a power that both exalted their position and made them objects of envy. Between 30 and 20 B.C.E. Herod the Great used his enormous wealth to demonstrate his allegiance to Rome by paving the main street of Antioch with marble (Josephus *JW* 1 §425; *Ant* 16 §148). In 9–6 B.C.E. a Jewish emir, a “military commander,” from Babylon named Zamaris was allowed to take up residence in greater Antioch. Because he brought 100 relatives and 500 mounted bowmen, he was settled north of the walled city in the plain. That decision implies that some Jews were already living there, perhaps as farmers (Josephus *Ant* 17 §23–27).

“When Caligula decided to have a statue of himself as Zeus made and set up within the Jerusalem temple, he ordered the governor of Syria, Petronius, to carry out his will. The statue was constructed at Sidon. Either there or at Ptolemais Jews offered their first protests. But a strange account of an Antiochene circus riot between Blues and Greens during the governorship of Petronius (39–41 C.E.), may be related to Caligula's plan. Petronius supported the Greens and so did the Jews. The Blues were angered by the games, became violent, eventually burned at least one synagogue, and killed a number of Jews. Perhaps the Jewish community wanted to influence Petronius quietly through the available city institutions by supporting his party. Whatever their intention, they became the target of the riot (Malalas 244.15–245.1).

“In the sixties, Antiochus, the son of a Jewish leader, rushed into a crowded theater and shouted that the Jews were plotting to burn the city. He led the angered crowd in making various Jews sacrifice to pagan gods or die, and was given command of troops who forced his people to break the Sabbath by working as they did on other days. A few years later, when fire broke out in the business and administrative center of the city and Antiochus repeated his charges, only the intervention of C. Pompeius Collega, the governor of Syria, prevented a pogrom (Josephus *JW* 7 §46–62).

“The Roman general and future emperor Titus received much political attention with his triumphal entry into Antioch after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. A mass of Antiochene citizens pleaded with him to destroy their Jewish community, but he refused to annihilate the Jews, to expel them, or to withdraw their rights as a politeuma. Yet to please the citizens he took some of the booty from Jerusalem, bronze cherubim from the temple, and placed them at the Daphne Gate. At a higher place on the gate itself he put up statuary that probably depicted Aeternitas and thus reminded everyone of Rome's victory in Jerusalem. Since most of Antioch's Jews lived in the southern quarter around the Daphne Gate, they were continually humiliated by these strong symbols of their defeat (Josephus *JW* 7 §96–111; *Ant* 12 §121–124; Malalas 281.4–5).”

[Frederick W. Norris, “Antioch (Place): Antioch of Syria” In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 266.]

<sup>15</sup>The Christian community had its beginning in the late 30s to early 40s with Christians fleeing persecution in Jerusalem and coming into the city preaching the Gospel, according to Acts 11:19-20: “19 Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. 20 But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus.” 19 Οἱ μὲν οὖν διασπαρέντες ἀπὸ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς γενομένης ἐπὶ Στεφάνῳ διήλθον ἕως Φοινίκης καὶ Κύπρου καὶ Ἀντιοχείας μηδενὶ λαλοῦντες τὸν λόγον εἰ μὴ μόνον Ἰουδαίοις. 20 ἦσαν δὲ τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἄνδρες Κύπριοι καὶ Κυρηναῖοι, οἵτινες ἐλθόντες εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν ἐλάλουν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλληνιστάς, εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν.

<sup>16</sup>Evidently the atmosphere of the Jewish synagogues helped pave the way for this, as John McRay notes:

Antioch had a large, wealthy Jewish population in the 1st century (Josephus *BJ* 7:43). These Jews endowed beautifully decorated synagogues, and “constantly attracted to their religious ceremonies multitudes of Greeks” (*BJ* 7.45).

[John McRay, “Antioch” In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 68.]

a Jewish proselyte from Antioch (Νικόλαον προσήλυτον Ἀντιοχέα), who was a believer and was named one of the seven at Jerusalem during the 30s (cf. Acts 6:1-7).

**Second**, Luke gives us a reference to leaders in the church: κατὰ τὴν οὖσαν ἐκκλησίαν προφήται καὶ διδάσκαλοι. Several unusual aspects surface here. The phrase τὴν οὖσαν ἐκκλησίαν is unusual Greek expression, and seems to be Luke's way of specifying the local congregation in Antioch.<sup>17</sup> The term ἐκκλησία is here collective in nature and lists all of the various house church groups under the one term ἐκκλησία.

Luke's designation of local church leaders is unusual for Acts: προφήται καὶ διδάσκαλοι. Elsewhere local leaders are specified as either τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας (the elders of the church, Acts 20:17) or ἐπισκόπους (care-givers, 20:28) who are to ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ (to pastor God's church, 20:28). Do Luke's terms προφήται καὶ διδάσκαλοι reflect the terms found in his source? Perhaps from Paul, since this pair of terms shows up a couple of places in Paul's letters:<sup>18</sup> πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον **προφήτας**, τρίτον **διδασκάλους**, (1 Cor. 12:28) and τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, **τοὺς δὲ προφήτας**, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, **τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους** (Eph. 4:11).<sup>19</sup> The difficulty with the Pauline source is that prophets are not local leaders, whereas teachers<sup>20</sup> may be either local (Eph.) or general (1 Cor). Perhaps Luke's Antioch source so specified prophets and teachers as local leaders there, and thus Luke adopts the reference in regard to the church there. Clearly from the grammar structure these are two functions of one group of leaders rather than separate leadership categories.<sup>21</sup> Additionally Luke had earlier mentioned in 11:27-30 that prophets had come to Antioch from Jerusalem, indicating an itinerate ministry for these prophets. But clearly now in 13:1-3 these prophets are local people who make Antioch their home.<sup>22</sup> What we probably are seeing here is the broader pattern in the New Testament to stress function in leadership roles, without much interest in whether these are local or general. This categorizing of leadership terms tends to become more important with an emphasis on position rather than on function.

The leaders mentioned by name are ὁ τε Βαρναβᾶς καὶ Συμεὼν ὁ καλούμενος Νίγερ, καὶ Λούκιος ὁ Κυρηναῖος, Μαναὴν τε Ἡρώδου τοῦ τετραάρχου σύντροφος καὶ Σαῦλος. Barnabas and Paul (Saul) stand as

<sup>17</sup>κατὰ τὴν οὖσαν ἐκκλησίαν. For the use of the participle see 5:17 (and the note); and 14:13 (D). This may be a case of the separation of a participle from its adjunct (here, ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ): the church that was in Antioch. But BDR § 474. 5(c), n. 9 rightly prefer 'In Antioch, in the local church'; so also M. 1:228 (quoting BM iii. p. 136 (AD 18), ἐπὶ ταῖς οὖσαις γετνίαις, and other papyri); M3.3:152." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 601.]

<sup>18</sup>Also note Rom. 12:6-7, 6 ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα, εἶτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, 7 εἶτε διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ, εἶτε ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, "6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching;"

<sup>19</sup>"In the local church at Antioch were Προφήται καὶ διδάσκαλοι. At 2:17f. the words of Joel are used to foretell the rise of Christian prophecy; at 11:27, prophets come down from Jerusalem to Antioch. E. Peterson (*Nuntius* 2 (1949) 9f.) thinks that these are the prophets referred to here; E. Schweizer (CONT 22c) rightly disagrees. See also 15:32; 19:6; 21:9, 10. It is quite possible (so e.g. Roloff 193) that these were travelling prophets (cf. Didache 11-13) who had settled in Antioch; whatever they may have been previously they do now appear to have settled. Teachers are mentioned in Acts here only, but cf. διδάσκειν (1:1; 4:2, 18; 5:21, 25, 28, 42; 11:26; 15:1, 35; 18:11, 25; 20:20; 21:21, 28; 28:3) and διδασχῆ (2:42; 5:28; 13:12; 17:19). Luke's own preferred word for ministers is πρεσβύτεροι (11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17, 18), who were also sometimes known as ἐπίσκοποι (20:28). He is probably dependent here on information derived directly or indirectly from Antioch, and it may be inferred that the words indicate the organization of the church at Antioch. Cf. 1 Cor. 12:28 (also Rom. 12:6f.; Eph. 4:11), where apostles stand before prophets and teachers." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 602.]

<sup>20</sup>"Teachers are mentioned in Acts here only, but cf. διδάσκειν (1:1; 4:2, 18; 5:21, 25, 28, 42; 11:26; 15:1, 35; 18:11, 25; 20:20; 21:21, 28; 28:3) and διδασχῆ (2:42; 5:28; 13:12; 17:19)." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 602.]

<sup>21</sup>"Prophecy was undoubtedly thought of as a spiritual gift (cf. especially 2:17f.; 19:6); so probably was teaching. The distinction between the two may have been a matter of manner rather than of content. Cf. the association of prophets and teachers in Didache 15:1; and see Schneider (2:113). It seems clear from what follows that the prophets and teachers, in addition to giving inspired exhortation and instruction, took the lead in planning and administering the church's work. The suggestion (Barth, CD 4:2:201) that διδάσκαλοι are found only in Gentile churches where there was no possibility of confusion with the one Teacher will hardly stand against 2:42." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 602.]

<sup>22</sup>"At 2:17f. the words of Joel are used to foretell the rise of Christian prophecy; at 11:27, prophets come down from Jerusalem to Antioch. E. Peterson (*Nuntius* 2 (1949) 9f.) thinks that these are the prophets referred to here; E. Schweizer (CONT 22c) rightly disagrees. See also 15:32; 19:6; 21:9, 10. It is quite possible (so e.g. Roloff 193) that these were travelling prophets (cf. Didache 11-13) who had settled in Antioch; whatever they may have been previously they do now appear to have settled." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 602.]

boundary markers for the list.<sup>23</sup> Between these two names come Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen. Each of these men are given further identifications for clarification of their identity. Simeon has the nickname of Niger (Συμεῶν ὁ καλούμενος Νίγερ).<sup>24</sup> Niger literally mean Black in Latin which is the source of the Greek spelling here, but nothing about his race can be inferred from this nickname.<sup>25</sup> Evidently Simeon was originally a part of the Jewish community in Antioch. Lucius came from Cyrene (Λούκιος ὁ Κυρηναῖος).<sup>26</sup> Probably he was among the early group of believers who came from Cyrene to Antioch and proclaimed the Gospel there (cf. Acts 11:19-21). Manaen is identified as a member of the court of Herod (Ἡρώδου τοῦ τετραάρχου σύντροφος). The term σύντροφος technically means ‘intimate friend’ and signifies that Manaen enjoyed a close friendship with the political leader Herod.<sup>27</sup> The Herod mentioned here is Herod Antipas who ruled Galilee during the ministry of Jesus, and is not Herod Agrippa I mentioned in 12:1.<sup>28</sup> Manaen had known Herod from their youth, but now their lives had gone very different directions: Manaen had become a Christian, and by this point in time Herod was either dead or else living in exile in Gaul after having been banished from his leadership in AD 39 by Emperor Caligula.<sup>29</sup> By this

<sup>23</sup>“The names are listed by means of the following particles: ὁ τε B. καὶ Σ ... καὶ Λ. ..., M. τε ... καὶ Σ. Luke is probably importing variety into his list, and not setting out pairs or groups (e.g. three prophets and two teachers). If any pair had been singled out it would have been Barnabas and Saul, and we should have had ὁ τε B. καὶ Σ., κτλ.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 603.]

<sup>24</sup>“Simeon called Niger. I.e., the Black One, a simple Greek transcription of Latin niger. The name Symeōn is a grecized form of Hebrew Šimē’ōn, a name commonly used among Jews of first-century Palestine. The Hebrew name was an abridged form of Šēma’ēl, ‘God has heard,’ or of Šēma’ yāh, ‘Yahweh has heard,’ shortened to Šimē’ōn, for which the more common Greek equivalent was Simōn, ‘Simon.’” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 496.]

<sup>25</sup>“Symeon is distinguished from Simon Peter (Symeon at 15:14; cf. 2 Peter 1:1) by the addition of ὁ καλούμενος (ἐπικαλούμενος, D 424, pc) Νίγερ. The construction is correct: the appositive has the article because this Symeon is being distinguished from another. Niger (a Latinism, black) occurs nowhere else in the NT; occasionally elsewhere, e.g. of a Peraean distinguished for his bravery (Josephus, *War*, 2:520; this means that nothing can be inferred from the name of Symeon Niger’s race).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 603.]

<sup>26</sup>“The appositive with Lucius also has the article, incorrectly, unless we are intended to distinguish him from another Lucius (perhaps him of Rom. 16:21). This seems improbable, since this Lucius is not mentioned in Acts. It is equally improbable that Luke was distinguishing Lucius from himself (see the note on 12:25). This Lucius came from Cyrene; it will be recalled that they were men of Cyprus and Cyrene who first in Antioch spoke the word of God to non-Jews. It could conceivably be marginally important that doctors from Cyrene were of some repute (so Herodotus 3:131:3 as quoted by Wettstein (532), but the text is doubtful).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 603.]

<sup>27</sup>“Μαναιὴν Ἡρώδου τοῦ τετραάρχου σύντροφος again is correctly described, without use of the article, since there is no other Manaen in the NT from whom he must be distinguished (though M. 3:206, stating the rule differently, regards this phrase as an exception). In the form Μαναιήμ (A has Μαναιήν) the name occurs at 4 Kdms 15:14, translating חַמְנַח, *Comforter*, and occasionally elsewhere. It is ‘ein nicht gerade seltener Name’ (StrB 2:710; see Hemer 227)). Herod the Tetrarch (his title has the article in view of Herod (Agrippa I) in ch. 12) is the ruler of Lk 3:1, and other passages. On σύντροφος see not only the passages cited in BA 1582 but also an extended note in Deissmann, BS 310–12 (also Jeremias, Jerusalem 88; ND 3:37); ‘it appears to have been in general use throughout the Hellenistic kingdoms’ (Deissmann, 312, citing M. Fränkel, *Altertümer von Pergamon* viii. 1 (Berlin 1890), 111f.). Cf. 2 Macc. 9:29; also 1 Macc. 1:6 (συνέκτροφος). It was a court title (often as σύντροφος τοῦ βασιλέως) and means intimate friend. For Luke’s interest in and possibly indirect contact with the Herods cf. Lk. 8:3. D has the surprising variant, (Μαναιήν τε Ἡρώδου καὶ τετραάρχου σύντροφος, which (though it is probably an accidental error) must be translated, Manean, son of Herod (the Great, presumably) and companion of (Herod, presumably) the tetrarch.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 603-04.]

<sup>28</sup>“Manaen, who had been raised with Herod the tetrarch. Lit., ‘one brought up with,’ or ‘friend from youth’ of Herod. This is Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great and Malthace, the tetrarch of Galilee during the ministry of Jesus (see Luke 3:1, 19; 8:3; 9:7, 9; 13:31; 23:7–15), and not to be confused with Herod the king or Herod Agrippa I (12:1). Herod Antipas was an adult when he became tetrarch in 4 B.C.; he reigned for 42 years until his banishment in A.D. 39. Though Manaen was such a confidant of young Herod Antipas, he is now a Christian and one of the prophets or teachers of Antioch. Manaen is a Greek form of Hebrew Menahēm, ‘Menahem’ (2 Kgs 15:14 [LXX]), meaning “‘Comforter.’” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 496-97.]

<sup>29</sup>How long Herod Antipas lived after Caligula banished him to Gaul (in modern France) in AD 39 is unknown. See “Herod Antipas,” Wikipedia.org for more details.

“Josephus’ mentions an earlier Menahem, an Essene, who was honored by Herod the Great for having foretold his rise to royal estate; it has been conjectured that he might have been the grandfather of this Menahem (Manaen). It is natural to suppose that Luke’s access to information about the Herod family was derived from Manaen. But what a commentary on the mystery and sovereignty of divine grace that, of these two boys who were brought up together, one should attain honor as a Christian leader, while the other should be best remembered for his inglorious behavior in the killing of John the Baptist and in the trial of Jesus!” [[F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 245.]

identification Luke probably signals that Manaen came out of an upper class of ancient society, although this is not clear.<sup>30</sup>

One point that should be remembered is that the list of five individuals at this point is representative but not exhaustive of the possible names of the various leaders of the house church groups scattered across the large city of Antioch.<sup>31</sup> Also the list of names simply specifies some of the leadership who are described as προφῆται καὶ διδάσκαλοι, **prophets and teachers**, rather than by the more common Lukan term πρεσβύτεροι for local leaders.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps Luke adopts the language of his source here, rather than put his own stamp on the narrative.<sup>33</sup> The New Testament focus on ministry function rather than ministry labels as designating positions should always be kept in mind as well.

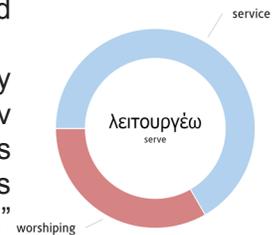
It may well be that these five leaders in the church at Antioch were the ones who took the initiative in leading the other leaders along with the congregation to make this hugely important decision to extend the Gospel outside the region around Antioch.

**Confrontation:** εἶπεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον.... The source of the challenge to move into new, uncharted waters in spreading the Gospel is attributed to the Holy Spirit, rather than one or some of the leadership of the church. This is consistent by Luke for he earlier had narrated that the disciple Ananias in Damascus had been told by the risen Christ that a divine call was upon Paul to preach the Gospel to the nations (cf. Acts 9:15-16).<sup>34</sup> Now this part of the vision given to Paul through Ananias over a decade earlier is about to be realized.

One should note the very prominent role of the Holy Spirit in what took place: He spoke the command to take action (εἶπεν); (indirectly) He guided the spiritual preparation for sending Paul and Barnabas (νηστεύσαντες καὶ προσευξάμενοι καὶ ἐπιθέντες τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῖς); He sent them off from Antioch (ἐκπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος). God chose the two individuals to go; the church and its leaders affirmed that choice.

Here stands one of the fundamental principles of the biblical commissioning narratives: the source of ground breaking decision for a church must always ultimately be God. The decision to move in radically new directions must never lay just with individuals in the church, including its leadership. If God doesn't prompt the decision, it will lead to disaster for the congregation.

How does a congregation discover the will of God? Luke indicates that the Holy Spirit had the opportunity to speak to the group while they were λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ νηστευόντων, **while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting**. What does this phrase refer to? The 'they' (αὐτῶν) reaches back to the group in the list, or perhaps implies the entire assembled congregation.<sup>35</sup> The object of worship was τῷ κυρίῳ, "to the Lord,"



<sup>30</sup>“The epithet applied to Manachen, σύντροφος (‘brought up together with’) does not necessarily mean a social peer. In the Epe-sian Tale, for example, it is applied to Rhode, the slave of the heroine, Anthia, e.g., 2.1.4; 2.3.3; 2.3.7; 2.4.1; 5.6.3. See also Jerome H. Neyrey, ‘Luke’s Social Location of Paul: Cultural Anthropology and the Status of Paul in Acts,’ in Witherington, History, 251–79, 263.” [Richard I. Pervo and Harold W. Attridge, *Acts : A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, Hermeneia--a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).]

<sup>31</sup>“The Western reading quoted above probably reflects that five was a small number of officers for a church such as Antioch; Schmithals 119 seems to hold a similar view, since he suggests that the list may originally have included Judas and Silas (15:27, 32). Why their names should have been removed does not appear.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 602-03.]

<sup>32</sup>“Luke’s own preferred word for ministers is πρεσβύτεροι (11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17, 18), who were also some-times known as ἐπίσκοποι (20:28).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 602.]

<sup>33</sup>The discussion among some modern commentators of a Pauline influence here coming out of 1 Cor. 12:28 (πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεῦτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα...) along with Rom. 12:6-7 and Eph. 4:11 does not prove convincing, largely because of the way Luke sets up his list here. If this were intended by Luke, then Paul’s name would need to be at the beginning of the list, not at the end of it. He was the only ἀπόστολος in the technical meaning of the term, and even if ἀπόστολος is understood more as ‘missionary’ the term then could just as easily have applied to Lucius as well as to Paul and Barnabas who were, from all indication, the three non natives of Antioch in the list. The only clearly signaled deliberateness in the list is the placing of Barnabas and Paul as ‘book ends’ as the first and last names in the list.

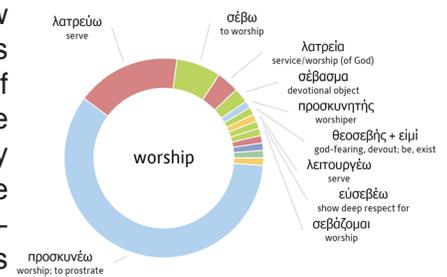
<sup>34</sup>**Acts 9:15-16** NRSV: 15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument *whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel*; 16 I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”

15 εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος· πορεύου, ὅτι σκευὸς ἐκλογῆς ἐστὶν μοι **οὗτος τοῦ βαστάσαι τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐνώπιον ἐθνῶν** τε καὶ βασιλέων υἱῶν τε Ἰσραὴλ· 16 ἐγὼ γὰρ ὑποδείξω αὐτῷ ὅσα δεῖ αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματός μου παθεῖν.

<sup>35</sup>“It is not clear whether the subject of the sentence is the prophets and teachers or includes the members of the church in general. Since the list of names in verse 1 is primarily meant to show who was available for missionary service, and since changes of subject are not uncommon in Greek, it is preferable to assume that Luke is thinking of an activity involving the members of the church generally; this will fit in with the fact that elsewhere similar decisions are made by the church as a whole.” [I. Howard Marshall, vol. 5, *Acts: An* Page 193

which can specify either Christ or God with the latter being the more likely intended meaning.<sup>36</sup>

Interestingly the term λειτουργέω is found only three times in the New Testament (Rom. 15:27; Heb. 10:11; Acts 13:2). In the first two instances it is translated ‘service’ by the NRSV, but ‘worshiping’ in Acts 13.2. One aspect of the verb λειτουργέω and its related noun form λειτουργία, which is slightly more common with six uses, is the public nature of the specified action.<sup>37</sup> Additionally the terms inherently denote a high degree of commendability attached to the public actions. Thus in the context here the translation ‘worshiping’ is appropriate, although it lacks much of the nuanced tone of the Greek expression. As the chart to the right indicates, of the 83 times the English word ‘worship’ is found in the NRSV it is translating ten different Greek words with προσκυνέω reflecting 43 of those instances. The contextual setting in Acts 13 points to a public worship service of the church in which these five leaders were present.<sup>38</sup> Additionally the term λειτουργέω points to worship that was going to produce something very beneficial to the entire group of believers in Antioch. It was a commendable public expression of worship to the Lord.<sup>39</sup>



Additionally while in worship these leaders were fasting: νηστευόντων. How extensive collective fasting was in the early church is unclear, for Luke mentions it only here and at 14:23 in Acts.<sup>40</sup> The highly limited men-  
*Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 229.]

<sup>36</sup>“Again, Kyrios is used in the sense of the God of Israel, not the risen Christ.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 497.]

<sup>37</sup>λειτουργέω impf. ἐλειτούργουν; fut. λειτουργήσω LXX; 1 aor. ἐλειτούργησα (cp. Att. λαός = λαός, q.v. + ἔργον; X.+; ins, pap, LXX; TestSol 12:6 v.l.; TestLevi 3:5; TestAsh 2:2; EpArist, Philo, Joseph.; on the spelling s. Maysen 127; Mlt-H. 76f) gener. ‘perform a public service, serve in a public office’ (in the Gr-Rom. world distinguished citizens were expected to serve in a variety of offices, including esp. as high priests, with all costs that such service involved, or to assume the costs of construction or maintenance of public buildings and production of dramas and games; for their services they would be recognized as people of exceptional merit [s. ἀρετή] or benefactors [s. εὐεργέτης]; but the word is also used of less prestigious activity SEG XXVI, 1392, 31 supply carts and mules; New Docs 1, 42–44) *in our lit. almost exclusively of religious and ritual services both in a wider and a more restricted sense* (SIG 717, 23f [100 B.C.] ἐλειτούργησαν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ εὐτάκτως; 736, 73; 74f λειτουργούντω τοῖς θεοῖς; 97f [92 B.C.]; PLond I, 33a, 3 p. 19 [II B.C.]; 41 B, 1; UPZ 42, 2 [162 B.C.]; 47, 3; BGU 1006, 10; LXX; EpArist 87; Dssm., B 137 [BS 140f]; Anz 346f; Danker, Benefactor [lit.]). Through the use of this term NT writers suggest an aura of high status for those who render any type of service.

**1. to render special formal service, serve, render service**, of cultic or ritual responsibilities

**a. of priests and Levites in God’s temple** (cp. Ex 28:35, 43; 29:30; Num 18:2; Sir 4:14; 45:15; Jdth 4:14; 1 Macc 10:42; Philo, Mos. 2, 152; Jos., Bell. 2, 409, Ant. 20, 218) abs. **Hb 10:11**. λ. τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ τοῦ θεοῦ perform services at the altar of God 1 Cl 32:2 (cp. Jo 1:9, 13); (w. ἱερατεύειν as Sir 45:15) λ. τῷ θεῷ 43:4; GJs 4:1 (1 Km 3:1).—Of Christian services ἐν τ. θυσιαστηρίῳ λ. τὸ θεῖον perform service to God at the altar **Tit 1:9** v.l.—Of officials of Christian congregations: λ. ἀμέμπτως τῷ ποιμνίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ serve Christ’s flock blamelessly 1 Cl 44:3. Of supervisors Hs 9, 27, 3. Of supervisors and servers λ. τὴν λειτουργίαν τῶν προφητῶν καὶ διδασκάλων perform the service of prophets and teachers D 15:1 (s. b, below on **Ac 13:2**.—λειτ. λ. Demosth. 21, 154; oft. in LXX; also Philo, Spec. Leg. 1, 82; SIG 409, 61).—Of angels (TestLevi 3:5) τῷ θελήματι αὐτοῦ (sc. θεοῦ) λειτουργοῦσιν παρεστῶτες they stand at (God’s) side and serve (God’s) will 1 Cl 34:5; cp. vs. 6 (Da 7:10 Theod.).

**b. of other expression of religious devotion** (Dionys. Hal. 2, 22, 2 ἐπὶ τῶν ἱερῶν of the wives of priests and their children who perform certain rites that would not be approved for males) including prayer (w. νηστεύειν, and of the prophets and teachers) τ. κυρίῳ **Ac 13:2**. λ. τῷ θεῷ (cp. Jo 1:13b) Hm 5, 1, 2; cp. 3; Hs 7:6. Of OT worthies οἱ τελείως λειτουργήσαντες those who have rendered superb service to God 1 Cl 9:2.

**2. to confer a special material benefit, serve** (X., Mem. 2, 7, 6; Chares Hist.: 125 Fgm. 4 p. 659, 28 Jac. [in Athen. 12, 54, 538e]; τῷ βίῳ λ. Origen, C. Cels. 8, 57, 1 and 6) ἐν τοῖς σαρκικοῖς λ. do a service in material things **Ro 15:27**—On this entry and the foll. one s. Elbogen 5; 511; FOertel, D. Liturgie, 1917; NLewis, Inventory of Compulsory Services in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt ’68; WBrandt, D. Wortgruppe λειτουργεῖν im Hb u. 1 Kl: Jahrb. d. Theol. Schule Bethel 1, 1930, 145–76; OCasel, λειτουργία—munus: Oriens Christ. III 7, ’32, 289–302; EPeterson, Nuntius 2, ’49, 10f; ARomeo, Miscellanea Liturgica (LMohlberg Festschr.), vol. 2, ’49, 467–519; FDanker, Gingrich Festschr. ’72, 108ff.—S. λειτουργία, λειτουργικός, λειτουργός.—DELG s.v. λαός. M-M. TW. Spicq. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 590-91.]

<sup>38</sup>Although not absolutely certain is whether this was a general worship service for the Christian community or a private time alone by just these leaders, the nature and use elsewhere of the verb λειτουργέω strongly favors the first understanding.

<sup>39</sup>The reporting of Barnabas and Paul to the entire congregation about their experiences at the end of the first missionary journey in 14:27 points in the direction of deep congregational involvement at the beginning of this process as well. Note: “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.” (παραγενομένοι δὲ καὶ συναγαγόντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀνήγγελλον ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς μετ’ αὐτῶν καὶ ὅτι ἤνοιξεν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν θύραν πίστεως.)

<sup>40</sup>“Fasting is not frequently enjoined in the OT. It accompanied mourning for the dead (e.g. 2 Sam. 1:12; 3:35); it might be prescribed in the Holy War (1 Sam. 14:24); it was part of the observance of the Day of Atonement (e.g. Lev. 16:29). According to post-biblical evidence (as late as the ninth century) Purim was preceded by a day of fasting on Adar 13. Fasting on other occasions might be privately undertaken (see I. Abrahams, *Studies* 1:121–8). Mk 2:18–20 suggests that Jesus and his disciples did not fast but that after the resurrec-

tioning of it in the NT, and in Acts especially, suggests that it was not widely practiced among first century Christians. The largely 'special occasion' nature of the mentioning of fasting in the Old Testament would suggest that what Luke is attempting to signal here is that among the leaders of the Antioch church was a growing concern that something needed to be done in order to reach the nations with the Gospel and that this included regions beyond Antioch. Thus in a concerted quest by the leaders God's will was being sought in how to understand and implement this developing concern.

One should also note the use of the *λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ νηστευόντων* participle phrase,<sup>41</sup> which defines an ongoing pattern of activity as a background to the Holy Spirit speaking (*εἶπεν*) to the group. The interpretive point here is that the speaking of the Holy Spirit came out of a regular pattern of worshiping and fasting, not from a single instance. The concern to spread the message of the Gospel to the nations was a growing burden of this group of leaders that developed over time, not something that suddenly 'popped out of the sky' to them. In their worship and fasting, they sought to position themselves to clearly discover God's will in this matter rather than take abortive action on their own.

How did the Holy Spirit speak to the group? The language of Luke here in no way implies an audible voice speaking to the group!<sup>42</sup> Luke does not specify how the Holy Spirit communicated His desires to the group, something that ultimately is unimportant. Instead, Luke stresses that the Holy Spirit did clearly make God's desires known to the group with specification of the two members of the group who were to be chosen for this work. With Luke's designation of the spiritual leaders at Antioch in terms of *προφῆται καὶ διδάσκαλοι*, likely a conviction emerged from one or all of these leaders that was spoken to the entire congregation. Regardless of the specific way the Holy Spirit communicated, what He said came through clear to the group so that they understood God's will in this concern to spread the Gospel.

**Commission:** Ἀφορίσατε δὴ μοι τὸν Βαρναβᾶν καὶ Σαῦλον εἰς τὸ ἔργον ὃ προσκέκλημαι αὐτούς. Luke only provides his readers with the essence of the Spirit's instructions to the group. At its heart was the command to 'separate out' Barnabas and Paul for a special task.<sup>43</sup> The verb expression is emphatic with the use of the Aorist imperative verb form Ἀφορίσατε and the particle of emphasis δὴ.<sup>44</sup> The idea of the verb is for these two men to be dedicated to the Lord for a special mission.<sup>45</sup> This constitutes their job assignment from the Lord. Interestingly, *fasting and ascension* became a Christian practice. It did not form a regular part of 'official' Greek and Roman religions, but was practised in some mystery cults (e.g. Sallustius, *De Dis et Mundo* 4 (Nock, p. 8, lines 20–22, ἐν κατηφορίᾳ ἐσμὲν σίτου τε καὶ τῆς ἄλλης παχείας καὶ ῥυπαρᾶς τροφῆς ἀπεχόμεθα (ἐκάτερα γὰρ ἐναντία ψυχῆ). εἶτα δένδρου τομαὶ καὶ νηστεία ...; see Nock's note on p. lv). Paul twice uses the word *νηστεία*, but apparently with reference rather to occasions when he had been obliged to go without food than to religious observance (2 Cor. 6:5; 11:27). In Acts (apart from a reference in 27:9 to 'The Fast', that is, the Day of Atonement) fasting is mentioned again only at v. 3 and at 14:23, perhaps (see the note) in connection with the appointment of presbyters. In Mt. 6:16–18 it is assumed that Christians will fast; they must not do so ostentatiously. It seems clear that some Christians took up the practice of fasting from pious Judaism, partly as self-discipline, partly as a reinforcement to prayer (see E. Lohse, *Ordination* 73, n. 1). It may be significant that the three references to fasting in Acts (13:2, 3; 14:23) all stand in connection with Antioch. Fasting might be undertaken with a special intention; Bauernfeind (169) speaks of 'ein innerliches Ringen um die kommende Missionstat'. [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 604-05.]

<sup>41</sup>In ancient Greek it is the Genitive Absolute construction. This construction enabled the writer to set up verbal actions being produced by a 'subject' different from the subject of the main verb action. Luke is particularly fond of this construction and employs it extensively in Luke - Acts. Additionally when coming at the beginning of a sentence the Genitive Absolute set up verbal action either taking place (present tense) or having taken place (Aorist tense) which served to 'set the stage' for the action defined in the main verb to which the Genitive participle(s) was attached as an adverbial modifier.

<sup>42</sup>The verb *λέγω* used here defines communication in the broadest terms. Had Luke intended to convey the idea of the Spirit speaking audibly to the group he would have chosen one of the Greek verbs, e.g., *λαλέω*, that defines audible speech by humans, or more likely, the special construction inherited from the LXX pattern for a divine voice speaking in which the verb *γίνομαι* is used.

<sup>43</sup>"Thus, the Spirit-guided missionary journey of Barnabas and Saul is inaugurated; compare 20:28 and 1 Tim 4:14. The risen Christ has called Saul, and the Jerusalem church has sent Barnabas to Antioch. Now the Spirit takes over and inaugurates the joint missionary work of the two, and especially of Saul, who becomes 'the apostle to the Gentiles' (Rom 11:13). 'The work' is a reference to the mission of Saul proposed in 9:15." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 497.]

<sup>44</sup>"In the Greek text immediately following the command set apart is an emphatic particle, not reproduced in most translations, but rendered by Moffatt 'come'; the meaning of the particle is probably to be understood in the sense of 'now' or 'immediately' (cf. Luke 2:15; Acts 6:3)." [Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 244-45.]

<sup>45</sup>"The two are to be set apart for a special work (cf. Num. 16:9; 1 Chron. 23:13). It is interesting and important that Paul uses *ἀφορίζειν* of himself and of his call (Rom. 1:1, ἀφορισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ; Gal. 1:15, ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἀφορίσας με). The work (*ἔργον*) to which the two men are called will become clear in the following chapters." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T

God chose the two key leaders of the community, Barnabas and Paul, rather than others less prominent in the life of the church.<sup>46</sup>

The details of the job assignment are only defined here in terms of εἰς τὸ ἔργον ὃ προσκέκλημαι αὐτούς, “for the work to which I have called them.” God through the Holy Spirit has already called out (προσκέκλημαι) Barnabas and Paul to this work (τὸ ἔργον). Now the congregation and the leadership are being asked to formally dedicate these two leaders to this task in a formal way. Although the details here have heavy Jewish tones from the commissioning narratives of the Old Testament, the non-Jewish members of the congregation could have understood the contours of this oracle from God out of their background in the Greco-Roman religions.<sup>47</sup>

For Paul, this moment at Antioch was the beginning of the completion of his divine calling at Damascus to preach the Gospel to the nations. For over a decade he had been preaching the Gospel only to Jews. Upon arriving at Antioch sometime prior to this event his ministry opportunities had been expanding with the growing presence of non-Jews in the congregation at Antioch. But now his mission as apostle to the Gentiles was about to be launched big time. For Barnabas, whose prior calling was real but just not described by Luke like that of Paul’s, a new phase of ministry was about to begin as well.<sup>48</sup>

**Conclusion:** τότε νηστεύσαντες καὶ προσευξάμενοι καὶ ἐπιθέντες τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῖς ἀπέλυσαν. The sending of Barnabas and Paul on this missionary journey is defined as the outcome of three activities: νηστεύσαντες καὶ προσευξάμενοι καὶ ἐπιθέντες τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῖς. In a subsequent worship service later on after the receiving of the instructions from the Holy Spirit (τότε), the congregation with its remaining leaders spent time again fasting and praying, νηστεύσαντες καὶ προσευξάμενοι. That fasting and praying naturally go together can be seen from the inherent meanings of both terms (seeking to understand God’s leadership) along with a common tendency to link the two items together. The entire commissioning service was prepared for with an intense seeking of God’s will and blessing on these two men, who would represent the church in their missionary labors.

The laying on of hands, ἐπιθέντες τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῖς, mentioned here has occasioned considerable discussion over the centuries. Some have seen in this an ‘ordination’ service, while most see it as a ‘commissioning’ service.<sup>49</sup> It provides no grounds for distinguishing this action in Antioch as ordination or commissioning.

Clark., 2004), 605.]

<sup>46</sup>“Barnabas and Saul would have been among the prophets and teachers at Antioch, but the church did not use this as an excuse not to send them. A selfish church might have tried to send ordinary members of the church but this church was willing to obey the Lord, and therefore they fasted and prayed some more, to be sure that the Lord had spoken (13:3)” [Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary* (Nairobi, Kenya; Grand Rapids, MI.: WordAlive Publishers; Zondervan, 2006), 1349.]

<sup>47</sup>“The Spirit leads the church to confirm the call the two had already received. Oracles often served as the basis for a mission. Dionysius, for example, defended his mission to bring a new religion to Greece by claiming that it was based on a theophany of Zeus (Euripides, *Bacchae* 469; cf. Gal 1:6; 2:2—travel in response to a revelation). Socrates’ mission began with an oracle from Delphi (Plato, *Apology* 20E–22A, 28E), as did that of Dio Chrysostom (422R; 243.1–12). This was but a specific application of a more general practice: for example, ‘And, indeed, what colony did Greece ever send into Aeolia, Ionia, Asia, Sicily, or Italy without consulting the Pythian or Dodonian oracle, or that of Jupiter Ammon?’ (Cicero, *De Divinatione* 1.1.2–3).” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 116–17.]

<sup>48</sup>“The nature of the task<sup>3</sup> is not revealed at this point, possibly for literary effect, but it is clear that missionary work must have been indicated; whether the missionaries were given directions for their route at this point or later (13:4) is not stated. Luke’s main point is to emphasize that mission is inaugurated by God himself.” [I. Howard Marshall, vol. 5, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 229–30.]

<sup>49</sup>The distinction between ‘ordination’ and ‘commissioning’ often has denominational background in its meaning(s). The common background in scripture is the idea of appointment to religious service. Normally the assumption is that God has issued the calling to service, and the congregation publicly acknowledges this divine appointment in a service of consecration of the individual. Ordination is usually seen in reference to becoming a pastor, a priest etc. Commissioning is typically seen as a service of dedication to some particular ministry such as missionary service.

Luke 6:13 stands as the starting point in Christian understanding: καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο ἡμέρα, προσεφώνησεν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐκλεξάμενος ἀπ’ αὐτῶν δώδεκα, οὓς καὶ ἀποστόλους ὠνόμασεν, “And when day came, he [Jesus] called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles.” The early church appointed a replacement for Judas in selecting Matthias (Acts 1:26): καὶ ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔπεσεν ὁ κλῆρος ἐπὶ Μαθθίαν, καὶ συγκατανηφίσθη μετὰ τῶν ἑνδεκά ἀποστόλων, “And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.” Some distinction from this seems to be present in what the church at Antioch did with Paul and Barnabas here in 13:1–4, as well as with the procedure of these two missionaries with the churches they would establish on the first missionary journey (14:23): χεῖροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς κατ’ ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους προσευξάμενοι μετὰ νηστειῶν παρέθεντο αὐτοὺς τῷ κυρίῳ εἰς ὃν πεπιστεύκεισαν, “And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.” To be clear, the ‘laying on of hands’ took place in both instances at Antioch and with the appointment of leaders in each of the churches. This pattern of appointing local church leaders becomes standard as Titus 1:5 suggests: Τοῦτου χάριν ἀπέλιπόν σε ἐν Κρήτῃ ἵνα τὰ λείποντα ἐπιδιορθώσῃ, καὶ καταστήσῃς κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους, ὡς ἐγὼ σοι διαταξάμην, “I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be

The practice of putting one's hands on another person in the ancient world has roots in the Jewish purification tradition of temple worship and the symbolical significance of the human hand.<sup>50</sup> Behind all of these actions was physical contact of one person with another, through hands touching the other person.<sup>51</sup> In most instances, the hands touched the head of the other person. The Torah clearly forbid touching anything considered unclean, and this included people as well. To do so was to become defiled and thus unable to worship God until ritual clean-

done, and *should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you:...*"

One should remember that the modern Christian definitions of religious ordination, even in Protestant church life, owe more to second through fifth centuries Roman Catholic tradition regarding who was authorized to administer the sacraments, than to the teachings of scriptures. Ordination today has more secular implications than religious ones, e.g., taxable status with the government, legal ability to perform weddings etc. Whether ordination is done by a local church or by the denominational group depends largely on the governance of the religious group. Sometimes appeals will be made to scriptures, mostly in Acts, that either the apostolic leaders ordained, or else the local church authorized the ordaining. But these appeals fall short of plausibility simply because they provide no basis for the modern practice of ordination to religious service, which is grounded almost completely in church tradition.

<sup>50</sup>HANDS, LAYING ON OF [Heb *sāmaḳ yad* *al*—'lean a hand upon' (Ex. 29:10, 15, 19; Lev. 1:4), *šīt yad* *al*—'place a hand upon' (Gen. 46:4), etc.; Gk *tithēmi tās cheiras ep* (Mk. 10:16), *epitithēmi tās cheiras* (Mt. 19:15), *epithesis tōn cheirōn* (1 Tim. 4:14), etc.]. The practice of laying hands upon the head of another person, usually a part of a religious rite, sometimes in order to impart a blessing. In Am. 5:19 the phrase "the laying of the hand upon" is used in a secular sense and is translated by the RSV as "[he] leaned with his hand against."

### I. In the OT

The laying on of hands was used in several distinct ways: in offering certain sacrifices, in consecrating or ordaining, in imparting blessings, and in passing judgment. The first two are connected with Heb *sāmaḳ* and seem to connote a "leaning" of the hands. The third is expressed by Heb *šīt* and connotes "placing" hands on the other.

**A. In Offering** The person presenting a peace offering (Lev. 3:1f) or a sin offering (Lev. 3:8, 13; 4:4; Nu. 8:12) was to lay his hands upon the animal so that he identified himself with the animal being offered. Most scholars believe that there was no transference of the guilt of sin. Rather, the value seemed to result from the offering of a pure and innocent life or of a being without blemish as an expiation for the guilt-laden life of the offerer. The only situation where the laying on of hands transferred the guilt of sin was that of the scapegoat (see AZAZEL). The high priest laid his hands upon the head of the animal, confessing the sins of the people. He then drove the goat, bearing the sins of the people, into the wilderness (Lev. 16:21).

**B. In Ordaining** Beginning with the ordination of the Aaronic priesthood (Lev. 8:14, 22) and the consecration of the Levites (Nu. 8:12), the laying on of hands set apart a man for a special office. Moses laid his hands upon Joshua to symbolize his assumption of the leadership of the nation (27:23). Although Nu. 27:18 states that Joshua already had been given the Holy Spirit, the action does not seem to convey a special spiritual grace. The rite, however, was always accompanied with a special commission and the man commissioned was given special authority.

**C. In Blessing** Jacob laid his hands on his grandsons' heads to bless them (Gen. 48:14). The laying on of hands was undoubtedly intended to convey some beneficial virtue.

In one instance God is said to lay (Heb *šīt*) His hand upon David (Ps. 139:5) as a sign of blessing. We should not forget that the divine blessing underlies human blessing. There is no higher blessing, as Job acknowledged in his confrontation with God (Job 9:33).

**D. In Passing Judgment** At the trial of a blasphemer each witness, to show his acceptance of the verdict of judgment, placed his hands upon the one to be executed (Lev. 24:14). In Ex. 7:4 the expression refers to an act of divine judgment by which God would visit the plagues upon Egypt. When a victim was spared death, as when God allowed the elders and leaders of Israel to see Him V 2, p 612 without executing the judgment of death (Ex. 24:11) or when Abraham was commanded not to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22:12), the sparing of judgment is described in terms of hands not being laid on the possible victim.

### II. In the NT

The same basic pattern is followed in the NT except that its sacrificial usage is dropped and the spiritual gifts are added. When Jesus blessed the children (Mt. 19:15 par Mk. 10:16), He laid His hands upon them. Both Jesus (e.g., Mt. 9:18; Mk. 6:5) and His apostles (Acts 5:12; 28:8) healed by laying on their hands (cf. 9:12, 17). The miracles often occur, however, without the laying on of hands, so the miraculous power for the healings was surely a personal power and was not specifically connected to the action of the hands.

Special spiritual gifts seem to have been given through the laying on of hands. The Holy Spirit was given to the Samaritans (Acts 8:17–20) and to the disciples of John the Baptist (19:6) by the laying on of the apostles' hands. In each case it is possible that the laying on of the hands confirmed a questionable baptismal practice, for the gift of the Holy Spirit is more normally given at baptism. Timothy also received special spiritual gifts from the hands of the elders (1 Tim. 4:14) and from the hand of Paul (2 Tim. 1:6). Some consider these verses to be the basis for the modern practice of confirmation.

On two occasions the laying on of hands was part of the setting of persons aside for special tasks. The seven chosen to care for the widows were selected by the church (Acts 6:6), while Paul and Barnabas were set apart by the Holy Spirit (13:3). The laying on of hands was a part of the formal ceremony by which the church commissioned them and then sent them into their new service. Paul admonished Timothy that this act, probably connected with ordination, ought to take place only after the entire matter was properly considered (1 Tim. 5:22).

On He. 6:2 see the comms for a discussion of the problematic context.

[Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 2, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Revised (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988; 2002), 611-12. S.V., D.W. Wead, "Hands, Laying on of."]

<sup>51</sup>The laying on of hands expression surfaces in Acts 6:6; 8:17, 19; 9:12, 17; 13:3; 28:8. In Paul's writings it is found in 1 Tim. 4:14 and 2 Tim. 1:6.

ness had been restored.<sup>52</sup> Consequently, to touch another person carried with it deep implications regarding the perceived religious purity of that person. It conveyed the individual's affirmation of the other person as committed to God. In a religious ritual touching by putting one's hands on the other person's head became a prayer for God to infuse that person with divine power and blessing. Thus Jesus often touched the people whom He healed (Mk 6:5; Lk 4:40; 13:11–13), as did the disciples (Mk 16:18; Acts 9:12, 17; 28:8). As Hebrews 6:2 indicates, a formal teaching about this procedure was developing in Christianity by the mid first century.<sup>53</sup> What we don't know from Hebrews is the content of this teaching, and so educated guessing by commentators usually fills the void.<sup>54</sup> What does become relatively clear is that the appointment to public office or the priesthood in the Greco-Roman tradition did not play a major role in this process of selection for a leadership role.<sup>55</sup> It was in the Hebrew heritage

<sup>52</sup>**2. Ritual or ceremonial uncleanness.** In the early books of the OT, cleanness and uncleanness are ritual issues. That is, calling a person or thing “unclean” was not a moral judgment. “Unclean” meant simply that a person or thing was unable to participate in Israel's worship of Yahweh. During the time of ceremonial uncleanness, one could not attend any worship ceremony or eat meat that had been offered in sacrifice (Nu 5:1–4; 9:6–12). Under certain circumstances an unclean person must be isolated from others in the community (Lev 13:45–46).

Ritual uncleanness could result from a number of different things—including giving birth (Lev 12), having various skin diseases (Lev 13–14), bodily emission or menstruation (Lev 15), and touching the dead (Nu 19).

Animals and foods were also divided into clean and unclean classes. The clean might be eaten; the unclean were forbidden (see Lev 11 for a list; cf. Ge 7:2; 8:20; Dt 14:3–21). Only clean animals might be offered to God as sacrifices.

A number of theories have been advanced to explain why the concept of the ceremonially unclean and clean was introduced into Mosaic Law. Did these rules serve to guard Israel against worship of animals? Were they designed to protect them from communicable diseases? The rules concerning the clean and the unclean seem to draw attention to central issues in human experience—to birth, death, sex, health, and food. In so doing, these ritual issues graphically demonstrated God's concern for everything in his people's earthly life.

There is no suggestion that the flesh of some animals is healthier to consume than that of others. When the clean and unclean animals are identified, Israel is simply told, “Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy” (Lev 11:43–44). Holy/Holiness No additional explanation is offered. What we conclude is that Israel's God sets apart what he chooses for his people, and he sets them apart from whatever he rejects. Israel is God's people. Everything in their daily life is to testify to their exclusive commitment to the Lord.

[Lawrence O. Richards, *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words : Based on the NIV and the NASB*, Zondervan's understand the Bible reference series (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 169-70.]

<sup>53</sup>Interestingly, in Hebrews 6:1-3, the laying on of hands was one of the topics of Christian teaching that the writer alludes to in early Christian teaching: “Therefore let us go on toward perfection, leaving behind the basic teaching about Christ, and not laying again the foundation: repentance from dead works and faith toward God, 2 instruction about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And we will do this, if God permits.” Διὸ ἀφέντες τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερόμεθα, μὴ πάλιν θεμέλιον καταβαλλόμενοι μετανοίας ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων καὶ πίστεως ἐπὶ θεόν, 2 βαπτισμῶν διδασχῆς ἐπιθέσεως τε χειρῶν, ἀναστάσεως τε νεκρῶν καὶ κρίματος αἰωνίου. 3 καὶ τοῦτο ποιήσομεν, ἂν περ ἐπιτρέπη ὁ θεός. This strongly implies that by the mid first century early Christianity was developing organized teaching regarding the ‘laying on of hands’ ἐπιθέσεως χειρῶν.

“Although the six articles of faith can be arranged in pairs that consider the knowledge and service of God, the cultus, and eschatology (so Thüsing, 243), acceptance of the variant reading διδασχῆν, “the teaching,” in v 2 calls for a different arrangement. The ‘catechetical instruction concerning cleansing rites and laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment’ stands in apposition to ‘the foundation’ of repentance from dead works and faith in God. This means that the laying of the foundation consisted in the provision of catechetical instruction (so Michel, 238; F. F. Bruce, 112). One implication of this interpretation is that repentance and faith were prompted, at least in part, by instruction that developed a distinctively Christian perspective on the articles of faith enumerated in v 2 (so Dunn, Baptism, 208).”

[William L. Lane, vol. 47A, *Word Biblical Commentary : Hebrews 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 140.]

<sup>54</sup>“Laying on of hands. The imposition of hands (Heb. *səmīkāh*) was an early Christian practice,<sup>26</sup> associated especially with the impartation of the Holy Spirit,<sup>27</sup> and that is most probably its significance here.<sup>28</sup> But it too was inherited from the Old Testament, where it is used especially in commissioning someone for public office,<sup>29</sup> or as part of the sacrificial ritual.<sup>30</sup> In later Judaism the term appears regularly in the sense of ordination (of rabbis).<sup>31</sup>” [F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 142-43.]

<sup>55</sup>“Appointment to formal functions in a religious community. Greeks and Romans knew a variety of modes of selection and installation to public office, and some of these influenced the later developments in the Church. Greek society commonly filled magistracies and priesthoods by election, by taking lots, or by a combination of the two methods. Cheirotonia was voting by a show of hands. Entrance into office involved the candidate undergoing a formal scrutiny of his qualifications, taking an oath, and bringing entrance sacrifices.

“The Roman Republic chose magistrates by an election by the voting units of the assembly. Existing magistrates had great influence in determining the outcome and had the right to designate lesser magistrates. Colleges of Roman priests filled vacancies by co-optation. Offices were formally assumed by taking the auspices to determine divine favor and formally beginning to exercise the functions. The oath held a prominent place. Under the empire the imperial designation eclipsed other methods of selection.”

[Everett Ferguson, “Ordain, Ordination” In vol. 5, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 37-38.]

of early Christianity that the formal action of appointment by the religious community simply acknowledged the divine selection of the individual. Unquestionably this is Luke's emphasis in 13:3.<sup>56</sup>

Thus Paul and Barnabas are sent out by the church (ἀπέλυσαν) to begin a work that would forever change the nature of the Christian religion.

### 5.0.1 Establishing Christian congregations, Acts 13:4-14:20; (Gal 3:1-5, 4:12-15)

In describing the activities of the first missionary journey, Luke splits up his narrative into two segments. First is the outward trip where initial contacts are made and congregations are established (13:4-14:20) and second comes the follow-up contacts in a revisiting of the churches where the focus is on disciplining and organizing the congregations (14:21-25).

As the map on the right indicates, their travels were not too far away from the home base in Antioch. Additionally, the regions they covered contained Jewish populations, although Jews were not as numerous in this area as they were to the west.<sup>57</sup> The towns and cities where they went include Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. These towns were located either on the island of Cyprus or on the mainland in the south central portion of what is modern Turkey.

Identification of the Roman political provinces where the mainland towns were located plays a role in the dating of the letter to the Galatians.<sup>58</sup> At the proper point this issue will be explored in detail with resulting conclusions.



<sup>56</sup>“The laying on of hands is duly accompanied by prayer and fasting as a ritual means of invoking God’s blessing on the commission about to be given to Saul and Barnabas.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 497.]

<sup>57</sup>“Within the boundaries of the Roman province of Galatia there is little reliable evidence for Judaism or Christianity in the 1st and 2d centuries A.D. Except for the passages in Acts which refer to synagogues at Pisidian Antioch (13:14) and Iconium (14:1), Jews are hardly attested in any of the cities before the 4th century. There were, however, important Jewish communities to the W, above all in Phrygia at Apamea and Acmonia (HJP<sup>2</sup> 3/1: 27–32). Moreover, inscriptions of N Galatia from the 3d to the 6th centuries do indicate small Jewish communities in rural districts (RECAM 2: 133, 141, 2096, 508–11). There is only one unambiguous reference to Christians in a Galatian city before A.D. 200, to Montanists in Ancyra (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.16); the evangelization of the apostolic period, therefore, left few traces. It is likely that Christian communities became larger and more influential in the second half of the 3d century, at least in certain cities (Harnack 1915, 2: 184–226). By the mid-4th century, however, Christianity seems to have become the religion of the majority of the inhabitants, as was more obviously the case in neighboring Cappadocia. The Galatian city of Laodice Catacecaumene was then a noted heretical center (Calder 1923).” [Stephen Mitchell, “Galatia (Place)” In vol. 2, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 871.]

<sup>58</sup>Paul (1 Cor. 16:1, Gal. 1:2, 2 Tim. 4:10) and Peter (1 Pet. 1:1) use the Greek noun Γαλατία, Galatia. But Luke uses the adjective Γαλατικός, ἡ, ὄν twice in Acts (16:6, τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ Γαλατικὴν χώραν, & 18:23, τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν καὶ Φρυγίαν) to refer to Galatia. Additionally in Gal. 3:1, Paul uses the personal noun Γαλάτης to refer to the Galatians. Much debate has arisen in the past century over whether Paul and Luke mean the same territory with their different terms, and if so, are they talking about the Roman province of Galatia, or about the ethnic Galatians who lived in a slightly different region:

**Γαλατία, ας, ἡ** (Diocles 125; Appian, *Mithr.* 17 §60; 65 §272 al.; Cass. Dio 53, 26; ins) **Galatia**, a district in Asia Minor, abode of the Celtic Galatians, and a Roman province to which, in addition to the orig. Galatia, Isauria, Cilicia, and northern Lycaonia belonged. The exact mng. of G. in the NT, esp. in Paul, is a much disputed question. **Gal 1:2; 1 Cor 16:1; 2 Ti 4:10** (in this pass. some mss. have Γαλλίαν, and even the better attested rdg. Γαλατίαν can be understood as referring to Gaul: Diod S 5, 22, 4 al.; Appian, *Celts* 1, 5 al.; Polyaeus 8, 23, 2; Jos., *Ant.* 17, 344; other ref. in Zahn, *Einl.* I 418.—To avoid confusion, it was possible to say something like Γαλατία τῆς ἑσῶς=eastern [Appian, *Bell. Civ.* 2, 49 §202] or Γαλάται οἱ ἐν Ἀσίᾳ [Appian, *Bell. Civ.* 4, 88 §373]); **1 Pt 1:1**. For the NT there are only two possibilities, both of which involve the Galatia in Asia Minor. The view that G. means the district orig. inhabited by the Galatians (North Gal. theory) found favor with Mommsen (ZNW 2, 1901, 86), ASteinmann (esp. detailed, *D. Leserkreis des Gal.* 1908), vDobschütz, Jülicher, MDibelius, Feine, Ltzm., JMoffatt, Goguel, Sickenberger, Lagrange, Meinertz, Oepke, EHaenchen (comm. on **Ac 16:6**), et al. Impressive support is given this point of view by Memnon of Asia Minor, a younger contemporary of Paul. For him the Galatians, of whom he speaks again and again (no. 434 Fgm. 1, 11ff Jac.), are the people with a well-defined individuality, who came to Asia Minor from Europe. Paul would never have addressed the Lycaonians as Γαλάται.—The opp. view, that G. means the Rom. province (South Gal. theory), is adopted by Zahn, Ramsay, EMeyer, EBurton (Gal 1921), GDuncan (Gal '34), esp. VWeber (Des Pls Reiserouten 1920). S. also FStähelin, *Gesch. d. kleinasiat. Galater* 1907; RSyme, *Galatia and Pamphylia under Aug.*: Klio 27, '34, 122–48; CWatkins, *D. Kampf des Pls um Galatien* 1913; JRopes, *The Singular Prob. of the Ep. to the Gal.* 1929; LWeisgerber, *Galat. Sprachreste*: JGeffcken Festschr. '31, 151–75; Hemer, *Acts 277–307* (North-Gal. hypothesis

As we examine the activities of Barnabas and Paul in each of the cities on this trip, we should take note of how the Gospel was presented, received, and used to begin a congregation. From this we can glean a better understanding of the ministry of these missionaries in establishing churches in these two regions of the ancient northeastern Mediterranean world. Something about the background history of each town needs to be examined for additional light on the shape of the activities in each place.

### 5.0.1.1 Work in Seleucia, Acts 13:4

**Acts 13:4** So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

4 Αὐτοὶ μὲν οὖν ἐκπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος κατήλθον εἰς Σελεύκειαν, ἐκεῖθεν τε ἀπέπλευσαν εἰς Κύπρον,

Seleucia was basically the port city of Antioch (appx. 20 km west of Antioch) at the mouth of the Orontes River, which is the basis for Luke's depiction in verse four.<sup>59</sup> Founded three centuries before by Seleucus I, the city functioned as a sea gateway to Antioch during the first Christian century.<sup>60</sup> It was often referred to as Seleucia Pieria in order to distinguish it from the almost dozen other cities with the name of Seleucia in the ancient world. By this point of time Seleucia was a city of considerable size, probably close to eighty to one hundred thousand people. As a major port city for international commerce, it had gained stature in the eastern Mediterranean, even though it had lost its prominence as the former capital of the Seleucid empire and now the position of the Roman capital of the province of Syria had shifted to Antioch.



Luke's depiction at this point is to stress that the city was the starting point for the first missionary journey. This is the only mention by name of the city in the Bible. What Luke does say is important, however. Once again (cf. 13:2) Luke stresses that this missionary activity was launched by the Holy Spirit rather than by mere human endeavor: Αὐτοὶ μὲν οὖν ἐκπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος. The 'therefore' οὖν implies this action as clearly implicit in the commissioning of these two missionaries at Antioch. It is the Spirit's sending out<sup>61</sup> of these men that is central. It was then from this port city (ἐκεῖθεν) that the two missionaries caught a ride (ἀπέπλευσαν) on a ship headed to Cyprus (Κύπρον).<sup>62</sup> This would have been relatively easy to do since a regular line of shipping

<sup>59</sup>'unnecessary and improbable' p. 306) Pauly-W. VII 519–55; Kl. Pauly II, 666–70.—New Docs 4, 138f. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 186-87.]

<sup>59c</sup>Σελεύκεια, ας, ἡ (less acceptable Σελευκία or Σελευκεία) **Seleucia**, the port city of Antioch in Syria (mentioned in Polyb. 5, 58, 4; Strabo 7, 5, 8 al.; ins; 1 Macc 11:8; Jos., Ant. 13, 221–23, C. Ap. 1, 207) **Ac 13:4**.—Kl. Pauly V 85; BHHW III 1764." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 918.]

<sup>60c</sup>Seleucia in Syria was the most important city founded by Seleucus I; it was also known as Seleucia Pieria. The name Seleucia honors Seleucus I as the founder of the city, while the name Pieria derives from Mt. Pierius, on whose S slope the city was built. Seleucia was one of four cities that Seleucus I built in N Syria. Apparently he considered it the most important of the four, since he named this one after himself. The three other cities were Antioch-on-the-Orontes (named for Seleucus' father), Laodicea-on-the-Sea (named for his mother), and Apamea (named after his wife). These four cities, known as the 'Syrian Tetropolis,' became centers for propagating Hellenistic cultural ideals throughout the region. Coins minted in these cities called them 'brother townships.'" [Leslie J. Hoppe, "Seleucia (Place)" In vol. 5, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 1075.]

<sup>61c</sup>ἐκπέμω fut. 3 sg. ἐκπέμψει Eccl 17:11; 1 aor. ἐξέπεμψα. Pass.: 1 aor. pass. ἐξεπέμφθην, ptc. ἐκπεμφθεῖς (s. πέμω; Hom.+ ) **to cause someone to go away (for a purpose), send out** (Jos., Ant. 2, 11) spies 1 Cl 12:2. ἐκπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος sent out by the Holy Spirit **Ac 13:4**. προφήτας ἐξέπεμψεν (God) sent out prophets AcPl Ha 8, 17 (s. καταπέμω). Of Christ ἀπὸ τ. θεοῦ ἐξεπέμφθη 1 Cl 42:1; send away (Jos., Ant. 1, 216, Vi. 332 εἰς τὰ Ἱερ.) εἰς Βέροιαν **Ac 17:10**.—M-M." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 307.]

<sup>62c</sup>Κύπρος, ου, ἡ (Hom. et al.; ins; 1 Macc 15:23; 2 Macc 10:13; Philo, Leg. ad Gai. 282; Joseph., SibOr; Tat. 9:3) **Cyprus**, an island in the bay formed by the south coast of Asia Minor and the Syrian coast. From 22 B.C. it was a senatorial province governed by a proconsul (ἀνθύπατος, q.v.) Visited by Paul on his so-called first missionary journey **Ac 13:4**. But Christianity had already been brought there by fugitives fr. Jerusalem **11:19**. Cp. also **15:39; 21:3; 27:4**.—WEngel, Kypros 1841; AMurray-ASmith-HWalters, Excavations in Cyprus 1900; EOberhammer, D. Insel Cypren 1903; Pauly-W. XII 1924, 59–117; Baedeker 363ff; Ramsay, Bearing 150ff; EPower, Dict. de la Bible, Suppl. II '34, 1–23; Kl.-Pauly III 404ff; RGunnis, Historic Cyprus '36–'56; GHill, A History of Cyprus, 4 vols. '48–'52; TMitford, in ANRW II/7/2 '80, 1298–1308.—OEANE II 89–96. ABD I 1228–30." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 575.]

between Cyprus and the mainland at Seleucia existed, a trip of about 105 km or 65 miles.

One important insight to be gleaned from the reference to Seleucia has little to do with the city. Instead, it comes from Luke's emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in launching the missionary travels of these two men. The church at Antioch did not initiate this work, neither did Paul and Barnabas. Rather the impetus for launching out came from God. Luke wants his readers to recognize that the positive results of this missionary work stem from its divine origin, rather than from human activity. This principle holds true in Christian service today. If God launches a work, its success is guaranteed. If human initiative motivates it, no lasting success will happen.

### 5.0.1.2 Work in Cyprus, Acts 13:5-12

**Acts 13:5** When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John also to assist them. 6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they met a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet, named Bar-Jesus. 7 He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and wanted to hear the word of God. 8 But the magician Elymas (for that is the translation of his name) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 But Saul, also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "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." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he went about groping for someone to lead him by the hand. 12 When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.

5 και γενόμενοι ἐν Σαλαμῖνι κατήγγελλον τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων· εἶχον δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννην ὑπηρέτην. 6 διελθόντες δὲ ὅλην τὴν νῆσον ἄχρι Πάφου εὔρον ἄνδρα τινα μάγον ψευδοπροφήτην Ἰουδαῖον ᾧ ὄνομα Βαριησοῦ, 7 ὃς ἦν σὺν τῷ ἀνθυπάτῳ Σεργίῳ Παύλῳ, ἀνδρὶ συνετῷ. οὗτος προσκαλεσάμενος Βαρναβᾶν καὶ Σαῦλον ἐπεζήτησεν ἀκοῦσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ· 8 ἀνθίστατο δὲ αὐτοῖς Ἐλύμας ὁ μάγος, οὕτως γὰρ μεθερμηνεύεται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, ζητῶν διαστρέψαι τὸν ἀνθύπατον ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως. 9 Σαῦλος δέ, ὁ καὶ Παῦλος, πλησθεὶς πνεύματος ἁγίου ἀτενίσας εἰς αὐτὸν 10 εἶπεν· Ὡ πλήρης παντὸς δόλου καὶ πάσης ῥαδιουργίας, υἱὲ διαβόλου, ἐχθρὲ πάσης δικαιοσύνης, οὐ παύση διαστρέφων τὰς ὁδοὺς κυρίου τὰς εὐθείας; 11 καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ χεὶρ κυρίου ἐπὶ σέ, καὶ ἔση τυφλὸς μὴ βλέπων τὸν ἥλιον ἄχρι καιροῦ. παραχρῆμα δὲ ἔπεσεν ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἀχλὺς καὶ σκότος, καὶ περιάγων ἐζήτηει χειραγωγούς. 12 τότε ἰδὼν ὁ ἀνθύπατος τὸ γεγονός ἐπίστευσεν ἐκπλησσομένους ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ κυρίου.



The first place these missionaries stop at is the island of Cyprus.<sup>63</sup> Several background issues are important to understanding the activities of these missionaries during the time they spent on the island.<sup>64</sup> The island

<sup>63</sup>“The general historicity of the whole missionary campaign has been questioned by some radical critics; others hold that it really took place, but after the events reported in Acts 15 (Haenchen, pp. 438f.). The former of these views can be cheerfully dismissed from consideration, since not even Haenchen is prepared to go that far, and it is completely improbable that Luke invented the details—including the unimportant details—of the story (Hanson, p. 118). For the latter view see Acts 15:1–35 introduction.

“So far as the present incident is concerned, the general background is perfectly plausible. Some doubts have been expressed about the conversion of the Roman governor, but there is no compelling reason for disbelieving the story. The story of Paul’s miraculous powers is also calculated to arouse scepticism, but it would be quite credible in a first-century context, in which Christians believed that their faith was superior to the powers of darkness and evil.”

[I. Howard Marshall, vol. 5, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 230-31.]

<sup>64</sup>“Cyprus figures in cuneiform texts from the eighteenth century B.C. on under the name Alashiya, the Elishah of Gen. 10:4.13 Its principal export was copper, to which it gave its name.<sup>14</sup> Its inhabitants in early days were known to the Greeks as Eteocyprits, but in historical times it was extensively colonized by Greeks and Phoenicians. It was annexed by Rome in 57 B.C., and was incorporated in the province of Cilicia two years later. In 27 B.C. it became a separate province, governed on behalf of Augustus by an imperial legate; in 22 B.C. Augustus transferred it to the control of the Roman senate, and from that year, like other senatorial provinces, it was administered by a proconsul,<sup>15</sup> as Luke indicates in verse 7.” [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 246.]

was rather large<sup>65</sup> and was positioned in the eastern Mediterranean 43 miles south of Asia Minor, 76 miles west of Syria, and 264 miles north of Egypt. It has a long history with the earliest residents reaching back six to seven thousand years (via carbon dating texting). Through its assisting Alexander the Great in his conquest of Tyre in 332 BC, it became a part of his empire and the Greek influence on the island was substantial. At the beginning of the Christian era, the island was a Senatorial province of the Romans and enjoyed peace and prosperity throughout the first Christian century.<sup>66</sup> The island is mentioned some eight times in the New Testament -- all in the book of Acts -- either by the Greek name Κύπρος (Cyprus)<sup>67</sup> or by Κύπριος (Cypriot).<sup>68</sup>



A copper mine on Cyprus.  
In antiquity Cyprus was a major source of copper.

Christianity among the Jewish residents came to the island prior to Paul and Barnabas' arrival there from believers who had fled Jerusalem after the death of Stephen. And subsequently believers from Cyprus had been instrumental in establishing the church at Antioch. These men had been key to breaking the racial barriers by preaching the Gospel in Antioch to non-Jews.<sup>69</sup> Whether or not this had been done on Cyprus prior to Antioch is not known. Thus the work that Paul and Barnabas did on the island does not stress planting churches, as will be the case when they reach the mainland subsequently where no churches were already existing. How extensive Christianity had spread to the island by their arrival is not clear, since Luke's narrative in 13:4-12 does not mention the existing churches. But it is clear that the Gospel had been preached on the island for several years prior to their arrival.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup>Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean, after Sicily and Sardinia, and only slightly larger than Crete. Its maximum length, E-W, is 138 miles and its maximum width, N-S, is 60 miles, encompassing an area of 3584 square miles. The W half of the island is mountainous, where the Trodos and Kyrenia Mountains reach a height of about 3300 ft and are snow-capped three months out of the year. The E half consists of the Mesaoria Plain and the Karpass Peninsula." [John McRay, "Cyprus (Place)" In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 1228.]

<sup>66</sup>"Peace and prosperity existed throughout the early part of the empire, supported by a flourishing trade in wine, copper, shipbuilding, and agriculture. The chief cities of the time were Salamis, Paphos, Lapithos, and Amathus. The Roman way of life is evidenced by the presence of theaters at Paphos, Salamis, Curium, Soli, and Citium, the last attested only epigraphically. Those at Salamis and Soli are beautifully restored. Further evidence is seen in the presence of gymnasiums preserved at Salamis and Paphos. Others are attested epigraphically for Citium, Curium, Chytri, Lapethus, and Carpasia. There was an amphitheater at Salamis and an odeion at Paphos. A large Roman bath has been found beside the theater and gymnasium at Salamis, and one is also known for Curium.

"Roman roads were built around the island, evidenced by numerous milestones and a map drawn up sometime between the 2d and 4th centuries. Inscriptions show that the roads were maintained until the 4th century. Temples of civic gods such as Apollo at Hyle, Aphrodite at Paphos, and Zeus at Salamis, along with floor mosaics such as those in the houses of Paphos testify to the prominence of polytheism. None of these seem to have survived the more immediate appeal of the deified Severan emperors. No evidence exists that any of them outlived the reign of Caracalla (211–17 A.D.). The spiritual vacuum thus created was filled by Christianity, whose presence is seen in the remains of basilical church buildings such as the one at Salamis."

[John McRay, "Cyprus (Place)" In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 1230.]

<sup>67</sup>"Κύπρος, ου, ἡ (Hom. et al.; ins; 1 Macc 15:23; 2 Macc 10:13; Philo, Leg. ad Gai. 282; Joseph., SibOr; Tat. 9:3) **Cyprus**, an island in the bay formed by the south coast of Asia Minor and the Syrian coast. From 22 B.C. it was a senatorial province governed by a proconsul (ἀνθύπατος, q.v.) Visited by Paul on his so-called first missionary journey **Ac 13:4**. But Christianity had already been brought there by fugitives fr. Jerusalem **11:19**. Cp. also **15:39; 21:3; 27:4**.—WEngel, Kypros 1841; AMurray-ASmith-HWalters, Excavations in Cyprus 1900; EOberhammer, D. Insel Cypren 1903; Pauly-W. XII 1924, 59–117; Baedeker 363ff; Ramsay, Bearing 150ff; EPower, Dict. de la Bible, Suppl. II '34, 1–23; Kl.-Pauly III 404ff; RGunnis, Historic Cyprus '36–'56; GHill, A History of Cyprus, 4 vols. '48–'52; TMitford, in ANRW II/7/2 '80, 1298–1308.—OEANE II 89–96. ABD I 1228–30." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 575.]

<sup>68</sup>"Κύπριος, ου, ὁ (Pind., Hdt. et al.; ins; 2 Macc 4:29; Joseph.; Tat. 41, 1) **a Cypriot**, an inhabitant of Cyprus Μνάσων τις Κ. **Ac 21:16**; ἄνδρες Κ. **11:20**; Κ. τῷ γένει **4:36**." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 575.]

<sup>69</sup>**Acts 11:19-20.** 19 Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. 20 But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus.

19 Οἱ μὲν οὖν διασπαρέντες ἀπὸ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς γενομένης ἐπὶ Στεφάνῳ διήλθον ἕως Φοινίκης καὶ Κύπρου καὶ Ἀντιοχείας μηδενὶ λαλοῦντες τὸν λόγον εἰ μὴ μόνον Ἰουδαίοις. 20 ἦσαν δὲ τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἄνδρες Κύπριοι καὶ Κυρηναῖοι, οἵτινες ἐλθόντες εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν ἐλάλουν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς Ἑλληνοιστάς, εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν.

<sup>70</sup>That Luke does not mention the already existing churches on the island should not be surprising, nor be a reason to doubt the

Because of the large Jewish population on the island numerous synagogues were located in the towns and cities.<sup>71</sup> It should be remembered that Barnabas was a Jew from the tribe of Levi whose home was on the island.<sup>72</sup> This background helped open doors of witness in the synagogues for these missionaries.

The first city on Cyprus mentioned by Luke is Salamis (v. 5): καὶ γενόμενοι ἐν Σαλαμῖνι κατήγγελλον τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων. εἶχον δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννην ὑπηρέτην. “When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John also to assist them.”<sup>73</sup> Earlier this port city had been the capital city of the island, but by this point in time Paphos was the capital.<sup>74</sup>



historical accuracy of his account. Instead, Luke concentrates on the one episode that happened on the island at Paphos in which Paul’s ministry reflects some basic similarities to Peter’s ministry earlier in Acts: 1) they both converted to Christ a Roman government official, and 2) they both performed a ‘punative’ miracle against a Jewish magician.

#### <sup>71</sup>In Hasmonean Times.

The large island in the easternmost basin of the Mediterranean, probably deriving its name from the Cyprus flower (Κύπρος), the Hebrew appellation of which is . Josephus states (“Ant.” i. 6, § 1) that the island, called in Hebrew, was named after the city “Ketion” or “Kition.” Nevertheless the term “isles of Kittim” (Jer. ii. 10; Ezek. xxvii. 6) indicates that “Kittim” signified all the islands and coastlands of the West, and, according to I Macc. i. 1 (XXεττειμ) and viii. 5 (Καπαττειων βασιλεια), included Macedonia, and, according to Dan. xi. 30, even Italy. The inhabitants of Cyprus were at first, perhaps, Carians; in historical times, Phenicians; and later, Greeks. During the last period, as the Judean Agrippa writes to the emperor Caius, the Jews were numerous there (Philo, “Legatio ad Caium,” 36; ii. 587, ed. Mangey). They stood in intimate relationship with the inhabitants of the island, and the favorable decree of the Romans regarding Jewish subjects was sent also to Cyprus (I Macc. xv. 23). During the war over the city of Ptolemais between Alexander Jannæus and Ptolemy Lathyrus, King of Cyprus, the Jews suffered severe losses, and Cleopatra III. of Egypt, mother of the Cyprian king, despatched her Hebrew commanders Chelkias and Ananias to the aid of Alexander Jannæus, who thereupon defeated the Cyprians. Referring to this event, Josephus (“Ant.” xiii. 10, § 4) quotes the statement of Strabo that the Jews of Cyprus remained steadfast in their allegiance to the party of Lathyrus, notwithstanding the high favor shown them by Queen Cleopatra.

#### In Roman Times.

In Cyprus as in Egypt, the Jews fared well at this time; and a distinguished Cyprian Hebrew, Timius by name, married Alexandra, daughter of Phasaelus and Salampsio, the latter a granddaughter of Herod the Great. This union, however, was without issue (“Ant.” xviii. 5, § 4). Christianity was preached here among the Jews at an early date, Paul being the first, and Barnabas, a native of Cyprus, the second, to disseminate the new doctrine (Acts iv. 36, xi. 19, xiii. 5, xv. 39); and according to a legend Barnabas was killed here by the Jews (“Acta Barnabæ,” § 23). There is also an account, agreeing well with what is known from classical authors concerning the fertility of Cyprus, that Queen Helen of Adiabene had fruit brought from the island to Jerusalem. Under the leadership of one Artemion, the Cyprian Jews participated in the great uprising against the Romans under Trajan (117), and they are reported to have massacred 240,000 Greeks (Dio Cassius, lxxviii. 32). This insurrection was finally quelled after considerable bloodshed (perhaps by Q. Marcius Turbo, who suppressed the uprising in Cyrene and Egypt), with the result that the Jews of Cyprus were almost entirely extirpated. The blood of the Jews slaughtered in Palestine is said to have streamed as far as Cyprus (Lam. R. i. 16, iv. 19); that is, the insurrection and the consequent slaughter of the Jews extended to Cyprus. In further punishment a severe law was enacted, according to which no Jew was thereafter to be permitted to land on Cyprian soil, not even in case of shipwreck; nevertheless Jewish residents were still to be found upon the island at a later period; and the products of the soil, to which Talmudists frequently refer (for instance, the “cumin” of Cyprus, Yer. Dem. ii. 1), were probably brought into the market by them. So rapidly did the Jews multiply that in 610 they were sufficiently numerous to participate in the insurrection against the Greeks under Heraclius.

A scholar, Moses of Cyprus by name, is said to have been arbitrator (in the eleventh century) between the Armenians and the Greeks (“Zeit. für Hebr. Bibl.” vi. 116). Benjamin of Tudela found in Cyprus a number of Jewish communities, one of which was guilty of the heresy of observing the Sabbath on Saturday morning to Sunday morning, instead of from Friday evening to Saturday evening. Judah Mosconi also visited the island, as did Menahem ben Perez (Zunz, “Gesam. Schriften,” i. 168). In 646, and again in 1154, Cyprus was devastated by the Arabs; in 1571 it was annexed by Turkey, having been wrested from the Venetians on the advice of Don Joseph NASI, who came near attaining to the dignity of the Cyprian crown (Hammer, “Gesch. der Osmanen,” iii. 564). In 1878 Cyprus came under English rule.

[“Cyprus,” *Jewish Encyclopedia* online]

<sup>72</sup>Acts 4:36. There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”).

Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἐπικληθεὶς Βαρναβᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνεύομενον υἱὸς παρακλήσεως, Λευίτης, Κύπριος τῷ γένει,  
<sup>73</sup>“Σαλαμίς, ἴνος, ἡ (on the v.l. Σαλαμῖνη s. B-D-F §57; Mlt-H. 128) *Salamis*, a large city on the east coast of the island of Cyprus (Aeschyl., Hdt. et al.; ins; SibOr 4, 128; 5, 452 πόλις μεγάλη) visited by Paul on his ‘first’ missionary journey Ac 13:5.—S. the lit. on Κύπρος.—Pauly-W. II 1832–44; Kl. Pauly IV 1505f; BHHW III 1645f; PECS 794–96.—M-M.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 911.]

<sup>74</sup>“A large port city on the east coast of Cyprus, important for trade with Syria. Salamis was the first mission stop for Paul and his companions Barnabas and John Mark on the ‘first missionary journey’ coming from Antioch to Cyprus by way of Seleucia: καὶ γενόμενοι ἐν Σαλαμῖνι κατήγγελλον ... ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων (Acts 13:5). During the time of the Ptolemies Salamis was the seat of the governor of Cyprus, though it then lost this function in the Roman period to the city of Paphos (cf. 13:6ff.). P. Bratsiotis, BHH 1645f.; E. Meyer, KP IV, 1505f.” [Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, vol. 3, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand

Luke's focus is on κατήγγελλον τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, 'they were proclaiming the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.' Thus from Luke the picture emerges that a central missionary strategy was to preach the Gospel to the Jewish people in their places of worship in the city. No mention yet is made of preaching to non-Jews. The tense of the Greek verb κατήγγελλον, the imperfect tense of ancient Greek, stresses a repeating pattern of activity of proclaiming the message. The emphasis contextually could be the idea 'at Salamis they began proclaiming' the message. Thus Luke seems to be saying that beginning at Salamis, the preaching ministry of Paul and Barnabas focused on the Jewish synagogues as they made their way across the island.<sup>75</sup> The synagogue or synagogues provided a natural starting point in each town for the preaching of the Gospel.<sup>76</sup> No mention here is made of reaching beyond the synagogues to the non-Jewish population on the island. Additionally, no mention is made in regard to the success of this preaching in the synagogues. Were there Jewish converts to Christ as a consequence? Although at other times Luke will frequently note converts either by name and/or by group designation with occasionally giving numbers, he does not do that here. We would normally assume that individual Jews did respond positively to the preaching of the Gospel. But such is merely an assumption, not something stated in the text. From Salamis to Paphos overland was approximately 173 kilometers, so traveling across the island took some time.



The other beginning point made by Luke is that John Mark (cf. 12:12; 13:13; 15:37-39) was with them as an assistant: εἶχον δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννην ὑπηρέτην.<sup>77</sup> Some have seen the mentioning of John Mark at this point into Luke's narrative as awkward, but such merely reflects a modern sense of when narrative details should be inserted. The mentioning of Mark as a ὑπηρέτην rather than as being in the group of προφῆται καὶ διδάσκαλοι (13:1) at Antioch most likely plays some role in his delayed mentioning of Mark. He was not one of the leaders, and thus played a secondary role in this ministry.

Literarily, Mark surfaces in the Acts narrative as accompanying Paul and Barnabas from Jerusalem to

Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990-), 224.]

<sup>75</sup>While the verb διελθόντες could be taken to refer to a missionary tour of the island, it probably means no more than that they traveled along the main road on the southern coast between Salamis and Paphos, the former being on the eastern end of the island, the latter at the western end.<sup>144</sup> [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 396.]

Also note the additional comments in footnote 144: "There is evidence that these two cities at each end of the island could be mentioned as representing the whole (cf. Sib. Or. 4:128-29), as we might say from New York to Los Angeles. Gill, 'Paul's Travels through Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12),' argues for the southern route on the basis of the discovery of an Augustan milestone, and that the southern route between the cities was 115 days, the northern 142. Gill also suggests that Paul may have preached in some of the cities along the way (such as Tremithus or Amathus), especially since he had to stop various times on this long journey. Paul and Barnabas may have preached all along this road, but if so Luke makes nothing of it."

<sup>76</sup>Barnabas and Paul began their mission work by preaching in the synagogues; this was a pattern that was to be frequently followed (13:14, 46; 14:1; 16:13 [see note]; 17:1, 10; 18:4, 19; 19:8; 28:17). Not only did it follow the principle of 'to the Jew first' but also it made practical sense in establishing a point of contact for the gospel.<sup>47</sup> [I. Howard Marshall, vol. 5, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 231.]

<sup>77</sup>Whether the preaching was effective in this case is something we are not told. Instead, we have the comment that John was assisting them. The reference is to John Mark (12:12; 13:13; 15:37-39). It comes in very oddly at this point. Clearly Luke has included it to explain the later references to his departure from the group, but the problem is why he did not do so at the outset of the story. Is there a hint that John was not sent by the Spirit, and that this was why he failed to finish the course? Or does Luke avoid saying directly that he had been sent by the Spirit in order to avoid the suggestion that later he withstood the guidance of the Spirit? But John was merely a helper, and not in the same group as the prophets and teachers listed in 13:1-3, and hence it was not necessary to name him there. Further, it was Paul's practice to take young men with him as his assistants in the work, and there is no good reason to doubt that this particular appointment was made in good faith. Since Barnabas belonged to Cyprus, and later took John back there with him, it is possible that John himself had family links with the island and that this was why he was chosen to accompany the other missionaries. It may be this family link with Cyprus that led to his being named at this particular point in the story. John's role as a servant is uncertain. Commentators differ as to whether he was to help the missionaries on a practical level (cf. the use of the corresponding verb in 20:34; 24:23) or in the work of the gospel, but both could be meant; it is unlikely that Luke here means to designate him as a 'servant of the word' (Luke 1:2)." [I. Howard Marshall, vol. 5, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 231-32.]

Antioch (12:25), here, and then when he abandons the missionary group after they left Cyprus and landed at Perga on the mainland (13:13). This middle reference here then calls attention to Mark being with them at the beginning of the missionary trip.<sup>78</sup>

The specific role that Mark played as a part of the group is merely specified as ὑπηρέτην. The wide range of possible meanings beyond the basic idea of subordinate does not provide much help understanding what Mark did as a member of the group.<sup>79</sup> Specific duties would depend on the type of work being done. Thus one

<sup>78</sup>John Mark surfaces in the pages of the New Testament in a variety of ways, most of which are positive:

MARK, JOHN (PERSON) [Gk loan(n)es Markos (Ἰωάννης Μάρκος)]. An early Jewish Christian who assisted with the 1st-century missionary activities of Paul, Peter, and Barnabas and who is associated by tradition with the gospel of Mark. The name is a combination of two appellations, the Heb yōhānān (“Yahweh has shown grace”; cf. 2 Kgs 25:23) and the Latin “Marcus” (or the Greek Markos). Dual names commonly were employed during the period as a common custom within Hellenistic Judaism (see Acts 1:23, Joseph-Justus).

The NT provides scant information about the figure of John Mark. He initially is introduced at Acts 12:12, a scene in which Peter returns from prison to the home of Mary, “the mother of John whose other name was Mark.” Both the house itself and the household of Mary probably were significant for the early Christian community in Jerusalem, since Peter seems to have known that Christians would be gathered there for prayer. Thus the role of John Mark in early Church tradition often is associated with the presumed wealth and prestige of Mary, who was a homeowner with a maidservant (Rhoda) and who could support gatherings of early Christians for worship. The common, though most likely errant, belief that John Mark was the “young man” who escaped capture by the Romans at the arrest of Jesus (Mark 14:51–52) rests upon the assumption that the Garden of Gethsemane was owned and tended by the family of Mary. According to this view, John Mark perhaps would have been stationed at the garden as a guard during the night watch. Another tradition, which maintains that the Last Supper (Mark 14) was held in the home of Mary, assumes that the household was familiar with the work of Jesus and was receptive to his activity. Papias of Hierapolis argues against a close relationship between Jesus and the family, however, since he notes specifically that Mark “had not heard the Lord, nor had he followed him” (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.15).

The only clear comment upon the activities of John Mark that is provided in the NT is the observation that he was one of numerous evangelistic missionaries who circulated during the 1st century (one of the 70 missionaries who are mentioned in Luke 10:1?). Accordingly, he is listed as an assistant to Paul and Barnabas during the first Pauline missionary journey (Acts 12:25; 13:5). Though the nature of that assistance is not specified, he may have served as a recorder, catechist, and travel attendant. Because of his status as the son of a prosperous Jewish-Christian family in Jerusalem and as the cousin of the wealthy landowner Barnabas (Col 4:10; Acts 4:36–37), John Mark would have been a natural selection for such a role. He later separated from Paul and Barnabas “in Pamphylia” (along the coast of S Anatolia), perhaps as the result of some unspecified disagreement. Paul thereafter refused to include him in subsequent travels (though Barnabas took him onward to Cyprus; Acts 15:37–39), and the account of Acts records his activities no further.

Apart from the testimony of Acts, his name (now listed only as Mark) reappears throughout the Pauline literary tradition as a reconciled missionary companion of Paul. Here he is remembered as one who labored faithfully for Christianity (2 Tim 4:11 and Philemon 24). The association of Barnabas with John “who is called Mark” in the record of Acts, on the one hand, and of Barnabas who was the “cousin” of Mark in the witness of Colossians, on the other hand, is an “undesigned coincidence” which suggests that the accounts of Acts and the Pauline Epistles in fact make reference to the same person (Taylor 1955: 29).

Though the figure of John Mark became a casualty of disputes within the Pauline missionary thrust, the Petrine tradition soon adopted an association with the name that has stood for centuries in ecclesial history. The initial evidence for this association appears in 1 Pet 5:13 where John Mark (again listed only as Mark) is mentioned by the author of the letter as “my son.” While the name Mark in 1 Peter cannot be identified definitively with the figure of Mark who appears in the Acts narrative, a consistent picture of the role and activities of John Mark would result if such an association can be accepted (Martin ISBE 3: 260). From the testimony of Papias (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.16) we learn that common ecclesial tradition recognized Mark as the “interpreter” of Peter who recorded the words of the apostle as the foundation for a written gospel (cf. also Iren. *Haer.* 3.1.1). There is no question that Papias here refers to the gospel of Mark as we know it. And again, while the association of Mark (as recorded by Papias) with John Mark of Jerusalem is not above suspicion, this consistent caricature has been preserved by subsequent Christian tradition.

Numerous traditions about the person and activities of Mark soon arose among the Church Fathers. Hippolytus, for example, refers to Mark as “stump-fingered” or “shortened.” The former translation may indicate that the historical figure of Mark possessed some peculiar physical characteristic (as is suggested by the Anti-Marcionite Prologue to the gospel from the 2d century). Modern scholars, however, often prefer to use the latter translation as a reference to the abbreviated nature of the gospel text itself (when compared to the other NT gospels) or in support of the manuscript tradition that concludes the gospel at Mark 16:8. Several early Christian traditions suggest that a close association existed between the figure of John Mark and the congregations of Alexandria, based upon the belief that he traveled to Egypt from Rome after the martyrdom of Peter (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.16.1). There is little information about the death of Mark. The claims for the martyrdom of Mark that appear in the Paschal Chronicle and in the Acts of Mark probably do not predate the 4th century (Swete 1909: xxvii–xxviii). For further discussion see Pesch Mark HTKNT.

[Clayton N. Jefford, “Mark, John (Person)” In vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 557-58.]

<sup>79</sup>“ὕπηρέτης, ου, ὅ (Aeschyl., *Hdt.*+; ins, pap, LXX; TestBenj 3:8; EpArist, Philo, Joseph., Just.; Tat. 4, 2; loanw. in rabb.; freq. as t.t. for a governmental or other official) **one who functions as a helper, freq. in a subordinate capacity, helper, assistant** (e.g. a physician’s assistant: Hobart 88f; as adjutant: Arrian, *Tact.* 10, 4; 14, 4; the lictor beside the consul: Appian, *Liby.* 90 §424; the 20 senators with Pompey: Appian, *Bell. Civ.* 2, 18 §67; the priest’s helpers: Diod S 1, 73, 3; the assistant to the ἡγούμενος of a cultic fellowship: Sb 7835, 11 [I B.C.]) Dg 7:2. John (Mark) as ὑπ. of Paul and Barnabas **Ac 13:5** (BHolmes, Luke’s Description of John Mark: JBL 54, Page 205

has to look at possible qualifiers of the noun for clues, but Luke does not provide any in reference to John Mark. Consequently we have little understanding of his role in the group of traveling missionaries. Given his later association with having written the second gospel, the inclination would be to assume a role that included recording the events and activities of Barnabas and Paul. But nothing in the Acts text asserts this.

Most of Luke's focus falls on a single event that happened at Paphos at the end of their stay on Cyprus; cf. vv. 6-12. The episodic narrative centers on three sets of characters: 1) the Jewish magician named both Bar-Jesus and Elymas; 2) the Roman proconsul for the island named Sergius Paulus; and 3) the two missionaries Barnabas and Paul.

One introductory interpretive issue is the role of this episodic narrative. Luke follows his typical pattern of a general summarizing statement of activity (cf. v. 5, 'they began proclaiming the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews') with the depiction of a single event (vv. 6-12). If this single event is meant as illustrative, then it should be understood to represent the conversion account of other individuals on the island as well. But from the narrative details one should be hesitant to go this direction, in that the event seems to be both distinctive and unique as the climatic experience of these missionaries prior to their departure from the island.

The Paphos mentioned here was actually the new Paphos of two towns close to one another that carried the same name.<sup>80</sup> The older town was further inland and was the center of the worship of the goddess of love, variously named Astarte (Syrian name) or Aphrodite (Greek name). Here she was worshipped with distinctive Phoenician rites distinct from other temples to her located elsewhere. The missionaries' encounter with Bar-Jesus occurred at new Paphos which was the Roman administrative center of the island, and by this point in time the largest and most important city on the island.

The narrative sequence was first a meeting with Bar-Jesus, that was followed by a meeting with the proconsul Sergius Paulus where Bar-Jesus was present and was opposing Barnabas and Paul. In this second meeting Paul pronounced a judgment miracle of blindness on Bar-Jesus, now referred to as Elymas. This blindness happened immediately to the amazement of the proconsul who then -- in Luke's words -- ἐπίστευσεν ἐκπληροσόμενος ἐπὶ τῇ διδασχῇ τοῦ κυρίου. Whether this Roman came to genuine faith commitment to Christ or not may be debated, since Luke can use πιστεύω with a variety of meanings in Acts. What is clear is that the Roman proconsul was very positively impressed by this display of divine power by Paul. This clearly would make life easier for the Christian communities on the island in the coming months.

Who was Bar-Jesus (Βαριησοῦ)?<sup>81</sup> Luke identifies him in several ways. His Aramaic based name

<sup>75</sup>35, 63–72; WHadorn, D. Gefährten u. Mitarbeiter des Pls: ASchlatter Festschr. 1922, 65–82; RTaylor, ET 54, '42/43, 136–38). Of the attendants of a board or court (Diod S 14, 5, 1f and Appian, Bell. Civ. 1, 31 §138 of attendants of the court; Diod S 17, 30, 4 παρέδωκε τοῖς ὑπηρεταῖς ... ἀποκτεῖναι; Maximus Tyr. 3, 2b), of the Sanhedrin (Jos., Bell. 1, 655 παρέδωκεν τοῖς ὑπ. ἀνελεῖν, Ant. 4, 37 πέμψας ὑπ.; 16, 232) Mt 5:25 (Ael. Aristid. 45 p. 68 D.: ὁ δικαστὴς παραδίδωσι τ. ὑπηρεταῖς 'deputies'); 26:58; Mk 14:54, 65; J 7:32, 45f; 18:3, 12, 22; 19:6; Ac 5:22, 26; GJs 10:1; 15:2. W. δοῦλοι (as Pla., Polit. 289c [on this Collins 81–84, s. below]; Just., A I, 14, 1) J 18:18. Of a synagogue attendant (as prob. in the Roman-Jewish grave ins: RGarrucci, Dissertazioni archeologiche II 1865, p. 166 no. 22) Lk 4:20 (ὑπ. as a title of cult officials: Thieme 33. Also Musaeus, Fgm. 11 Diels [Paus. 10, 5, 6]: Pygcon as Poseidon's ὑπηρετὴς ἐς τὰ μαντεύματα; Dio Chrys. 19 [36], 33 ὑπ. τῶν τελετῶν; PLond 2710 recto, 11 [HTR 29, '36, p. 40; 50]). Of a king's retinue J 18:36; GJs 21:2; 23:1f. The apostles as assistants of Christ Ac 26:16; 1 Cor 4:1 (Epict. 3, 22, 82 the Cynic as ὑπ. τοῦ Διός; Galen, Protr. 5 p. 12, 5 J.: Socr., Hom. et al. as ὑπ. τοῦ θεοῦ; Pythagorean saying: WienerStud 8, 1886, p. 278 no. 105 τὸν ἐνεργετοῦντὰ σε εἰς ψυχὴν ὡς ὑπηρετὴν θεοῦ μετὰ θεὸν τίμα=one who has benefited you spiritually, esteem as God's helper after God; Sextus 319; Just., D. 57, 3). Believers gener. as θεοῦ ὑπηρεταῖ (w. οἰκονόμοι [as 1 Cor 4:1] and πάρεδροι) IPol 6:1 (cp. PGM 59, 3; 5 and Jos., Bell. 2, 321, Ant. 3, 16).—Also w. objective gen. of that to which services are rendered (Appian, Bell. Civ. 3, 41 §169 τῆς πατρίδος ὑπ.; Wsd 6:4) ὑπηρεταῖ τοῦ λόγου ministers of the word Lk 1:2 (cp. the role of a scribe Sir 39:1–4; PMather, BR 30, '85, 28f). ἐκκλησίας θεοῦ ὑπηρεταῖ servants of God's assembly/church ITr 2:3.—On the obscure οἱ τῶν ἐχθρῶν ὑπηρεταῖ B 16:4 s. Windisch, Hdb. ad loc.—On the functions of the ὑπ. in Greco-Rom. Egypt, HKupiszewski and JModrzejewski, JJP XI and XII, '57/58, 141–66; JCollins, Diakonia '90, esp. 81–84, 173–75.—B. 1334. DELG. M-M. TW. Spicq. Sv." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1035.]

<sup>80</sup> PAPHOS (PLACE) [Gk Paphos (Παφος)]. A city in the SW of the island of Cyprus (34°45'N; 32°25'E), seat of the island's administrative government during the NT period. The Paphos of Acts 13:6–13 is actually the newer of two neighboring cities bearing the same name, sometimes differentiated by the terms 'New Paphos' (paphos nea; Pliny HN, 5.130) and 'Old Paphos' (palaiapaphos; Strabo 14.683)." [Conrad Gempf, "Paphos (Place)" In vol. 5, The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 139.]

<sup>81</sup> Βαριησοῦ, ὁ (so Tdf., whose app. s. for variants, then supplement w. N. app.; בַּר יֵשׁוּעַ indecl. Bar-Jesus, name of a false prophet (cp. Ἐλύμας, and ref. there) Ac 13:6. MWilcox, The Semitisms of Ac, '65, 89." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 167.]

Interestingly many manuscript copies adopt variations of spellings perhaps in large part to avoid using the name Ἰησοῦς in connection to this fellow, although Barrett doubts this.

Βαριησοῦ literally means ‘son of Jesus / Joshua. He is called a μάγον, which can be either positive, a wise man (4x in Matthew), or negative, a magician (2x in Acts).<sup>82</sup> Clearly the latter is intended by Luke. The performing of magical tricks in the ancient world usually took on the nature of astrology, fortune telling and related activities. For this man to function in the court of the Roman governor meant he was there to help the governor make correct decisions about actions that could have significant impact on the governor and on the island. By supposedly being able to tell the future, Bar-Jesus was an advisor to the governor. That government leaders employed the services of such individuals in the ancient world was normal and wide spread. The first century world was enormously superstitious and fearful of the future.<sup>83</sup>



JEWISH MAGICAL AMULETS  
These medieval amulets were intended to protect people from evil spirits.

None of the following forms of the name itself can however be immediately eliminated: Βαριησοῦς; Βαριησοῦ; Βαριησοῦμ; Βαριησοῦαν; perhaps also the Syriac Barshuma. Βαριησοῦς and Βαριησοῦν (accusative agreeing with μάγον κτλ.) may be taken as attempts to improve the grammar. Βαριησοῦ and Βαριησοῦαν (accusative) may be regarded as alternative transliterations of בר-ישוע. It does not seem possible to account for all the variations as attempts to avoid Jesus as a nomen sacrum (Dinkler, Signum Crucis 30); but the Syriac *bar šuma* ‘, son of the name, may be one. In rabbinic use, שׁ (name) may stand for God; a Syriac translator who could not bring himself to say bar yesu might make the corresponding substitution (StrB 2:711).

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 613.]

<sup>82c</sup> μάγος, οὐ, ὁ (s. μαγεία, μαγεύω)

1. a **Magus**, a (Persian [SNyberg, D. Rel. d. alten Iran '38], then also Babylonian) *wise man and priest, who was expert in astrology, interpretation of dreams and various other occult arts* (so Hdt.+; Jos., Ant. 20, 142; s. Da 2:2, 10; in still other pass. in Da, Theod.; Tat. 28, 1. Beside φιλόσοφος of Apollonius of Tyana: Orig., C. Cels. 6, 41, 13). After Jesus' birth μάγοι Magi Mt 2:7 (cp. Jos., Ant. 10, 216), 16a (=GJs 22:1); vs. 16b; GJs 21:1, 3 (apart fr. the pap text, μάγοι appears in codd. of GJs twice in 21:2; once in vs. 3), or more definitely μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν (ἀπὸ Ἀραβίας Just., D. 77, 4; ἀπὸ ἀνάτολης Orig., C. Cels. 1, 40, 20) Magi from the east Mt 2:1 came to Palestine and declared that they had read in the stars of the birth of the Messianic King. Diog. L. 2, 45 φησὶ δ' Ἀριστοτέλης μάγον τινὰ ἐλθόντα ἐκ Συρίας εἰς Ἀθήνας in order to announce to Socrates that he would come to a violent end.—ADieterich, ZNW 3, 1902, 1–14; FSteinmetzer, D. Gesch. der Geburt u. Kindheit Christi 1910; GFrenken, Wunder u. Taten der Heiligen 1929, 186–93; KBornhäuser, D. Geburts-u. Kindheitsgesch. Jesu 1930. FCumont, L'Adoration des Mages: Memorie della Pontif. Acc. Rom. di Archeol. 3, '32, 81–105. EHodous, CBQ 6, '44, 71–74; 77–83.—On the Magi HMeyboom, Magiërs: TT '39, 1905, 40–70; GMessina, D. Ursprung der Magier u. d. zarath. Rel., diss. Berl. 1930, I Magi a Betlemme e una predizione di Zoroastro '33 (against him GHartmann, Scholastik 7, '32, 403–14); RPettazzoni, RHR 103, '31, 144–50; Goodsp., Probs. 14f.—On the star of the Magi HKritzinger, Der Stern der Weisen 1911; HGVoigt, Die Gessichte Jesu u. d. Astrologie 1911; OGerhardt, Der Stern des Messias 1922; DFrövig, D. Stern Bethlehems in der theol. Forschung: TK 2, '31, 127–62; CSSmith, CQR 114, '32, 212–27; WVischer, D. Ev. von den Weisen aus dem Morgenlande: EVischer Festschr. '35, 7–20; ELohmeyer, D. Stern d. Weisen: ThBl 17, '38, 288–99; GHartmann, Stimmen d. Zeit 138, '41, 234–38; JSchaumberger, Ein neues Keilschriftfragment über d. angebl. Stern der Weisen: Biblica 24, '43, 162–69, but s. ASachs and CWalker, Kepler's View of the Star of Bethlehem and the Babylonian Almanac for 7/6 B.C.: Iraq 46/1, '84, 43–55. Cp. ποιμήν 1.

2. **magician** (Trag. et al.; Aeschin. 3, 137 [μάγος=πονηρός]; Diod S 5, 55, 3; 34 + 35 Fgm. 2, 5 τις ... ἄνθρωπος μάγος, a false prophet, who πολλοὺς ἐξηπάτα; Vett. Val. 74, 17; Philo, Spec. Leg. 3, 93; TestReub 4:9) of Barjesus=Elymas on Cyprus Ac 13:6, 8. Cp. Hm 11:2 v.l.—On the history of the word ANock, Beginn. I 5, '33, 164–88=Essays I 308–30; HKippenberg, Garizim u. Synagoge '71, 122–24 on Ac 8:10; MMeyer/PMirecki, edd., Ancient Magic and Ritual Power '95. M-LThomsen, Zauberd Diagnose und Schwarze Magie in Mesopotamien (CNI Publikationen 2) n.d.: ancient Mesopotamian background. S. also MSmith, Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark '73, esp. 220–78 for ancient sources and 423–44 for bibl. (for caution about media hype and fantastic hypotheses relating to this work s. JFitzmyer, How to Exploit a Secret Gospel: America, June 23, '73, 570–72). FGraf, La magie dans l' antiquité Gréco-Romaine, '95.—B. 1494f. Renehan '82 s.v. DELG. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 608-09.]

<sup>83c</sup> Court astrologers or magicians who allegedly predicted the future and attempted to alter the fates with their magic were not uncommon in the Mediterranean world. Tiberius followed the guidance of the astrologer Thrasyllus (Suetonius, Tiberius 14.4) and various Chaldean soothsayers (Juvenal, Satires 10.93–94). Nero accepted the divinations of the astrologer Babilus (Suetonius, Nero 36.1). Otho used the services of the astrologer Seleucus (Suetonius, Otho 4.1; 6.1). Vespasian had great faith in his horoscope (Suetonius, Vespasian 25). Domitian had in his employ the astrologer Ascleterion (Suetonius, Domitian 15.3). Marcus Aurelius kept Arnuphis, an Egyptian magician, with him on the Danube (Dio Cassius 71.8.4). Valerian's persecutions of Christians were encouraged by the advice of Macrianus, an Egyptian magician (Eusebius, Church History 7.10.4–6). Lesser rulers as well were not immune to the practice. For example, Felix, the procurator (Acts 24), used a Jew named Simon, who was a Cyprian magician (Josephus, Antiquities 20.7.2 §§ 141–44). A magician is also a part of the household of Senator Marcellus (Acts of Peter 8). It is, therefore, no surprise to find the proconsul of Cyprus advised by a magician. Nor is it a surprise to have him connected to Cyprus. Pliny, Natural History 30.11, says that Cyprus had in his times supplanted previous famed centers of magic. Nor is it surprising that the magician is depicted as Jewish. In the Greco-Roman mind, Jews and magic were closely linked (Strabo, Geography 16.2.43; Pliny, Natural History 30.11; Apuleius, Apology 90; Celsus [in Origen, Against Celsus 1.26; 4.33]). Nor is it surprising that the proconsul's adviser tries to interfere with the official's religious quest. For example, Plutarch (On the Obsolescence of Oracles 45 D-F) tells how Epicurean advisers to a ruler in Cilicia attempted to keep him

Additionally Bar-Jesus was called a ψευδοπροφήτην by Luke.<sup>84</sup> This label of false prophet naturally fits the label of magician given the connection with the Roman proconsul. The term ψευδοπροφήτης clearly has an Old Testament background and suggests the supplying of false information in the name of religion. The third label helps explain the false prophet label; Bar-Jesus was a Ἰουδαῖον, Jew. According to Josephus, during the first century many Jews engaged in magic and were often highly sought after because it was assumed they had connections to one of the most powerful gods in the ancient world.<sup>85</sup>

The other name that Luke mentions is difficult to understand: Ἐλύμας.<sup>86</sup> Luke seems to say that this name means ‘the magician’: ὁ μάγος, οὕτως γὰρ μεθερμηνεύεται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. But also Luke’s words could be taken to mean that Ἐλύμας means Βαριησοῦ. Many have so understood Luke at this point. But how this could have been possible with Βαριησοῦ as an Aramaic loan word and Ἐλύμας as a Greek name is impossible to explain. Interestingly codex Beza from the fifth century replaces Ἐλύμας with Ἐτοιμᾶς.<sup>87</sup> Probably the first understand is closer to Luke’s intention, but it is not clearly certain.



What is more interesting is the name Paul gave him when speaking to Bar-Jesus, υἱὲ διαβόλου, [son of the devil](#). In unusually blunt language Paul labeled [him an offspring of Satan, rather than a son of Joshua](#). Luke signals the basis from belief in oracles.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 117-18.]

<sup>84</sup>“ψευδοπροφήτης, ου, ὁ **one who falsely claims to be a prophet of God or who prophesies falsely, false/bogus prophet** (Zech 13:2; Jer 6:13 al.; TestJud; AscIs; Philo, Spec. Leg. 4, 51; Jos., Bell. 6, 285, Ant. 8, 236; 318; 10, 111; Just., D. 7, 3; 69, 1; 82, 1; Zosimus: Hermet. IV p. 111, 2; Iren. 5, 28, 2 [Harv. II 401, 25f]; Orig., C. Cels. 3, 2, 15; Hippol., Ref. 9, 15, 3) **Mt 7:15; 24:11, 24; Mk 13:22; Lk 6:26; Ac 13:6; 2 Pt 2:1; 1J 4:1; Rv 16:13; 19:20; 20:10**; ApcPt 1:1; Hm 11:1f, 4, 7 (Leutzsch, Hermas 461 n. 237 [lit.]); D 11:5f, 8–10; 16:3.—Harnack, Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel 1884, 119ff, Mission I4 1923, 332ff; 362ff; EFascher, Προφήτης 1927; JReiling, The Use of ΠΣΕΥΔΟΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ in the Septuagint, Philo and Josephus: NovT 13, 71, 147–56.—DELG s.v. ψεύδομαι and φημί. TW. Sv.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1097.]

<sup>85</sup>“The fact that he is Jewish is not a surprise. Many Jews engaged in various forms of magical practices in the Greco-Roman era. In fact, Jewish magic was famous in antiquity.<sup>239</sup> Josephus gives an account of the Roman procurator Felix securing the services of a Jewish magician from Cyprus to use spells in his quest to secure the attraction of Drusilla, with whom he fell madly in love.<sup>240</sup>” [Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary Volume 2: John, Acts*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 336.]

<sup>86</sup>“Ἐλύμας, α, ὁ **Elymas** (PKatz recommends Ἐλυμᾶς. In Diod S [20, 17, 1; 18, 3] as name of a Libyan king Αἰλύμας) **a magician of Cyprus Ac 13:8**, who was also called Barjesus acc. to vs. 6. Ac obviously considers the two names to be linguistically equiv. to each other; it is hardly correct to assume, w. some, that vs. 8 means to say that the word Elymas=μάγος (but s. Haenchen, Acts, ad loc.). Wendt, e.g., holds that the Arab. verb ‘alima=recognize, gain insight into someth., whence ‘alim=magician, one who tries to see into the future. Dalman (Gramm.2 162) finds in Ἐ. Ἐλυμαῖος=Ἐλαμίτης; Grimme interprets it as ‘astrologer’, Burkitt as ὁ λοιμὸς pestilence (s. λοιμὸς II, 2), Harris, Zahn, Clemen and Wlh. prefer the rdg. Ἐτοιμας, from D, and identify the magician w. the sorcerer Ἄτομος in Jos., Ant. 20, 142. See RHarris, Exp. 1902, I 189ff; FBurkitt, JTS 4, 1903, 127ff; CClemen, Paulus 1904, I 222f; TZahn, NKZ 15, 1904, 195ff; D. Urausgabe der AG des Luk. 1916, 149f; 350ff; HGrimme, OLZ 12, 1909, 207ff; Wlh., Kritische Analyse der AG 1914, 24.—M-M.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 320.]

<sup>87</sup>Instead of Ἐλύμας codex Bezae reads (with a lacuna of one letter) Ἐτ[.]μας. That it should be spelled Ἐτοιμᾶς is shown by the Latin side of the manuscript, which reads Etoemas, as does also Lucifer, the manuscripts of Ambrosiaster vary between ethimas, etymas, tymas, thimas, and atrmas. Manuscripts of Pacianus read hetymam or hetym ἡτῆμ. Likewise in support of the reading of Bezae is the addition in some Old Latin witnesses at the end of ver. 6, where E reads ὁ μεθερμηνεύεται Ἐλύμας, but where it<sup>818</sup> vg<sup>ms</sup> Lucifer read paratus [i. e. Ἐτοιμος].

It is possible, as Harris suggested,<sup>7</sup> that the Western tradition of Ἐτοιμᾶς (or Ἐτοιμος) goes back to a source similar to the one used by Josephus when he mentions the part played by a Jewish magician who lived in Cyprus about this time and who helped the procurator Felix to win Drusilla (Ac 24:24), the wife of king Aziz of Emesa (*Antiquities*, xx.vii.2). Although most of the manuscripts of Josephus call the magician Simon, one eleventh-century manuscript, supported by the *Epitome of the Antiquities*, give him the name Atomos (Ἄτομος).<sup>8</sup>

While some scholars (including Zahn, Clemen, Wellhausen, Ropes, A. C. Clark, and C. S. C. Williams) have been impressed by the parallel in Josephus, Burkitt hesitated to accept the identification and proposed the conjectural emendation of ὁ λοιμὸς, a word that occurs in 24:5 and that was used by Demosthenes for a φαρμακός (“sorcerer”). The passage, as Burkitt would read it, runs: ἀνθίστατο δὲ αὐτοῖς ὁ λοιμὸς, ὁ μάγος, οὕτως γὰρ μεθερμηνεύεται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, “Now they were withstood by the pestilent fellow, the sorcerer I mean, for ‘pestilent fellow’ is the interpretation of the name.”<sup>9</sup>

Despite Harris’s ingenious argument, which broadens the testimony supporting the Western reading(s), the Committee did not feel itself justified in disregarding the weight of the manuscript evidence attesting Ἐλύμας.<sup>10</sup>

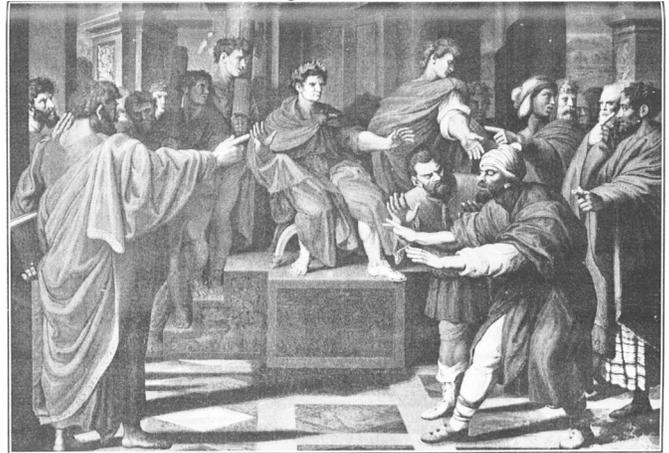
[Bruce Manning Metzger and United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 355-56.]

of this strong accusation with ὁ πλήρης παντὸς δόλου καὶ πάσης ῥαδιουργίας... ἐχθρὸς πάσης δικαιοσύνης, *you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy*. In the middle of these two devastating accusations Paul calls Bar-Jesus υἱὲ διαβόλου. Through Paul's words Luke informs us of the evil nature of this fellow. And it is on this basis that he opposes the message of Paul and Barnabas, and thus brings down on himself the divine judgment of blindness.

Important to consider here is the parallel between this encounter of Paul and a somewhat similar one by Peter with the Jewish magician Simon Magnus in Samaria (cf. Acts 8:9-24). That God's power over evil and magic was present in the ministries of both Peter and Paul is made very clear by Luke. Thus at the outset of Paul's missionary work was a demonstration of this power from God in the curse placed on Bar-Jesus by Paul at Paphos.

The second character in this episode is the Roman proconsul (τῷ ἀνθυπάτῳ) named Σεργίῳ Παύλῳ, whom Luke also labels as ἀνδρὶ συνετῷ. These terms require examination. His government position is called ἀνθύπατος<sup>88</sup> because the term proconsul was used to identify a governor of a senatorial province, over against the term *praefectus* or *procurator* which designated a governor of an imperial province directly controlled by the emperor.<sup>89</sup> Only Cyprus and Achaia as senatorial provinces are mentioned by name in the New Testament; the others are imperial provinces.

His double name was Σέργιος Παῦλος, *Sergius Paulus*.<sup>90</sup> The difficulty here is that this name never shows up in any Roman listing of proconsuls located on the island of Cyprus. This has led to numerous views about this fellow.<sup>91</sup> This doesn't mean necessarily that Luke had wrong information; rather, that we just don't have enough information.<sup>92</sup>



<sup>88</sup>“ἀνθύπατος, ου, ὁ (ἀντί, ὑπατος; orig. ‘highest’ then ‘consul’; Polyb. et al.; freq. in lit.; Jos., Ant. 14, 236; 244 al.; Mel.; ins [s. e.g. PHermann, Inschriften von Sardeis: Chiron 23, ’93, 233–48: of an honorand, 211 A.D., pp. 238f ]; pap [incl. Ox 850 verso 15: AcJ]) **head of the govt. in a senatorial province, proconsul** (s. Hahn 39f; 115; 259, w. lit.). Those mentioned are the proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus **Ac 13:7**, cp. vss. **8** and **12**; of Achaia, Gallio **18:12**; cp. **19:38**; of Asia MPol 3:1; 4; 9:2, 3; 10:2; 11:1; 12:1.—DELG s.v. ὑπατος. M-M.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 82.]

<sup>89</sup>For a helpful discussion see “Roman governor,” Wikipedia.org.

<sup>90</sup>“Σέργιος, ου, ὁ *Sergius*, name of a Roman gens (in its Gk. form in Diod S 12, 24, 1; 12, 43, 1; 14, 19, 1; SIG 646, 16; pap): Σεργίῳ Παύλῳ ἀνθύπατος proconsul Sergius Paulus **Ac 13:7**. Attempts to confirm the identity of this official through ins have not proved convincing (Hemer, Acts 109 n. 17; 166f n. 16). On the principal documents (IGR III, 930, but without the name Sergius, s. HDessau, ZNW 2, 1901, 83 n. 3; Groag, Pauly-W. VI [1909] 1781; for improved rdg. Tmitford, ANRW II/7/2 [1980], 1301–4. SEG XX, 302, 10f K] οἴντου Σεργ[ίου Παύλου ἀνθυπάτου---], which is placed in a restored rdg. under the reign of Gaius [Caligula], not Claudius, by Mitford p. 1300 n. 54 and 1330 n. 195. A terminal stone in the city of Rome CIL VI 31545 [=ILS 5926; s. Mommsen, ZNW 2, 1901, p. 83, 3] w. full name ‘L. Sergius Paullus’ but without ref. to Cyprus; two inscriptions fr. Pisidian Antioch [Ramsay, Bearing 150; 153f; GChesman, JRS 3, 1913, 262]) s. Hemer above and Boffo, Iscrizioni 242–46.—TZahn, NKZ 15, 1904, 23–41; 189–200; Ramsay, Bearing 150–72; Cheesman, loc. cit. 253–66; AWikenhauser, Die AG 1921, 338–41; Kl. Pauly V 137; Haenchen p. 77 (Eng. tr. 64); DBS XII 693–99.—LGN I. M-M.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 919.]

<sup>91</sup>“The identity of this man is admirably discussed by Lake in *Begs*. 5:455–459; see more recently, and much more briefly, Schneider (2:121); also B. van Elderen in FS Bruce (1970) 151–6. Lake shows that some inscriptions which appear to refer to Sergius Paulus and to connect him with Cyprus have been misunderstood and are inapplicable. One inscription (CIL vi. 4, ii. p. 3116, no. 31545) does refer to one L. Sergius Paulus. It names five men, of whom he is one, as curatores riparum et alvei [Tiberis]. Three are unknown; one, Paullus Fabius Persicus, was one of the Fratres Arvales, and probably Magister in AD 35. The inscription is dated by a reference to the Emperor Claudius; it must therefore fall between AD 41 and 54. ‘The name of L. Sergius Paullus suggests that he may be the Sergius Paulus of Acts. The date would fit admirably if he went to Cyprus soon after being one of the Curators of the Tiber’ (Lake 458). It would of course be necessary to suppose that his curatorship fell fairly early in Claudius’ principate. van Elderen refers to another inscription which he thinks to be of greater value than that in CIL. This is to be found in *Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas pertinentes*, ed. R. Cagnat, III 935.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 613-14.]

<sup>92</sup>“The proconsul at this time was named Sergius Paulus. Although there is no certain archaeological verification of his proconsulship on Cyprus at this time, several inscriptions might point in that direction.<sup>12</sup> Further, the family of the Pauli was an influential Roman patrician family, producing many officials throughout the empire over a long period, which in itself lends credence to a Paulus as proconsul of Cyprus.” [John B. Polhill, vol. 26, *Acts*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Page 209

Luke also labels him as ἀνδρὶ συνετῷ, *an intelligent man*. His alertness is signaled by his desire to learn about the message Barnabas and Paul were preaching: οὗτος προσκαλεσάμενος Βαρναβᾶν καὶ Σαῦλον ἐπέζητησεν ἀκοῦσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ. While Barnabas and Paul first came across Bar-Jesus somewhat by accident (v. 6, εὔρον ἄνδρα τινὰ) in the city of Paphos, they were summoned to the governor's palace to present their message to this very interested Roman leader (προσκαλεσάμενος Βαρναβᾶν καὶ Σαῦλον). In Paul's encounter with this Roman leader, he experienced something similar to Peter's earlier encounter with the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:17-48). Both had keen interest in the message being preached by Christian leaders. Sergius Paulus is not identified as a "God-fearer" (εὐσεβῆς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν, 10:2) as was Cornelius. But both men were interested in the Christian message as non-Jews.

The first scene (13:6) in the city of Paphos merely establishes that Barnabas and Paul met the magician Bar-Jesus.

The second scene (13:7-12) evidently took place in the governor's palace, as Luke's term προσκαλεσάμενος implies.<sup>93</sup> Luke only provides us with a glimpse into that session at the point of the magician's opposition to what Paul and Barnabas were explaining to the governor.<sup>94</sup> How long they talked before Bar-Jesus interrupted them is not clear. Luke states ἀνθίστατο δὲ αὐτοῖς Ἐλύμας ὁ μάγος... ζητῶν διαστρέψαι τὸν ἀνθύπατον ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως, *Elymus the magician opposed them seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith*. How he sought to accomplish this would be interesting to know, but Luke does not clue us into his strategy. What is clear, however, is that Bar-Jesus wasn't interested in this new message himself, and saw his own position with the Roman governor being jeopardized should the governor convert to Christianity. This he attempted to prevent.

Paul counter acted him with very blunt language<sup>95</sup> and the pronouncement of the curse of blindness (vv. 9-11). Luke's narration at this point contains some important aspects.

What Paul said and did was under the leadership of the Holy Spirit: πλησθεὶς πνεύματος ἁγίου. The apostle did not respond in anger or frustration. Instead, his response was prompted by God's Spirit. Paul looked intently at Bar-Jesus as he spoke to him: ἀτενίσας εἰς αὐτόν. Paul focused his attention exclusively on this magician as he got ready to speak to him in very solemn tones.<sup>96</sup>

What the apostle said to the magician in Luke's brief summary contains several aspects:

**1) the accusing address:** Ὡ πλήρης παντὸς δόλου καὶ πάσης ῥαδιουργίας, υἱὲ διαβόλου, ἐχθρὲ πάσης δικαιοσύνης, *"You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy,"* This is both blunt and direct accusatory language, and is presented in very solemn tones (Ὡ<sup>97</sup>). One should note that Luke's char-

Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 292.]

<sup>93</sup>“The language of this Lucan composition is septuagintal<sup>70</sup> and invigorated with the rhetorical flourishes of which he is fond, as well as ominously sonorous cadences and clever repetitions.<sup>71</sup> This is an oracle of judgment<sup>72</sup> delivered by an inspired speaker consisting of an accusation in the form of a question (v. 10, as in 5:3), a threat (v. 11a), and the immediate fulfillment of the prophecy (v. 11b).<sup>73</sup> In another reminiscence of the story of Jesus, the magus is accused of trying to make God's straight paths crooked (v. 10b). This is a patent allusion to the activity of the Baptizer (Luke 3:4, citing Isa 40:3; cf. Luke 1:76, 79) that justifies the epithet ‘false prophet’ of v. 6. His punishment, in a nice turnabout, echoes that of Paul.<sup>74</sup> The one who had sought to dissuade the proconsul from accepting the message is reduced to stumbling about crookedly seeking guides.<sup>75</sup> Blinding is a typical punishment, to be sure,<sup>76</sup> but also yields the precise symbolic opposite of Paul's mission: to bring people from darkness (the realm of the devil [Luke 22:53]) to light.<sup>77</sup> This imagery brackets Paul's career. In the very last scene of Acts, he denounces the ‘blindness’ of his Jewish hearers (28:6–7).<sup>78</sup>” [Richard I. Pervo and Harold W. Attridge, *Acts : A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 326-27.]

<sup>94</sup>“For our purposes, what is important to note is that there is a pattern in Acts of confrontation between early Christian leaders and those who are characterized as magicians and the like, whether we are talking about Peter's confrontation with Simon Magus or this narrative or the conflict with the sons of Sceva in Acts 19:13–14. Note that in all three cases the opponents have some kind of association with Judaism or those on the fringes of Judaism.<sup>147</sup> The problems of syncretism were many, and on an island like Cyprus which had had contacts with and influence from a variety of cultures both in the past and the present,<sup>148</sup> it is not surprising to find a person of Bar-Jesus' sort playing an important role in the court.” [Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles : A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 397.]

<sup>95</sup>Compare the bluntness of Paul's language to Bar-Jesus (13:9-11) to Peter's addressing Simon Magnus in Samaria (8:20-23).

<sup>96</sup>ἀτενίζω 1 aor. ἠτένισα (Hippocr. et al.) *look intently at, stare at* someth. or someone εἰς τι (Polyb. 6, 11, 5; BGU 1816, 25; Lucian, Charon 16; 3 Macc 2:26; TestSol 24:5; TestAbr B 8 p. 112, 19f [Stone p. 72]; TestReub 4:2; JosAs 8:8; 16:7 cod. A; ApcMos 33; Jos., Bell. 5, 517) **Ac 1:10; 7:55; 2 Cor 3:7, 13; 1 Cl 7:4; 17:2; 36:2; GJs 3:1; 12:2** (varying w. ἀνασπενάζω, cp. de Strycker 298). εἰς τινα (Diog. L. 6, 6, 61; Sext. Emp., Math. 1, 306 Pyrr. 1, 75) **Ac 3:4; 6:15; 11:6; 13:9; 1 Cl 9:2; 19:2**. πρὸς κυρίου GJs 13:1. W. dat. of pers. (PGM 4, 556; 711; JosAs 8:8) **Lk 4:20; 22:56; Ac 3:5 D, 12; 10:4; 14:9; 23:1**. Abs. (Herm. Wr. 13, 3) 3:3 D. AcPt Ox 849, 13. Without personal referent, in this instance Paul, AcPl Ox 6, 8f (=Aa I, 241, 13).—FSolmsen, Beiträge z. griech. Wortforschung I 1909, 22.—DELG s.v. τανυ-Ε. τεῖνω. M-M. TW. Spicq.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 148.]

<sup>97</sup>Ὡ interjection (Hom.+)

acterization of Bar-Jesus through Paul's words represents the opposite of his characterization of Paul, who is described as πλησθεὶς πνεύματος ἁγίου, *filled with the Holy Spirit*. In this characterization of Bar-Jesus as the epitome of evil, we gain a clear understanding of what Luke intended with the label ὁ μάγος, *the magician*.

The accusatory nature of the direct address in Paul's words charges Bar-Jesus with being ὧ πλήρης παντὸς δόλου καὶ πάσης ῥαδιουργίας, full of every kind of deceit<sup>98</sup> and of every kind of treachery.<sup>99</sup> Both terms are closely related to one another and both allude to trickery and fraud. The second term highlights the first term by implying that such a person by nature looks first at how to cheat someone out of their possessions rather than at other options. The second label, υἱὲ διαβόλου, *son of the Devil*, represents a stinging play off the Aramaic name Bar-Jesus (son of Joshua). This fellow, Paul said, was Joshua's son; he was the Devil's son! The Jewish tone here presses the issues to this man's Jewish background and suggests he is not worthy of being Jewish. His true father doesn't go back to Abraham; his lineage goes back to the Devil! Additionally, this implies Paul's attribution of any special powers that Bar-Jesus may have had to the Devil, and not to God.

Both these indictments put Bar-Jesus on guard because they are made directly at him in the presence of the Roman governor on whom Bar-Jesus is dependent. For them to have validity, some dramatic proof will need to be produced by Paul to back up such accusations.

**2) Paul's demand:** οὐ παύσῃ διαστρέφων τὰς ὁδοὺς κυρίου τὰς εὐθείας; *will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?* The rhetorical question raised to Bar-Jesus demands that he cease his deceptive actions. The background of this expression goes back to Luke 3:4-6<sup>100</sup> where John the Baptist is portrayed

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**1. marker of personal address O, O ... !** (oft. before the voc., in accord w. the Koine and w. Semitic usage, but never used when calling upon God. See B-D-F §146; Rob. 463f; Mlt-Turner 33).

*a. mostly expressing emotion* (at the beginning of a clause; Cornutus 14 p. 14, 9 ὃ πονηρέ, κτλ.; TestAbr B 10 p. 115, 3 [Stone p. 78] ὃ ταλαίπωρε ψυχῇ; ParJer 5:28 ὃ υἱέ μου; ApcEsd 5:6; ApcSed 11:1ff; ApcMos 10; Just., D. 32, 1 ὃ ἄνθρωπε; Mel., P. 81, 596 ὃ Ἰσραὴλ παράνομε) ὃ γύναι **Mt 15:28**; within a statement Hv 1, 1, 7 (as TestAbr B 6 p. 110, 22 [Stone p. 68]; TestJob 24:9). Cp. **Lk 24:25; Ro 2:1, 3; 9:20; Gal 3:1; 1 Ti 6:20; Js 2:20**. ὃ ἀνόητοι 1 Cl 23:4. The nom. takes the place of the voc. (Maximus Tyr. 1, 10g; Philostrate., Ep. 37) **Mt 17:17; Mk 9:19; Lk 9:41; Ac 13:10**.

*b. without emotion* (in accord w. Attic usage, also EpArist 1; 120; Ar. 2, 1; Just., A II, 1, 1; Mel., P. 32, 216; Tat. 14, 1) ὃ Θεόφιλε **Ac 1:1**. Cp. **18:14; 27:21**.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1101.]

<sup>98</sup>“**δόλος, ου, ὁ** (s. three prec. entries and δολῶ; Hom.+; ins, pap, LXX; PsSol 4:8; Test12Patr; ApcEl [PSI 7 verso, 3]; SibOr 3, 191; EpArist 246; Philo; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 200 al.; Just., D. 14, 2; Iren. 5, 29, 2 [Harv. II 404, 2]; loanw. in rabb.) **taking advantage through craft and underhanded methods, deceit, cunning, treachery**. In the following lists of vices (cp. Herm. Wr. 13, 7b) δ. may be rendered by deceit **Mk 7:22; Ro 1:29**; D 5:1; B 20:1; pl. 1 Cl 35:5. ἐν ᾧ δ. οὐκ ἔστιν in whom there is nothing false (Theogn. 416 πιστὸν ἐταῖρον, ὅτω μὴ τις ἔνεστι δόλος; LXX) **J 1:47**; cp. **1 Pt 2:22**; 1 Cl 16:10 (both Is 53:9); 50:6; **Rv 14:5** v.l. (both Ps 31:2); Pol 8:1 (after **1 Pt 2:22**); πλήρης παντὸς δ. monster of underhandedness (Goodsp.) **Ac 13:10** (Just., D. 14, 2 μεμεστωμένοι ... δόλου). W. κακία **1 Pt 2:1** (FDanker, ZNW 58, '67, 93–95); λαλεῖν δ. speak deceitfully 3:10; 1 Cl 22:3 (both Ps 33:14).—δόλω by cunning or stealth (Hom. et al.; Ex 21:14; Dt 27:24 al.; ViAhiac [Ahijah] 3 [p. 92, 2 Sch.]; Philo, Spec. Leg. 4, 183; Jos., Ant. 10, 164; prayers for vengeance fr. Rhe-nea: SIG 1181, 3 and in Dssm., LO 352; 354ff [LAE 423ff]; cp. μετὰ δόλου Did., Gen. 126, 20) **Mt 26:4; 2 Cor 12:16**. δόλω πονηρῶ w. base cunning (SIG 693, 2; 5, cp. 9; OGI 629, 112; BGU 326 II, 3 [Hunt-Edgar 85 II, 3]) IEph 7:1. Also ἐν δ. (Soph., Phil. 102; Wsd 14:30; 1 Macc 1:30) **Mk 12:14** v.l.; **14:1; 1 Th 2:3**.—B. 1171. DELG. M-M. TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 256.]

<sup>99</sup>“**ῥαδιουργία, ας, ἡ** (s. beg. of prec. entry; X. et al.; Suda: ῥ. = πλατογράφος καὶ ὁ κακοῦργος ἀπλῶς a counterfeiter and, in general, a bad pers.) in its less pejorative sense ῥ. suggests an easygoing approach to things in contrast to serious acceptance of responsibilities: ‘frivolity’ (the trickery of slaves is a common theme in Gr-Rom. comedy), then **an endeavor to gain some personal end through clever or tricky means**, in effect a mild expr. for **chicanery, wickedness, villainy, deceit, fraud, unscrupulousness** (one who looks for an easy and questionable way of doing things to make money may be said, in American parlance, ‘to con’ others.) (Polyb. 12, 10, 5; Diod S 5, 11, 1; Plut., Cato Min. 16, 3; PMagd 35, 11 [216 B.C.]; BGU 226, 14 [99 A.D.]; POxy 237 VIII, 15; PStras 40, 30; SB 10929 III, 10; Philo, Cher. 80) w. δόλος **Ac 13:10**.—AWikenhauser, BZ 8, 1910, 273; CBarrett, in Les Actes des Apôtres, ed. JKremer '79, 289, on Elymas.—M-M. TW. Spicq.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 902-03.]

<sup>100</sup> Luk3 3:3-6 NRSV. <sup>3</sup> He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup> as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

*make his paths straight.*

<sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;

against the backdrop of Isaiah 40:3-5. Paul accuses Bar-Jesus of reversing this command of God by making straight roads crooked. This man thus represented the opposite of the true prophets of God; therefore the label ψευδοπροφήτην (v. 6). In graphic language Paul calls on Bar-Jesus to cease twisting and perverting the message of God. As a Jew his claim to special powers evidently had been based on asserting that he understood the mind of the powerful God of the Jews. Paul charges him with just the opposite. Not only did he not understand the will of God; what understanding he did possess was used to twist and pervert divine true.

**3) Paul's pronouncement of judgment:** καὶ νῦν ἰδοῦ χεῖρ κυρίου ἐπὶ σέ, καὶ ἔση τυφλὸς μὴ βλέπων τὸν ἥλιον ἄχρι καιροῦ. “And now listen—the hand of the Lord is against you, and you will be blind for a while, unable to see the sun.” At this point the apostle takes a bold step and pronounces God’s judgment on Bar-Jesus. Paul’s words stress two dynamics: God’s hand and temporary blindness by Bar-Jesus.

**God's hand:** καὶ νῦν ἰδοῦ χεῖρ κυρίου ἐπὶ σέ. In anthropomorphic language Paul asserts that God’s power is opposed to Bar-Jesus. The image of God’s hand is a Jewish way of referring to the power and authority of God (1 Pet. 5:6).<sup>101</sup> When God’s hand is “with you” the expression means the favor of God; cf. Luke 1:66; Acts 11:21. But when it is “against you” it signals divine punishment (cf. Heb. 10:31). And this negative idea is its meaning here. A divine punishment on Bar-Jesus was about to be imposed by God, not by human authority.

**Temporary blindness:** καὶ ἔση τυφλὸς μὴ βλέπων τὸν ἥλιον ἄχρι καιροῦ. The crux of the punishment was to be a temporary blindness that is described in terms of not being able to see the sun but only lasting for a short period of time. The irony here is that such was almost exactly what Paul experienced when he met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, as Luke describes in Acts 9:8-9:<sup>102</sup>

8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

8 ἠγέρθη δὲ Σαῦλος ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, ἀνεωγμένων δὲ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν ἔβλεπεν· χειραγωγούντες δὲ αὐτὸν εἰσήγαγον εἰς Δαμασκόν. 9 καὶ ἦν ἡμέρας τρεῖς μὴ βλέπων, καὶ οὐκ ἔφαγεν οὐδὲ ἔπιεν.

Both Jewish men at one point had been opposing what God was seeking to accomplish through the Gospel. Both experienced blindness when they came into direct contact with God or one of God’s representatives. Paul had repented of his actions, and thus the three days of blindness in Damascus became an opportunity for inner reflection and expressed dependency upon the Christian community in Damascus. Out of Paul’s experience of being blinded by God came a deeper understanding of his calling to bring Gentiles out of darkness to the light of God in Christ.

Bar-Jesus, however, was unrepentant and his blindness stood as a stern rebuke of his actions directly from God. It could have become a turning point for this Jewish man, but Luke implies that it did not cause him to turn around his life. One of the interesting differences in the two experiences is that Paul οὐδὲν ἔβλεπεν, *was seeing nothing*, while Bar-Jesus μὴ βλέπων τὸν ἥλιον, *was not able to see the sun*. But the punishment was temporary, ἄχρι καιροῦ. This signals that the punishment was intended to be a warning to Bar-Jesus to get his life straightened out with God. But Luke seems to imply that this man did not heed the warning.

### **The consequences:**

**1) Bar-Jesus became blind:** παραχρῆμα δὲ ἔπεσεν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἀχλὺς καὶ σκότος, καὶ περιάγων ἐζήτει χειραγωγούς. *Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he went about groping for someone to lead him by the hand.* The impact of the pronouncement of a curse on Bar-Jesus was παραχρῆμα, *immediately*.<sup>103</sup> Thus the mira-

<sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

3 καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς πᾶσαν περίχωρον τοῦ Ἰορδάνου κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, 4 ὡς γέγραπται ἐν βίβλῳ λόγων Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου· Φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, *εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ*. 5 πᾶσα φάραξ πληρωθήσεται καὶ πᾶν ὄρος καὶ βουνὸς ταπεινωθήσεται, καὶ ἔσται τὰ σκολιὰ εἰς εὐθείαν καὶ αἱ τραχεῖαι εἰς ὁδοὺς λείας· 6 καὶ ὄψεται πᾶσα σὰρξ τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ.

<sup>101</sup>“χεῖρ κυρίου, as representing God’s activity in the world, is also a biblical term; cf. e.g. Judges 2:15 (χεῖρ κυρίου ἦν ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς εἰς κακά); cf. also Job 19:21.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 617.]

<sup>102</sup>“Paul himself had experienced blindness, not, however, as punishment but as a sign of the Lord’s presence in his conversion.”<sup>15</sup> One would like to agree with Chrysostom, who argued that Paul inflicted his own blindness on Elymas in the hope that it would lead to his conversion, just as it had been a sign of his own. More likely, however, the blindness was symbolic of Elymas’s own spiritual state of being (cf. John 3:19–20; 9:39).” [John B. Polhill, vol. 26, *Acts*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 294.]

<sup>103</sup>“**παραχρῆμα** adv. (Hdt., Thu., Aristoph.+). On the spelling s. B-D-F §12, 3; Rob. 297; on its use §102, 2; Rob. 550) **pert. to a point of time that is immediately subsequent to an action, at once, immediately Mt 21:19f.** Elsewh. in the NT only in Lk and Ac: *Lk 1:64; 4:39; 5:25; 8:44, 47, 55; 13:13; 18:43; 19:11; 22:60; Ac 3:7; 5:10; 12:23; 13:11; 16:26, 33; 22:29* v.l.—B 12:7; MPol 13:1; GJs Page 212

cle took place at once in plain sight of everyone in the room. His becoming blind is described in terms of ἔπεσεν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ἀχλύς καὶ σκότος, *a midst and darkness fell upon him*. The non-medical term ἀχλύς is only used here in the entire New Testament and defines something like a fog that obscures vision.<sup>104</sup> The expression ἔπεσεν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν, *fell upon him*, stresses that this midst and darkness enveloped him so that he could not see. But he was the only person in the room so impacted by the midst with its accompanying darkness. This is made clear by Luke’s next statement: καὶ περιάγων ἐζήτει χειραγωγούς, *and he went about groping for someone to lead him by the hand*.

Blindness as a divine punishment upon an adult, even temporary blindness, was not commonly taught in either the Old or New Testaments. Jesus’ healing ministry centered a great deal on restoring sight to individuals who had been blind, often since birth.<sup>105</sup> The experience of Bar-Jesus is unique in the New Testament, and only has some vague similarities to Paul’s experience on the road to Damascus. And most likely it is against the backdrop of Paul’s experience that the temporary blindness was imposed on Bar-Jesus as a divine rebuke of him for his opposition to the Gospel.

One other aspect of importance is the general similarity of Paul’s miracle of divine judgment upon this man with the judgment miracle that Peter pronounced on Ananias and Sapphira for their deceptiveness about their contributions to the church in Acts 5:1-11. In that episode Peter pronounced a curse, an invoking of divine judgment, upon both these individuals and they subsequently died. Here at Paphos Paul pronounced a curse on Bar-Jesus and he became temporarily blind. In the Lukan tendency to parallel the ministries of Paul and Peter this is an additional incidence where both leaders were granted divine permission to invoke divine punishment on disobedient individuals.

**2) Sergius Paulus believes:** τότε ἰδὼν ὁ ἀνθύπατος τὸ γεγονός ἐπίστευσεν ἐκπλησσομένου ἐπὶ τῇ διδασκίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου. *When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord*. The positive impact of this divine punishment of Bar-Jesus was that it clearly caught the attention of the Roman governor who watched all this take place.<sup>106</sup> Luke in typical Greek fashion alludes to this as τὸ γεγονός,

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19:2; 20:4 codd.; 22:3. Pleonastically εὐθέως παραχρῆμα (X. et al.; PStras 35, 17 εὐθὺς καὶ παραχρῆμα) **Ac 14:10** D (B-D-F §484; cp. Rob. 1205).—DDaube, *The Sudden in Scripture* 76, 38–46 (but s. Rydbeck 174–76). S. εὐθέως.—DELG s.v. χρῆμα. M-M.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 773.]

<sup>104</sup>“ἀχλύς, ὄσος, ἦ (Hom. et al.; in prose Hippocr. et al.; Polyb. 34, 11, 15; Ezk 12:7 Aq.; Job 3:5 Sym.; Philo, Cher. 61; Jos., Ant. 9, 56)

**1. lit. someth. that comes upon one like a fog and obscures vision, mist** (w. σκότος as Dio Chrys. 11 [12], 36; Philo, Deus Imm. 130) of darkening of the eyes in a man who is being blinded **Ac 13:11** (cp. Il. 16, 344; Od. 20, 357; κατ’ ὀφθαλμῶν δ’ ἔχουτ’ ἀχλύς ‘a mist came over his eyes’ 22, 88; schol. on Apollon. Rhod. 2, 259b; also medic. t.t.: Galen, Medicus 16 [XIV 774 K.]; further exx. in Hobart 44f).

**2. fig. someth. that beclouds one’s understanding, mistiness, in the eyes of the mind** (Heraclit. Sto. 33 p. 48, 14; Plut., Mor. 42c διάνοια ἀχλύς γέμουσα; Himerius, Or. 35 [=Or. 34, 3] p. 146, 20 Colonna ἢ ἀχλύς τῆς ψυχῆς) 2 Cl 1:6.—DELG.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 160.]

<sup>105</sup>“The widespread incidence of blindness in NT times is indicated by the importance which the restoration of sight had in Christ’s ministry of healing (cf. Mt. 9:27; 11:5 [par Lk. 7:22]; Mt. 12:22; 15:30f; 20:30–34 [par Mk. 10:46–52; Lk. 18:35–43]; 21:14; Mk. 8:22–25; etc. In the 1st cent A.D. blindness was generally regarded, in accordance with the OT tradition (cf. Ex. 4:11; Dt. 28:28; 2 K. 6:18; Ezk. 6:9), as a divine punishment for sin without any reflection on its possible incidence from purely physical and external causes. Jesus did not subscribe to the punitive view of blindness, however (Jn. 9:2f), but instead used the condition from time to time as a means of manifesting divine love to an underprivileged segment of the community.” [Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 1, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Revised (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988; 2002), 525.]

<sup>106</sup>“We are told the proconsul believed, ‘being astonished (deeply impressed) at the teaching of the Lord.’ We might have expected Luke to say, astonished at the miracle performed in the Lord’s name and power.

“Are we to assume, then, that the proconsul became a Christian? This is possibly Luke’s meaning, but in view of the lack of clear explication of what the proconsul believed,<sup>172</sup> the lack of any reference to the falling of the Spirit, and the lack of any reference to baptism we cannot be certain. Astonishment was also the reaction of the crowds in Acts 3:10, but it did not mean they were all converted. Simon Magus in 8:13 is said to have believed,<sup>173</sup> but it is clear from the rest of the story that Luke does not see him as truly or fully converted. Certainly, the proconsul responded positively to the message, and apparently also to the miracle. Probably it is best to take the verb in question as an inceptive aorist—the proconsul ‘began to believe’ at this juncture.<sup>174</sup> For Luke’s audience it was important to point out that even those of high social status, even those who were governmental officials, could be favorably impressed with the gospel and not see it as a threat. Indeed, they might even be converted.

“It is probably no accident that this subsection ends very similarly to what we find in Luke 4:32. In both conclusions we hear of amazement at the teaching of the Lord, and in both stories teaching and the first wonder recorded as being performed by the protagonist are clustered together.<sup>175</sup> Luke intends with Paul, as with Peter previously, to show how they follow closely in the footsteps of their Lord in their teachings and actions and lives, and receive similar response. Paul, before his Damascus road experience, used to be like Elymas; now he is like Jesus.”

what happened. He does label the miracle at all. What he does is to gather up the magician's verbal opposition, Paul rebuke, and the divine curse in one simple reference, τὸ γεγονός. The proconsul, ὁ ἀνθύπατος, watched all this happen (ἰδὼν) and responded (τότε) to it with ἐπίστευσεν, he believed. Does Luke intend to mean that the proconsul converted to Christianity by his use of this verb? Luke can use the Greek verb πιστεύω to describe a reaction of being impressed but not necessarily of coming to saving faith; cf. 3:10; 8:13. More likely this is how the verb should be taken here. The qualifying extension, ἐκπλησσομένη ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ κυρίου, being astonished at the teaching about the Lord, provides confirmation that the Roman governor's reaction was not a conversion to Christianity, but instead a very favorable response to its message. Luke's higher concern in reporting this event centers on demonstrating that God's power that expressed itself first in Jesus' ministry, then in Peter's leadership of the Jewish Christian community, was now expressing itself in dramatic fashion over superstition in Paul's ministry as well. Just as Peter secured a favorable response to Christianity from the Roman centurion Cornelius, now Paul accomplishes something similar from a Roman governor on Cyprus.

**3) Paul's use of a punishment miracle.** Although not stated directly in Luke's narrative report, it is clearly implied in the way the episode at Paphos is narrated. When Paul pronounces a divine curse on Bar-Jesus, he is in no way motivated by revenge or a desire to retaliate against this Jewish magician for his opposition to Paul's preaching of the Gospel to the Roman governor. The uniqueness of this judgment miracle in the narrative about Paul in Acts chapters twelve through twenty-eight remind us that when facing opposition repeatedly in his ministry Paul would not invoke God's wrath upon his opponents again.

What should we make of this? Let me suggest the following. Luke clearly positions Paul's words and actions against Bar-Jesus as coming about because the apostle was πλησθεὶς πνεύματος ἁγίου, filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus what Paul said and did was prompted by God and expressed the desires of God, not those of Paul. Being entrusted with the fuller expression of God's presence in no way implies the preacher takes possession of that divine power and can use it at will. Never ever can the servant of God bend God's presence to his own desires and wishes! God's power always remains solely in God's hands, and can flow through the human servant's ministry only at the desire of God Himself. It then exclusively a matter of the obedience of the minister to God's leadership that enables him to become the channel of God expressing His presence and power in dramatic ways to others. And that happens only inside the framework of God's will, not at the wishes of the minister!

**One other note.** In this episode something important takes place that sets a pattern for the remainder of Acts. Paul undergoes a name change! No, he didn't change his name at Paphos, nor did God change his name. Instead, Luke shifts from calling the apostle Saul, Σαῦλος, to calling him Paul, Παῦλος (v. 9). From this point to the end of Acts Luke will only refer to the apostle as Παῦλος.<sup>107</sup> Although Luke gives no stated reason for this shift (Σαῦλος δέ, ὁ καὶ Παῦλος) it does take place with the first positive Gentile response to Paul's preaching of the Gospel recorded in Acts. The name shift is from the Aramaic / Hebrew Σαῦλος to the Greek Παῦλος. Interestingly the Roman governor also shares that name Σέργιος Παῦλος with Paul. Also the Jewish magician is known by two separate names, Βαρισηοῦς and Ἐλύμας.

Paul did not undergo a name change himself at Paphos. Both these names had been a part of the series of identifying names he had carried since birth. It is at Paphos that Luke changes the way he refers to the apostle in Acts. Perhaps Paul himself switched over to his Greek name at this point, but Luke does not state this. Naming individuals in the ancient world tends to be different than in the various patterns in modern western cultures, which themselves differ substantially from one another. Clinton Arnold in the below table illustrates this pattern in the ancient Roman tradition, which was mandatory for all Roman citizens. Several prominent Roman leaders during this era are mentioned and their complete listing of names can be documented from ancient Roman sources. This helps us understand how the naming process developed in this period of time.<sup>108</sup>

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[Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 402-03.]

<sup>107</sup>The only exception, which is not really an exception, is when Paul in later speeches recounts the words of Jesus to him at his conversion on the road to Damascus in 22:7, 13; 26:14.

<sup>108</sup>Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary Volume 2: John, Acts*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 338-339:

"It was common for Roman citizens to have three names: the *praenomen*, *nomen*, and *cognomen* (see the chart above). 'Paul' is the apostle's Roman cognomen. Since Paul gained his citizenship at birth (see 22:26-29), it is a matter of speculation to determine how his parents or grandparents received their citizenship. Scholars suggest two different ways that Paul's ancestors may have gained their prized Roman citizenship. (1) F. F. Bruce suggests that it may have been bestowed on Paul's father or grandfather by one of the Roman generals (Pompey or Antony) known to have been in control of the province of Cilicia in the first century B.C. and for whom his relative rendered some outstanding service to the Roman cause. Bruce suggests that if the citizenship was bestowed by Mark Antony, Paul's full

PRAENOMEN	NOMEN GENTILE	COGNOMEN	SUPERNOMEN
(an individual's name identifying the person within the family — similar to our first name)	(family name—similar to our surname)	(additional family name designating a branch of the family—used as the ordinary personal name)	Signa (Nickname) Hebrew Name
Lucius	Annaeus	<b>Seneca</b>	
Marcus	Tullius	<b>Cicero</b>	
Gaius	<b>Julius</b>	<b>Caesar Germanicus</b>	Caligula (“little boots”)
Gaius	Octavius	<b>Caesar (“Augustus” a title)</b>	
Tiberius	Julius	Caesar Augustus	
Tiberius	Claudius	Nero Germanicus	
<b>Nero</b>	Claudius	Caesar	
(Lucius)	Sergius	Paullus	
?	?	<b>Paullus</b>	<b>Saul</b>

For whatever the reason, we do know that in Luke's reference to the apostle from Paphos on, he becomes Paul rather than Saul.

### 5.0.1.3 Work in Perga, Acts 13:13

**Acts 13:13** Then Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. John, however, left them and returned to Jerusalem;

13 Ἀναχθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Πάφου οἱ περὶ Παῦλον ἦλθον εἰς Πέργην τῆς Παμφυλίας· Ἰωάννης δὲ ἀποχωρήσας ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ὑπέστρεψεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα.

Once the ministry on Cyprus was completed at Paphos, Paul along with Barnabas and John Mark caught a ship (Ἀναχθέντες<sup>109</sup>) from Paphos to the port city of Perga on the mainland. Luke's unusual way to designating the traveling group, οἱ περὶ Παῦλον, (literally) *those around Paul*, could be taken to imply that Paul was not in the group, but this would be incorrect since the following narrative makes it clear that Paul was with the group.<sup>110</sup>



The group of missionaries landed at Πέργη, Perga.<sup>111</sup> This wealthy and very Greek oriented town of seven name would have been: *Marcus Antonius Paullus*.<sup>252</sup> (2) Alternatively, Paul's ancestors may have gained their citizenship after being freed as enslaved prisoners of war (perhaps enslaved during the Roman general Varus's campaign against Jews in Galilee in 4 B.C. or even in earlier Roman excursions into Palestine).<sup>253</sup>

<sup>109</sup>Although ἀνάγω has a variety of meanings, one of those is a nautical term meaning “to begin to go by boat” or “to put out to sea.” Luke especially uses it with a nautical meaning in Acts: 28:11; 13:13; 16:11; 18:21; 27:21; 27:4, 12; 20:3, 13.

<sup>110</sup>“Paul and his companions. Lit., ‘those around Paul,’ which might seem to say that Paul himself was not with them; but from what follows it is clear that that is merely a Lucan literary way of stating that Paul was not traveling alone.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 508.]

<sup>111</sup>“Perga was founded by a mixed multitude of Greek immigrants after the Trojan War. Recent excavations have turned up a number of statue bases of ‘founders’ of the city—some of them the legendary leaders of the original migration (such as Calchas and Mopsus), but others who are known to have been prominent historical personages (such as M. Plancius Varus and his son, C. Plancius Varus, fl. second half of 1st century A.D., who were originally Italians) who were designated ‘founders’ as a result of their personal philanthropy on behalf of the community (Bean 1979: 31–32).

“The Plancius family had great wealth and influence in various parts of Asia Minor and were the leading family in Perga during the first two centuries A.D. M. Plancius Varus had a political career in Rome under Nero and managed to survive the intrigues of A.D. 69 to become proconsul of Bithynia under Vespasian. He had served as a Roman senator, and his son was later to achieve the double distinction of being a successful athlete and also consul during the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117–38). A descendant of the family was to become a celebrated philosopher (Varus). But it was his daughter, Plancia Magna, who exercised the greatest influence in her day. Dozens of texts have been found with her name on them, more than in the case of any other civic personage. She was responsible for the erection of a magnificent array of statues of the Roman imperial family just inside the S gate, many of which are now in the fine museum in Antalya. Plancia herself was priestess of Artemis and held the highest civic office of state (demiurgus). Several striking statues of her have also been uncovered.

“The city of Perga was a very wealthy and beautifully decorated city from Hellenistic times. Its remains today are second only to Page 215

eral thousand inhabitants was some seven miles up the river Cestrus in the district of Παμφυλία, **Pamphylia**.<sup>112</sup> Beginning in 43 AD Pamphylia was combined with Lycia to form a separate Roman province.<sup>113</sup> The uncomfortable climate as well as the prevalence of malaria in the region were the two main distractions for the area.

The only event that Luke records about their time in Perga was that Ἰωάννης δὲ ἀποχωρήσας ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ὑπέστρεψεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, **John, however, left them and returned to Jerusalem**. Without giving a reason, Luke indicates that John Mark decided to abandon the group and return home to Jerusalem, probably to his mother Mary’s home in the city (cf. Acts 12:12). Luke’s descriptive language here (ἀποχωρήσας ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ὑπέστρεψεν εἰς...) is neutral and does not suggest something negative going on. Not until 15:38 after the Jerusalem council do we get the sense that some conflict emerged between Mark and Paul, for Paul at this later time considered Mark’s departure from the group at Perga to be a desertion: Παῦλος δὲ ἤξιου, **τὸν ἀποστάντα** ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Παμφυλίας καὶ μὴ συνελθόντα αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ ἔργον, μὴ συμπαραλαμβάνειν τοῦτον, **But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work**. Much speculation about what may have provoked this conflict can be found from the time of the church fathers until our day. Luke did not consider the reason to be important enough for it to be included in his narrative. Consequently, there is no way to know the cause of this tension. The only hint is that from 15:38 John Mark appeared in Paul’s eyes to not be trustworthy and sufficiently committed to pull his share of responsibilities in the group. Clearly in uncle Barnabas’ eyes, however, (cf. 15:39) nephew Mark was viewed as sufficiently dependable to make another trip.

Whether or not Paul preached the Gospel in Perga at this point is not known. Luke only mentions that when he and Barnabas came back through Perga on the way back to Antioch Paul did preach in the city: καὶ λαλήσαντες ἐν Πέργῃ τὸν λόγον κατέβησαν εἰς Ἀτάλειαν, **When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia**.

Thus these now two missionaries spent some time in the city and then decided it was time to move on to the next place of ministry, which was quite a journey from Perga to the north.



#### 5.0.1.4 Work in Pisidian Antioch, Acts 13:14-52

**Acts 13:14** but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. **15** After the reading of the law and the prophets, the officials of the synagogue sent

Ephesus among the cities associated with the apostle Paul. At least three aqueducts supplied water to the city. The towers of the 3d century B.C. gate are still standing and are among the most impressive of any city of the period. One of the best preserved stadiums in Asia Minor is found just outside the wall of Perga, as is a moderately well preserved Greek theater that was later converted to the Roman style and which would have been operative when Paul visited the city in ca. A.D. 47–48. Perga’s theater could accommodate up to 14,000 spectators (Bean 1979: 29). There were numerous elaborate Roman baths in the city and also a very large gymnasium with a palaestra (lit. wrestling place) adorned with statues and dedicated to the emperor Claudius (A.D. 41–54). At the foot of the acropolis was a handsome nymphaeum (fountain) adorned with a reclining statue of Kestros [Cestrus] (god personifying the local river). Although there was a famous temple to Artemis in Perga that appears on the coinage of the city from the 2d century onward and served as an ‘inviolable’ sanctuary of refuge from the time of Domitian (A.D. 81–96), its location has not yet been determined. In spite of its Asiatic setting, the culture of Perga was almost entirely Greek and, to a lesser extent, Roman. Only about one or two percent of the names represented at Perga are Anatolian; a third of them are Roman. There was presumably a synagogue, where Paul may have preached on his return visit from Galatia (Acts 14:25), but there is no tradition of any early church having been established here.”

[W. Ward Gasque, “Perga (Place)” In vol. 5, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 228.]

<sup>112</sup>“A district in S Asia Minor bounded on the N by Pisidia and the Taurus Mountains, on the E by Cilicia Tracheia (later called Isauria), and on the W by Lycia. The district, which bordered the Mediterranean coast, covered a territory about eighty miles long and thirty miles wide. Several navigable rivers, including the Kestros and the Eurymedon, flowed through the region to the S coast of Asia Minor and emptied into the Pamphylian Sea. The major cities on the coast were Attalia, Side, and Coracesium and in the interior were Perga and Aspendus (Strabo 14.4.1–3; see also Bean 1968: 1053–81). The coastal towns were used as an operational base for pirates from Pamphylia and Cilicia (Strabo 12.7.2–3, 14.3.2). The climate along the coastal plain was uncomfortable and malaria was prevalent. The region produced abundant fruit crops and was renowned for its pharmaceutical products.” [Scott T. Carroll, “Pamphylia (Place)” In vol. 5, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 138.]

<sup>113</sup>“Pamphylia was part of the province of Cilicia from 102 B.C.E. to 44 B.C.E. and then was included in the province of Asia. Antony granted Pamphylia to Amyntas in 36 B.C.E. and it was joined together with Galatia from 25 B.C.E. to 43 C.E. (see Smye 1934) when Claudius formed Lycia-Pamphylia. Pamphylia was reunited to Galatia by Galba, after the Lycians procured a temporary independence, and was finally reunited again with Lycia by Vespasian. Luke’s use of a common article bonding ‘Cilicia’ and ‘Pamphylia’ in Acts 27:5 was probably not to indicate a political entity (which did not exist) but rather a geographical unit, both sharing the S coastline of Asia Minor.” [Scott T. Carroll, “Pamphylia (Place)” In vol. 5, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 138.]

them a message, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, give it." 16 So Paul stood up and with a gesture began to speak:

"You Israelites, and others who fear God, listen. 17 The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. 18 For about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. 19 After he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance 20 for about four hundred fifty years. After that he gave them judges until the time of the prophet Samuel. 21 Then they asked for a king; and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. 22 When he had removed him, he made David their king. In his testimony about him he said, 'I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after my heart, who will carry out all my wishes.' 23 Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised; 24 before his coming John had already proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John was finishing his work, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but one is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of the sandals on his feet.'

26 "My brothers, you descendants of Abraham's family, and others who fear God, to use the message of this salvation has been sent. 27 Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning him. 28 Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed. 29 When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead; 31 and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and they are now his witnesses to the people. 32 And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm,

'You are my Son;  
today I have begotten you.'

34 As to his raising him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,

'I will give you the holy promises made to David.'

35 Therefore he has also said in another psalm,

'You will not let your Holy One experience corruption.'

36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, died, was laid beside his ancestors, and experienced corruption; 37 but he whom God raised up experienced no corruption. 38 Let it be known to you therefore, my brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; 39 by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. 40 Beware, therefore, that what the prophets said does not happen to you:

41 'Look, you scoffers!  
Be amazed and perish,  
for in your days I am doing a work,  
a work that you will never believe, even if someone tells you.' "

42 As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people urged them to speak about these things again the next sabbath. 43 When the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44 The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy; and blaspheming, they contradicted what was spoken by Paul. 46 Then both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "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. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,

'I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles,  
so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.' "

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. 49 Thus the word of the Lord spread throughout the region. 50 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. 51 So they shook the dust off their feet in protest against them, and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

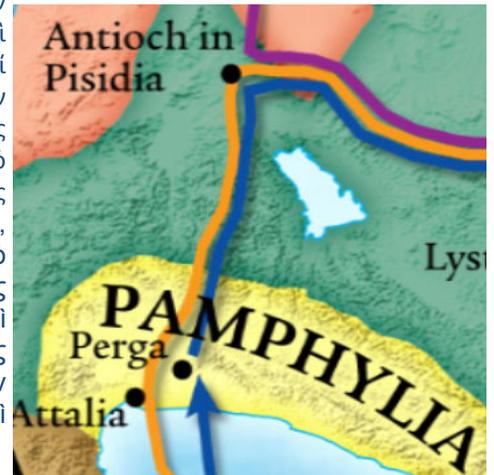
14 αὐτοὶ δὲ διεληθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Πέργης παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν τὴν Πισιδίαν, καὶ εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῆ ἡμέρας τῶν σαββάτων ἐκάθισαν. 15 μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν ἀπέστειλαν οἱ ἀρχισυνάγωγοι πρὸς αὐτοὺς λέγοντες· Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, εἴ τίς ἐστὶν ἐν ὑμῖν λόγος παρακλήσεως πρὸς τὸν λαόν, λέγετε. 16 ἀναστὰς δὲ Παῦλος καὶ κατασεισάσας τῆ χειρὶ εἶπεν· Ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται καὶ οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν, ἀκούσατε. 17 ὁ θεὸς τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου Ἰσραὴλ ἐξελέξατο τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν, καὶ τὸν λαὸν ὕψωσεν ἐν τῇ παροικίᾳ ἐν γῆ Αἰγύπτου, καὶ μετὰ βραχίονος ὑψηλοῦ ἐξήγαγεν αὐτοὺς ἐξ αὐτῆς, 18 καί, ὡς τεσσερακονταετῆ χρόνον ἐτροποφόρησεν αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, 19 καὶ καθελὼν ἔθνη ἑπτὰ ἐν γῆ Χανάν κατεκληρονόμησεν τὴν γῆν αὐτῶν 20 ὡς ἔτει τετρακοσίοις καὶ πενήκοντα. καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἔδωκεν κριτὰς ἕως Σαμουὴλ τοῦ προφήτου. 21 κάκειθεν ἠτήσαντο βασιλέα, καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς τὸν Σαοὺλ υἱὸν Κίς, ἀνδρὰ ἐκ φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, ἔτη τεσσεράκοντα· 22 καὶ μεταστήσας αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν τὸν Δαυὶδ αὐτοῖς εἰς βασιλέα,

ὦ καὶ εἶπεν μαρτυρήσας· Εὗρον Δαυὶδ τὸν τοῦ Ἰεσσαί, ἄνδρα κατὰ τὴν καρδίαν μου, ὃς ποιήσει πάντα τὰ θελήματά μου. 23 τούτου ὁ θεὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ σπέρματος κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν ἤγαγεν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ σωτῆρα Ἰησοῦν, 24 προκηρύξαντος Ἰωάννου πρὸ προσώπου τῆς εἰσόδου αὐτοῦ βάπτισμα μετανοίας παντὶ τῷ λαῷ Ἰσραὴλ. 25 ὡς δὲ ἐπλήρου Ἰωάννης τὸν δρόμον, ἔλεγεν· Τί ἐμὲ ὑπονοεῖτε εἶναι; οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐγὼ· ἀλλ' ἰδοὺ ἔρχεται μετ' ἐμὲ οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἄξιος τὸ ὑπόδημα τῶν ποδῶν λῦσαι.

26 Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, υἱοὶ γένους Ἀβραάμ καὶ οἱ ἐν ὑμῖν φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν, ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος τῆς σωτηρίας ταύτης ἐξαπεστάλη. 27 οἱ γὰρ κατοικοῦντες ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες αὐτῶν τοῦτον ἀγνοήσαντες καὶ τὰς φωνὰς τῶν προφητῶν τὰς κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἀναγινωσκομένας κρίναντες ἐπλήρωσαν, 28 καὶ μηδεμίαν αἰτίαν θανάτου εὐρόντες ἠτήσαντο Πιλάτον ἀναιρεθῆναι αὐτόν· 29 ὡς δὲ ἐτέλεσαν πάντα τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένα, καθελόντες ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου ἔθηκαν εἰς μνημεῖον. 30 ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἤγειρεν αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν· 31 ὃς ὠφθῆ ἐπὶ ἡμέρας πλείους τοῖς συναναβάσιν αὐτῷ ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ, οἵτινες νῦν εἰσὶ μάρτυρες αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν λαόν. 32 καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς εὐαγγελιζόμεθα τὴν πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ἐπαγγελίαν γενομένην 33 ὅτι ταύτην ὁ θεὸς ἐκπεπλήρωκεν τοῖς τέκνοις ἡμῶν ἀναστήσας Ἰησοῦν, ὡς καὶ ἐν τῷ ψαλμῷ γέγραπται τῷ δευτέρῳ· Υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γενένηκά σε. 34 ὅτι δὲ ἀνέστησεν αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν μηκέτι μέλλοντα ὑποστρέφειν εἰς διαφθοράν, οὕτως εἶρηκεν ὅτι Δώσω ὑμῖν τὰ ὄσια Δαυὶδ τὰ πιστά. 35 διότι καὶ ἐν ἐτέρῳ λέγει· Οὐ δώσεις τὸν ὄσιόν σου ἰδεῖν διαφθοράν· 36 Δαυὶδ μὲν γὰρ ἰδίᾳ γενεᾷ ὑπηρετήσας τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ βουλῇ ἐκοιμήθη καὶ προσετέθη πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶδεν διαφθοράν, 37 ὃν δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἤγειρεν οὐκ εἶδεν διαφθοράν. 38 γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ὅτι διὰ τούτου ὑμῖν ἄφεσις ἀμαρτιῶν καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν νόμῳ Μωϋσέως δικαιωθῆναι 39 ἐν τούτῳ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιοῦται. 40 βλέπετε οὖν μὴ ἐπέλθῃ τὸ εἰρημένον ἐν τοῖς προφήταις· 41 ἴδετε, οἱ καταφρονηταί, καὶ θαυμάσατε καὶ ἀφανίσθητε, ὅτι ἔργον ἐργάζομαι ἐγὼ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ὑμῶν, ἔργον ὃ οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε ἐάν τις ἐκδιηγῆται ὑμῖν.

42 Ἐξιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν παρεκάλουν εἰς τὸ μεταξὺ σάββατον λαληθῆναι αὐτοῖς τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα. 43 λυθείσης δὲ τῆς συναγωγῆς ἠκολούθησαν πολλοὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ τῶν σεβομένων προσηλύτων τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Βαρναβᾷ, οἵτινες προσλαλοῦντες αὐτοῖς ἐπειθον αὐτοὺς προσμένειν τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ.

44 Τῷ δὲ ἐρχομένῳ σαββάτῳ σχεδὸν πᾶσα ἡ πόλις συνήχθη ἀκοῦσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου. 45 ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τοὺς ὄχλους ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου καὶ ἀντέλεγον τοῖς ὑπὸ Παύλου λαλουμένοις βλασφημοῦντες. 46 παρρησιασάμενοί τε ὁ Παῦλος καὶ ὁ Βαρναβᾶς εἶπαν· Ὑμῖν ἦν ἀναγκαῖον πρῶτον λαληθῆναι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ· ἐπειδὴ ἀπωθεῖσθε αὐτόν καὶ οὐκ ἀξιους κρίνετε ἑαυτοὺς τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς, ἰδοὺ στρεφόμεθα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη· 47 οὕτως γὰρ ἐντέταλται ἡμῖν ὁ κύριος· Τέθεικά σε εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναι σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς. 48 ἀκούοντα δὲ τὰ ἔθνη ἔχαιρον καὶ ἐδόξαζον τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον· 49 διεφέρετο δὲ ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου δι' ὅλης τῆς χώρας. 50 οἱ δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι παρώτρυναν τὰς σεβομένας γυναῖκας τὰς εὐσχήμονας καὶ τοὺς πρῶτους τῆς πόλεως καὶ ἐπήγειραν διωγμὸν ἐπὶ τὸν Παῦλον καὶ Βαρναβᾶν, καὶ ἐξέβαλον αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν ὀρίων αὐτῶν. 51 οἱ δὲ ἐκτιναζάμενοι τὸν κονιορτὸν τῶν ποδῶν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἦλθον εἰς Ἰκόνιον, 52 οἱ τε μαθηταὶ ἐπληροῦντο χαρᾶς καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου.



Once John Mark had left these two missionaries, they decided to make their way over 160 kilometers northward to Ἀντιόχειαν τὴν Πισιδίαν, Antioch in Pisidia.<sup>114</sup> This was not an easy journey in that it climbed to 3,600 feet in elevation through mountain roads. As a Roman military outpost, the city was more Roman than it was Greek, although having been founded as a Greek city.<sup>115</sup> As a Roman controlled city from 25 BC onward when

<sup>114</sup>“Antioch is called ἡ πρὸς (τῇ) Πισιδίᾳ, ‘on the Pisidian border,’ by Strabo (12.569, 577).<sup>5</sup> It lies in ‘Pisidian’ Phrygia; the adjectival use of Πισιδία, ‘Pisidia,’ is unusual. The city was officially called Colonia Caesarea (Pliny *Nat. hist.* 5.94),<sup>6</sup> and was one of the Roman colonies which offered protection against the high-landers. It was also the administrative center for the southern part of the province of Galatia.<sup>7</sup> The Roman character of the city is not recognizable in Acts (in contrast to 16:12). Evidence for the presence of the Jewish community is provided by an inscription in Apollonia.<sup>8</sup>” [Hans Conzelmann, Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 103.]

<sup>115</sup>“Pisidian Antioch was a city in south central Turkey founded in the 3d century B.C. by one of the Seleucid kings, probably Antiochus I or Antiochus II, and initially occupied by settlers from Magnesia on the Maeander in Ionia. The city has been identified with ruins just east of the modern town of Yalvaç (38°17'N; 31°11'E). Around the middle of the 2d century B.C. a fine Ionic temple was built at the extramural sanctuary of Mên Askaēnos, an Anatolian deity and the most important god of the city (Mitchell and Waelkens *fc.*, chaps. 2–3). Little else is known of Antioch’s history in the Hellenistic period, but it became prominent in 25 B.C. when the Roman emperor Augustus annexed the central Anatolian province of Galatia, to which it belonged, and refounded the city as a Roman colony populated by veterans from the Roman legions V and VII (Levick 1967: 29–41). It swiftly became an important and successful community. Between 15 B.C. and A.D. 35 three members of the imperial household—Drusus, brother of the future emperor Tiberius; C. Domitius Ahenobarbus, the father of the emperor Nero; and L. Cornelius Sulla Felix, son-in-law of Germanicus—as well as two Augustan generals, P. Sulpicius Quirinius and M. Servilius, held honorary magistracies in the colony. At the same time the city center was adorned with a magnificent series of buildings connected with the imperial cult: a Roman-style podium temple set in front of a semicircular portico at the head of a large colonnaded square, a colonnaded street named after the emperor Tiberius, a triple arched gateway, which was com-

Antioch became an administrative center for the province of Galatia, military veterans were largely used to colonize the city with Latin speaking Romans. Thus when Paul and Barnabas arrived in the city in the mid 40s they heard more Latin being spoken in the city than they did Greek.<sup>116</sup> The political and economic importance of the city made it an important place for planting a Christian congregation. These two missionaries would spend a good bit of time in the city, and when eventually forced to leave because of synagogue based opposition, a thriving community of believers would exist not only in the city but also in the surrounding region.

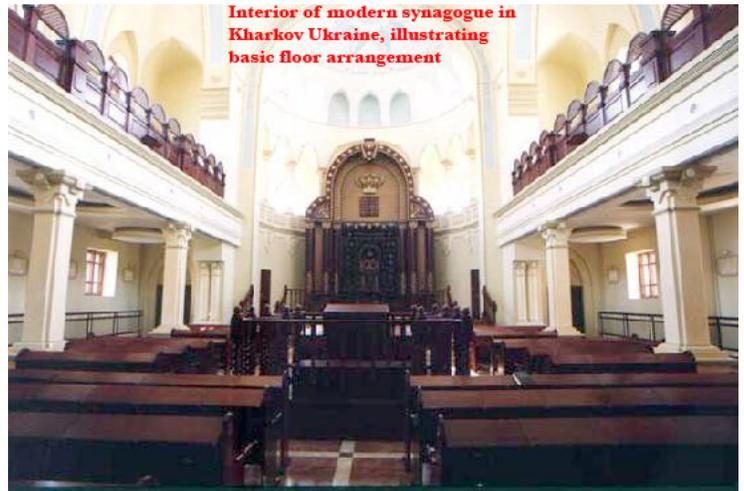


Antiocheia in Pisidia

Luke's depiction of their ministry in the city is an extended episodic narrative with a speech of Paul inserted into the narrative. The narrative introduction is provided in vv. 13-16a. Paul's speech follows in vv. 16b-41. The narrative conclusion then comes in vv. 41-52. This is Paul's first recorded speech in Acts, and is delivered to Jews at a sabbath service in one of the synagogues there. A second speech was attempted the following sabbath, but was interrupted by Jewish opposition when almost the entire city gathered to hear Paul speak (vv. 44-45). Their missionary efforts then turned to the Gentiles in the city with large numbers coming to Christ. Jewish synagogue opposition eventually forces them to leave the city after some weeks of evangelizing the region.

Our examination of this experience will be built around these three natural divisions of the text.

**Narrative introduction, vv. 14-16a.** The first scene focuses on the Jewish sabbath day worship service they attended in a synagogue at Antioch: καὶ εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων ἐκάθισαν, *And on the sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down.* The typical modern Jewish synagogue floor design, as illustrated in the photo, is based on the ancient patterns. The synagogue that Paul and Barnabas attended that Friday evening would not have been nearly as elaborate as the modern one in the photo. The raised platform in the center of the room was for the reading of the Torah, while the Jewish men were seated in a circle around the platform. The so-called 'reading desk' on the platform was where the Torah scrolls were laid and



Interior of modern synagogue in Kharkov Ukraine, illustrating basic floor arrangement

the official synagogue reader read the assigned passage for that service. The offering of prescribed prayers and the reading of the Hebrew Bible were the two central aspects of sabbath worship by Jews in the synagogue service on Friday evenings.<sup>117</sup> A sermon or 'homily' might be given by someone in the congregation if they felt it ap-

pleted in A.D. 50, and a staircase linking the street with the imperial sanctuary (Robinson 1926; Mitchell and Waelkens fc., chap. 4). Also during this period members of Antioch's leading families began to hold important positions in the Roman military and administrative hierarchy, and the elite of the colony were among the first easterners to enter the Senate at Rome (Levick 1967: 103-20; Halfmann 1979). The colony continued to prosper through the 2d and 3d centuries and under Diocletian became the metropolis of the newly constituted province of Pisidia. An early 4th-century governor, Valerius Diogenes, was responsible for an important building program and was also active in the persecution of Christians (MAMA 1 no. 170; Calder 1920), but by the end of the century Antioch had an orthodox bishop in correspondence with St. Basil, and had witnessed the construction of several major churches (Mitchell and Waelkens fc., chap. 2 and appendix 1; Kitzinger 1974).” [Stephen Mitchell, “Antioch (Place): Antioch of Pisidia” In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 264.]

<sup>116</sup>“Hellenisation became Latinisation during the Roman period and it was applied in Antioch best. The city was divided into seven quarters called ‘vici’ all of which were founded on seven hills like in Rome. The formal language was Latin till the end of the 3rd century AD. The fertility of the land and the peace brought by Augustus (*Pax Romana*: Roman Peace) made it easier for the veterans as colonists in the area to have good relations and integration with the natives.” [“Antioch, Pisidia,” Wikipedia.org]

<sup>117</sup>“The fittings of the synagogues were in New Testament times very simple. The chief was the closet (תִּבְיָה) in which were kept the rolls of the law and the other sacred books.<sup>102</sup> These were wrapped in linen cloths (מִטְפָּחוֹת),<sup>103</sup> and lay in a case (קַיָּה = θήκη).<sup>104</sup> An elevated place (בֵּימָה = βήμα, tribune), upon which stood the reading-desk, was erected, at least in post-Talmudic times, for him who read the Scriptures aloud or preached.<sup>105</sup> Both are mentioned in the Jerusalem Talmud,<sup>106</sup> and may well be assumed for the time of Christ.

appropriate; it should center on explaining the application of the scripture text read in that service.<sup>118</sup> Two separate synagogue sabbath services are described in the New Testament by Luke: one in Palestine (Luke 4:16-27) and this one in Diaspora Judaism (Acts 13:14-42).

These two Jewish visitors joined the congregation on that Friday evening in order to worship God<sup>119</sup> in the typical manner of devout Jews of that time. Given that the main objective was to receive instruction from God through the reading of the Hebrew Bible, the request of the synagogue rulers (οἱ ἀρχισυνάγωγοι<sup>120</sup>) had an assistant check with these two Jewish visitors about speaking to the group to provide instruction from the Torah: μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν ἀπέστειλαν οἱ ἀρχισυνάγωγοι πρὸς αὐτοὺς λέγοντες: Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, εἴ<sup>121</sup> τίς ἔστιν ἐν ὑμῖν λόγος παρακλήσεως πρὸς τὸν λαόν, λέγετε. After the reading of the law and the prophets, the officials of the synagogue sent them a message, saying, “Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, give it.” The term used, λόγος παρακλήσεως, surfaces in Hebrews 13:22 labeling the book of Hebrews as a Jewish sermon, which is the intended meaning here by Luke as well. What Paul will deliver to the assembled group then was a standard Jewish sermon, but from a Christian perspective.

**Paul’s missionary sermon, vv. 16b-41.** With such an invitation to speak to the group, Paul seized the opportunity to deliver a sermon to them about Christ. The background reading from both the Law and the Prophets (τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν) help lay the scriptural foundation for his message.<sup>122</sup> Luke’s depiction in v. 16a, ἀναστὰς δὲ Παῦλος καὶ κατασεύσας τῇ χειρὶ εἶπεν, So Paul stood up and with a gesture<sup>123</sup> began to speak, Among other fittings, lamps may also be mentioned.<sup>107</sup> Lastly trombones (σὺμφῶν) and trumpets (κρουστά) were indispensable instruments in public worship. The former were blown especially on the first day of the year, the latter on the feast days.<sup>108</sup> [Emil Schürer, vol. 4, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Second Division, Vol. II. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1890), 74-75.]

<sup>118</sup>In the governing structures for Jewish colonies in the Dispersion a variety of patterns existed. In the cast of Antioch where a Jewish presence in the town existed but was not dominate in the town, a Jewish council of elders exercised leadership over the affairs of the Jewish community, and often served as the official liaison of the community to the governing authorities. Where the Jewish community was substantial multiple synagogues would exist but all would come under the central authority of this council of elders. Each synagogue community would have its own leaders who would be subject to the central council of elders.

<sup>119</sup>Given the nature of the synagogue as for prayer and instruction in the Law of Moses, most Jews of that time would not have considered attending a Friday evening sabbath service as an act of worship. Worship of God was done either in the temple in Jerusalem and at one’s home in the gathering of the family. The gathering of the Jewish community in a sabbath service was for prayers and to receive instruction from God through the Torah. Note Schürer’s remarks:

For it is necessary first of all to remark, that the main object of these Sabbath day assemblages in the synagogue was not public worship in its stricter sense, i.e. not devotion, but religious instruction, and this for an Israelite, was above all instruction in the law. Josephus rightly views the matter in this light: ‘Not once or twice or more frequently did our lawgiver command us to hear the law, but to come together weekly, with the cessation of other work, to hear the law and to learn it accurately.’<sup>40</sup> Nor was Philo in the wrong, when he called the synagogues ‘houses of instruction,’ in which ‘the native philosophy’ was studied and every kind of virtue taught.<sup>41</sup> In the New Testament too, the διδάσκειν always figures as the chief function of the synagogue.<sup>42</sup>

Emil Schürer, vol. 4, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Second Division, Vol. II. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1890), 54.

<sup>120</sup>ἀρχισυνάγωγος, οὐ, ὁ (s. συναγωγή; Just., D. 137, 2 exx. fr. ins and lit. in Schürer II 434–36 and III 100f; Sb 5959, 3 [time of Augustus]; SEG VIII, 170, 2ff; on this ZNW 20, 1921, 171; Dssm., LO 378–80 [LAE 439–41] w. lit.) **leader/president of a synagogue**, a term found also in polytheistic cult (Poland, *Gesch.* 355–57) and given simply as a title (Schürer II 435; for ins evidence relating to Jewish women s. BBrooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue*, ’82; men and women: *New Docs* 4, 214–20), *in our lit. only w. ref. to the Jewish synagogue, of an official whose duty it was esp. to take care of the physical arrangements for the worship services* (Hebr. מְשִׁבֵּט הַשָּׁבִיט) **Mk 5:22, 35f, 38; Lk 8:49; 13:14; Ac 13:15; 14:2 D; 18:8, 17.** Those named are Ἰάϊρος, Κρίσπος and Σωσθένης; s. these entries.—WThieling, *Der Hellenismus in Kleinafrika* 1911, 76; TRajak/DNoy, *JRS* 83, ’93, 75–93.—M-M. TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 139.]

The use of the plural form here rather than the singular suggests this may have been a larger synagogue community that required more than a single person to arrange for the sabbath services each week, which was the usual pattern.

<sup>121</sup>The use of the first class conditional protasis introduced by εἴ assumes that Paul and Barnabas would have something to say to the group. What signaled this is not mentioned by Luke. Perhaps initial introductions prior to the beginning of the service; perhaps assuming that Paul was a Jewish scribe as a Pharisee as indicated by his appearance; or something else indicated that these two men would likely have something worthwhile to say to the group.

<sup>122</sup>After the call to worship and the recitation of the appropriate prayers the scripture lessons were read—one from the Pentateuch and one from the Prophets.<sup>37</sup> (The Pentateuch was read in sequence according to a triennial lectionary;<sup>38</sup> the lesson from the Prophets was normally selected because of some relation to the Pentateuchal lesson.)<sup>39</sup> Then an address was usually delivered by some suitable member of the congregation. It was part of the duties of the ruler or rulers of the synagogue to appoint someone to deliver the address.<sup>40</sup> [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 252.]

<sup>123</sup>The gesture was a sign given for silence and attention; see the WT reading and 12:17; 19:33; 21:40.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 510.]

most likely implies that he walked to the raised platform in the center of the room called in Greek the βῆμα, in Hebrew בימה, from where he spoke to the group. Here Paul stood up to speak, while Jesus at Nazareth sat down to speak. Most likely this represented a difference in custom between Diaspora Judaism and Palestinian Judaism.<sup>124</sup> Further, Paul's opening words, ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται καὶ οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν, *You Israelites, and others who fear God*, clearly indicate that non-Jews were present in the audience. The phrase οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν had a technical designation of Gentiles who were sympathetic to Judaism but had not made the full commitment to become a proselyte Jew through conversion to the Jewish religion.

What is important also to remember is the general similarity of Paul's first recorded sermon in a Diaspora Jewish synagogue to Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost at Jerusalem in Acts 2:1-42, sermon vv. 14-36. Additionally, it has some affinities with Stephen's defense speech in Acts 7:1-53. Both Paul's and Peter's speeches are called 'missionary speeches' in that they were delivered to an audience with the intent of converting that audience to Christ, while Stephen's speech was given to defend his Christian activities before the judicial council of the Jews. This difference in objective for each speech helps account for many of the differences in approach that surface in a comparison of the speeches.

The sermon divides itself into three natural sections:<sup>125</sup> vv. 16b-25, salvation history; vv. 26-37, contemporary Israel; vv. 38-41, concluding exhortation to the audience. The successive narrowing of scope creates something of a bulls eye target strategy. In **the first section** Paul reviews Israelite history with a basically positive thrust, over against Stephen's similar review with a more negative thrust (Acts 7:2-47). Paul jumps from David to Jesus (vv. 22-25) with the affirmation of the superiority of Jesus by John the Baptist. In **the second section** of vv. 26-37, Paul focuses on contemporary Judaism emphasizing the crucifixion of Jesus in Jerusalem by the residents and leaders in Jerusalem (vv. 26-29). In vv. 30-37, the resurrection of Jesus is emphasized against the backdrop of David's words in the Psalms. **The third section** of vv. 38-41 is an appeal to his audience in Antioch to not make the mistake of rejecting Jesus like those in Jerusalem did, since He is the exclusive way to forgiveness of sins before God. The theme of justification by faith as the key to divine forgiveness of sins is unique to Acts but is prominent in Paul's writings, especially in Col. 1:4 and Eph. 1:7 which link jus-



<sup>124</sup>“The standing posture seems to have been the normal one for synagogue preachers in the dispersion. Jesus, on the other hand, stood up to read the lesson but sat down to expound it. This may reflect a difference in practice between Palestinian synagogues and those of the dispersion; it has also been suggested that a word of exhortation was delivered by a standing preacher, whereas one sat to expound the scriptures.”<sup>447</sup> [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 253.]

<sup>125</sup>“In some respects Paul's address is reminiscent of Peter's speech in Jerusalem on the first Christian Pentecost (2:14–36) and of that of Stephen (7:1–53), but it has its own distinctive elements. It is another missionary, kerygmatic sermon addressed this time to diaspora Jews and Gentile sympathizers. The structure of the speech is indicated by the threefold use of andres Israēlītai or andres adelphoi, the form of address used in vv 16, 26, 38; hence the three parts: (1) 16b–25; (2) 26–37; (3) 38–41. The structure is so understood by Schneider, *Ap. G.*, 2.130; de-Silva, “Paul's Sermon,” 34–35; Pesch, *Ap. G.*, 2.30–31; Polhill, *Acts*, 300; Roloff, *Ap. G.*, 202–3. For a four-part division (16b–25, 26–31, 32–37, 38–41), see Weiser, *Ap. G.*, 322–23. As Barrett (*Acts*, 623) notes, it makes little difference if the second part is divided in two or not.

The first part of the discourse (13:16b–25) is a recital of salvation history. It differs from the recital in Stephen's speech (7:2–47) in being positive in its exposé, and not negative as a buildup for an indictment. It makes no mention of the patriarchs and Moses, and Paul emphasizes God's guidance, which leads from the election of Israel to Jesus, “the continuity between Israel and the church” (Conzelmann, *Acts*, 103). God has provided for Israel even before he raised up “judges” (charismatic leaders) and “kings” for it. Such divine providence was exercised on behalf of Israel of old.

The second part (13:26–37) is a proclamation made to contemporary Israel: To us, “children of the family of Abraham” (v 26), the message of this salvation has been sent, “God raised him [Jesus] from the dead” (v 30). The kerygma itself is found in vv 26–31, and an argument from Scripture supports it in vv 32–37. The Lucan themes of Jewish ignorance and Christian testimony appear again (in vv 27, 30–31).

The third part (13:38–41) is the concluding exhortation: Through Christ come forgiveness of sins and justification, a message not to be spurned. This is the climax of Paul's address to the people in the synagogue. It is the only time in Acts, when Paul's teaching about justification by faith is mentioned, the topic that is prominent in his letters to the Galatians and Romans. One should note how Luke has recast the Pauline teaching in vv 38–39. The prime effect of the Christ-event in Pauline theology, justification by faith, is adjusted as an explanation of forgiveness of sins. The latter is a prominent Lucan way of expressing an effect of the Christ-event, which, however, is absent in Paul's uncontested letters. It is found in the Deutero-Pauline Col 1:14 and Eph 1:7. Such a treatment of this Pauline topic introduces part of the problem of the Paulinism of Acts; see Introduction §§171–77. The entire episode thus presents Pauline testimony in a certain parallelism with that of Peter, both in the speech and in the miracles.

[Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 507-08.]

tification to forgiveness: διὰ τούτου ὑμῖν ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν καταγγέλλεται... ἐν τούτῳ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιούται. This stands over against the inability to find justification through the Law of Moses: [καί] ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν νόμῳ Μωϋσέως δικαιωθῆναι. Paul closes by citing Habb. 1:5 from the LXX: Ἴδετε, οἱ καταφρονηταί, καὶ θαυμάσατε καὶ ἀφανίσθητε, ὅτι ἔργον ἐργάζομαι ἐγὼ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ὑμῶν, ἔργον ὃ οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε ἐάν τις ἐκδιηγῆται ὑμῖν. *Look, you scoffers! Be amazed and perish, for in your days I am doing a work, a work that you will never believe, even if someone tells you.*

From this we gain some insight into Paul's use of the Old Testament. He saw in David's writings in the Psalms and in the prophet Habakkuk prophecies that were fulfilled in Christ. Israelite history leading up to David provided the basis for a prodigy from which Jesus descended as the promised Messiah. David and the prophets affirm Jesus as the Messiah in their writings. But Jesus' messiahship targets divine forgiveness of sins, not political deliverance as contemporary Jewish messianic expectation asserted. This forgiveness of sins is something the Law of Moses could not grant. This stood in stark contrast to the current messianic expectation that the promised Messiah would institute obedience to the Torah on a scale never before seen.

**Narrative conclusion, vv. 42-52.** The response to Paul's sermon was very positive. A request was made for them to come back on the next sabbath and explain their views further to the group: Ἐξιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν παρεκάλουν εἰς τὸ μεταξὺ σάββατον λαληθῆναι αὐτοῖς τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα, *As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people urged them to speak about these things again the next sabbath.* Additionally a large group of Jews and Gentiles followed Paul as they left the synagogue asking questions and expressing a desire to follow Jesus: λυθείσης δὲ τῆς συναγωγῆς ἠκολούθησαν πολλοὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ τῶν σεβομένων προσηλύτων τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Βαρναβᾶ, οἵτινες προσλαλοῦντες αὐτοῖς ἔπειθον αὐτοὺς προσμένειν τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ, *When the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.* Thus the response to the sermon was substantial and very positive.

The following Friday evening was a different story, however, as vv. 44-50 indicate. Excitement about this new preaching caught the attention of almost the entire city (σχεδὸν πᾶσα ἡ πόλις) who turned out to hear Paul and Barnabas in the follow up sermon. But this excitement by non-Jews prompted a negative reaction by the Jewish leaders who then vigorously opposed Paul and Barnabas: ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τοὺς ὄχλους ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου καὶ ἀντέλεγον τοῖς ὑπὸ Παύλου λαλουμένοις βλασφημοῦντες. *But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy; and blaspheming, they contradicted what was spoken by Paul.* The substantial interest by non-Jews was more than the Jewish leaders could tolerate, given their religious heritage of exclusivity.

This in turn prompted a very blunt declaration by Paul and Barnabas in vv. 46-47:<sup>126</sup>

46 παρρησιασάμενοί τε ὁ Παῦλος καὶ ὁ Βαρναβᾶς εἶπαν· Ὑμῖν ἦν ἀναγκαῖον πρῶτον λαληθῆναι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ· ἐπειδὴ ἀπωθεῖσθε αὐτὸν καὶ οὐκ ἀξίους κρίνετε ἑαυτοὺς τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς, ἰδοὺ στρεφόμεθα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη· 47 οὕτως γὰρ ἐντέταται ἡμῖν ὁ κύριος· Τέθεικά σε εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν τοῦ εἶναι σε εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

46 Then both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "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. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.' "

Based on Isaiah 49:6, they declare their intention to shift their focus away from the Jews in the city and on to the Gentiles with the message of salvation in Christ. Thus we have expressed here the ministry commitment that the risen Jesus had given to Paul as divine calling in Damascus (cf. 9:15-16).

This declaration set up a two pronged reaction in the city. The Gentiles who heard what they said responded positively and many Gentiles came to Christ, not just in the city itself but in the surrounding region (vv. 48-49). On the negative side, the Jewish community intensified their hostility to Paul and Barnabas eventually forcing the two missionaries to leave the city (vv. 50-51). As a signal of their influence but not governing power, they resorted to persuading τὰς σεβομένας γυναῖκας τὰς εὐσχήμονας καὶ τοὺς πρῶτους τῆς πόλεως, *the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city*, to use their political power to force these two missionaries to leave not just the city, but the region (καὶ ἐξέβαλον αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων αὐτῶν).

Thus Paul and Barnabas had to leave Antioch, but not before they symbolically protested this action by the Jewish residents: οἱ δὲ ἐκτιναζάμενοι τὸν κονιορτὸν τῶν ποδῶν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς, *So they shook the dust off their feet in protest against them.*<sup>127</sup> This traditional Jewish action represented a disassociation of Paul and Barnabas with

<sup>126</sup>The boldness (παρρησιασάμενοί) of Paul and Barnabas compares to that of Peter and John in Acts 4:13.

<sup>127</sup>"So they shook its dust from their feet in protest against them. Cf. Luke 9:5; 10:11. They sought to get rid of anything of that district that might still cling to them, by an act symbolizing the severance of all association with it. Jews returning to Palestine from pagan territory were expected to do the same (see Str-B, 1.571; cf. H. J. Cadbury, "Dust and Garments," Beginnings, 5.269-77. Compare 18:6." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale

the Jewish community in Antioch that was expressing that they would have no more responsibility for the divine punishment of the Jewish residents for having rejected the Gospel message.

But as these two missionaries leave the city, something wonderful is taking place: οἱ τε μαθηταὶ ἐπληροῦντο χαρᾶς καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου, *And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.* These missionaries leave behind a community of believers in Christ who are excited about their faith and are completely submissive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Paul and Barnabas have planted their first church! And it is mostly made up of Gentiles.

#### 5.0.1.5 Work in Iconium, Acts 14:1-7

**Acts 14:1** The same thing occurred in Iconium, where Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3 So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who testified to the word of his grace by granting signs and wonders to be done through them. 4 But the residents of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. 5 And when an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, 6 the apostles learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country; 7 and there they continued proclaiming the good news.

14.1 Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν Ἰκόνιῳ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ λαλῆσαι οὕτως ὥστε πιστεῦσαι Ἰουδαίων τε καὶ Ἑλλήνων πολὺ πλῆθος. 2 οἱ δὲ ἀπειθήσαντες Ἰουδαῖοι ἐπήγγειραν καὶ ἐκάκωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐθνῶν κατὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν. 3 ἱκανὸν μὲν οὖν χρόνον διέτριψαν παρρησιαζόμενοι ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ μαρτυροῦντι τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, διδόντι σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα γίνεσθαι διὰ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν. 4 ἐσχίσθη δὲ τὸ πλῆθος τῆς πόλεως, καὶ οἱ μὲν ἦσαν σὺν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις οἱ δὲ σὺν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις. 5 ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο ὁρμὴ τῶν ἐθνῶν τε καὶ Ἰουδαίων σὺν τοῖς ἄρχουσιν αὐτῶν ὑβρίσαι καὶ λιθοβολῆσαι αὐτούς, 6 συνιδόντες κατέφυγον εἰς τὰς πόλεις τῆς Λυκαονίας Λύστραν καὶ Δέρβην καὶ τὴν περιχώρον, 7 κάκεῖ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ἦσαν.

The next place for these two missionaries was Ἰκόνιον, Iconium,<sup>128</sup> located about a hundred miles (165 km) south southeast of Pisidian Antioch, about a five day journey along one of the *Via Sebaste* roads. Located on the western edge of the Anatolian plateau roads coming from the east, especially from Tarsus, converge there and, traveling through a mountain pass on the west, head toward Pisidian Antioch. This very prosperous Roman colony in the first century world was the eastern most city of Phrygia<sup>129</sup> during this period, but governmentally was a part of the Roman province of Galatia.<sup>130</sup> The fictitious writing from the late second century, *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, is set in Iconium, and focuses mainly on the actions of a young Christian girl named Thecla,



University Press, 2008), 522.]

<sup>128c</sup>Konya, also spelled in some historic English texts as *Konia* or *Koniah*, was known in classical antiquity and during the medieval period as *Iconium* in Latin, and Ἰκόνιον (*Ikónion*) in Greek. The name *Konya* is a cognate of icon, as an ancient Greek legend ascribed its name to the ‘eikon’ (image), or the ‘gorgon’s (Medusa’s) head’, with which Perseus vanquished the native population before founding the city.” [“Konya,” *Wikipedia.org*]

<sup>129</sup>Phrygia, Φρυγία, was an ancient kingdom in the west central part of Anatolia centered around the Sakarya River. The kingdom was conquered in 695 BC and the territory successively was ruled by the Lydians, Persians, Greeks, and the Romans beginning in 133 BC. An ethnic culture with the distinctive Phrygian language, similar to Greek but very different from the other regional languages, continued to give the people distinctive identity until the middle ages. Iconium on the far eastern side shifted back and forth from being linked to Phrygia, a part of Asia, and to being a part of Lycaonia, a part of Galatia. During Paul’s stay there it was linked to the Roman province of Galatia administratively.

<sup>130c</sup>Located approximately 170 mi (280 km) S of Ankara (ancient Ancyra) on the border between mountainous Phrygia to the W and the broad plain of Lycaonia to the S and E, it lies on a high, fertile plateau (3,770 feet or 1,150 m). One of the oldest continually occupied cities in the world, it dates back at least to the 3d millennium B.C. According to local legend, it was the first city to be built following the great Flood. Its location caused it to be linked at various times with both Phrygia and Lycaonia. Founded as a Phrygian settlement and linked with Phrygia both geographically and culturally, the native people would have considered themselves Phrygians. As a part of the empire of the Seleucid successors to Alexander the Great, and later as a part of the Roman empire, it was linked with the cities of Lystra and Derbe (in Lycaonia). Those who were strongly attached to the Gk language and culture would have considered themselves Greeks, while a few would have identified with the vision of the Roman empire. For millennia, Iconium has been—and, as Konya, continues to be today— ‘a prosperous city of peace and commerce as well as a center of agriculture’ (Hagner ISBE 2: 792). Located on an important crossroads linking Rome and the Greek cities of the Roman provinces of Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia with the luxuries of the Levant, Iconium was a large and wealthy city in NT times.” [W. Ward Gasque, “Iconium (Place)” In vol. 3, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 357.]

who preached the Gospel and baptized converts in Iconium supposedly under Paul's leadership.<sup>131</sup>

Luke's narrative of Paul and Barnabas' time in Iconium underscores the repetition of a pattern similar to their previous experience at Pisidian Antioch: Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν Ἰκονίῳ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ, *The same thing occurred in Iconium. First*, the two missionaries spoke in the Jewish synagogue with a large number of Jews and Gentiles becoming Christians: εἰσελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ λαλῆσαι οὕτως ὥστε πιστεῦσαι Ἰουδαίων τε καὶ Ἑλλήνων πολὺ πλῆθος, *where Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers. Second*, this success stirred up Jewish opposition to their preaching of the Gospel: οἱ δὲ ἀπειθήσαντες Ἰουδαῖοι ἐπήγειραν καὶ ἐκάκωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐθνῶν κατὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, *But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.* The major difference between Iconium and Antioch was that it took quite some time for the opposition to reach a threatening level that would endanger the missionaries: ἰκανὸν μὲν οὖν χρόνον διέτριψαν παρρησιαζόμενοι ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ μαρτυροῦντι τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, διδόντι σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα γίνεσθαι διὰ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν, *So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who testified to the word of his grace by granting signs and wonders to be done through them.* Over this period of several weeks the residents of the city became divided over supporting or opposing Paul and Barnabas: ἐσχίσθη δὲ τὸ πλῆθος τῆς πόλεως, καὶ οἱ μὲν ἦσαν σὺν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις οἱ δὲ σὺν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, *But the residents of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. Third*, eventually those hostile to Paul and Barnabas hatched up an assassination plot that forced these missionaries to flee the city: 5 ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο ὁρμὴ τῶν ἐθνῶν τε καὶ Ἰουδαίων σὺν τοῖς ἄρχουσιν αὐτῶν ὑβρίσαι καὶ λιθοβολῆσαι αὐτούς, 6 συνιδόντες κατέφυγον..., 5 *And when an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, 6 they learned of it and fled....* The Lycaonian towns of Lystra and Derbe provided some safety from the authorities in Iconium, as Iconium had initially from Antioch: εἰς τὰς πόλεις τῆς Λυκαονίας Λύστραν καὶ Δέρβην καὶ τὴν περίχωρον, *κἀκεῖ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ἦσαν, to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country; and there they continued proclaiming the good news.*

Some of the distinctives of their experience in Iconium to their earlier experiences at Antioch and Cyprus include the following:

(1) Although the pattern of preaching to Jews and Gentile God-fearers in the synagogue was the same, the opposition of the Jewish synagogue leadership to their work took much longer to crystallize into a determination to get rid of them. In Cyprus Paul and Barnabas evidently encountered little or no opposition in the synagogues, but in Antioch it gelled quickly and became intense after on a short time.

(2) In contrast the opposition in Iconium developed much slower, but did eventually include both the Jewish synagogue leadership and Gentile town authorities (ὁρμὴ τῶν ἐθνῶν τε καὶ Ἰουδαίων σὺν τοῖς ἄρχουσιν αὐτῶν). For many commentators beginning with the so-called Western text copyists<sup>132</sup> in the fourth and fifth centuries, the reference in verse three to the slowly developing opposition is sequentially out of place.<sup>133</sup> But Luke

<sup>131</sup>“The apocryphal work entitled *The Acts of Paul*, dating from the second half of the 2d century, contains traditions and legends about Paul's missionary activity. It was written by an elder of the church in this very region, who, unfortunately, was disciplined by his compatriots for his labor of love (he said he had done his work ‘out of love for Paul’). One famous series of episodes focuses on Paul's friendship of a young woman by the name of Thecla and on her evangelism, teaching, and exploits for the Lord. The narrative tells us more about the late 2d century tendencies to asceticism, religious enthusiasm, and credulity than about the events of a century earlier. But it does contain this description of Paul, set in Iconium, that many scholars have regarded as historically trustworthy: ‘And [Onesiphorus] saw Paul coming, a man small of stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked, full of friendliness; for now he appeared like a man, and now he had the face of an angel’ (NTApocr 2: 354).” [W. Ward Gasque, “Iconium (Place)” In vol. 3, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 357.]

<sup>132</sup>Note the way these copyists modified Luke's narrative:

WT: 1 [omits “In Iconium”]. Jews and Greeks were surprised and became believers. 2 The leaders of the synagogue of the Jews and (other) leaders stirred up a persecution of them against the upright and poisoned ... 4 others associating with the apostles because of the word of God. 5 Again the Jews with some Gentiles stirred up a persecution a second time; having stoned them, they drove them out of the town. 6 They fled and came to Lycaonia, to a certain town called Lystra. 7 They continued to preach, and all the populace was aroused by their teaching. Paul and Barnabas continued to spend time in Lystra.

[Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 525.]

<sup>133</sup>“The real problem in the paragraph is the position of v 3. To many commentators it seems out of place. Ramsay simply eliminated it, whereas Moffatt placed it before v 2; for others vv 3–5 are only an enlarged account of vv 1–2, perhaps derived from a different source. Codex Bezae also sought to resolve some of the problem (see WT above). Michael (‘The Original Position’) may be right in saying that v 3 originally stood in the middle of 13:48. In any case, one has to interpret it where it is in the Alexandrian text today.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 525–26.]

seems to intentionally insert this reference to a long, prosperous ministry between the initial opposition to it (v. 2) and the full blown opposition (vv. 4-6). This lengthy productive ministry provided the continuing stimulus for the developing opposition to these missionaries.

The way Luke describes this ministry is instructive. *Humanly*, it was the consistent courageous speaking in behalf of the Lord a message about God's grace: διέτριψαν παρρησιαζόμενοι ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ τῷ μαρτυροῦντι τῷ λόγῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ. *Divinely*, this preaching of God's grace was affirmed supernaturally by miracles: διδόντι σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα γίνεσθαι διὰ τῶν χειρῶν αὐτῶν. We don't have any account of a specific miracle to know exactly what Paul and Barnabas did, but such information is not important to Luke's point. He stresses that God provided convincing proof that what these missionaries was preaching came from Him and with His blessing. To confirm that in the eyes of both Jews and Gentiles listening to this Gospel message, these missionaries were able to perform actions that clearly went beyond human abilities or powers (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα). Such a perspective is consistent with the miracles done by Jesus, then by Peter, and now by Paul and Barnabas. Their miracles were not done for show or to dazzle an audience with human possession of supernatural power. Both Simon Magnus in Samaria (Acts 8) and the Jewish magician Bar-Jesus (Acts 13) had not understood that critical point. Miracles done by Jesus and the apostles were validating signs (σημεῖα) that pointed to a reality beyond the miracle. Thus the miracles reflects actions consistent with the message of the Gospel that underscores both God's offer of salvation in Christ and the warning of final judgment.

(3) In verse four Paul and Barnabas are termed ἀποστόλοις, *apostles*. Apart from here and 14:4 Luke never uses the term apostle for Paul, in spite of Paul being the central character of the second half of the book of Acts. The inclusion of Barnabas under this label also poses some challenges, since the term at its technical meaning is restricted in the New Testament to the original Twelve and to Paul. In both Luke and Acts, 70 of the 75 instances of ἀπόστολος refer only to the Twelve original apostles ordained by Jesus. The simplest -- and in my estimation -- the most natural meaning of ἀπόστολος in 14:4, 14 in reference to Paul and Barnabas is the non-technical meaning of 'messenger' or 'missionary.' This is consistent with how the term is clearly used in John 13:16; 2 Cor. 8:23 (referring to Paul's co-workers), and Phil. 2:25 (referring to Epaphroditus).<sup>134</sup> In the narrative great emphasis is given to Paul and Barnabas as divinely sent messengers through whom God was working in unusual fashion to persuade the listeners to the Gospel that it had a divine origin. To then speak of them as commissioned messengers is quite natural, and is the etymological root meaning of ἀπόστολος.

(4) In Antioch the impact of the Gospel preaching διεφέρετο δὲ ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου δι' ὅλης τῆς χώρας, *Thus the word of the Lord spread throughout the region*. But in Iconium the impact was centered in the city itself and no mention is made of its spreading to neighboring towns and villages. And ironically this came about in spite of a very limited time in Antioch but a lengthy period of time in Iconium. It could be that Luke just failed to mention an expanding impact in Iconium as he did in Antioch. But he seems to be more deliberate in his choice of including or omitting details that this would imply.

(5) The strategy of the opposition to Paul and Barnabas, while somewhat similar did take on some differences between Antioch and Iconium. In Antioch Jewish opposition chose to pressure some devout Gentile women worshippers at the Jewish synagogue who had power and leverage with city governmental leaders. Thus working through these women and some of the men of power in the city, they were able to have Paul and Barnabas officially banished from the city and the region: ἐξέβαλον αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τῶν ὀρίων αὐτῶν. But in Iconium, a plot to kill Paul and Barnabas was hatched up in an unholy alliance between Jewish and Gentile leaders in the city: ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο ὁρμὴ τῶν ἔθνῶν τε καὶ Ἰουδαίων σὺν τοῖς ἄρχουσιν αὐτῶν ὑβρίσαι καὶ λιθοβολῆσαι αὐτούς. The opposition to these missionaries in Iconium was present among both Jewish and Gentile leaders in the city. Very likely Luke's mentioning of the city becoming divided (ἐσχίσθη δὲ τὸ πλῆθος τῆς πόλεως) over supporting and opposing these two missionaries played a role in this seeming deeper and more widespread opposition to

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<sup>134</sup>Many modern commentators go to extreme and bizarre lengths to explain away the use of ἀπόστολος here in chapter fourteen. See the otherwise competent commentator Joseph Fitzmyer observations:

This designation probably comes from the source he is using, in which the two were so named, and he has not bothered to make the source conform to his otherwise usual practice. So Roloff, *Apg.*, 211; Weiser, *Apg.*, 348-49. If this explanation is not considered valid, and Barrett (Acts, 671) considers that it is not, then it is difficult to explain why Luke would refer to Paul as an "apostle" only in this chapter. Becker thinks that Luke uses the title in these two instances only in the sense of "a church missionary" and that it does not have the same sense as that implied in 1:21-22 (Paul, 59, 79). That, however, is a dubious distinction. In 1:21-22 Luke has listed his criteria for membership in the Twelve, and otherwise he never regards either Paul or Barnabas as part of that group. There were, in fact, in the early church other persons beyond the Twelve who bore the title *apostolos*.

[Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 526.]

them. The charge of causing a disturbance that upset the peace of the city could have been easily validated at Iconium.

With such danger threatening their lives, Paul and Barnabas had to flee the city to the relative safety of the Lycaonian town of Lystra, some 21 miles (35 km) south of Iconium.<sup>135</sup>



#### 5.0.1.6 Work in Lystra, Acts 14:8-20

Acts 14:8 In Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet and had never walked, for he had been crippled from birth. 9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. And Paul, looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10 said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And the man sprang up and began to walk. 11 When the crowds 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 oxen and garlands to the gates; he and the crowds wanted to offer sacrifice. 14 When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting, 15 “Friends, why are you doing this? We are mortals just like you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. 16 In past generations he allowed all the nations to follow their own ways; 17 yet he has not left himself without a witness in doing good—giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling you with food and your hearts with joy.” 18 Even with these words, they scarcely restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.

19 But 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. 20 But when the disciples surrounded him, he got up and went into the city. The next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.

8 Καί τις ἀνὴρ ἀδύνατος ἐν Λύστροις τοῖς ποσὶν ἐκάθητο, χλωὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, ὃς οὐδέποτε περιεπάτησεν. 9 οὗτος ἤκουσεν τοῦ Παύλου λαλοῦντος· ὃς ἀνένισας αὐτῷ καὶ ἰδὼν ὅτι ἔχει πίστιν τοῦ σωθῆναι 10 εἶπεν μεγάλη φωνῇ· Ἀνάστηθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου ὀρθός· καὶ ἤλατο καὶ περιεπάτει. 11 οἱ τε ὄχλοι ἰδόντες ὃ ἐποίησεν Παῦλος ἐπήρασαν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτῶν Λυκαονιστὶ λέγοντες· Οἱ θεοὶ ὁμοιωθέντες ἀνθρώποις κατέβησαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς 12 ἐκάλουν τε τὸν Βαρναβᾶν Δία, τὸν δὲ Παῦλον Ἑρμῆν, ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ ἡγούμενος τοῦ λόγου. 13 ὁ τε ἱερεὺς τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ ὄντος πρὸ τῆς πόλεως ταύρους καὶ στέμματα ἐπὶ τοὺς πυλῶνας ἐνέγκας σὺν τοῖς ὄχλοις ἤθελεν θύειν. 14 ἀκούσαντες δὲ οἱ ἀπόστολοι Βαρναβᾶς καὶ Παῦλος, διαρρηξάντες τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν ἐξεπήδησαν εἰς τὸν ὄχλον κρίζοντες 15 καὶ λέγοντες· Ἄνδρες, τί ταῦτα ποιεῖτε; καὶ ἡμεῖς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἐσμεν ὑμῖν ἄνθρωποι, εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν ματαίων ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ θεὸν ζῶντα ὃς ἐποίησεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς· 16 ὃς ἐν ταῖς παρωχημέναις γενεαῖς εἶασεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη πορεύεσθαι ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν· 17 καίτοι οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον αὐτὸν ἀφήκεν ἀγαθουργῶν, οὐρανόθεν ὑμῖν ὑετοὺς διδοὺς καὶ καιροὺς καρποφόρους, ἐμπιπλῶν τροφῆς καὶ εὐφροσύνης τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν. 18 καὶ ταῦτα λέγοντες μόλις κατέπαυσαν τοὺς ὄχλους τοῦ μὴ θύειν αὐτοῖς.

19 Ἐπήλθαν δὲ ἀπὸ Ἀντιοχείας καὶ Ἰκονίου Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ πείσαντες τοὺς ὄχλους καὶ λιθάσαντες τὸν Παῦλον ἔσωρον ἔξω τῆς πόλεως, νομίζοντες αὐτὸν τεθνηκέναί. 20 κυκλωσάντων δὲ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτὸν ἀναστὰς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν. καὶ τῇ ἐπαύριον ἐξῆλθεν σὺν τῷ Βαρναβᾶ εἰς Δέρβην.

Now these two missionaries were working in a small town off the beaten path for the first time. Lystra was a small Roman colony in the first century world whose local population had been somewhat overwhelmed by the settling of Roman army veterans in the century before Christ.<sup>136</sup> The Roman influence was heavy, although the

<sup>135</sup>“It is bounded by massive mountains on the west and south, but the highland plains of Anatolia stretch out to the east and north. It was not on a natural thoroughfare, but the Romans made it into a colony in 6 B.C. — probably as an eastern frontier outpost and as a place to help control tribes located in the mountains to the west of Lystra. Eventually, because of its status as a ‘colony,’ a road was built connecting Iconium, Lystra, Laranda, Derbe, and Cilicia. Because of its isolated position it was a bit more ‘provincial’ than Iconium or Pisidian Antioch to the north and northwest.” [“Lystra,” *Holy Land Photos*]

<sup>136</sup>“In the years of Roman rule over Asia Minor, Lycaonia owed its importance to its situation on the main road from the west-central coast through the Cilician Gates to the broad plain of Cilicia (Ruge PW 26: 2253–65). Lystra itself was about a day’s journey from the main road, at the junction of two other roads which ran N from the northern Isaurian slopes of the Taurus, on the route that was known in antiquity as the *via Sebaste*. The city was a Roman colony, founded by Augustus in 26 B.C., and it was situated on a low hill rising out of the valley (Levick 1967: 51–52). The original settlers of the Augustan colony were veterans of the Roman army; and, despite the fact that they became thoroughly integrated with the local population within a generation or so, Lystra retained some vestiges of its Italian settlement for centuries (the predominance of the native Lycaonian element of the city, however, is illustrated in the story of Paul’s visit in the A.D. 40s). One of these Italian features was the use of Latin rather than Greek for public inscriptions and on coin legends. Another was the town’s constitution, which retained the traditional civic organization of a Roman colony. The chief magistrates were a pair of officials known as *duumviri*, the town council was referred to as the *ordo decurionum* instead of as the *boule*, as would have been the case in a Greek city, and the Latin word *populus* was used to describe the citizen body. Some Italian cults came to be celebrated along

Lycaonian influence of the natives remained strong as well. It was this influence that Paul and Barnabas encountered in the town.<sup>137</sup> We have very limited information about the later history of the city, since the references in Acts are the last literary references to Lystra in all of ancient literature.<sup>138</sup>

Luke's depiction of their experiences begins with a summarizing statement covering both Lystra and Derbe (vv. 6-7). Then he describes one episode where Paul and Barnabas were thought to be Greek gods, in vv. 8-18. This is followed by Paul's stoning by a mob in the city that almost cost him his life (vv. 19-20).

**Summary (vv. 6-7):** 6 συνιδόντες κατέφυγον εἰς τὰς πόλεις τῆς Λυκαονίας Λύστραν καὶ Δέρβην καὶ τὴν περίχωρον, 7 κακεῖ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ἦσαν, 6 the apostles learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country; 7 and there they continued proclaiming the good news. When the two missionaries fled Iconium, Luke says they came to the district of Lycaonia where Lystra and Derbe were located.<sup>139</sup> By only read- with those of the native gods." [D. S. Potter, "Lystra (Place)" In vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 426-27.]

<sup>137c</sup>Augustus' choice of the site for this colony was dictated by military considerations. In the course of the civil wars after the murder of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., Mark Antony had taken control over the E provinces of the Roman Empire — this by arrangement with Augustus after the defeat of Brutus and Cassius, two of Caesar's assassins, in 42 B.C. In the course of a thorough reorganization of the region, Antony had abolished the great province of Cilicia, of which Lycaonia had been a part, because it had not been economically practical for Rome to continue direct control over an area whose economy was seriously underdeveloped. He placed these areas under the control of various local dynasts who could keep better order than the Romans. Lycaonia had fallen to Amyntas of Galatia, and Augustus left him in power after his victory over Antony in 31 B.C. But when Amyntas died in 26 B.C., Augustus had no choice but to reinstate direct Roman government, and the kingdom of Amyntas became the Roman province of Galatia (Syme 1939: 325-32; cf. Levick 1967: 29-41, 195-97). To safeguard this territory, Augustus established a number of veteran colonies at strategic points. Lystra was the southernmost of these colonies, and its location suggests that Augustus intended it to be a base for the campaigns that his governors would wage against the tribes of the Taurus.

"Lystra was founded as a military colony to protect Roman invasion routes into the Taurus and, conversely, to protect the main road in the N from raiders out of the mountains. Since the highlands were never brought completely under Roman control, Lystra probably retained its character as a frontier town throughout its history and, despite its Italian foundation, it became very much a Lycaonian town, rather than a Roman one. The nature of the place is best illustrated by Luke's account of the visit to Lystra that Paul and Barnabas made in the A.D. 40s. After Paul healed a cripple, according to the account in Acts (14:8-18), they were greeted by the local inhabitants who called out to them in Lycaonian. These people identified them as the local gods who, through a form of local syncretism, were identified with the Greek gods Zeus and Hermes. This is of some interest because the local Zeus, Zeus Ampelites, was portrayed on reliefs as an elderly bearded figure, and because he is sometimes depicted with a young male assistant. The identification by the people of Lystra of Barnabas as Zeus and Paul as Hermes 'as he was the bringer of the word' suggests that they thought that the two men were functioning in the way that they envisaged their own gods as acting: the bearded Zeus was the initiator of the action and Hermes was his agent in carrying out the action. This further suggests that the people may have thought that Barnabas resembled their Zeus, while Paul resembled his helper. The passage is therefore of considerable importance as evidence for the physical appearance of Paul at this stage in his career, as well as for the nature of life at Lystra in this period (Robert 1987: 383; Lane Fox 1987: 99-100).

[D. S. Potter, "Lystra (Place)" In vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 427.]

<sup>138c</sup>There is no description of any event at Lystra in literary works later than the Acts of the Apostles, but it is clear from inscriptions, coin finds, and administrative records that the community retained its urban identity until at least the 11th century. The latest finds are very close in time to the Seljuk conquest, and the toponym Zoldera, which preserves the memory of the name Lystra, suggests that it continued to exist for some time after the establishment of the Turkish kingdom at Iconium (Levick 1967: 183). Records of the church councils also make it clear that Lystra was substantial enough to have a bishop of its own and that its importance was not completely eclipsed by Iconium. The story of Paul's visit may have made it a place of some interest to people living in the Christian empire." [D. S. Potter, "Lystra (Place)" In vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 427.]

<sup>139c</sup>The territory of the Lycaones was a region of Central Asia Minor N of the Taurus range, bordered on the W by Phrygia, on the E by Cappadocia, and on the N (after 232 B.C.) by ethnic Galatia." "In 333 B.C. Lycaonia became part of the empire of Alexander the Great and, after his death, of his Seleucid successors. . . .

"In 188 B.C. the Romans transferred Lycaonia from the Seleucids to the kingdom of Pergamum. When the Romans accepted the bequest of the kingdom of Pergamum in 129 B.C., they bestowed its easternmost regions on neighboring rulers, Lycaonia going to the king of Cappadocia. Mark Antony gave western Lycaonia to Polemon of Laodicea in 39 B.C.; three years later he transferred the whole of Lycaonia to Rome's ally Amyntas, king of Galatia. Soon afterward Amyntas seized the eastern cities of Derbe and Laranda and added them to his realm. When Amyntas fell in battle against unruly tribesmen of the Taurus region in 25 B.C., his augmented kingdom was reconstituted by Augustus as the Roman province of Galatia. In 20 B.C. Augustus gave eastern Lycaonia to Archelaus, king of Cappadocia (Strab. 12.1.4; 12.2.7; 14.5.6; Dio Cass. 54.9.2). In western Lycaonia he planted two colonies of veteran soldiers—at Parlais and Lystra—and these were linked by a road system with Pisidian Antioch in Phrygia, another colony.

"Eastern Lycaonia was bestowed by Emperor Gaius on Antiochus IV, king of Commagene, in A.D. 37. It was taken from him almost immediately afterward, but was restored to him by Claudius in 41 (Dio Cass. 59.8.2; 60.8.1). About that time Derbe, on the frontier between the province of Galatia and the kingdom of Commagene, received the honorific title Claudioderbe. Eastern Lycaonia now became known as Lycaonia Antiochiana (Ptol. Geog. 5.6.17; CIL 10.8660); Pliny the Elder calls it Lycaonia ipsa 'Lycaonia itself' (HN 5.95). Western Lycaonia, which remained part of the province of Galatia, may have been distinguished as Lycaonia Galatica."

[F. F. Bruce, "Lycaonia (Place)" In vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), Page 227]

ing his description here, one might assume that these towns were close together and far from Iconium. But this would be wrong, as the above map illustrates. They were at least a good two to three days walk apart from one another.<sup>140</sup>

Luke indicates a preaching ministry in this region that included not only the two towns but also the surrounding countryside (τὴν περίχωρον<sup>141</sup>). Thus the concern was to evangelize the entire area, and not just the cities. Already in Antioch Luke stressed that the Gospel spread into the surrounding countryside (13:49): διεφέρετο δὲ ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου δι’ ὅλης τῆς χώρας. The importance of these notations by Luke is to stress a saturation method, rather than a merely focused emphasis on the population centers only.



Further Luke stresses that this preaching in the countryside was an ongoing activity that extended over a period of time: κάκει εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ἦσαν, and there they continued proclaiming the good news. This statement has affinity with the similar efforts of the apostles in Jerusalem (5:42): πᾶσάν τε ἡμέραν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καὶ κατ’ οἶκον οὐκ ἐπαύοντο διδάσκοντες καὶ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. And every day in the temple and at home they did not cease to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah.

With this broad stroke Luke paints a general picture of activity in the region of Lycaonia. These were not major cities in the larger region but they were places where people needed the Gospel. And these two missionaries were committed to bringing that message to everyone who would listen.

**Mistaken identity (vv. 8-18):** Luke illustrates the Lycaonian ministry with an episode that happened in Lystra. It has strange aspects that reflect the highly superstitious nature of the local residents. In the town was a crippled man whom Paul healed (vv. 8-10), and this healing promoted a mistaken reaction by the local residents (vv. 11-18).

**Healing, vv. 8-10:** 8 Καί τις ἀνὴρ ἀδύνατος ἐν Λύστροις τοῖς ποσὶν ἐκάθητο, χωλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, ὃς οὐδέποτε περιεπάτησεν. 9 οὗτος ἤκουσεν τοῦ Παύλου λαλοῦντος· ὃς ἀτενίσας αὐτῷ καὶ ἰδὼν ὅτι ἔχει πίστιν τοῦ σωθῆναι 10 εἶπεν μεγάλη φωνῇ· Ἀνάστηθι ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου ὀρθός· καὶ ἤλατο καὶ περιεπάτει. 8 In Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet and had never walked, for he had been crippled from birth. 9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. And Paul, looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10 said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And the man sprang up and began to walk. Although Luke does not specify, the crippled man most likely was a Gentile and not Jewish. From Luke’s depiction of the entire episode it does not appear that there was a Jewish synagogue in Lystra that Paul could have connected to during his stay there. But that some Jews did live in the city -- at least a little later on -- is clear from Acts 16:1-3, since it was home for Timothy and his mother and grandmother. How many beyond that is impossible to know.

Luke takes pains to describe the man’s condition in terms of the complete paralysis of his legs and feet that had been his fate since birth. While Paul was preaching -- most likely in the town marketplace -- on one occasion this man was listening and responding positively to the apostle’s preaching. He caught Paul’s attention in the crowd of people and Paul felt led to focus on him. After looking closely at the man (ἀτενίσας αὐτῷ) Paul saw in his response the willingness to make a faith commitment to Christ (ἰδὼν ὅτι ἔχει πίστιν τοῦ σωθῆναι). In light of this Paul told him in a loud voice (μεγάλη φωνῇ) so that he would be clearly heard by the crowd: Ἀνάστηθι

1996), 420-421]  
<sup>140</sup>Interestingly, at Derbe Paul was only 130 miles away from his home, Tarsus, further to the east. Had he been inclined to give up because of all the vicious opposition to him, it would have been much easier to have kept on going east from Derbe back home to Tarsus, than to turn around and re-trace his route through the cities where he had experienced intense opposition.

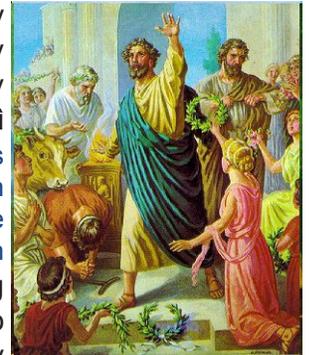
<sup>141c</sup>περίχωρος, ov pert. to being around an area, neighboring (Gen 19:28) quite predom. used as a subst. (οἱ περίχωροι ‘the neighbors’ Demosth. 19, 266; Plut., Cat. Maj. 351 [25, 3], Eum. 593 [15, 13]; Aelian, NA 10, 46; Cass. Dio 36, 33) ἢ π. (sc. γῆ; B-D-F §241, 1) region around, neighborhood (LXX, which also has τὸ περίχωρον and τὰ περίχωρα. Loanw. in rabb.) Mt 14:35; Mk 6:55 v.l.; Lk 4:14, 37; 7:17; Ac 14:6; 1 Cl 11:1; GPt 9:34. Used w. gen.: of a river, whose neighboring region to the right and left is designated as ἡ π.: ἢ π. τοῦ Ἰορδάνου (Gen 13:10f) Mt 3:5 (s. below); Lk 3:3. ἢ περίχωρος τῶν Γερασηνῶν the Gerasenes and the people living around them Lk 8:37. ὅλη ἢ π. τῆς Γαλιλαίας Mk 1:28 is either expegetical gen. the whole region around, that is, Galilee or the region around Galilee (Mt understands it in the latter sense, and 4:24 inserted ὅλη ἢ Συρία for it); the expegetical gen. is prob. exhibited in GJs 8:3 καθόλου τῆς π. τῆς Ἰουδαίας throughout the Judean countryside (s. deStrycker ad loc.). By metonymy for the inhabitants Mt 3:5.—DELG s.v. χώρα. M-M.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 808.]

ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας σου ὀρθός, [Stand upright on your feet](#). The response of the man was immediate: καὶ ἤλατο<sup>142</sup> καὶ περιεπάτει. [And the man sprang up and began to walk](#).<sup>143</sup> This was dramatic and came somewhat surprisingly since the crippled man did not ask to be healed.

Some important observations here. 1) Some affinity of Paul's healing the crippled man at Lystra with Peter's healing of a crippled man in the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 3:1-10) clearly exist. Many are convinced that this is another of Luke's parallelisms between the ministries of Peter and Paul.<sup>144</sup> Perhaps this is so, although the distinctives of each of the miracle narratives caution against assuming too close a parallel. 2) Paul connected saving faith in Christ with the necessary requirement for this man's healing: ἰδὼν ὅτι ἔχει πίστιν τοῦ σωθῆναι (cf. also Mark. 5:34 and Luke 8:48 for Jesus doing the same). While the judgment miracle by Paul on Bar-Jesus at Paphos on Cyprus earlier may have prompted a saving faith response from Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul (Acts 13:12), clearly this crippled man in Lystra came to believe in Jesus and thus received something even greater than the ability to walk. 3) Miracles in the New Testament connect spiritual deliverance from sin with physical deliverance from disease and health problems. In contrast to the many miracle narratives in ancient literature outside the New Testament, the miracles done by Jesus and the apostles always pointed ultimately to the spiritual needs of the individual. They were never done for sensation or for personal monetary gain, as was generally the case in the other miracle narratives. They were never done to assert supernatural powers of a human being! The presence of God working in the life of the person is always the point, and that divine presence is expressing God's concern for the well being of the individual needing the miracle.

**False worship, vv. 11-18.** The audience response to the miracle centers on a shocking misunderstanding by the crowds of what had happened (vv. 11-13) and the two missionaries' desperate attempts to correct the misunderstanding (vv. 14-18).

**Misunderstanding, vv. 11-13:** 11 οἱ τε ὄχλοι ἰδόντες ὃ ἐποίησεν Παῦλος ἐπήραν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτῶν Λυκαονιστὶ λέγοντες· Οἱ θεοὶ ὁμοιωθέντες ἀνθρώποις κατέβησαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς 12 ἐκάλουν τε τὸν Βαρναβᾶν Δία, τὸν δὲ Παῦλον Ἑρμῆν, ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ ἡγούμενος τοῦ λόγου. 13 ὁ τε ἱερεὺς τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ ὄντος πρὸ τῆς πόλεως ταύρους καὶ στέμματα ἐπὶ τοὺς πυλῶνας ἐνέγκας σὺν τοῖς ὄχλοις ἤθελεν θύειν. 11 [When the crowds 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 oxen and garlands to the gates; he and the crowds wanted to offer sacrifice.](#) The misunderstanding was that the crowds assumed that this miracle meant that some gods had descended to earth to be with them. The confusion of the crowd is further heightened by the way they [interpreted the healing](#).<sup>145</sup> How they could have identified the Greek gods Zeus and Hermes with Barnabas and



<sup>142c</sup> ἄλλομαι fut. ἀλοῦμαι, 1 aor. ἤλαμην (Hom. et al.; LXX; Jos., Bell. 5, 330, Ant. 20, 61; Just., D. 69, 6 [s. Is 35:6]).

1. **lit. to make a quick leaping movement, leap, spring up** (PRyl 138, 15): of the lame man when healed (Is 35:6) περιπατῶν καὶ ἀλλόμενος *walking and leaping* i.e. showing by slow and fast movement that he was really healed **Ac 3:8**. ἤλατο καὶ περιεπάτει *he leaped up and could walk* **14:10**.

2. **fig., of the quick movement of inanimate things** (since Il. 4, 125 an arrow): **to spring up from a source**, of water well up, **bubble up** (as Lat. salire Vergil, Ecl. 5, 47; Suet., Octav. 82) πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομένου *a spring of water welling up* **J 4:14**.—DELG. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 46.]

<sup>143</sup>The standard pattern of miracle narratives universally in the ancient world included three segments: 1) description of the need for the miracle (i.e., vv. 8-9a); 2) description of the doing of the miracle (i.e., vv. 9b-10a); and 3) the consequences of the miracle first on the person or object targeted by the miracle (i.e., v. 10b) and then on the bystanders who watched the miracle being done (i.e., vv. 11-18).

<sup>144c</sup>In its present form, the healing is too similar to that of Peter (and John) in 3:1–10 for the resemblance to be attributed to accident or to the requirements of the form.<sup>31</sup> The phrases καὶ τις ἀνὴρ (‘and a man’) and χωλὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ (‘crippled from birth’) occur only in these two places in the Greek Bible.<sup>32</sup> The two accounts also share the words ἰδὼν (‘seeing’), περιεπάτει (‘walk’ [imperative]), and forms of the verbs ἀτενίζω (‘look intently’) and ἄλλομαι (‘leap’), the last of which appears only once elsewhere in the NT. In addition, each involves a temple, an entrance,<sup>33</sup> and contains a subsequent religious conflict and a speech that explains the source of miraculous power. Luke has so shaped this incident to provide a comparison and contrast between the ministries of Peter and Paul and the evangelization of a polytheist audience that the discovery of an underlying source of the miracle is not only impossible but also irrelevant. When the two stories are placed beside one another, an action the implied reader is all but compelled to perform, Gal 2:9 emerges as a memorable diptych: Peter, missionary to the Jews (who inaugurated the gentile mission), and Paul, herald of salvation to the gentiles (to whom he preaches a basic tenet of Jewish monotheism).<sup>347</sup> [Richard I. Pervo and Harold W. Attridge, *Acts: A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 352.]

<sup>145c</sup>In a Jewish context, the healing would move a crowd to praise God. So here, but these acclaimers are not Jews, so they leap to the conclusion that gods are on the scene. That scene is as full of problems as it is of excitement. From the history-of-religions perspective, deification is an overdetermined reaction,<sup>44</sup> and no allowance for miscommunication readily compensates for the confusion of heralds

Paul is something of a mystery given their Lycaonian background. Perhaps from one of the Greek myths comes an explanation.<sup>146</sup> The Greek gods Zeus and Hermes (in Roman tradition, Jupiter and Mercury) supposedly visited the people of Phrygia in the region to the west of Lystra, and when not being shown hospitality by the people except for Baucis and Philemon the people come under the wrath of the gods, but the couple showing them hospitality are blessed beyond measure! The Lycaonians in Lystra were determined not to make this mistake by failing to recognize and honor these gods!

The reference to the Greek names of Zeus (and Hermes) is used by Luke to refer to the local Lycaonian version called Zeus Ampelites, as identified by one of the inscriptions found in the town with a drawing of a bearded person as the god. Such adaptation of the classical sets of deities in Greek and Roman tradition by locals was normal and widespread over the ancient world. Usually local traditions, including distinctive worship rituals, developed as well. Zeus, for example, had many names and different worship traditions in the Roman world.<sup>147</sup> Luke mentions a temple dedicated Zeus just outside the town. With this news spreading quickly, the priest of the temple brought oxen and garlands to the city gate desiring to sacrifice them to these two missionaries.

The most curious aspect of the narrative is the crowd's identifying choice of Barnabas as Zeus and Paul as Hermes. Paul was connected to Hermes on the basis of Paul having done the preaching to the crowds.<sup>148</sup>

**Attempted correction, vv. 14-18:** 14 ἀκούσαντες δὲ οἱ ἀπόστολοι Βαρναβᾶς καὶ Παῦλος, διαρρήξαντες τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν ἐξεπήδησαν εἰς τὸν ὄχλον κράζοντες 15 καὶ λέγοντες· Ἄνδρες, τί ταῦτα ποιεῖτε; καὶ ἡμεῖς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἐσμεν ὑμῖν ἄνθρωποι, εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν ματαίων ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ θεὸν ζῶντα ὃς ἐποίησεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς· 16 ὃς ἐν ταῖς παρωχημέναις γενεαῖς εἶασεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη πορεύεσθαι ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν· 17 καίτοι οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον αὐτὸν ἀφήκεν ἀγαθουργῶν, οὐρανόθεν ὑμῖν ἕτεοὺς διδοὺς καὶ καιροὺς καρποφόρους, ἐμπιπλῶν τροφῆς καὶ εὐφροσύνης τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν. 18 καὶ ταῦτα λέγοντες μόλις κατέπαυσαν τοὺς ὄχλους τοῦ μὴ θύειν αὐτοῖς. 14 When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting, 15 “Friends, why are you doing this? We are mortals just like you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. 16 In past generations he allowed all the nations to follow their own ways; 17 yet he has not left himself without a witness in doing good—giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling you with food and your hearts with joy.” 18 Even with these words, they scarcely restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them. When Paul and Barnabas realized what was happening they were horrified as was symbolized in their tearing their clothes off before the crowd (διαρρήξαντες τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτῶν). It took a while for them to understand what was going on because the people were not speaking either Greek or Latin, the dominant languages of the time, but rather their local dialect called Λυκαονιστί, the Lycaonian language.<sup>149</sup> We know little about this localized language, since the inscriptions and other archaeological discoveries in and around Lystra are in either Greek or mostly Latin.<sup>150</sup>

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of a new god with two of the old gods. Gods worked healings in various ways that did not require physical presence, and dwellers in rural precincts were not unaware of holy persons. Hermes was not a ‘healing god,’ nor were he and Zeus a traditional pair.” [Richard I. Pervo and Harold W. Attridge, *Acts : A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 353.]

<sup>146</sup>“A probable solution was endorsed by A. D. Nock: the story is inspired by a Greek myth known through Ovid’s sentimental rendition of the tale of Baucis and Philemon (Metam. 8.611–724).<sup>45</sup> That story is set in the general vicinity: Phrygia,<sup>46</sup> which Zeus and Hermes (Latin Jupiter and Mercury) visit in human form (*Iuppiter huc specie mortali cumque parente venit Atlantiades positus caducifer alis* [626–27]).<sup>47</sup> No one will give them so much as a cup of cold water until they come upon the elderly and impoverished Baucis and Philemon, who gladly share their meager resources. When the wondrous replenishment of wine reduces the couple to terror, the gods reveal their identities, eradicate the inhospitable with a flood, transform the couple’s pathetic hovel into a temple of Zeus and Hermes, and make the pair its priests. The content and context of the story account for the anomalies of vv. 11–13. Those who know the story will appreciate its wit. These yokels<sup>48</sup> are determined not to be taken unawares again. Those unfamiliar with the story will miss the humor, but not the excitement.<sup>49</sup>” [Richard I. Pervo and Harold W. Attridge, *Acts : A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 353–54.]

<sup>147</sup>See “Cults of Zeus,” *Wikipedia.org* for details.

<sup>148</sup>“Hermes was the herald, or messenger, of the gods to humans, sharing this role with Iris. A patron of boundaries and the travelers who cross them, he was the protector of shepherds and cowherds, thieves,<sup>5</sup> orators and wit, literature and poets, athletics and sports, weights and measures, invention, and of commerce in general.<sup>6</sup>” [“Hermes,” *Wikipedia.org*]

<sup>149</sup>“Λυκαονιστί adv. *in (the) Lycaonian (language)*, a dialect spoken in Lycaonia, no longer known **Ac 14:11**.—PKretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griech. Sprache* 1896, 396; KHoll, *Her.* 43, 1908, 240ff.; Haenchen ad loc.—M-M.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 604.]

<sup>150</sup>“These were not the Roman citizens of the colony, whose language (as appears from funerary inscriptions) was Latin, but the native Anatolian population, who still spoke their Lycaonian vernacular. The fact that they called out in Lycaonian on this occasion is mentioned by Luke for two reasons: first, Paul and Barnabas recognized that this language (though they did not understand it) was differ-

Their counter action to stop this act of idolatry was to yell at the crowd: Ἄνδρες, τί ταῦτα ποιεῖτε; καὶ ἡμεῖς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἐσμεν ὑμῖν ἄνθρωποι, εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν ματαίων ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ θεὸν ζῶντα ὃς ἐποίησεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς· 16 ὃς ἐν ταῖς παρωχημέναις γενεαῖς εἶασεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη πορεύεσθαι ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν· 17 καίτοι οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον αὐτὸν ἀφήκεν ἀγαθουργῶν, οὐρανόθεν ὑμῖν ὑετοὺς διδοὺς καὶ καιροὺς καρποφόρους, ἐμπιπλῶν τροφῆς καὶ εὐφροσύνης τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν. They stressed emphatically that they were only humans, not gods. The true God as Creator and Sustainer of the world was the source of this miracle.

Luke's summary here is one of but two places in the New Testament where the Gospel is presented to a completely pagan audience.<sup>151</sup> Thus a very different approach is taken to this audience with absolutely no Jewish or Christian background heritage.

Luke adds at the end of this section: καὶ ταῦτα λέγοντες μόλις κατέπαυσαν τοὺς ὄχλους τοῦ μὴ θύειν αὐτοῖς. *Even with these words, they scarcely restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.* These Christian missionaries were barely able to keep the crowds from carrying out their desire to sacrifice to them as gods. To be sure Paul and Barnabas speaking in Greek to an audience more comfortable with their native language of Lycaonian presented some of the communication barrier. Beyond this was the determination of the people to not offend any potential deity who might be in their midst.

**Stoning (vv. 19-20):** 19 Ἐπῆλθαν δὲ ἀπὸ Ἀντιοχείας καὶ Ἰκονίου Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ πείσαντες τοὺς ὄχλους καὶ λιθάσαντες τὸν Παῦλον ἔσυρον ἔξω τῆς πόλεως, νομίζοντες αὐτὸν τεθνηκέναι. 20 κυκλωσάντων δὲ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτὸν ἀναστὰς εἰσηλθεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν. καὶ τῇ ἐπαύριον ἐξῆλθεν σὺν τῷ Βαρναβᾶ εἰς Δέρβην. 19 *But 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. 20 But when the disciples surrounded him, he got up and went into the city. The next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.* At some point after this episode, outsiders arrived to take advantage of the crowd of Lycaonian folks. Luke indicates that these were Jews who came from both Antioch (171 miles away) and Iconium (21 miles away). Their traveling these long distances reflects the intensity of their hatred of Paul and Barnabas and their determination to stop the preaching of the Gospel to Gentiles. In Iconium a plot to kill Paul and Barnabas had been developed by both Jewish and Gentile authorities. In Antioch the Jewish authorities had worked through powerful Gentiles in the city to get these missionaries banished. But only the Jewish authorities in both cities were unrelenting in their determination to get rid of these missionaries.<sup>152</sup>

In Lystra they were able to convince the fickle crowd, who early wanted to worship these missionaries but now possibly offended by the refusal to accept their worship, to now turn on them with an attempt to kill them by stoning. They almost succeeded when they got Paul and stoned him into unconsciousness in the city. For some unstated reason, Barnabas escaped the stoning. Paul was dragged outside the city and left for dead by the crowd.

But God had different plans for Paul. Luke's language of the disciples surrounding the unconscious Paul outside the city seems to imply a miracle taking place, although we can not be certain.<sup>153</sup> Paul got up and

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ent from the Phrygian speech which they had heard on the lips of the indigenous population of Pisidian Antioch and Iconium; second, the crowd's use of Lycaonian explains why Paul and Barnabas did not grasp what was afoot until the preparations to pay them divine honors were well advanced." [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 274.]

<sup>151</sup>"The summary which Luke proceeds to give of their exhortation provides us with one of the two examples in Acts of the preaching of the gospel to purely pagan audiences—to people who, unlike the Gentiles who attended synagogue worship, had no acquaintance with the God of Israel or with the Hebrew prophets.<sup>38</sup> The other, and fuller, example is the speech delivered by Paul to the Athenian Court of the Areopagus (17:22–31).<sup>39</sup> Preachers to such audiences would not be expected to insist on the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, as they did in addressing synagogue congregations; instead, an appeal to the natural revelation of God the Creator is put in the forefront. Yet this appeal is couched in language largely drawn from the Old Testament. Martin Dibelius points out that the speech at Lystra shows dependence on the Septuagint—even more so, he thinks, than does the later speech at Athens. 'The proclamation about God,' he says, '... is preached completely in Old Testament style (see Ex. 20:11); the gods are described as 'vain ones' (or 'vanities'), as in 3 King[dom]s 16:2, 13, 26; 4 King[dom]s 17:15; Esth. 4:17 [LXX]; Jer. 2:5; 8:19; 3 Macc. 6:11.'<sup>40</sup>" [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 276.]

<sup>152</sup>"Luke does not say if there was a Jewish community and synagogue at Lystra. Probably there was, however; this would more readily explain how Jews from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium were able to incite the Lystrans against Paul and Barnabas. This would not have been so easy had those Jews been complete strangers, lacking any point of contact with the populace of Lystra, but they could achieve their purpose more conveniently through a Jewish community in Lystra. Although more than a hundred miles separated Lystra from Pisidian Antioch, the relation between the two places is evidenced by a statue of Concord which citizens of Lystra set up in Pisidian Antioch.<sup>47</sup>" [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 278.]

<sup>153</sup>"Luke's description of Paul's suddenly standing up and going back into the city after being dragged out and left for dead by the

together with the disciples -- probably converts from Paul's earlier preaching in the city -- they returned into the city. Quite a brave action by Paul! A few manuscripts in the Western text tradition add that it was in the evening when Paul re-entered Lystra.<sup>154</sup> The apostle never forgot that experience and mentions it twice in his letters; see 2 Cor. 11:25 and 2 Tim. 3:11. Additionally the marks in his body mentioned in Gal. 6:17 allude back to this stoning as well.

Luke says that the next day he and Barnabas left Lystra and headed out for Derbe some 60 miles to the south southeast of Lystra. This would put considerable distance between them and the hostility they experienced in Lystra.

### 5.0.1.7 Work in Derbe, Acts 14:21

**Acts 14:21** After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch.

21 Εὐαγγελισάμενοί τε τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην καὶ μαθητεύσαντες ἱκανοὺς ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς τὴν Λύστραν καὶ εἰς Ἰκόνιον καὶ εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν,

In the previous sentence Luke indicated that καὶ τῇ ἐπαύριον ἐξῆλθεν σὺν τῷ Βαρναβᾶ εἰς Δέρβην, *The next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.*<sup>155</sup> This was a several days journey east from Lystra to this town on the most eastward side of Lycaonia. It therefore put these two missionaries further from the reach of their Jewish persecutors. Luke's brief depiction suggests that this worked well for they enjoyed a peaceful and blessed ministry in Derbe, unlike all the previous places on the mainland. A Christian community emerged out of this ministry that would produce a Gaius, who later on would participate in the relief offering collected by Paul for the impoverished saints in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 20:4).



### 5.0.2 Discipling Christian congregations, Acts 14:21-28

**Acts 14:21** After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch. 22 There they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying, "It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God." 23 And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.

24 Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. 25 When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. 26 From there they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had completed. 27 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. 28 And they stayed there with the disciples for some time.

21 Εὐαγγελισάμενοί τε τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην καὶ μαθητεύσαντες ἱκανοὺς ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς τὴν Λύστραν καὶ εἰς Ἰκόνιον καὶ εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, 22 ἐπιστηρίζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν μαθητῶν, παρακαλοῦντες ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει καὶ ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. 23 χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς κατ' ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους προσευξάμενοι μετὰ νηστειῶν παρέθετο αὐτοῖς τῷ κυρίῳ εἰς ὃν πεπιστεύκεισαν. 24 καὶ διελθόντες τὴν Πισιδίαν ἦλθον εἰς τὴν Παμφυλίαν, 25 καὶ λαλήσαντες ἐν Πέργῃ τὸν λόγον κατέβησαν εἰς Ἀτάλειαν, 26 κακεῖθεν ἀπέπλευσαν εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, ὅθεν ἦσαν παραδεδομένοι τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὸ ἔργον ὃ ἐπλήρωσαν. 27 παραγενόμενοι δὲ καὶ συναγαγόντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀνήγγελλον ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ὅτι ἤνοιξεν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν θύραν πίστεως. 28 διέτριβον δὲ χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς.

The second phase of this missionary trip shifted the focus from establishing churches to strengthening the churches. Luke describes it in two parts, first in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (vv. 21-23), and second in the cities of Pamphylia, Perga and Attalia (v. 24). Then Luke describes the trip by shift back to Antioch for the reporting to the home congregation (vv. 26-28).

That these missionaries ventured no farther east signals that their plans were to remain in the territory

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roadside has a flavor of miracle about it. The additional statement in the Western text that it was evening when he reentered Lystra is very probably true." [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 279.]

<sup>154</sup> ἔσπερας γενομένης, *being evening*. This assumes that they returned into the city under the cover of darkness when it was safer.

<sup>155</sup> "The location of Derbe, disputed for a long time, may now be identified in light of an inscription as Kerti Hüyük, twenty-two kilometers north-northeast of Karaman-Laranda." [Hans Conzelmann, Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 112.]

of Lycaonia and not go beyond it. How much time was spent in Derbe before they retracing their route back through these hostile cities is not given by Luke. It all depends on the length of time to make “many disciples” (μαθητεύσαντες ἱκανούς).<sup>156</sup>

The first part alludes to the three cities where these missionaries had encountered enough success to spark Jewish opposition to their work: Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. Their activities in this re-visiting of the congregations centered on 1) strengthened the faith of the disciples (v. 22) and 2) helping organizing the leadership of the congregations (v. 23).



**5.0.2.1 Strengthening the disciples:** 22 ἐπιστηρίζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν μαθητῶν, παρακαλοῦντες ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει καὶ ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. There they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying, “It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God.” Two areas of activities are presented along with a reason for them. One should note that these statements come as expansion elements to the core clause expression ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς τὴν Λύστραν καὶ εἰς Ἰκόνιον καὶ εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν (they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch), doing the two actions specified in verse twenty-two. Luke first says that Paul and Barnabas were ἐπιστηρίζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν μαθητῶν. This is similar language to the work of Paul and others later (15:31, 42; 18:23) and also to that given to Peter by Jesus (Luke 22:32).<sup>157</sup> Through this spread of usage of the verb ἐπιστηρίζω / στηρίζω,<sup>158</sup> the general idea is to strengthen the faith commitment of individual believers and of congregations. With the direct object of the verb here as τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν μαθητῶν, Luke stresses the deep inner strengthening of disciples in terms of resolve to be faithful even in the midst of persecution. The ψυχὰς of the disciples signals the deepest part of their inner life where decisions are made. Paul and Barnabas sought to build resolve and determination to remain committed to Christ through times of real pressure and stress.

Also these missionaries were παρακαλοῦντες ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει. Luke had described something similar earlier in 13:43 that took place in Pisidian Antioch, τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Βαρναβᾶ, οἵτινες προσλαλοῦντες αὐτοῖς ἔπειθον αὐτοὺς προσμένειν τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ, Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God (cf. also 11:23, παρεκάλει πάντας τῇ προθέσει τῆς καρδίας προσμένειν τῷ κυρίῳ, as an example of Barnabas’ actions at Antioch in Syria). Barnabas and Paul encouraged the believers to remain committed to Christ. The idea is not to remain loyal to a set of established Christian doctrines. It is far deeper than that as 11:23 and 13:43 illustrate. These believers had broken with their heritage and religious upbringing by becoming Christians. They were paying a heavy price for it. Just as Paul had done earlier in Pisidian Antioch, now he and Barnabas spend time giving encouragement to the believers -- both Jewish and Gentile -- in the churches of all three cities to be consistent in their Christian commitment. Unquestionably this included explaining aspects of the Christian religion that were not understood. But loyalty to God through Christ is at the heart of this encourage-

<sup>156</sup>“In Derbe nothing special is recorded: the same process went on as in previous cases. Here on the limits of the Roman province the Apostles turned. New magistrates had now come into office in all the cities whence they had been driven; and it was therefore possible to go back.” [William Mitchell Ramsay, Sir, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, 120.] Ramsay’s speculation that enough time had passed for new magistrates to have assumed office who would not persecute Paul and Barnabas for re-entering these cities is not based on anything that Luke says or implies.

<sup>157</sup>Acts 15:32. Ἰούδας τε καὶ Σιλᾶς, καὶ αὐτοὶ προφῆται ὄντες, διὰ λόγον πολλοῦ παρεκάλεσαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ἐπιστηρίζαν· Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers

Acts 15:41. διήρχετο δὲ τὴν Συρίαν καὶ τὴν Κιλικίαν ἐπιστηρίζων τὰς ἐκκλησίας. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

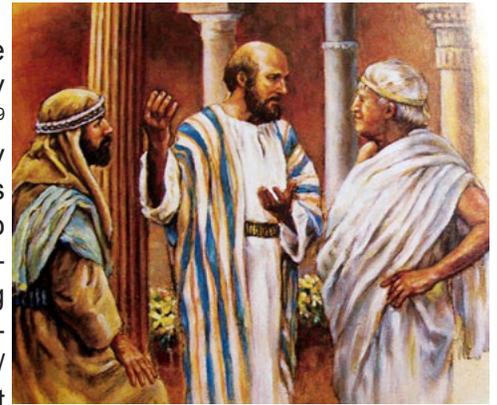
Acts 18:23. καὶ ποιήσας χρόνον τινὰ ἐξῆλθεν, διερχόμενος καθεξῆς τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν καὶ Φρυγίαν, στηρίζων πάντας τοὺς μαθητάς. After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

Luke 22:32. ἐγὼ δὲ ἐδεήθην περὶ σοῦ ἵνα μὴ ἐκλίπῃ ἡ πίστις σου· καὶ σὺ ποτε ἐπιστρέψας στηρίσον τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς σου. but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.

<sup>158</sup>ἐπιστηρίζω fut. ἐπιστηριῶ Ps 31:8; 1 aor. ἐπιστήριξα, 2 sg. ἐπεστήρισας Ps 37:3. Pass.: fut. ἐπιστηριχθήσομαι Judg 16:26; aor. ἐπεστήριχθην LXX, subj. 3 sg. ἐπεστηρισθῆ; pf. 3 sg. ἐπεστήρικται Jdth 8:24 v.l. (for-ισται); plpf. 3 sg. ἐπεστήρικτο LXX (s. στηρίζω; Aristot. et al.; LXX) to cause someone to become stronger or more firm, strengthen, in our lit. of believers in connection with their commitment and resolve to remain true, esp. in the face of troubles: τινὰ or τί the brothers Ac 11:2 D; cp. 18:23. Souls (=hearts as center of personal feeling and psychic response) 14:22; congregations or churches 15:41. Abs. vs. 32 (sc. ἀδελφούς).—TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 381.]

ment.

The basis for these admonitions given to the new believers in these cities is given as *καὶ ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ*. This very awkward expression in ancient Greek<sup>159</sup> stresses that a fundamental principle of the Kingdom of God (*τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ*) is suffering (*διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς...*). This basic principle applicable generally was utilized by these missionaries to remind these believers that suffering troubles (*πολλῶν θλίψεων*), and especially out of opposition, should not be surprising.<sup>160</sup> Believers coming into the Kingdom of God should expect to pay a price for the faith commitment necessary.<sup>161</sup> When one submits to the control of God over his / her life, inevitably other people are not going to understand, and often not sympathize with such commitment. This particularly true when such commitment means a radical break with religious heritage and lifestyle. Clearly the folks in these three cities had witnessed this directly as they watched persecution of Paul and Barnabas explode. Luke doesn't describe persecution of believers directly in the city, but clearly hostility toward Christianity was present. To be clear, it came primarily from the Jewish synagogue leadership in these towns, and perhaps the non-Jewish government authorities were largely indifferent so long as the Christians did not cause social problems. But when Paul and Barnabas appealed to the inevitability of suffering abuse in order to be a believer, the Christians in these three cities knew well what they were talking about.



Thus the missionaries in their return trip sought to build up the churches that now had been in existence for several weeks and perhaps months.

**5.0.2.2 Organizing the leadership:** 23 *χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς κατ' ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους προσευξάμενοι μετὰ νηστειῶν παρέθεντο αὐτοὺς τῷ κυρίῳ εἰς ὃν πεπιστεύκεισαν*. **And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.** The other sphere of activities by Paul and Barnabas was administrative in nature. In the single Greek sentence the core expression is *παρέθεντο αὐτοὺς τῷ κυρίῳ*, **they presented them to the Lord**. This was the primary activity by Paul and Barnabas before leaving each congregation. Literally, they handed over these congregations to the Lord in prayer and in their minds for safe keeping.

Some actions were a part of this dedication to God that Luke mentions. First came *χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς κατ' ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους*, **after having hand picked elders for them in each church**.<sup>162</sup> The process

<sup>159c</sup>*Zeugma* is a special type of ellipsis requiring a different verb to be supplied (K.-G. II 570f.), i.e. one verb is used with two objects (subjects) but suits only one: 1 C 3:2 *γάλα ὑμᾶς ἐπότισα, οὐ βρῶμα* (scil. ἐνώμισα or the like, §155(7))." [Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner and Robert Walter Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 253.]

<sup>160c</sup>To translate *θλίψεις* as 'persecutions' is undesirable. For Luke, the cross is a part of daily life (Luke 9:23). There is wisdom in his sentiment, for various forms of social slight and exclusion, verbal hostility and the like may have been more of a motive for apostasy in the long run than the threat of martyrdom.<sup>129</sup> To call this a 'theology of the cross,' even in Barrett's sense: 'It is not Paul's, it is not as profound as Paul's; but it exists' may be misleading.<sup>130</sup> *Theologia crucis* applies to Pauline theology—particularly as expounded by M. Luther—and gains nothing by generalization." [Richard I. Pervo and Harold W. Attridge, *Acts : A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 362.]

<sup>161</sup>Luke refers to either the Kingdom (1:6; 20:25) or the Kingdom of God (1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:18; 28:31) in Acts sparingly, in spite of this being the key theme of Jesus preaching in the Gospels (162 uses of *βασιλεία* in the NT). The negative political overtones of such language outside Palestine moderated the use of the term.

<sup>162</sup>Note the later insights into this process in the early second century:

**Didache 15:1. Appoint for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not lovers of money, and true and approved; for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers.**

15.1 *Χειροτονήσατε οὖν ἑαυτοῖς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους ἀξίους τοῦ κυρίου*, ἄνδρας πραεῖς καὶ ἀφιλαργύρους καὶ ἀληθεῖς καὶ δεδοκιμασμένους, ὑμῖν γὰρ λειτουργοῦσι καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν λειτουργίαν τῶν προφητῶν καὶ διδασκάλων.

**Ignatius Letter to Polycarp 7.2. (2) It is certainly appropriate, Polycarp (how blessed by God you are!), to convene a council that will be most pleasing to God and to appoint someone whom you consider to be especially dear and resolute, who is qualified to be called God's courier; commission him to go to Syria, that he may glorify your resolute love, to the glory of God.**

(2) *πρέπει, Πολύκαρπε θεομακαριστότατε, συμβούλιον ἀγαγεῖν θεοπρεπέστατον καὶ χειροτονήσαι τινα ὃν ἀγαπητὸν λίαν ἔχετε καὶ ἄοκνον*, ὃς δυνήσεται θεοδρόμος καλεῖσθαι· τοῦτον καταξιώσαι, ἵνα πορευθεῖς εἰς Συρίαν δοξάσῃ ὑμῶν τὴν ἄοκνον ἀγάπην εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ.

#### **Comments on Didache 15:1**

First of all the Didachist calls on the community to choose their own officers or representatives from among themselves (v. 1a). That call can scarcely be understood to mean that he is thereby introducing a new custom; rather he is expressing an opinion (also

of selection is not all that clear.<sup>163</sup> The use of the verb χειροτονέω, **to choose by vote** (cf. 2 Cor. 8:19 for the other use), does seem to imply congregational involvement in the process although the recommendation of these two missionaries would have played a significant role in the process.<sup>164</sup> The label for local leadership is the standard Lukan designation πρεσβυτέρους, elders.<sup>165</sup> In Paul's speech later (20:17ff.), what Luke terms the πρεσβυτέρους Paul will label ἐπισκόπους, **overseers** (v. 28), and tell them to **pastor** (ποιμαίνειν) the church (v. 28). The concern was simply that among the different house church groups individuals were already emerging who reflected greater spiritual understanding and commitment in the face of opposition. Such individuals could give guidance to these small groups of people seeking to understand their new religious faith and wanting to be faithful to Christ.

The process of choosing the leaders and then of dedicating the churches to the Lord came out of a period of προσευξάμενοι μετὰ νηστειῶν, **having prayed with fasting**. The entire missionary journey had been born in prayer and fasting (cf. 13:1-4), so to spend time praying and fasting in dedicating these newly established churches seems quite natural and to be expected. These two actions in tandem with one another reflect a serious effort to seek the will of God in important decisions, clearly what was at stake here.<sup>166</sup>

What clearly emerges here is the intense desire of Paul and Barnabas to follow God's leadership in every aspect of helping these young churches establish themselves. They full well knew that only God could protect these communities of believers from the pressures not just of the pagan lifestyle of the surrounding world, but also the pressure from the Jewish synagogue leadership for everyone in these communities to abandon this new religion in favor of traditional Judaism. In roads into the surrounding Gentile world had already been made by the synagogues and this new religious movement presented serious threat to that influence. Stopping it was a major concern of the synagogue leadership. Strong leadership in the churches would be needed in order to ward off this pressure. And God's protecting help would be essential.

**5.0.2.3 Preaching in Perga and Attalia:** 24 καὶ διελθόντες τὴν Πισιδίαν ἦλθον εἰς τὴν Παμφυλίαν, 25 καὶ λαλήσαντες ἐν Πέργῃ τὸν λόγον κατέβησαν εἰς Ἀτάλειαν, **24 Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. 25 When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.** After finishing up at Pisidian Antioch, they made their way south first to Perga and then to the port town of Attalia. This was an arduous journey descending

intended to establish a rule) regarding already existing usages. We must in all probability understand the text to mean that the choice of officers is the business of the whole community.<sup>3</sup> The injunction to choose officers is, at any rate, addressed to the entire (individual) congregation. The procedure for making the choice is not prescribed. Χειροτονεῖν here means "choose" or "elect," not "appoint."<sup>4</sup> Those who are chosen bear the titles ἐπίσκοποι καὶ διάκονοι; this is most probably to be understood to mean that a number of ἐπίσκοποι and/or διάκονοι are to work in each community.<sup>5</sup>

[Kurt Niederwimmer and Harold W. Attridge, *The Didache: A Commentary*, Hermeneia—a critical and historical commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 200.]

<sup>163</sup>One way of strengthening the churches was making provision for leadership in them. In each of them there were some members who had already attained a sufficient degree of spiritual maturity to serve their fellow-believers as guides and give them the further instruction and encouragement they required in face of the hardship and persecution which they must expect as they maintained their Christian witness. It is held by many readers of Acts that the formal appointment of elders reflects the later situation of the Pastoral Epistles rather than this early stage in apostolic history. The language may be Luke's,<sup>56</sup> but it is plain from Paul's letters that he made provision for spiritual guidance in the churches which he founded and encouraged the members to recognize and respect their leaders.<sup>57</sup> What Barnabas's policy in this matter was we have no independent means of knowing. 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.<sup>58</sup> [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 280.]

<sup>164</sup>There is some question in this particular instance about who appointed the elders—the apostles or the congregation. The NIV text follows the most natural rendering of the Greek construction: Paul and Barnabas appointed the elders (v. 23).<sup>74</sup> This seems to be an exception to the more common practice of the congregation appointing its leadership (cf. Acts 6:1-6).<sup>75</sup> Perhaps in these early congregations the wisdom of the apostles was needed in establishing solid leadership over those so recently converted from paganism. Perhaps even in these instances the selections of the apostles were confirmed by vote of the congregations." [John B. Polhill, vol. 26, *Acts*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 319.]

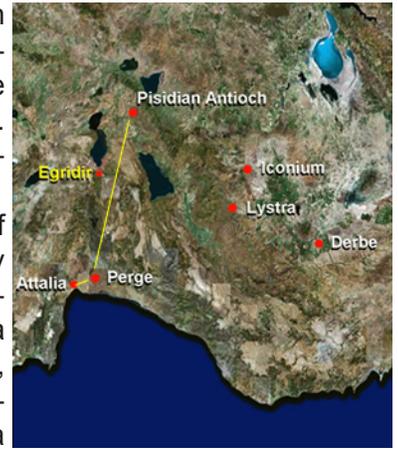
<sup>165</sup>See Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18.

<sup>166</sup>The fasting practice of the early Church closely reflects that of its Jewish milieu. When Christian leaders are commissioned, fasting is the natural adjunct to fervent prayer (Acts 13:2-3 and 14:23). In Luke's infancy story, Anna the prophetess is held up as a paragon of traditional piety that expresses itself in fasting and continual prayer, and as a model for the church order of holy widows (Luke 2:27 cf. Acts 6:1 and 1 Tim 5:5). Similarly, Cornelius the God-fearer is renowned for his prayer and almsgiving (Acts 10:30-31). The textual tradition (P<sup>50</sup>, A<sup>2</sup>, D) quickly supplemented these two acts of piety (prayer and almsgiving, v 31) with a reference to the third, fasting. In the same way, the allusion to prayer in 1 Cor 7:5 attracted a textual addition of fasting in some manuscripts (Codex Sinaiticus, K, L)." [John Muddiman, "Fast, Fasting" In , in , vol. 2, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 774-75.]



some 3,600 feet elevation wise through mountainous territory of about 160 kilometers. In this journey they would have passed through several small towns. Luke seems to imply that some evangelizing may have taken place.<sup>167</sup>

Clearly he uses the language of evangelizing (λαλήσαντες ἐν Πέρῃ τὸν λόγον) in reference to Perga. The missionaries had passed through Perga earlier on their way north to Antioch, but Luke made no mention of evangelizing activity then (cf. 13:13). Perga and Attalia are located in the region of Pamphylia,<sup>168</sup> over against Antioch being in Pisidia.<sup>169</sup> Attalia, Ἀττάλεια,



is mentioned for the first time here.<sup>170</sup> Luke seems to imply that they came to this port town for the purpose of catching a ship that would take them back home to Antioch in Syria, although some copyists of this text centuries later add words to imply evangelizing activity took place here as well.<sup>171</sup>

**5.0.2.4 Sailing back to Antioch:** 26 κάκειθεν ἀπέπλευσαν εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, ὅθεν ἦσαν παραδεδομένοι τῆ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὸ ἔργον ὃ ἐπλήρωσαν. 27 παραγενόμενοι δὲ καὶ συναγαγόντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀνήγγελλον ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς μετ’ αὐτῶν καὶ ὅτι ἤνοιξεν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν θύραν πίστεως. 28 διέτριβον δὲ χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς. **26 From there they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for**

<sup>167</sup>“For διέρχεσθαι see on 8:4; it could well bear here the meaning that Luke seems often to attach to it, of making a preaching tour; the travellers were prepared to interrupt their journey in order to speak the word in Perga (v. 25) and may have done so elsewhere. But Luke has now used up his narrative material and gives little more than a list of places.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 689-90.]

<sup>168</sup>“**Παμφυλία, ας, ἡ** (Strabo 14, 3, 1; Appian, Mithrid. 56 §226; Cass. Dio 69, 14; Philo, Leg. ad Gai. 281; Joseph. [Niese index]; ins; 1 Macc 15:23.—On the use of the art. s. B-D-F §261, 6) **Pamphylia**, a province in the southern part of Asia Minor, along the Mediterranean seacoast. On the Jewish population s. Schürer III 4, 5, 33. Visited by Paul several times. **Ac 2:10; 13:13; 14:24; 15:38; 16:6** v.l. (for Φρυγίαν); **27:5** (cp. Jos., Ant. 2, 348 Παμφύλιον πέλαγος).—K.GrafLanckoroński, Städte Pamphyliens u. Pisidiens 1890/92; IAsMinLyk I. Pauly-W. 354–407; Kl. Pauly IV 441–44; BHHW III 1381. DELG s.v. φῶλον.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 754.]

“**PAMPHYLIA (PLACE)** [Gk Pamphylia (Παμφυλία)]. A district in S Asia Minor bounded on the N by Pisidia and the Taurus Mountains, on the E by Cilicia Tracheia (later called Isauria), and on the W by Lycia. The district, which bordered the Mediterranean coast, covered a territory about eighty miles long and thirty miles wide. Several navigable rivers, including the Kestros and the Eurymedon, flowed through the region to the S coast of Asia Minor and emptied into the Pamphylian Sea. The major cities on the coast were Attalia, Side, and Coracesium and in the interior were Perga and Aspendus (Strabo 14.4.1–3; see also Bean 1968: 1053–81). The coastal towns were used as an operational base for pirates from Pamphylia and Cilicia (Strabo 12.7.2–3, 14.3.2). The climate along the coastal plain was uncomfortable and malaria was prevalent. The region produced abundant fruit crops and was renowned for its pharmaceutical products.” [Scott T. Carroll, “Pamphylia (Place)” In vol. 5, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 138.]

<sup>169</sup>“**Πισιδία, ας, ἡ** (Diod S 33, 5a; Strabo 12, 8, 14 Ἀντιόχεια ἢ πρὸς Πισιδίᾳ; Ptolemaeus 5, 4, 11; 5, 5, 4; OGI 535, 5 al. in ins) **Pisidia**, a mountainous region in central Asia Minor, west of the Taurus Mts., traversed by Paul, **Ac 14:24**. Ἀντιόχεια τῆς Πισ. **13:14** v.l.—Zahn, Einl.3 I 130ff; VSchultze, Altchristl. Städte und Landschaften II 2, 1926; Hemer, Acts 228; Pauly-W. XX 1793–97; Kl. Pauly IV 868f; BHHW III 1475f. See also on Παμφυλία.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 816.]

<sup>170</sup>“**Ἀττάλεια, ας, ἡ** (Ἀττάλεια v.l., oth. edd.) **Attalia**, a seaport in Pamphylia **Ac 14:25**.—Ramsay, *Hist. Geogr.* 420.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 149.]

<sup>171</sup>“κατέβησαν. Perga was some miles up stream (see 13:13), and Attalia (modern Antalya) on the coast. This seaport was of relatively recent foundation by Attalus II Philadelphus, c. 150 BC. It is hard to understand Conzelmann’s comment (81) that this note of itinerary is redactional. The evangelists had entered Pamphylia through Perga, and only some kind of traditional itinerary, whether accurate or not, would have led Luke to introduce a further locality of which he has nothing to say except that the party came to it and then left it (unless we follow D (614 pc) sy<sup>h\*\*</sup> mae, who add εὐαγγελιζόμενοι αὐτοὺς—no doubt because they wished to make it clear that Paul and Barnabas seized every opportunity of evangelism).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 690.]

the work that they had completed. 27 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. 28 And they stayed there with the disciples for some time. Luke mentions in passing the lengthy journey by ship from Attalia to Seleucia in Syria and then on to Antioch: *κάκειθεν ἀπέπλευσαν εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν*. As the map suggests, this was a longer trip (appx. 308 miles, 495 km) than had been taken previously, and they went directly back to the starting point of Antioch. Arriving by ship at Seleucia they made their way then to Antioch where they were warmly received by the church.



**First in v. 26**, Luke stressed that their work was completed: τὸ ἔργον ὃ ἐπλήρωσαν, *the work which they have completed*. This alludes back to the initial instructions given by the Holy Spirit (cf. 13:2): εἰς τὸ ἔργον ὃ προσκέκλημαι αὐτοῦς, *for the work to which I have called them*. It was for the accomplishing of this work that these men were set apart in their commissioning service at the beginning: ὅθεν ἦσαν παραδεδομένοι τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ, *from where they had been handed over to the grace of God*. With this very graphic expression, Luke describes the earlier commissioning service in Acts 13:1-3 at Antioch that launched these missionaries on their trip.

In addition to serving as an inclusio boundary marker to describe the first missionary journey (cf. Acts 13-14), this expression underscores what had been true all along, that these men were committed to doing a work given to them by God. The church had dedicated them to this objective; now they were coming back home to report that this indeed had been accomplished.

**Second in v. 27**, upon arrival in the city Paul and Barnabas requested a gathering (συναγαγόντες<sup>172</sup>) of

<sup>172</sup> *συνάγω* fut. συνάξω; 1 aor. συνήξα (2 Esdr 7:28; 8:15; cp. ParJer 7:16f; D 10:5), inf. συνάξει Lk 3:17 v.l. (on the late aor. form s. Schwyzer I 749, 1; JMoulton, Cambridge Bibl. Essays 1909, 485f); 2 aor. συνήγαγον. Pass.: 1 fut. συναχθήσομαι; 1 aor. συνήχθη; pf. 3 sg. συνήκται LXX (Hom. et al.)

**1. to cause to come together, gather (in)**

a. things: **J 15:6**. κλάσματα **6:12f**. ξύλα MPol 13:1. *Of fish of every kind, which the net gathers up when it is cast Mt 13:47*. Of the fragments of a ms. that is wearing out MPol 22:3a; EpilMosq 5a. Of field crops (Ex 23:10; Lev 25:3; JosAs 1:3) **Mt 25:24, 26**; cp. pass. (Jos., Ant. 5, 242) D 9:4a. W. indication of the destination εἰς τι (Diod S 19, 100, 2 τ. ἄσφαλτον σ. εἰς τινα τόπον) εἰς τὴν ἀποθήκην **Mt 3:12; 6:26; 13:30; Lk 3:17**. ποῦ **12:17**. ἐκεῖ vs. **18**. *συνάγειν πάντα Lk 15:13 gather everything together*; perh. with a commercial connotation turn everything into cash (cp. Plut., Cato Min. 762 [6, 7] κληρονομίαν εἰς ἀργύριον συναγαγών).—In imagery *συνάγειν μετὰ τινος join with someone in gathering* (opp. σκορπίζω, q.v. 1) **Mt 12:30; Lk 11:23**. *συνάγειν καρπὸν εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον J 4:36*. Of sheep, metaph. **10:16 P<sup>66</sup>**.

b. of persons *bring or call together, gather a number of persons* (1 Km 5:11; PsSol 11:3; TestJob 17:2; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 234; IAndrosIsis, Kyme 17 husband and wife) πάντας οὓς εὔρον **Mt 22:10**. πάντας τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς **2:4** (Appian, Bell. Civ. 4, 4 §15: in view of frightening signs ἡ βουλή μάντις συνήγεν). πάντα τὰ ἔθνη 2 Cl 17:4; (Is 66:18). συνέδριον (Diod S 17, 4, 2 συνέδριον συναγαγών, likew. 17, 30, 1.—Cp. Ex 3:16 τ. γερουσίαν, likew. Jos., Ant. 5, 332; PsSol 8:28 τὴν διασπορὰν Ἰσραὴλ) **J 11:47**. τὸ πλῆθος (Diod S 4, 53, 1 συναγαγεῖν εἰς ἐκκλησίαν τὰ πλήθη; Jos., Ant. 3, 188; cp. ParJer 7:16f τὸν λαόν) **Ac 15:30**. τὴν ἐκκλησίαν (Aeneas Tact. 431; Lucian, Jupp. Trag. 15) **14:27**; cp. D 10:5. *συνάξεις πάντας τοὺς σοὺς ὑπὸ τὸ στέγος σου 1 Cl 12:6*. Foll. by εἰς to indicate the place (X., Ages. 1, 25; Jos., Vi. 280 τὸ πλῆθος εἰς τὴν προσευχήν; ArcEsd 3:6 πάντα εἰς τὴν κοιλάδα τοῦ Ἰωσαφάτ) εἰς τὸν τόπον **Rv 16:16** (Diod S 17, 20, 1 συνήγαγεν εἰς ἓνα τόπον τοὺς ἀρίστους; 13, 49, 3). εἰς ἓν **J 11:52** (cp. εἰς 4a). To indicate purpose (Dionys. Hal. 2, 45 ὅπως εἰς φιλίαν συνάξουσι τὰ ἔθνη; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 111) εἰς τὸν πόλεμον **Rv 16:14; 20:8**. Cp. **13:10** v.l. ἐπὶ τινα **Mt 27:27**. ἵνα κάμῃ συναγάγη ὁ κύριος Ἰ. Χρ. μετὰ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν that the Lord Jesus Christ may gather me also with the chosen MPol 22:3b; EpilMosq 5b.—Pass., either in the passive sense be gathered or brought together συναχθήσονται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη **Mt 25:32**. συναχθήτω σου ἡ ἐκκλησία ἀπὸ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς εἰς τὴν σὴν βασιλείαν D 9:4b; or w. act. force gather, come together, assemble (Gen 29:8; Dt 33:5; Esth 9:18; En 13:9; TestReub 1:2; ArcMos 5:38; ViJer 12 [p. 73, 8 Sch.]) **Mt 22:41; 27:17; Mk 2:2**; MPol 18:2; D 14:1; 16:2. The subject can also be a collective word συνήχθη τὸ πρεσβυτέριον **Lk 22:66**; ἡ πόλις **Ac 13:44**. More closely defined: as to place εἰς τι **Mt 26:3; Ac 4:5** v.l. εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον **Rv 19:17**. ἐν τινι: **Ac 4:5, 31**. ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ with the congregation **11:26**. εἰς ἧτε μετ' ἐμοῦ συνηγμένοι ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ μου if you are gathered with me in my bosom 2 Cl 4:5 (a dominical saying, of unknown origin). παρά τινι with someone **Ac 21:18 D**. πρὸς τινα to or with someone (TestBenj10:11) **Mt 13:2; 27:62; Mk 4:1; 6:30; 7:1**. πρὸς ἀλλήλους GpT 8:28. ἐπὶ τινα with or around someone **Mk 5:21**; against someone (Gen 34:30; Josh 10:6; Hos 10:10) **Ac 4:27** (=κατὰ τινος vs. 26 after Ps 2:2). ἐπὶ τίνων ζωὴν into life 2 Cl 17:3. ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ (s. αὐτός 3b and ἐπί 1cβ) **Mt 22:34; Ac 4:26 (Ps 2:2)**; 1 Cl 34:7. συναχθέντες ὁμοῦ GJs 9:1. σὺν τινι (Mί 2:12) **1 Cor 5:4**. συναχθέντες μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων **Mt 28:12**; also of an individual pers. συνήχθη Ἰησοῦς μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ **J 18:2** (HReynen, BZ 5, '61, 86–90 'stay'). W. an adv. of place οὗ **Mt 18:20; Ac 20:8**; ὅπου **Mt 26:57; J 20:19** v.l.; ἐκεῖ (TestBenj 9:2; Jos., Ant. 6, 23) **Mt 24:28; Lk 17:37 v.l.; J 18:2**. Foll. by inf. of purpose **Ac 13:44; 15:6; 20:7; Rv 19:19**.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 962.]

all the believers in the city (τὴν ἐκκλησίαν) so that they could give a report (ἀνήγγελλον<sup>173</sup>) on their work. Their report stressed two aspects: 1) ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς μετ' αὐτῶν, **all that God had done with them**, and 2) καὶ ὅτι ἤνοιξεν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν θύραν πίστεως, **and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles**. The first clause stresses what God had accomplished with the missionaries. Somewhat unusual<sup>174</sup> is μετ' αὐτῶν, **with them**.<sup>175</sup> God in close association with Paul and Barnabas had accomplished many things.

The second clause opens a new aspect that went beyond the probable expectation of the church at the commissioning service earlier (13:1-3). That Gentiles could come into faith commitment to Christ (θύραν πίστεως) would not have been particularly surprising at Antioch since Gentiles were becoming Christians and joining the church at Antioch in increasing numbers. Luke has already signaled this possibility with the conversion of the Roman military officer Cornelius (cf. 10:45 & 11:1). What Paul and Barnabas reported to the church was a flood of non-Jews coming into the Christian faith during this missionary work. In Anatolia, it was the Gentile god-fearers attending the synagogues who responded most enthusiastically to the preaching of the Gospel. It is this part of their trip that would eventually prove to be highly controversial, given the Judean Christian stance that one first had to convert to Judaism before becoming a Christian.

Had Paul and Barnabas taken the same stance there would not have been the synagogue persecution of them in the mainland cities of Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. And there would not have erupted the subsequent controversy that Luke describes in chapter fifteen. But as Paul vehemently asserts in Gal. 2:1-10, this would have severely compromised the Gospel that God had delivered to the apostles. His passion had been to follow the leadership of God completely, and this included preaching only the message delivered to him by God. Suffering persecution was the price to pay for uncompromising obedience.

**Third in v. 28**, Luke indicates that these missionaries had considerable time (χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον) to recover as well as to minister at Antioch before controversy broke out. It was a dispute that would threaten not only the church in Antioch but the entire Christian movement: **διέτριβον** δὲ χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς, **And they stayed there with the disciples for some time**.<sup>176</sup> How long this period of time was is not



<sup>173</sup> ἀναγγέλλω fut. ἀναγγεῖλω; 1 aor. ἀνήγγελα, inf. ἀναγγεῖλαι; pf. ἀνήγγελα 1 Km 3:13. Pass.: fut. 3 sg. ἀναγγελήσεται Ps 21:31; 2 aor. ἀνηγγέλῃν (B-D-F §76, 1; Mlt-H. 226); s. Anz 283f on the history of this word (Aeschyl., Thu.+)

1. w. full force of ἀνά, **to carry back information, to report**, of pers. returning fr. a place (X., An. 1, 3, 21; Gen 9:22; Jdth 11:15) **Mk 5:14** v.l. τινὶ τι: **Mt 28:11** v.l.; ἀναγγέλλων ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἐπιπόθησιν **2 Cor 7:7**; ἃ ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός *they reported what God had done* **Ac 14:27**; cp. 15:4. μὴ ἀναγγεῖλης ὅσα εἶδες GJs 20:4. ταῦτα 23:2 (twice). ἃ εἶδεν **24:2**. W. ὅτι foll. J 4:51f v.l.; GJs 24:3.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 59.]

<sup>174</sup>“The words ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς μετ' αὐτῶν appear in different orders in the MSS, and D has the surprising text ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν αὐτοῖς μετὰ τῶν ψυχῶν αὐτῶν; gig has the same text but without αὐτοῖς (*cum animabus eorum*). The text of the great majority of MSS has been held to show Semitism in its use of μετὰ; see Torrey (38; on 15:4) and M. 2:466. Begs. 4:169 argues that ποιεῖν μετὰ is equivalent to ποιεῖν with the dative, quoting Lk. 1:72; Tobit 12:6; 13:6; Judith 8:26; (1 Macc. 10:27), but note that the same use is to be found in P. Amh. 2(1901). 135, 15 (2nd Century AD); Hermas, Mandate 5:2:1; Similitude 5:1:1. They also point to Acts 15:4 and to 16:40, where D has ἐν αὐτοῖς, but d cum eis. Moule (IB 184) thinks Semitism doubtful, and says (61) that the clause ‘may well mean all that God had done in fellowship or cooperation with them—in which case it is plain Greek.’ Bauernfeind (185) thinks it possible that we should after αὐτῶν supply ὧν; it is not clear whether he thinks that the two letters were originally present and dropped out by haplography. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that there is some Semitic influence behind the reading of D; see Wilcox (84f., 154f.). ‘It is generally recognized that the reading μετὰ τῶν ψυχῶν αὐτῶν reflects Semitic influence and is linguistically equivalent to μετὰ αὐτῶν in the usual text.’ [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 691-92.]

<sup>175</sup>“With them is capable of two principal interpretation: it may refer to all that God had done ‘for them’ (Knox ‘all God had done to aid them’), but more likely it is to be taken in the sense of what God had done ‘in union with them’ (NEB ‘all that God had done through them’; Zurich ‘all the great things God, who had been with them, had done’; Goodspeed ‘how God had worked with them’; Barclay ‘all that God had done along with them’)” [Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles*, UBS handbook series; Helps for translators (New York: United Bible Societies, 1993), 286.]

<sup>176</sup>“**διατρίβω** impf. διέτριβον; fut. διατρίψω LXX; 1 aor. διέτριψα, ptc. διατρίψας (Hom.+)  
lit. ‘rub through, wear away’; in our lit. fig. **to remain or stay in a place, spend time**, usually rendered stay in sense of duration, esp. when associated with place or pers. (Il. 19, 150, abs. ‘waste time’; Hdt. et al.) w. acc. τὸν χρόνον (Lysias 3, 12; BGU 1140, 4 [5 B.C.] διατρίψας ἐνταῦθα τὸν πάντα χρόνον; cp. Demetr.: 722 Fgm. 1, 3 Jac. of Jacob indentured by Laban ἐπὶ ἔτη; Jos., Ant. 6, 297; Just., D. 2, 3 δ. ἱκανὸν μετ' αὐτοῦ χρόνον) ἱκανὸν μὲν οὖν χρόνον διέτριψαν=they stayed quite a while (in Iconium) **Ac 14:3**; sim. vs. **28**. ἡμέρας τινάς (X., Hell. 6, 5, 49; cp. Lev

specified by Luke.<sup>177</sup> Probably several months is in mind. Interestingly, a similar statement is made by Luke in 15:35 after Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from the Jerusalem council: Παῦλος δὲ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς **διέτριβον** ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι μετὰ καὶ ἐτέρων πολλῶν τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου. **But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, and there, with many others, they taught and proclaimed the word of the Lord.** This later, more detailed description most likely implies what they were also doing earlier after arriving back at Antioch from the first missionary journey.

### Paul's summation of this work:

Some attention now needs to be given to a couple of passages in Paul's letter to the Galatians, which is addressed to the mainland churches at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. One of the assumptions in the use of the Galatians texts is that the term Galatians, Γαλατία, in Gal. 1:2 refers to the Roman province of Galatia which included, at this point in time, the towns that were evangelized on the first missionary journey.<sup>178</sup> These two passages allude to the historical starting point for Christianity among the readers. Because they refer to both Paul's evangelizing strategy and the Galatians' response, the passages become important primary source materials giving general characterizations of Paul's method of presenting the Gospel in these towns.

### Gal. 3:1-5

3 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! 2 The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? 4 Did you experience so much for nothing?—if it really was for nothing. 5 Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

3.1 Ὡ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν, οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἑσταυρωμένος; 2 τοῦτο μόνον θέλω μαθεῖν ἀφ' ὑμῶν, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; 3 οὕτως ἀνόητοί ἐστε; ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελεῖσθε; 4 τοσαῦτα ἐπάθετε εἰκῆ; εἶ γε καὶ εἰκῆ. 5 ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; 6 καθὼς Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.

Again some consideration of the *contextual setting* for these words of Paul in the letter are essential for proper understanding of his meaning. In the first two chapters Paul defends his calling as an apostle, which he saw as foundational to his preaching of the apostolica Gospel. A defense of this Gospel then begins with 3:1-5 in his letter. This initial defense is to appeal to the conversion experience of the Galatians when he and Barnabas first preached the Gospel to them on the first missionary journey. This is the first in a series of seven arguments defending Paul's preaching a message of salvation by faith without works of law (3:1-4:31).

In the opening rhetorical question we are pointed back in time to the conversion of the Galatians through Paul's preaching of the Gospel to them: Ὡ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν, οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἑσταυρωμένος; **"You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified!"** The relative clause at the end provides important insight into how Paul viewed his responsibility of preaching the Gospel. He characterizes that preaching in the dramatic image of a person carrying through the streets of their town a placard with this simple message written in bold letters: **"Jesus Christ crucified!"**<sup>179</sup> Paul's claim here is consistent with his calling on the Damascus road ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν

14:8) 16:12; cp. 20:6; 25:6, 14. Abs. stay, remain, stay μετὰ τινος with someone (Pla., Apol. 33b, Phd. 59d al.) **J 3:22; 11:54** v.l.; MPol 5:1.—**Ac 12:19; 14:19** v.l. W. the place given ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ **15:35**; cp. **14:7** D (PHal 1, 182f ἐν Ἀπόλλωνος πόλει δ.; Sb 1002, 9; 2 Macc 14:23; Jdth 10:2; Jos., Bell. 1, 387; Tat. 9, 1 ἐν οὐρανῷ). ἐπὶ γῆς on earth Dg 5:9 (Alciphron 2, 22, 2 ἐπὶ Κεραμεικοῦ; POxy 2756 [78/79 A.D.], 8f ἐπὶ Ἀλεξανδρίας). ἐκεῖ (Jos., Ant. 8, 267) **Ac 25:14**.—B. 569. DELG s.v. τρίβω. M-M." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 238.]

<sup>177c</sup> χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον, an example of the litotes characteristic of Acts; cf. 12:18; 15:2; 17:4, 12; 19:23, 24; 27:20. It is impossible to know whether Luke means a week or some months, or even more; and very probable that Luke himself did not know. He means that Paul and Barnabas settled back into the life of the church that had sent them on their mission (13:1–3), and that the Council of ch. 15 did not happen immediately (Roloff 221)." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark., 2004), 693.]

<sup>178</sup>This is a disputed assumption among contemporary scholars, but will be explored in great detail and vigorously defended later on in Part Three: Paul the Writer, in the discussion regarding the Letter of Paul to the Galatians. .

<sup>179c</sup>Their foolish conduct (cf. 1:6) was the more culpable in that Jesus Christ had been publicly proclaimed before their very eyes as crucified. The word rendered 'openly displayed' (*prographō*) refers not to some document or letter previously written by Paul (cf. the use of the word in Rom. 15:4; Eph. 3:3; Jude 4),<sup>10</sup> nor to a depiction of the suffering and dying Jesus,<sup>11</sup> but to the public and official

ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, **“that I might evangelize him among the Gentiles”** (Gal. 1:16). Additionally, it is consistent with Luke’s depiction in Acts of Paul’s ministry in Pisidian Antioch (13:26-41), Iconium (14:1-7), Lystra (14:8-20), Derbe (14:21), and Perga (14:25). In this evangelizing phase of establishing the Christian communities in this part of Galatia, Paul’s preaching centered on the salvation provided by God for both Jews and Gentiles through His Son Jesus Christ. What emerges is the clear picture that Paul understood everything in Christian ministry to focus one way or another on the salvation of God in Christ. He both taught this and practiced it in his ministry!

Next Paul turns to appeal to the Galatians conversion itself. In verse two he raises the question of conversion in terms of having received the Spirit: τοῦτο μόνον θέλω μαθεῖν ἀφ’ ὑμῶν, ἐξ ἔργων νόμου τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάβετε ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως; **“The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard?”** In defending the Gospel of faith commitment to Christ, Paul reminds the Galatian readers that they became Christians by responding in faith commitment to hearing this message about Jesus preached to them. This stands in direct opposition to the view of the Judaizers who claimed that salvation necessitated obeying the Jewish Torah beginning with circumcision. In Luke’s depiction of the first missionary journey (Acts 13-14), at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra the preaching of the Gospel came first in the Jewish synagogues of these cities and created an enthusiastic response among the Gentile ‘god-fearers’ who were attending the synagogues. But synagogue opposition to Gentiles being offered salvation from the God of Abraham without first requiring proselyte conversion to Judaism exploded and forced the Christian missionaries to flee from all three cities. In Derbe, where no Jewish synagogue was located, the preaching was exclusively to Gentiles and generated a substantial acceptance by the people. Given this beginning history, the acceptance of these Jewish Christians coming into these towns demanding such conversion to Judaism could easily gain a positive response from the local synagogue leadership who had vigorously opposed Paul’s earlier preaching. Paul in his letter to the Galatians then appeals to the Christian conversion of these folks under his earlier ministry.

The role of the Holy Spirit in conversion is central as Paul makes clear in Gal. 3:13-14,

13 Χριστὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξηγόρασεν ἐκ τῆς κατάρας τοῦ νόμου γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα, ὅτι γέγραπται: Ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου, 14 ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, **ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.**

13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, **“Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—** 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, **so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

When the individual responds to the Gospel message in faith surrender it is the Spirit of God who takes up residence in the life of the person and applies the work of Christ to the individual’s life. Through the Spirit believers gain the presence and the power of God in their lives so as to be able to live the life of faith, as Paul details in Gal. 5:16-26.

In Paul’s argument to the Galatians he makes the strong point that when one begins the Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit, that entire spiritual journey is lived out in obedience to the Holy Spirit, rather than by turning to Torah obedience as the meaning of living the Christian life (Gal. 3:3-5).

3 οὕτως ἀνόητοί ἐστε; ἐναρξάμενοι πνεύματι νῦν σαρκὶ ἐπιτελεῖσθε; 4 τοσαῦτα ἐπάθετε εἰκῆ; εἶ γε καὶ εἰκῆ. 5 ὁ οὖν ἐπιχορηγῶν ὑμῖν τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἢ ἐξ ἀκοῆς πίστεως;

**3 Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? 4 Did you experience so much for nothing?—if it really was for nothing. 5 Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?**

Paul’s description here of the conversion moment for the Galatian believers stresses the beginning and then the living of the Christian life as a faith commitment to Christ. This is consistent with Luke’s description of the revisiting second phase of the first missionary journey where Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps back through these cities **“strengthening the souls of the disciples and encouraging them to continue in faith, saying, ‘It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God.’”** ἐπιστηρίζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν μαθητῶν, παρακαλοῦντες **ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει** καὶ ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ (Acts 14:22).

character of the apostolic kerygma which set forth, like a placard for all to see, ‘Jesus Christ ... crucified’ (RSV, NASB, NIV).<sup>12</sup> The perfect participle *estaurōmenos* (‘crucified’) in this phrase does not merely fasten attention upon the death of Christ as the culmination and therefore summary of his life as that of ‘one who took the form of a servant’,<sup>13</sup> nor does it characterize Jesus as one hanging on the cross and to be considered as such even now; rather it describes him in his character as the crucified (and risen) One. The phrase ‘Jesus Christ crucified’ concisely summarizes the decisive event in salvation history and, as such, the fundamental content of the Pauline kerygma.<sup>14</sup> If only the Galatians had fixed their eyes on that placard, it would have enabled them to escape the fascination of the false teachers; for that one phrase, had it been truly understood, would have removed the ground from the Judaizers’ argument (cf. on 1:4).” [Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 129-30.]

Thus from this brief allusion to the ministry of Paul in Gal. 3:1-5 we catch a glimpse of how the apostle understood that ministry. He centered on the preaching of Christ; the Galatians responded in a faith commitment to that message that was intended to launch a life long faith commitment to Christ.

#### Gal. 4:12-20

12 Friends, I beg you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong. 13 You know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I first announced the gospel to you; 14 though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or despise me, but welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. 15 What has become of the goodwill you felt? For I testify that, had it been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? 17 They make much of you, but for no good purpose; they want to exclude you, so that you may make much of them. 18 It is good to be made much of for a good purpose at all times, and not only when I am present with you. 19 My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20 I wish I were present with you now and could change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

12 Γίνεσθε ὡς ἐγώ, ὅτι κἀγὼ ὡς ὑμεῖς, ἀδελφοί, δέομαι ὑμῶν. οὐδέν με ἠδικήσατε· 13 οἴδατε δὲ ὅτι δι' ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον, 14 καὶ τὸν πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου οὐκ ἐξουθενήσατε οὐδὲ ἐξεπτύσατε, ἀλλὰ ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ ἐδέξασθέ με, ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. 15 ποῦ οὖν ὁ μακαρισμὸς ὑμῶν; μαρτυρῶ γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰ δυνατόν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν ἐξορύξαντες ἐδώκατέ μοι. 16 ὥστε ἐχθρὸς ὑμῶν γέγονα ἀληθεύων ὑμῖν; 17 ζηλοῦσιν ὑμᾶς οὐ καλῶς, ἀλλὰ ἐκκλεῖσαι ὑμᾶς θέλουσιν, ἵνα αὐτοὺς ζηλοῦτε. 18 καλὸν δὲ ζηλοῦσθαι ἐν καλῶ πάντοτε, καὶ μὴ μόνον ἐν τῷ παρεῖναι με πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 19 τέκνα μου, οὓς πάλιν ὠδίνω μέχρις οὗ μορφωθῆ Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν· 20 ἤθελον δὲ παρεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἄρτι, καὶ ἀλλάξαι τὴν φωνήν μου, ὅτι ἀποροῦμαι ἐν ὑμῖν.

The point of reference in this passage is his reference in vv. 13-15 to the initial reception of Paul when he preached the Gospel to them on the first missionary journey. This passage stands as the sixth of seven arguments defending the Gospel of faith in Christ only, and literarily is a 'appeal to friendship' argument that was commonly used in the ancient world. The heart of the argument is simply that the Galatians had warmly received Paul initially but now were tempted to abandon that friendship in favor of that of the Judaizer opponents of Paul. The apostle indicates that true friendship stands the test of truthfulness because it is based on compassionate devotion and commitment.

The issue of the Galatians' initial acceptance of Paul centered on overcoming a significant barrier that was present in Paul's physical appearance:

13 οἴδατε δὲ ὅτι δι' ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον, 14 καὶ τὸν πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου οὐκ ἐξουθενήσατε οὐδὲ ἐξεπτύσατε, ἀλλὰ ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ ἐδέξασθέ με, ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.

**13 You know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I first announced the gospel to you; 14 though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or despise me, but welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.**

Paul refers to an unnamed physical weakness that he was experiencing while in Galatia on the first missionary journey.<sup>180</sup> Luke makes no reference to this in his description in Acts 13 and 14. The only thing that is mentioned is that at Lystra Paul was stoned into unconsciousness and dragged out of the city by the crowds (14:19). But this could hardly qualify as being what Paul refers to in his letter. The apostle indicates some of aspects about what he calls a ἀσθένειαν. It was physical, and not emotional or spiritual: τῆς σαρκὸς. It was causing him problems when he first preached among the Galatians: εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον. It even became a motivation for preaching among them: δι' ἀσθένειαν. It would normally have caused people to shun him: τὸν πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου οὐκ ἐξουθενήσατε οὐδὲ ἐξεπτύσατε, **"though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or despise me."** If there is a legitimate link between this ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς and the mentioning of a σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί, 'thorn in the flesh,' in 2 Cor. 12:7, then Paul evidently suffered from this physical malady for most of his ministry.<sup>181</sup> But the Galatians did not allow this to prevent them from gladly hearing the Gospel from Paul: ἀλλὰ

<sup>180</sup>He now reminds them of the circumstances in which he paid them his first missionary visit: it was, he says, 'on account of a bodily infirmity' (δι' ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς). They knew exactly what he meant, so he had no need to go into details; his modern readers have not their advantage. It is natural to link this bodily infirmity with the 'splinter in the flesh' (σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί) to which he refers in 2 Cor. 12:7-10, but we are too ill-informed to identify the two outright. Paul experienced the first attack of the 'splinter' about AD 43 (cf. the 'fourteen years' of 2 Cor. 12:2), and he was apparently still subject to its attacks when 2 Corinthians was written (c. AD 56). Whatever be the date of Galatians, it falls within these limits. (Both here and in 2 Cor. 12:7 σάρξ means 'body'; by contrast, διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς in Rom. 6:19 apparently means mental incapacity.)"

[F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 208.]

<sup>181</sup>Efforts down through the centuries have attempted to link the ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς (Gal. 4:13) with a literal reading of 4:15, εἰ δυνατόν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν ἐξορύξαντες ἐδώκατέ μοι, **"For I testify that, had it been possible, you would have torn out your eyes**

ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ ἐδέξασθέ με, ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, “**but welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.**”

Paul describes an enthusiastic welcome by the Galatians that is consistent with Luke’s description. In Antioch the whole city turned out to hear Paul and Barnabas (13:42-44):

42 Ἐξιόντων δὲ αὐτῶν παρεκάλουν εἰς τὸ μεταξύ σάββατον λαληθῆναι αὐτοῖς τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα. 43 λυθείσης δὲ τῆς συναγωγῆς ἠκολούθησαν πολλοὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ τῶν σεβομένων προσηλύτων τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Βαρναβᾷ, οἵτινες προσλαλοῦντες αὐτοῖς ἔπειθον αὐτοὺς προσμένειν τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ. 44 Τῷ δὲ ἐρχομένῳ σαββάτῳ σχεδὸν πᾶσα ἡ πόλις συνήχθη ἀκοῦσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου.

**42 As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people urged them to speak about these things again the next sabbath. 43 When the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. 44 The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.**

In fact it was this unusually enthusiastic welcoming of Paul and Barnabas that sparked the Jewish synagogue opposition to these missionaries (13:45). And when Paul stressed the message of salvation available to the Gentiles, there was continued enthusiasm in spite of the Jewish opposition:

48 ἀκούοντα δὲ τὰ ἔθνη ἔχαιρον καὶ ἐδόξαζον τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον· 49 διεφέρετο δὲ ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου δι’ ὅλης τῆς χώρας.

**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. 49 Thus the word of the Lord spread throughout the region.**

According to Luke, their experience in Iconium was similar (14:1-7).

14.1 Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν Ἰκονίῳ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ λαλήσαι οὕτως ὥστε πιστεῦσαι Ἰουδαίων τε καὶ Ἑλλήνων πολὺ πλῆθος.

**14.1 The same thing occurred in Iconium, where Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers.**

Luke stresses an enthusiastic response to the preaching of the Gospel by both Jews and Gentiles. When the Jewish synagogue opposition forced the missionaries to flee Luke indicates that they continued preaching the Gospel in the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe (14:6-7). No direct statement of response in Lystra is provided by Luke but he does mention the presence of disciples in the city who helped Paul recover after the stoning (14:20). In Derbe the response is mentioned as very positive (14:21): Εὐαγγελισάμενοι τε τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην καὶ μαθητεύσαντες ἱκανοὺς ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς τὴν Λύστραν καὶ εἰς Ἰκόνιον καὶ εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, “**After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch.**”

What becomes clear from Luke’s narrative is confirmed by Paul in his letter that the Galatians responded enthusiastically to the preaching of the Gospel, especially the non-Jewish segment of the population in that region. The Jewish synagogue leadership instigated the opposition to Paul, and were able to influence the Gentile authorities to put pressure on Paul and Barnabas that forced them to leave all of the cities except for Derbe and Perga.

From these references in Galatians, and supplemented by his depiction of his preaching style at Corinth,<sup>182</sup> the clear impression is that Paul’s preaching of the Gospel was not dependent on rhetorical skills or an entertaining speaking style. Most likely he would not have been a popular preacher in most modern churches because of his lack of oratorical skills. But as he indicates to the Corinthians his preaching of the Gospel centered on

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**and given them to me.”** These are then linked to Paul’s reference to writing with abnormally large letters in 6:11, Ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ. When these references in Galatians are linked to the σκόλωψ τῇ σαρκί in 2 Cor. 12:7, the conclusion has often been made that Paul’s physical malady had to do with his eyes that left him with limited vision and probably facial disfigurement.

“W. M. Ramsay (SPT, 94–97), rightly taking δι’ ἀσθένειαν to mean ‘because of an infirmity’ (cf. MHT I, 172; BDF 223.3; E. Schweizer, TDNT VII, 125 n. 216, s.v. σάρξ), supposed that Paul contracted malaria in the low-lying territory of Pamphylia and made his way up to the high country around Pisidian Antioch, c. 3600 feet above sea-level, to recuperate.” [F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 208.] But making all these connections does not present a strong argument for such a conclusion. The reality is that we don’t know what it was beyond the direct statements of Paul himself, and he chose not to identify it specifically.

<sup>182</sup>**First Corinthians 2:1-5 NRSV. 2 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.**

2.1 Καγὼ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἦλθον οὐ καθ’ ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ θεοῦ. 2 οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἶδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον· 3 καγὼ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῶ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 4 καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ σοφίας ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, 5 ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.

the story of Jesus and the salvation available to faith commitment to Him. Paul depended on the 'breath of God' (θεόπνευστος, 2 Tim. 3:16) saturating his words and thus the convicting Spirit of God was the One who produced the positive response to the spoken Word. The goal was ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾗ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ, "so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:5).

### Summary:

From this analysis of Luke's description, supplemented by Paul's observations, what conclusions about the missionary strategy of Barnabas and Paul can be concluded? Let me suggest the following conclusions:

**1) The first missionary journey began at the direction of God through His Spirit,** and the ministry of Paul and Barnabas was guided by the Spirit from beginning to end. Luke especially makes that point at the end in Acts 14:26, κάκειθεν ἀπέπλευσαν εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, ὅθεν ἦσαν παραδομένοι τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὸ ἔργον ὃ ἐπλήρωσαν, "From there they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had completed." If a mission strategy is going to work successfully, it must be led of God completely from start to finish. If it isn't, then failure will be its fate.

**2) The first missionary journey came out of a worshipping congregation with leaders seeking the will of God** and willing to take risks to carry out that divine will once it was understood. Acts 13:1-3 is clear about this. It was this progressive minded church at Antioch passionately seeking to understand the will of God that God chose to use as the launch pad of an endeavor that would forever change the nature of the Christian religion. To be clear many things set up such a positive atmosphere for the church. The social and cultural mixture of Antioch helped open up thinking about peoples way beyond the Promised Land of the Jews. The metropolitan atmosphere played a role in extending the Christian faith beyond the Jewish synagogues of the city. And it helped in making even the Jewish synagogues there more open to non-Jews interested in worshipping God.

What becomes clear in the first missionary journey and the subsequent others is that Antioch became 'home base' to the expansion of Christianity all across the northeastern Mediterranean world of the first century. The first missionary journey began in Antioch (13:1-3) and it ended in Antioch (14:26-28). This would be the same for the second missionary journey (15:35-40; 18:22), and the third missionary journey would also begin at Antioch (18:23). One lesson for missionary strategy is that missions should grow out of the church and be anchored in church. It is not an individual thing. Churches do missions, not individuals! Paul and Barnabas felt responsibility to report to the Antioch church (14:27-28). It was the prayer support and encouragement of the church at Antioch that undergirded their work, and perhaps financially contributed to it as well.

**3) The first missionary journey evolved from a general plan but remained flexible throughout.** The beginning at Cyprus, the home of Barnabas, provided the initial shaping of what these missionaries would do. They began by preaching in the Jewish synagogues, and it was not until Paphos at the end of the time on Cyprus that non-Jews came into the picture. This prepared Paul and Barnabas for the opposition in the Jewish synagogues they would encounter on the mainland at Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. The responsiveness of the Gentiles to the Gospel there even came initially from those Gentiles already attending the Jewish synagogues with religious interest in the God of the Jews. But it was not limited to just these Gentiles, as Luke points out especially in Antioch and Iconium.

These missionaries followed their plan of first going to the synagogue to give the Jews opportunity to respond to the Gospel, and then they turned to the non-Jewish population with a positive message of salvation from the God of this universe through His Son Jesus Christ. This "to the Jew first and then to the Gentile" strategy of Paul was something he sensed in his calling to ministry and that was ordained of God for him. Thus he sought to be faithful in following this guideline. But when they arrived at Derbe with no Jewish synagogue, their preaching to the Gentiles produced evidently the greatest response of any of the cities they went to.

The flexibility factor comes into the picture especially on the mainland. They were forced to flee Antioch, and then to flee Iconium. After being nearly stoned to death at Lystra, Derbe on the eastern frontier without a synagogue became a safe haven for these two men to recuperate and also to carry out minister without persecution. I seriously doubt that Paul and Barnabas had this mapped out in detailed plans when they first arrived at the port city of Perga. The pattern of activity on the island of Cyprus seems to have been planned out, apart from the encounter with Bar-Jesus at Paphos. But God turned even this into a marvelous opportunity to have an impact on the Roman governor of the island.

I suspect there is a valuable lesson here for modern missionaries. Plan out what you want to accomplish, but always let God revise and alter those plans at time passes. You may not end up doing exactly what you in-

tended at the beginning. But if God has shaped the contours of your work all along, then what comes out of it will be successful because it represents God's work, not yours.

**4) The first missionary journey is characterized by the seizing of every opportunity to give witness to Jesus Christ.** These came in the Jewish synagogues of Antioch and Iconium. In Lystra the healing of a crippled man presented opportunity to witness to Christ. In Derbe and Perga preaching of the Gospel came in the market places and other public locations where people would listen. In Pisidia the preaching of the Gospel first in Antioch spread to the surrounding countryside (13:49). Preaching the Gospel included the countryside of Lycaonia where Lystra and Derbe were located (14:6-7). To be sure, Antioch in Pisidia was the only one of these places that we could call a city, Iconium, and especially Lystra, Derbe, Perga, and Ittalia were at best small towns and barely above villages. Conditions in most of these places were primitive, and as one commentator says, "frontier towns." These were not the cultured large cities of Antioch in Syria, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome et als.

Paul and Barnabas did not just focus on the large cities. Theirs was more a saturation strategy that included the rural countryside areas as well as the small towns and the cities in the region. Luke carefully notes that the Gospel spread out over all the area through the ministry of these men. What the missionaries did was simply go wherever God prompted them. And sometimes that push came through persecution. But wherever they landed their concern was to seek opportunities to present the Gospel to whoever would listen.

Modern missionaries must not sit back and wait on opportunities to develop so they can do missions. Rather, there must be sensitivity to God's leadership that seeks to utilize every opportunity that comes along for witness to Christ. We cannot anticipate what all of these will be. But we can follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit step by step along the way.

**5) The first missionary journey included both evangelizing the lost and disciplining the saved.** When pitted "evangelizing" or "church planting," one cannot use one label to the exclusion of the other in defining the contours of this missionary trip. It included both. With no pre-existing congregations in any of the places on the mainland, in contrast to Cyprus, evangelizing the lost was the initial activity. But as Luke makes abundantly clear in 14:21-25, Paul and Barnabas understood the critical importance of Christian communities that were organized and growing spiritually. They took considerable risks in going back to these cities where their lives had been in *jeopardy* in order to help the young congregations become stable and able to resist the opposition each would face in their local community.

Modern missions makes a huge mistake if it pits evangelization against church planting. Only professing believers can constitute a church. Our missionary strategy must make sure that the Gospel is presented to every willing listener and then it must strongly bring those professing faith in Christ together to form a Christian community. In my estimation a biblical oriented missions strategy is wholistic and includes preaching the Gospel to the lost and forming Christian congregations out of those who are saved. Additionally it must focus on helping those congregations form adequate organization and teaching so that they can become stable groups of believers who can mutually encourage one another in the faith. These are the insights to be gleaned from the first missionary journey, and others are present as well.

### **5.1 Jerusalem council (AD 47/48), Acts 15:1-35, Gal 2:1-10**

Luke indicates in Acts 14:27-28 that after reporting to the church at Antioch what God had done on the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas "**stayed there with the disciples for some time,**" διέτριβον δὲ χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς.<sup>183</sup> This was a special time of recouping themselves after the rather demanding trip and in the positive atmosphere of the Christian community provided an encouraging setting for doing ministry to these two men. But this calm atmosphere would not last indefinitely.

What will rear its ugly head on the ancient horizon is a religious based racism that threatened the very existence of Christianity. When the controversy arose it was based in Jerusalem but exploded in Antioch. Thus Luke narrates the problem in terms of its initial surfacing in Antioch (vv. 1-3), the seeking of a solution in Jerusalem (vv. 4-29), and the sharing of the proposed solution in Antioch (vv. 30-35). In his letter to the Galatians, Paul also provides his version of this meeting but only describes what took place in Jerusalem in 2:1-10.

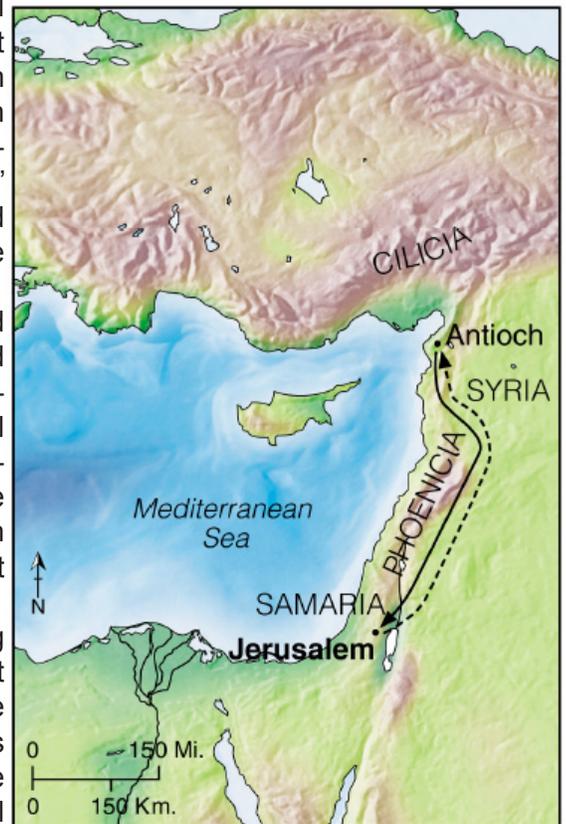
The time frame for this situation is in the late 40s of the first Christian century. One should not overlook what was developing in the Jewish world not only in Palestine but elsewhere in the Roman empire during this period. During the 50s and 60s especially Jewish unrest began erupting in Galilee over land stealing from Jewish peasants by wealthy Jewish aristocrats in Jerusalem and subsequently Roman aristocrats. The injustices

<sup>183</sup>Luke typically expresses the time frame in terms of "not a short time," χρόνον οὐκ ὀλίγον. Perhaps this extended a year or more, but the exact period of time cannot be determined from the way Luke expressed it.

began in the 40s. A guerrilla type warfare erupted at a skirmish level with attacks on Roman soldiers and others. It wasn't until 66 AD that outright revolt broke out that led to the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD by the Romans. But during this period an increase in Jewish nationalism took place with a focused emphasis upon every Jew rigidly adhering to the 'traditions of the elders.' Unfortunately the Judaizing controversy inside Christianity erupted during this surge of fanatical nationalism not only across Palestine but in Jewish settlements across the Roman Empire.

In Diaspora Judaism typically greater openness toward Gentiles converting to Judaism would be found, than what would be present in Judea. And this openness extended to Gentiles merely attending synagogue services as 'God-fearers.' But when Paul preached God's acceptance of Gentiles solely on a faith commitment to Jesus Christ without proselyte conversion to Judaism, eye brows were raised across the synagogue audiences. Consternation with Paul and his message erupted in Jerusalem. And some of it was inside the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem.

For Luke this controversy signals one of those pivotal turning points in the Christian movement. This narrative is inserted not just chronologically but conceptually in the middle of his history of the early church.<sup>184</sup> The apostle Peter has figured prominently in Luke's story until this point, and will, with chapter fifteen, disappear from the narrative as well as the mentioning of the other apostles. The central role of the church in Jerusalem will now begin diminishing with Antioch increasingly becoming the center of the Christian movement in the Roman Empire. The church in Jerusalem will remain Jewish Christian in its orientation under the general leadership of James as the key pastoral figure in the city until his martyrdom in the early 60s. With the first Jewish war impacting the city by the mid 60s and with the city's complete destruction by 70 AD, the Jerusalem church scatters with the Jewish Christians fleeing to other parts of the empire to avoid massacre by the Romans along with other Jews from the city. This includes the apostles as well, most of whom had already left Jerusalem by the late 50s. From this council meeting on the Christian movement would increasing distance itself from Judaism and would rapidly become a non-Jewish religious movement. Thus by the end of the first century only a very small portion of professing Christians would have a Jewish background.



### 5.1.1 Problems at Antioch, Acts 15:1-3

15 Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. 3 So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the believers.

15.1 Καί τινες κατελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐδίδασκον τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὅτι Ἐὰν μὴ περιμηθῆτε τῷ ἔθει τῷ Μωϋσέως, οὐ δύνασθε σωθῆναι. 2 γενομένης δὲ στάσεως καὶ ζητήσεως οὐκ ὀλίγης τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Βαρναβᾶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἔταξαν ἀναβαίνειν Παῦλον καὶ Βαρναβᾶν καὶ τινὰς ἄλλους ἐξ αὐτῶν πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ πρεσβυτέρους εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ περὶ τοῦ ζητήματος τούτου. 3 οἱ μὲν οὖν προπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας διήρχοντο

<sup>184</sup>“The issue that the incident in the Antiochene church raises sparks what is for Luke a very important development in his story of the early church. It falls designedly in the center of Acts. In my translation, chaps. 1–14 have 12,385 words; chaps. 15–28, 12,502 words. So what is now recounted is the turning point of Luke's story, when the apostolic and presbyteral college of Jerusalem officially recognizes the evangelization of Gentiles, which has been initiated by Peter and carried out on a wide scale by Barnabas and Paul. It leads to the definitive break of the Christian church from its Jewish matrix. It is also the last act that Luke records about Peter and the apostles. During the persecution mentioned in 8:1, only the apostles were said to have remained in Jerusalem; the flight of the rest led to the preaching of the Word to Jews and others in the diaspora. In the Lucan story the Antiochene church seeks doctrinal guidance from the mother church of Jerusalem. The controversial issue is to be laid before the apostles and the presbyters of Jerusalem, and the testimony borne to Gentiles is officially accepted and approved.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 538-39.]

τὴν τε Φοινίκην καὶ Σαμάρειαν ἐκδιηγούμενοι τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν, καὶ ἐποίουν χαρὰν μεγάλην πᾶσι τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς.

In this initial scene that took place in Antioch, individuals from the church in Jerusalem made the long trip of about 300 miles to Antioch, probably by ship,<sup>185</sup> in order to object to what the church in Antioch was doing in regard to the Gentiles who were professing faith in Christ. To be sure Luke specifies *τινες κατελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας*, “**certain ones came down from Judea.**” Perhaps he is attempting to deflect a criticism of the Jerusalem church directly, but the likelihood is that these individuals originated from Jerusalem. But in the letter composed by James to the church at Antioch (15:24), these individuals are referred to with *τινὲς ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξελθόντες ἐτάραξαν ὑμᾶς λόγοις ἀνασκευάζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν οἷς οὐ διεστειλάμεθα*, “**certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds.**” Clearly these individuals came from Jerusalem.

Also Luke does not name these individuals; instead he simply refers to them by the indefinite pronoun *τινες*. Earlier with the conversion of the Roman soldier Cornelius Peter had come under criticism by some that Luke labeled *οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς*, “**those from the circumcision,**” for his handling of Cornelius.<sup>186</sup> Then in 15:5, Luke identifies individuals in Jerusalem of the same view as these who traveled to Antioch as *τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευκότες*, “**some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees.**” Early on (Acts 6:7) in the life of the Jerusalem church Luke had indicated *πολύς τε ὄχλος τῶν ἱερέων ὑπήκουον τῇ πίστει*, “**a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.**” The pattern that seems to have evolved in the church at Jerusalem was a large number of individuals came into the Christian community who were actively involved in organized religious structures of Judaism, namely, priests and Pharisees. From all indication they continued to actively participate in the Jewish organizations they held membership in, although now as professing Jewish Christians.

For Luke not who these individuals were by name was important, but rather what they were teaching and insisting upon was the main issue. At Antioch, Luke says their demands were *Ἐὰν μὴ περιτμηθῆτε τῷ ἔθει τῷ Μωϋσέως, οὐ δύνασθε σωθῆναι*, “**Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.**” Although slightly different wording, the essential ideas are the same as that voiced later by the Pharisees in the Jerusalem meeting (15:5): *δεῖ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς παραγγέλλειν τε τηρεῖν τὸν νόμον Μωϋσέως*, “**It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.**” What was “**taught**” (ἐδίδασκον) in Antioch, and then “**demand**” (δεῖ) in Jerusalem was Jewish proselyte conversion as the first step to becoming a Christian.<sup>187</sup> This

<sup>185</sup>Note that the trip from Jerusalem to Antioch was going north 300 miles. Luke’s use of *κατελθόντες*, “having come down,” is consistent with his standard way to referring to traveling any direction from Jerusalem as ‘going down’ and from any direction going toward Jerusalem was ‘going up.’ This is mainly theological, not geographical.

<sup>186</sup>Acts 11:1-3 NRSV. 11 Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, *the circumcised believers* criticized him, 3 saying, “Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?”

11.1 Ἦκουσαν δὲ οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ οἱ ὄντες κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν ὅτι καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ. 2 ὅτε δὲ ἀνέβη Πέτρος εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ, διεκρίνοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν *οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς* 3 λέγοντες ὅτι Εἰσηλθες πρὸς ἄνδρας ἀκροβυστίαν ἔχοντας καὶ συνέφαγες αὐτοῖς.

<sup>187</sup>The idea of being a *προσήλυτος*, “convert,” to Judaism is behind the four uses of the term in the New Testament.

“**προσήλυτος, οὐ, ὁ** (cp. ἦλθον; also ἔλευσις) **one who has come over from polytheism to Judean religion and practice, convert** (so Goodsp., Probs. 36f; the transliterated form ‘proselyte’ NRSV, REB, but only **Ac 2:11**, otherwise ‘convert’ or ‘worshiper’), a designation for a gentile won for the Israelite community through missionary efforts (the word is found in Apollon. Rhod. 1, 834 [μετοίκους καὶ προσηλύτους] and in the LXX. Plainly in a technical sense in Philo; cp. Spec. Leg. 1, 51 τούτους δὲ καλεῖ προσηλύτους ἀπὸ τοῦ προσεληλυθέναι καινῆ καὶ φιλοθέῳ πολιτεία=these he [apparently Moses] calls ‘proselytes’ because they have ‘proselyted’ to a new state where love of God prevails; Sb 1742 Σάρρα προσήλυτος. Roman grave inscriptions also contain ‘proselytus’ or ‘proselyta’ [Schürer III 162, 55].—Perh. *πρ.* was used as a t.t. in the Isis cult [=Lat. ‘advena’ in Apuleius, Metam. 11, 26; s. Rtzst., *Mysterienrel.* 3 193]). W. Ἰουδαῖοι **Ac 2:11**. Of Nicolaus of Antioch **6:5**. Of Jewish efforts to proselytize **Mt 23:15**.—*They are to be differentiated fr. the σεβόμενοι τὸν θεόν, who had obligated themselves only to follow certain commandments*; in a mixed expr. **Ac 13:43** speaks of *σεβόμενοι πρ.*—ABertholet, *Die Stellung der Israeliten u. der Juden zu den Fremden* 1896, 257ff; KAxenfeld, *Die jüd. Propaganda als Vorläuferin der urchristl. Mission: Missionswissenschaftl. Studien für GWarneck* 1904, 1–80; ILevi, *Le Prosélytisme juif*: REJ 50, 1905, 1 ff; 51, 1906, 1ff; 53, 1907, 56ff; Schürer III 150–76; HGressmann, ZMR 39, 1924, 10ff; 169ff; MMeinertz, *Jesus u. die Heidenmission* 1925; Bousset, *Rel.* 3 76ff; Billerb. I 924ff; II 715; IV 353ff; Harnack, *Mission I* 1923, 1–23 (Eng. tr., JMoffatt2, 1908, 1–23); GRosen, *Juden u. Phönizier* 1929; GMoore, *Judaism I*, 1927, 323–53; FDerwacter, *Preparing the Way for Paul* 1930; HLietzmann, *Gesch. d. Alten Kirche* 1, ’32, 68–101; CSchneider, *Ntl. Zeitgeschichte* ’34, 173–75; HPreisker, *Ntl. Zeitgesch.* ’37, 290–93; WBraude, *Jewish Proselyting in the First Five Centuries of the Common Era* ’40; SLieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* ’42: *Gentiles and Semi-Proselytes*, 68–90; JKlausner, *From Jesus to Paul* (tr. WStinespring) ’43, 31–49; ESimon, *Verus Israel* ’48; SZeitlin, *Proselytes and Proselytism*, etc.: *HAWolfson-Festschr.* ’65, 871–81. Add. bibl., esp. since ’65, Schürer III 1–3; ABD V 505.—Pauly-W., *Suppl.* IX, 1248–83; Kl. Pauly IV, 1187; BHHW IV 1515.—S. also lit. s.v. σέβω 1b.—DELG s.v. ἐλεύσομαι. M-M. EDNT. TW. Sv.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 880.]

represented by the beginning of the Christian era the complete conversion of Gentiles to the Jewish religion.<sup>188</sup> The beginning stage represented interest by Gentiles in Judaism to the point that they attended the synagogue sabbath services and generally followed the rules of morality taught by the Jews. Cornelius as a ‘God fearer’ (εὐσεβῆς καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεὸν) in Acts 10:1-2 represents such a person in the first century world. But Nicolaus, one of the seven set aside for ministry in Acts 6:5, was a Gentile convert to Judaism before becoming a Christian: Νικόλαον προσήλυτον Ἀντιοχέα, “**Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.**” At some earlier point Nicolaus had submitted to circumcision and had made a formal commitment to obey the Torah of Moses. Subsequently he had made a faith commitment to Christ that brought him into the Christian community in Jerusalem.

These “Judaizers” in both Jerusalem and at Antioch had no problem with Gentiles such as Nicolaus. He had followed the proper steps in their thinking toward becoming a Christian. What was a serious problem to them, however, was when Gentiles bypassed the proselyte conversion to Judaism and only made a faith commitment to Christ. And Paul and Barnabas had been preaching this “shortcut” to Christian conversion among the Gentiles on the first missionary, and the church at Antioch was being filled with such people through their influence and blessing. They saw this influx of Gentiles into the Christian community at Antioch, and the church there stamping their approval on this trend, as a dangerous move that reflected heresy. Without any authorization from James or the apostles in Jerusalem (15:24), they took matters into their own hands to go to Antioch to straighten out this twisted teaching of Paul and Barnabas. When they arrived in Antioch they began advocating their views in the Christian community at Antioch.

These individuals directed challenged the views of Paul and Barnabas, and Luke says γενομένης δὲ στάσεως καὶ ζητήσεως οὐκ ὀλίγης τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Βαρναβᾶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς, “**and after there arose not a small dispute and debate by Paul and Barnabas against them...**”. In Luke’s colorful manner,<sup>189</sup> he indicates that a huge confrontation between these two respected leaders at Antioch and these men from Jerusalem erupted. One can only imagine the detailed positions of both sets of men as that debated vigorously over this issue. To be sure, it would have been helpful to us had Luke detailed the arguments that Paul and Barnabas used to refute the opposing

<sup>188</sup>Evidently the origin of this insistence on circumcision lies in Genesis 17:9-14.

**9 Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. 10 This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner—those who are not your offspring. 13 Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” 15 God also said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. 16 I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.” 17 Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?”**

At least this is the basis down through the centuries of Judaism for insisting on the circumcision of males among them. Although not all branches of modern Judaism see circumcision as mandatory for either Jews or Gentile converts, the more conservative branches still require circumcision for all Jewish males and for any Gentile who desires to convert to Judaism. For more details see “Proselyte,” Jewish Encyclopedia. A few modern Christian groups follow a similar teaching and require circumcision of Christian converts. See “Circumcision controversy in early Christianity,” Wikipedia.org.

Note Barrett’s comments also:

The visitants took the opposite view. Without circumcision there is no salvation. Circumcision is a Mosaic requirement: ἐὰν μὴ περιμηθῆτε τῷ ἔθει τῷ Μωυσέως. The Western text (D (sy<sup>p</sup>) sa mae) makes it clear that more than an initiatory rite is required: ἐὰν μὴ περιμηθῆτε καὶ τῷ ἔθει M. περιπατήτε (note the present—continuous—tense). This is implied though not mentioned by the Old Uncial text; there would be no point in being circumcised and then neglecting to keep the Law. Characteristically the Western text leaves nothing to imagination—or to common sense. ἔθος is not adequately rendered by custom: it refers to the practice originated by Moses (though in fact circumcision goes back to Abraham; Gen. 17:10–14), and this has the force of law. Cf. 6:14; 16:21; 21:21; 26:3; 28:17; also 2 Macc. 11:25 (τὰ ἐπὶ τῶν προγόνων αὐτῶν ἔθη); 4 Macc. 18:5; Josephus (e.g. Ant. 20:100, τοῖς γὰρ πατρίοις οὐκ ἐνέμεινεν οὗτος ἔθεισιν); Philo (e.g. *Spec. Leg.* 2:148, πάτριον ἔθος). This use of the word seems to have been a Jewish development (not noted in LS); see however Dittenberger, *Syll.* 2:1073:20f., κατὰ τὸ πάτριον τῶν ἀγώνων ἔθος. This use (with ἔθος) of κατὰ might have been expected rather than Luke’s dative. This is described by M. 3:242 as a dative of cause (... ‘because of the law’). BDR § 196:1, n.1 also classifies the use as *Dativus Causae*, but—surprisingly—translates ‘gemäss’ (in conformity with?), and compares PHolm 2:18, τῆτε (legd. τῆδε) τάξει, ‘nach diesem Rezept’. This seems to be Luke’s meaning: Gentiles must be circumcised in accordance with the Mosaic practice.

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 698-99.]

<sup>189c</sup>“The litotes is characteristic of the later part of Acts—12:18; but 15:2; 19:11, 23, 24; 20:12; 21:39; 26:19, 26; 27:20; 28:2.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 700.]

view point. I suspect most of them centered in a careful exposition of the passages in the Old Testament dealing with circumcision beginning with Genesis seventeen.<sup>190</sup>

The outcome of these ongoing confrontations<sup>191</sup> was that ἔταξαν ἀναβαίνειν Παῦλον καὶ Βαρναβᾶν καὶ τινὰς ἄλλους ἐξ αὐτῶν πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ πρεσβυτέρους εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ περὶ τοῦ ζητήματος τούτου, **“Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders.”** Literally the core clause does not indicate who appointed (ἔταξαν) the delegation to go to Jerusalem. But the context strongly suggests the church at Antioch made this decision.<sup>192</sup> The group sent from Antioch included both Paul and Barnabas, along with some unnamed other members. The objective of this trip was περὶ τοῦ ζητήματος τούτου, **“concerning this dispute.”** In Paul’s depiction of the motivation behind this trip, he tells the Galatians, ἀνέβην δὲ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν· καὶ ἀνεθέμην αὐτοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, κατ’ ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς δοκοῦσιν, μὴ πως εἰς κενὸν τρέχω ἢ ἔδραμον, **“I went up in response to a revelation. Then I laid before them (though only in a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure that I was not running, or had not run, in vain”** (Gal. 2:2).

Some see in Paul’s statement of purpose a very different reason for the trip to Antioch than the one found in Acts 15:2, περὶ τοῦ ζητήματος τούτου.<sup>193</sup> The sense of ζήτημα very likely is much more intense than the NRSV translation, **“to discuss this question,”** would imply.<sup>194</sup> This highly controversial issue generated intense positions that were vigorously expressed in blunt debate. When one reads the extremely complex Greek text of Gal. 2:1-10 along with the highly blunt language used there, the same conclusions are reached: Paul was trying -- rather unsuccessfully -- to describe somewhat mildly a meeting in Jerusalem that was driven by extremely intense emotional feeling and passionate commitment to his view point. For the apostle this issue centered in the credibility of the Gospel and of the Christian religion. Were other leaders to deviate from the clear revelation from Jesus Himself on this matter, the Christian movement would be dead. Of course, Paul traveled to Jerusalem κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν, **“by revelation.”** God directed him to do everything in his power to protect the integrity of the Gospel at this meeting. He had to know whether the apostles in Jerusalem, along with the leadership of the Jerusalem church under James, stood firm on this Gospel message or not. If not, then they would be seriously undermining

<sup>190</sup>Probably some background insight into how Paul would have argued his case can be gleaned from Romans 4 and Galatians 3 where Paul argues that believers by faith identification with Abraham have been made ‘sons of Abraham’ who possess a circumcision of the heart and not of the flesh. His point from Gen. 15:6 is that Abraham was made righteous before God, prior to being circumcised, not subsequent to it. And this divine declaration of Abraham’s righteousness was based on his faith commitment to God, something that Gentile believers in Christ share with Abraham. Thus physical circumcision is irrelevant to salvation, as Paul clearly advocates in 1 Cor. 7:18-20,

**18 Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything. 20 Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called.**

18 περιτετημένους τις ἐκλήθη, μὴ ἐπισπάσθω· ἐν ἀκροβυστία κέκληται τις, μὴ περιτεμνέσθω. 19 ἡ περιτομή οὐδὲν ἐστὶν αἰὶ καὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία οὐδὲν ἐστὶν, ἀλλὰ τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ. 20 ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ κλήσει ἢ ἐκλήθη, ἐν ταύτῃ μενέτω.

<sup>191</sup>Interestingly as noted by Barrett, the Western text alternative reading stresses a difference between the two sides of the debate. Those from Judea announce their view, but Paul adamantly insists on his views: “If the Judaeans παρήγγειλαν, Paul is represented as δυσχυριζόμενος (for the word see 12:15; Lk. 22:59; also PMich 659:14, cited in ND 2:81). The Western characteristic that appears here is that of sharpening the picture, making the story more vivid and exciting; see 1:22; FS Black (1979), 15–27.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 701.]

<sup>192</sup>“It was argued above that the subject of ἔταξαν is the Christians of Antioch, but the nearest antecedent is αὐτούς, the Judaeans, and these are taken to be the authors of the arrangement by the Western text, which instead of ἔταξαν ... αὐτῶν has ἔλεγεν γὰρ ὁ Παῦλος μένειν οὕτως καθὼς ἐπίστευσαν δυσχυριζόμενος. οἱ δὲ ἐληλυθότες ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ παρήγγειλαν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ καὶ τισὶν ἄλλαις ἀναβαίνειν (D (gig w sy<sup>hmg</sup> mae)) and adds after a second Ἱερουσαλήμ, ὅπως κριθῶσιν ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς (D<sup>c</sup>); and with varying order 614 pc sy<sup>h\*\*</sup>). See also on 15:7. This is one of those passages in Acts (see Introduction, pp. xxif.) where the Old Uncial text and the Western text are said to give fundamentally different views of an event. In the Old Uncial text arrangements are made for a debate on equal terms; in the Western text Paul and Barnabas and other members of the erring church are peremptorily summoned to Jerusalem to stand trial. The difference is less great than is sometimes supposed.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 701.]

<sup>193</sup>Of course, much of this centers on linking Gal. 2:1-10 either with the Acts trip found in 11:30 or else another trip not mentioned by Luke. But as will be argued later, the better connection is between Acts 15 and Gal. 2.

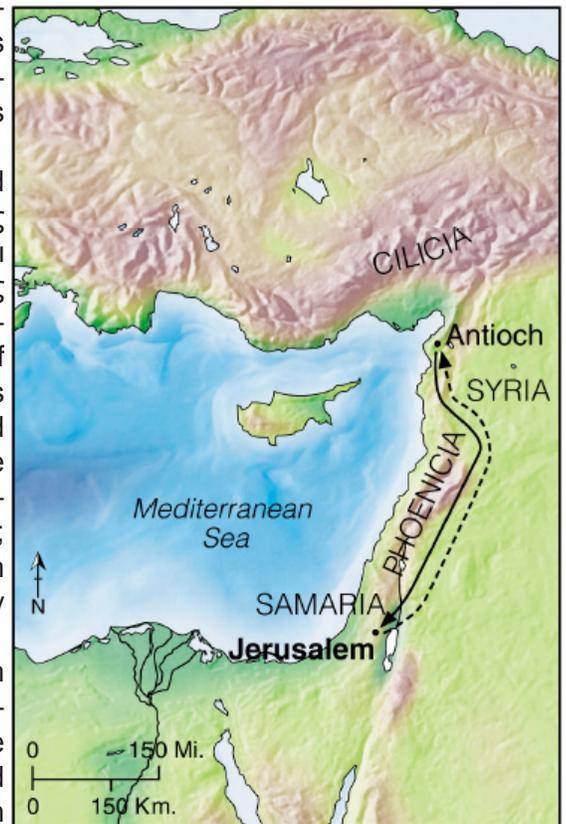
<sup>194</sup>“**ζήτημα, ατος, τό** (s. prec. entry; Soph., Hippocr.+; ins, pap; Ezk 36:37 v.l.; Just., D. 123, 7; loanw. in rabb.) in our lit. only in Ac, w. the mng. it still has in Mod. Gk. (**controversial**) **question, issue, argument** (Epict. 2, 11, 8) **Ac 15:2; 26:3.** ζ. περί τινος **questions about someth.** (Pla., Leg. 10, 891c) **18:15; 25:19.**—In **23:29**, since περί had already been used, the subj. of the discussion is added in the gen., ζ. τοῦ νόμου αὐτῶν.—DELG s.v. ζητέω. M-M.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 428.]

everything Paul and Barnabas had stood for in their ministries. Galatians 2:1-10 is loaded with controversy and confrontation, just as Acts 15 is. Fortunately for Christianity, the leadership of the Christian movement made their decision at Jerusalem in favor of God's revelation about a faith only response to this Gospel.

The trip of the Antioch delegation to Jerusalem is described in fascinating tones in 15:3, οἱ μὲν οὖν προπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας διήρχοντο τὴν τε Φοινίκην καὶ Σαμάρειαν ἐκδιηγούμενοι τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν, καὶ ἐποίουν χαρὰν μεγάλην πᾶσι τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς. **First**, they were officially sent off by the church in Antioch: οἱ μὲν οὖν προπεμφθέντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας. Luke's use of the verb προπέμπω -- different from ἀπολύω in 13:3 -- underscores providing assistance to the group for their trip.<sup>195</sup> Quite naturally and appropriately, the church at Antioch was keenly interested in the outcome of this trip. The term ἐκκλησία has become one of the primary ways that Luke refers to the Christian community at Antioch; cf. 11:26, 13:1; 14:27; 15:3. Here the term designates the collection of numerous house church groups meeting individually over the city but together known as the ἐκκλησία.

**Second**, the members of the original Jerusalem delegation that came to Antioch either remained in Antioch or traveled separately back to Jerusalem. Probably the latter was the case since they also had vested interests in what happened in Jerusalem, and doubtless did not want to listen to Paul's challenges all the way on the 300 mile trip back to Jerusalem. They drop out of the picture in Luke's depiction.

**Third**, Paul and Barnabas with their delegation traveled over land, as Luke says, they διήρχοντο τὴν τε Φοινίκην καὶ Σαμάρειαν. Two regions are specified by Luke as their route. Φοινίκη, Phoenicia, was the territory along the Mediterranean coast southward from below Antioch into Samaria.<sup>196</sup> It stretched all the way to Mt. Carmel and included the cities of Tyre<sup>197</sup> and Sidon.<sup>198</sup> Samaria, Σαμάρεια, was the next territory before reaching Judea and Jerusalem. The arrows on the above map indicating the understood route are highly questionable. Luke clearly says they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, not around them: διήρχοντο τὴν τε Φοινίκην καὶ



<sup>195</sup>“προπέμπω impf. προέπεμπον; fut. 3 pl. προπέμψουσιν Judth 10:15; 1 aor. προέπεμψα, pass. προεπέμψθη (Hom. et al.; ins, pap, LXX; TestSol 22:16 P; JosAs 22:7; Ar. [Milne p. 76 ln. 38]; Just., D. 19, 4) ‘send forth’ . . . .”

2. to assist someone in making a journey, *send on one's way* with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc. (1 Macc 12:4; 1 Esdr 4:47; EpArist 172) τινά someone **1 Cor 16:11**. W. δέχεσθαι Pol 1:1. σπουδαίως **Tit 3:13**. ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ **3J 6**. W. the destination given οὗ ἔαν πορεύομαι **1 Cor 16:6**. Pass. w. ὑπό τινος **Ac 15:3**. Also w. the destination: εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν **2 Cor 1:16**; ἐκεῖ **Ro 15:24**.—M.-M.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 873.]

<sup>196</sup>“Φοινίκη, ης, ἢ (Hom.+.) **Phoenicia**, in NT times the name of the seacoast of central Syria, w. Tyre and Sidon as the most important cities Ac 11:19; 15:3; 21:2. HGuthe, RE XVIII 1906, 280–302 (lit.); SMoscatti, D. Phœniquer '66; Pauly-W. XVII '36, 350–80; Kl. Pauly IV 796–98; BHHW III 1464–68.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1062.]

<sup>197</sup>“One of the most ancient towns on the Phoenician coast. Tyre (M.R. 168297) is situated about 40 km S of Sidon, and about 45 km N of Acco. In antiquity it was an island ca. 600–750 m from the mainland (Curtius *Hist. of Alex.* 4.2.7), but since the time of Alexander the Great (actually beginning in the summer of 332 B.C.) the island has been linked with the mainland by a causeway, which has broadened over the centuries. Thus, Tyre is now a peninsula. With a few exceptions, it has been occupied continuously from the middle of the 3d millennium B.C. through the Greco-Roman and Byzantine periods. Consequently, the Bible is full of references to this important city.” [H. J. Katzenstein, “Tyre (Place)” In vol. 6, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 686.]

<sup>198</sup>“A city of ancient Phoenicia. The Greek geographer Strabo mentions Sidon as one of the most ancient of the Phoenician cities (16.2.22). Situated on the E Mediterranean coast about 25 miles N of Tyre, Sidon (modern Saïda, 33°32' N; 35°22' E) was prominent from a very early period. The city is paired with Tyre in the Epic of Kirta from Ugarit (KTU 1.14.IV.35, 39 [šdynm]), a composition that is probably centuries older than the extant copy dated about 1345 B.C.E. A Hittite incantation from early in the 14th century B.C.E. mentions Sidon ahead of Tyre in a list of cities and regions (ANET, 352). In the Amarna correspondence, Sidon appears repeatedly as a leader of the anti-Egyptian coalition of city-states (on the chronology, see Katzenstein 1973:29–45).” [Philip C. Schmitz, “Sidon (Place)” In vol. 6, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 17.]

Σαμάρειαν. Thus their trip could have involved ship travel in some parts as they made their way down the eastern Mediterranean coast. Luke’s use of the imperfect tense form of διέρχομαι, “they were passing through,” stresses maximum contact with already established Christian communities in numerous small towns and villages along this route.<sup>199</sup> These churches likely had come out of Paul’s persecution as a Pharisee of Christianity in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1)<sup>200</sup> or perhaps from the continuous spread of Christianity in the region during this period (cf. Acts 12:24).<sup>201</sup> Whatever their origin, there were flourishing congregations all through these two regions along the Mediterranean coast. Paul and his delegation took time to visit them and share with them what God had been doing in their ministry.

**Fourth,** Luke stresses that Paul and his group were ἐκδιηγούμενοι τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν τῶν ἐθνῶν, “**explaining in detail the conversion of the Gentiles.**” The contextual signals suggest that these were either dominantly Jewish or exclusively Jewish congregations, who might have not been overjoyed at this news. But in fact Luke indicates that Paul and Barnabas in their reports brought joy to all these congregations: καὶ ἐποίουν χαρὰν μεγάλην πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς. These believers now lived far enough from Jerusalem and Judea that they possessed much greater openness to this radical departure from the past than was present further south in Judea. Their daily lives interacted much more frequently with non-Jews in where they lived. As a consequence this news of the marvelous ways that God was working outside traditional Jewish circles was exciting news to these people. Although the language of Luke here only demands an explanation of what had been happening in Antioch, it is difficult to imagine that Paul and Barnabas didn’t give major attention to the outreach of the Gospel during the first missionary journey as well. This positive reception of their work stood in direct contrast to the criticism of it by the Jerusalem delegation that had come to Antioch. This was encouraging to these missionaries as they made their way to Jerusalem and the meeting with the church and its leaders there.

### 5.1.2 Victory in Jerusalem, Acts 15:4-29; Gal 2:1-10

**Acts 15:4** When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. **5** But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, “It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.”

**6** The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. **7** After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. **8** And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; **9** and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. **10** Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? **11** On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”

**12** The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles. **13** After they finished speaking, James replied, “My brothers, listen to me. **14** Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. **15** This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written,

**16** ‘After this I will return,  
and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen;  
from its ruins I will rebuild it,  
and I will set it up,

**17** so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—  
even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called.

Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things **18** known from long ago.’

**19** Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, **20** but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. **21** For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues.”

<sup>199</sup>Interestingly Luke ‘book ends’ this trip with two Aorist participles (προπεμφθέντες, “**having been sent,**” v. 3; παραγενόμενοι, “**having arrived,**” v. 4) with the imperfect tense verbs describing the trip. This writing strategy adds vividness to the reference to the trip south from Antioch to Jerusalem passing through Phoenicia and Samaria.

<sup>200</sup>**Acts 8:1** NRSV. **That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria.**

Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ διωγμὸς μέγας ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τὴν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις· πάντες δὲ διεσπάρησαν κατὰ τὰς χώρας τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Σαμαρείας πλὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων.

<sup>201</sup>**Acts 12:24** NRSV. But the word of God continued to advance and gain adherents. Ὁ δὲ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἠῤῥξανε καὶ ἐπληθύνετο.

22 Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers, 23 with the following letter: “The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the believers of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. 24 Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds, 25 we have decided unanimously to choose representatives and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: 29 that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

4 παραγενόμενοι δὲ εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα παρεδέχθησαν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, ἀνήγγειλάν τε ὅσα ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν μετ’ αὐτῶν. 5 ἐξάνεστησαν δὲ τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευκότες, λέγοντες ὅτι δεῖ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς παραγγέλλειν τε τηρεῖν τὸν νόμον Μωϋσέως.

6 Συνήχθησαν τε οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἰδεῖν περὶ τοῦ λόγου τούτου. 7 πολλῆς δὲ ζητήσεως γενομένης ἀναστὰς Πέτρος εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε ὅτι ἀφ’ ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεὸς διὰ τοῦ στόματός μου ἀκοῦσαι τὰ ἔθνη τὸν λόγον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου καὶ πιστεῦσαι, 8 καὶ ὁ καρδιογνώστης θεὸς ἐμαρτύρησεν αὐτοῖς δοῦς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον καθὼς καὶ ἡμῖν, 9 καὶ οὐθὲν διεκρίνειν μεταξύ ἡμῶν τε καὶ αὐτῶν, τῇ πίστει καθαρῆς τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν. 10 νῦν οὖν τί πειράζετε τὸν θεόν, ἐπιθεῖναι ζυγὸν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον τῶν μαθητῶν ὃν οὔτε οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν οὔτε ἡμεῖς ἰσχύσαμεν βαστάσαι; 11 ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ πιστεύομεν σωθῆναι καθ’ ὃν τρόπον κάκεῖνοι.

12 Ἐσίγησεν δὲ πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος, καὶ ἤκουον Βαρναβᾶ καὶ Παύλου ἐξηγουμένων ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν δι’ αὐτῶν. 13 μετὰ δὲ τὸ σιγῆσαι αὐτοὺς ἀπεκρίθη Ἰάκωβος λέγων· Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἀκούσατέ μου. 14 Συμεὼν ἐξηγήσατο καθὼς πρῶτον ὁ θεὸς ἐπεσκέψατο λαβεῖν ἐξ ἐθνῶν λαὸν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. 15 καὶ τούτῳ συμφωνοῦσιν οἱ λόγοι τῶν προφητῶν, καθὼς γέγραπται· 16 Μετὰ ταῦτα ἀναστρέψω καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀνοικοδομήσω καὶ ἀνορθώσω αὐτήν, 17 ὅπως ἂν ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν κύριον, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ’ οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ’ αὐτούς, λέγει κύριος ποιῶν ταῦτα 18 γνωστὰ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος. 19 διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω μὴ παρενοχλεῖν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐπιστρέφουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, 20 ἀλλὰ ἐπιστεῖλαι αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων καὶ τῆς πορνείας καὶ τοῦ πνικτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος· 21 Μωϋσῆς γὰρ ἐκ γενεῶν ἀρχαίων κατὰ πόλιν τοῦς κηρύσσοντας αὐτὸν ἔχει ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἀναγινωσκόμενος.

22 Τότε ἔδοξε τοῖς ἀποστόλοις καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις σὺν ὅλῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐκλεξαμένους ἄνδρας ἐξ αὐτῶν πέμψαι εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν σὺν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ, Ἰούδαν τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν καὶ Σιλᾶν, ἄνδρας ἡγουμένους ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, 23 γράψαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν· Οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἀδελφοί τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς ἐξ ἐθνῶν χαίρειν. 24 ἐπειδὴ ἠκούσαμεν ὅτι τινὲς ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξεληθόντες ἐτάραξαν ὑμᾶς λόγοις ἀνασκευάζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν οἷς οὐ διεστειλάμεθα, 25 ἔδοξεν ἡμῖν γενομένοις ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐκλεξαμένοις ἄνδρας πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς σὺν τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἡμῶν Βαρναβᾶ καὶ Παύλῳ, 26 ἀνθρώποις παραδεδωκόσι τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. 27 ἀπεστάλκαμεν οὖν Ἰούδαν καὶ Σιλᾶν, καὶ αὐτοὺς διὰ λόγου ἀπαγγέλλοντας τὰ αὐτά. 28 ἔδοξεν γὰρ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν μηδὲν πλέον ἐπιτίθεσθαι ὑμῖν βᾶρος πλὴν τούτων τῶν ἐπάναγκες, 29 ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας· ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε. ἔρρωσθε.

This episodic narrative is full of shifting scenes and is combined with speech summaries. Sorting these out provides the better way to interpret the text. Scene one in vv. 4-5 sets up the narrative with the reception Paul and his delegation from Antioch received at Jerusalem (v. 4), and includes also the counter argument from the opposing viewpoint (v. 5). Scene two in vv. 6-11 details the leadership meeting in which Peter addresses the group. Scene three in v. 12 contains a brief depiction of the report of Paul and Barnabas. Scene four in vv. 13-21 describe James’ speech and leadership over the meeting. Scene five in vv. 22-29 describes the agreement of the entire Jerusalem church with its leaders in support of Paul and Barnabas and the church at Antioch.

One preliminary question relates to the labeling of this meeting in Jerusalem. More often than not it is called either the Jerusalem Council or the Apostolic Council. The problem with this is the misleading nature of such labels. The later church councils some centuries afterwards, although taking something of a clue from this meeting, took on a very different nature than what is described by Luke in chapter fifteen.<sup>202</sup> Thus I will not use

<sup>202c</sup>This meeting has often been referred to as the Apostolic Council. That is really a misnomer, because the meeting as described is not a solemn assembly of authorities from all over the church. Moreover, it is never counted as one of the councils in the history of Christianity. Yet when one reflects on the issue that is discussed and its doctrinal significance for the future of the church, one can see why it might be regarded as a sort of ‘Council.’ (So I retain the name and put it in quotation marks.) It is, in effect, the episode in the early church that eventually leads to the convening of official councils of later date.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 543.]

I appreciate the honesty and careful scholarship of Father Fitzmyer, a Roman Catholic scholar, on this distinction.

the label council to refer to this meeting; instead terms like ‘meeting,’ ‘conference,’ etc. are more accurate and diminish confusion with the later formal church councils in ancient Christian history.

**Scene one (vv. 4-5): Reception in Jerusalem.** 4 παραγενόμενοι δὲ εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα παρεδέχθησαν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, ἀνήγγειλάν τε ὅσα ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν μετ’ αὐτῶν. 5 ἐξανέστησαν δὲ τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευκότες, λέγοντες ὅτι δεῖ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς παραγγέλλειν τε τηρεῖν τὸν νόμον Μωϋσέως. **4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. 5 But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, “It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.”**



The reception of the Antioch group in Jerusalem was mixed. Luke indicates that the leadership and the church as a whole enthusiastically welcomed the group, but one segment that opposed what was happening in Antioch vigorously opposed the delegation. Thus Luke sets up the narrative for the confrontation over Christian belief that would be the centerpiece of the meeting.

The positive reception of Paul, Barnabas, and the other members of the group from Antioch included the church (τῆς ἐκκλησίας), the apostles (τῶν ἀποστόλων), and the local leaders (καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων).<sup>203</sup> Luke defines the reception with the verb παρεδέχθησαν, which in this context specifies acceptance into the presence of someone in a hospitable manner.<sup>204</sup> Given the various reports of what was taking place in Antioch, and the travels of Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey, I quite confident that the Christian community in Jerusalem was keenly interested in getting a first hand report from members of the church at Antioch.

The other part of this positive reception related to the reporting (ἀνήγγειλάν<sup>205</sup>) of the group regarding ὅσα

<sup>203</sup>“There is little doubt that παρεδέχθησαν is what Luke wrote, though ὑπεδέχ. and ἀπεδέχ. both have some slight support; the ad-verb μέγας is added by C D (\*) 6 614 1704 pc sy<sup>h\*</sup> sa — the Western editor, notwithstanding his revision of v. 2, wished to underline the warmth of the welcome accorded to Paul, Barnabas, and their colleagues when they reached Jerusalem. This confirms the view that he is emphasizing what he finds rather than introducing new points of view.

“They were welcomed by (Metzger 428 takes the more Semitic ἀπὸ (B C 36 453 1175 pc) to be original rather than ὑπό (P<sup>74</sup> κ A D E Ψ M)) the church and the apostles and elders. Church (ἐκκλησία) here probably refers to those Christians who did not hold office, whether as apostles or elders. For the extent to which (in Luke’s view) these members participated in the Council see on 15:6, 12, 22, 23. For the apostles and elders see on v. 2. Wilson (Gentiles 182), following Wikenhauser and Stählin, suggests that in the present verse we have a preliminary open meeting, whereas in 15:6 there is a meeting of the apostles and elders alone, at which ‘the real business was decided’.”

[C. K. Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 703-04.]

<sup>204</sup>παράδεχομαι fut. παραδέξομαι; 1 aor. παρεδεξάμην. Pass.: 1 fut. pass. παραδεχθήσομαι; 1 aor. παρεδέχθην (Hom.+)

**1. to acknowledge someth. to be correct, accept,** w. a thing as obj. in the acc. (Epict. 3, 12, 15; BGU 1119, 54 [I A.D.] τὴν συντίμησιν; PRyl 229, 16; PFay 125, 10; Ex 23:1; 3 Macc 7:12; Just., D. 12, 2) τὸν λόγον **Mk 4:20** (Diocles 112 p. 163, 18 παραδ. τὸν λόγον; Plut., Mor. 47e; Philo, Leg. All. 3, 199). ἔθη **Ac 16:21**. μαρτυρίαν **22:18**. τί ἄλλο **Ac 1 Cor 2:34**. κατηγορίαν **1 Ti 5:19** (Sextus 259 διαβολὰς κατὰ φιλοσόφου μὴ παραδέχου). Receive erroneous teachings **I Eph 9:1**. (Opp. παραιτεῖσθαι) τὰ κτισθέντα **Dg 4:2**.

**2. to accept the presence of someone in a hospitable manner, receive, accept,** w. a pers. as obj. in the acc. (POxy 492, 8; 14; 1676, 28; BGU 27:10; Jos., C. Ap. 2, 256; 258) dissidents **ISm 4:1**. θεὸν τὸν παραδεχόμενον ἡμᾶς (w. καλεῖν) **2 Cl 16:1**. Pass. (2 Macc 4:22 Cod. V) **Ac 15:4** (v.l. ἀπεδέχθησαν). Take back a wife who was dismissed for adultery **Hm 4, 1, 8a; pass. 4, 1, 7; 8b**. Of a citizen who wishes to return to his home city after living in a strange land, pass. **Hs 1:5**.—Corresp. to πᾶν receive favorably=love (Pr 3:12) **Hb 12:6; 1 Cl 56:4**.—M-M.”

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 761.]

<sup>205</sup>ἀναγγέλλω fut. ἀναγγεῶ; 1 aor. ἀνήγγειλα, inf. ἀναγγεῖλαι; pf. ἀνήγγειλα 1 Km 3:13. Pass.: fut. 3 sg. ἀναγγελήσεται Ps 21:31; 2 aor. ἀνηγγέλην (B-D-F §76, 1; Mlt-H. 226); s. Anz 283f on the history of this word (Aeschyl., Thu.+)

**1. w. full force of ἀνά, to carry back information, to report,** of pers. returning fr. a place (X., An. 1, 3, 21; Gen 9:22; Jdth 11:15) **Mk 5:14** v.l. τινί τι: **Mt 28:11** v.l.; ἀναγγέλλων ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἐπιπόθησιν **2 Cor 7:7**; ἄ. ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός they reported what God had done **Ac 14:27**; cp. **15:4**. μὴ ἀναγγεῖλης ὅσα εἶδες **GJs 20:4**. ταῦτα 23:2 (twice). ἃ εἶδεν 24:2. W. ὅτι foll. **J 4:51f** v.l.; **GJs 24:3**.

**2. gener. to provide information, disclose, announce, proclaim, teach** (=Att. ἀπαγγέλλω, a common usage in ins and pap, but found as early as Aeschyl., Prom. 661, X., et al. On the LXX s. Anz 283f) αἴνεσιν the praise of God **1 Cl 18:15** (Ps 50:17). ποιήσιν χειρῶν the work of God’s hands 27:7 (Ps 18:2). τινί τι (En 13:10; Jos., Bell. 1, 663, Ant. 5, 114) ἄ. ταῦτα τοῖς ἐκλεκτοῖς **Hv 2, 1, 3**; cp. 3, 3, 1. ἄ. τοῖς λοιποῖς τὰ γενόμενα **MPol 15:1**.—W. ἐξομολογεῖσθαι: ἄ. τὰς πράξεις αὐτῶν make their deeds known **Ac 19:18**.—Of a report to officials **Mt 28:11** v.l.; **J 5:15** (v.l. ἀπήγγειλεν; s. Anz 283).—Of proclamation of what is to come in the future (Is 41:22f; Tat. 13:3 πνεῦμα ... διὰ προαγορεύσεων ... το κεκρυμμένον ἀνήγγειλε) through the Spirit τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἄ. ὑμῖν he will proclaim to you what is to come **J 16:13**, cp. vss. **14f, 4:25** (PJoüon, RSR 28, ’38, 234f: ἄ.=report what one has heard).—Of Jesus **J 16:25** v.l.—Of didactic speaking: preach w. διδάσκειν **Ac 20:20**; cp. ἄ. πᾶσαν τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ θεοῦ vs. **27** (cp. Dt 24:8 τὸν νόμον). ἃ νῦν ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν which have now been proclaimed to you **1 Pt 1:12; 1J 1:5**. ἀνηγγεῖλαμεν ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ we proclaimed before him **1 Cl 16:3** (Is 53:2); cp.

ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν μετ’ αὐτῶν, “everything that God had done with them.” In 14:27 the same verb is used to describe Paul and Barnabas’ report to the church at Antioch about the first missionary journey. Luke, uniquely, describes the actions of God “with them,” μετ’ αὐτῶν.<sup>206</sup> The heart of ὅσα ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν is ἡ ἐπιστροφή τῶν ἐθνῶν, “the conversion of the Gentiles,” that the delegation had reported to the churches in Phoenicia and Samaria (v. 4) on the trip down from Antioch.<sup>207</sup>

It was this focus on how God was saving Gentiles solely by their faith commitment to Christ that provoked the negative reaction in the general gathering of the Christian community in Jerusalem. The source of this opposition is defined by Luke as τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευκότες, “some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees.” Clearly these individuals were connected to the Jerusalem group that came to Antioch and created the controversy there at the beginning: τινες κατελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας (v. 1). Whether or not the same individuals now spoke up in Jerusalem is unclear. No indication is given by Luke that this delegation returned to Jerusalem for the meeting. But what Luke does make clear is that this intense insistence on strict orthodoxy that drove members of the group to make the long journey to Antioch was typical of the kind of passionate insistence on Jewish orthodoxy that typified the Pharisees in their hounding of Jesus by traveling from Jerusalem to Galilee to oppose Him. As a Pharisee, Paul himself had been willing to go to extreme lengths in enforce strict Jewish orthodoxy by traveling to Damascus in his persecution of Christians. This mind-set had found lodging inside the Christian community by Jewish members claiming to be believers while continuing to practice the traditions taught by the Pharisees. Interestingly this kind of intense demand for conformity did not come from those with a Sadducean background, since these individuals were very open to Hellenistic ideas traditionally. How many of these Jews became a part of the Christian movement is never mentioned, perhaps because of their aristocratic background and concentrated living being centered in Jerusalem, which meant that Christianity had little appeal to them.

Were these individuals authentic believers? Luke uses the language of believing about them, πεπιστευκότες. But does this mean authentic faith or merely publicly professed faith? Luke can use πιστεύω with both meanings in Acts.<sup>208</sup> Luke seems to take a public profession of faith at face value without clearly signaling whether he believes it to be genuine or not. On the other hand, when Paul describes these same people in the Jerusalem meeting he leaves no doubt whatsoever that he did not consider them to be genuine believers. Note his characterization of them in Gal. 2:4, διὰ δὲ τοῦς παρεισάκτους ψευδαδέλφους, οἵτινες παρεισήλθον κατασκοπεῖσαι τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἡμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν, “But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us.” As a fellow Pharisee himself, he could spot false claims to religious devotion about the Pharisees better than others in the Christian community without that background and training.

The essence of their objection was not that Gentiles were professing faith in Christ. Rather, they were bypassing the essential step of proselyte Jewish conversion as a part of Christian conversion: δεῖ περιτέμναι αὐτοὺς παραγγέλλειν τε τηρεῖν τὸν νόμον Μωϋσέως. Circumcision and formal commitment to obey the Torah were the two key aspects of Jewish proselyte conversion during this period of time.<sup>209</sup> Luke states that representatives of this group ‘stood up’ and verbalized their objections to the preaching of Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles: Ἐξανέστησαν.... λέγοντες ὅτι.<sup>210</sup> It is important to note that their words were directed not just to the leaders in

GEb 121, 29. *περί τινος* **Ro 15:21** (Is 52:15); 2 Cl 17:5.—M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 59.]

<sup>206</sup>This idea of God doing something in association with individuals is only found in Luke. But the idea of doing something to an individual, τί τινι, either for their benefit or disadvantage is found in NT usage.

“This use of μετά occurs only in Lk. and Acts (Lk. 1:72; 10:37; Acts 14:27; 15:4); Wilcox 84 considers whether it is taken from the LXX or direct Semitic influence. The former is the likelier alternative.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, The international critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 704.]

<sup>207</sup>The verb ἀνήγγειλάν in v. 4 is parallel to the participle ἐκδιηγούμενοι in verse 3.

<sup>208</sup>Cf. Acts 2:44 (+), 4:4 (+), 4:32 (+) but 8:13 (-) and 13:12 (?).

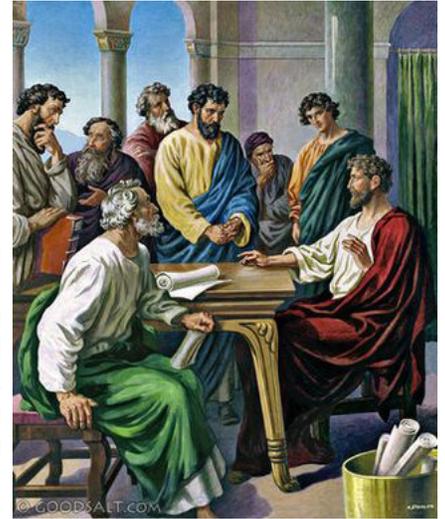
<sup>209</sup>“The reason for their insistence has been set forth in 15:1: circumcision and observance of the Mosaic law are conditions necessary for salvation. Their demands are based on the way they interpret God’s words to Abraham in Gen 17:10–14 (cf. Josh 5:2–9) and to Moses in Deut 5:28–33.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 545–46.]

<sup>210</sup>ἐξανίστημι (s. ἀνίστημι) fut. ἐξαναστήσω; 1 aor. ἐξανέστησα; 2 aor. ἐξανέστην; pf. 3 sg. ἐξανέστηκεν Ezk 7:10.

**1. to cause to stir from a position, raise up, awaken** (Soph., Hdt. et al.; LXX; Jos., Ant. 5, 46) τινά someone 1 Cl 26:2 (quot. of uncertain orig.; possibly Ps 70:21f LXX?). τοὺς ἀσθενοῦντας raise up the weak 59:4.

Jerusalem but to the entire gathered assembly that included both leaders and members at large. While the larger group was welcoming the delegation from Antioch, these representatives threw cold water on this warm reception with their critical demands that things were not be done properly in Antioch.

**Scene two (vv. 6-11): Apostolic view expressed by Peter.** 6 Συνήχθησάν τε οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἰδεῖν περὶ τοῦ λόγου τούτου. 7 πολλῆς δὲ ζητήσεως γενομένης ἀναστὰς Πέτρος εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς· Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε ὅτι ἀφ’ ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεὸς διὰ τοῦ στόματός μου ἀκοῦσαι τὰ ἔθνη τὸν λόγον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου καὶ πιστεῦσαι, 8 καὶ ὁ καρδιογνώστης θεὸς ἐμαρτύρησεν αὐτοῖς δοὺς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον καθὼς καὶ ἡμῖν, 9 καὶ οὐθὲν διέκρινεν μεταξὺ ἡμῶν τε καὶ αὐτῶν, τῇ πίστει καθάρισας τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν. 10 νῦν οὖν τί πειράζετε τὸν θεόν, ἐπιθεῖναι ζυγὸν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον τῶν μαθητῶν ὃν οὔτε οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν οὔτε ἡμεῖς ἰσχύσαμεν βαστάσαι; 11 ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ πιστεύομεν σωθῆναι καθ’ ὃν τρόπον κἀκεῖνοι. **6 The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. 7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. 8 And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; 9 and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. 10 Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? 11 On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”**



One of the debates among modern scholars is whether scene two shifts from a public meeting of the entire Christian community to a private meeting of just the leadership.<sup>211</sup> The likely situation is that scenes two through four (vv. 6-21) reflect the private meeting with a general meeting at the beginning (scene one) and at the end (scene five). One should not imagine that all this took place in one day. Much more likely is that this extended over a period of several days, perhaps even weeks. Luke is only giving us a bird’s eye summation, not a detailed accounting of everything that took place. Paul unquestionably indicates that the intense confrontation with his opponents at Jerusalem took place privately, rather than publicly (Gal. 2:2):

καὶ ἀνεθέμην αὐτοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, **κατ’ ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς δοκοῦσιν**, μή πως εἰς κενὸν τρέχω ἢ ἔδραμον.

Then I laid before them (**though only in a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders**) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure that I was not running, or had not run, in vain.

Clearly the controversial nature of this objection was such that it needed detailed discussion and debate in order to find proper resolution. And this debate did not need to be done publicly, but privately where the parties involved could freely express their viewpoints. A public forum would have exposed Christianity to the outside world as being shaken by internal dissension and divisiveness. Once the issue was resolved to the satisfaction of the leadership, the proposed solution was presented to the entire congregation in a public meeting brought together later after the leaders had hammered out the solution.

What appears interesting is that James, not Peter, presides over both the public and private segments of this conference. James as the leader of the οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, who were the local house church leaders in Jerusalem, has now come to the forefront of the Christian movement, while Peter as the spokesman for the apostles (οἱ ἀπόστολοι) has taken on a new leadership role that is regional and less localized in nature. Peter is not functioning in the role of the first pope in this meeting at Jerusalem! Nor are the apostles reflecting the much later

**2. to beget progeny, raise up offspring** fig. ext of mng. 1, ἐ. σπέρμα (Gen 19:32, 34) **Mk 12:19; Lk 20:28.**

**3. to come to the fore**, intr. in mid. and 2 aor. act. (Pind., Hdt. et al.; Jos., Bell. 2, 279, Ant. 17, 132 al.; LXX; PsSol 6:4; JosAs 16:14 cod. A and Pal. 364)

**a. stand up** (distinct from others) to speak (X., An. 6, 1, 30) **Ac 15:5.**

**b. rise up** of one who appears on the scene and becomes an object of special attention (Judg 5:7 A; En 15:12) B 4:4.—M-M.

TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 345.]

<sup>211</sup>“It is not said that these Jewish Christians ‘stood up’ in the ‘Council’ (*pan to plēthos*, v 12); the occasion of their demand is rather the welcoming reception of the visitors from Antioch. Their demand follows on the report mentioned at the end of v 4. Conzelmann (Acts, 116) maintains that there is only one ‘plenary assembly,’ to which both vv 4–5 and vv 6–12 refer; similarly Weiser, Apg., 380, but that is far from certain, as Schneider (Apg., 2.179) recognizes. Cf. Pesch, Apg., 2.76.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 545.]

Roman Catholic college of cardinals in their participation. Instead local leaders under the guidance of James are in charge of the meeting and it is James that puts the Jerusalem church's stamp of approval on the decision through the writing of the letter to the church at Antioch.

Luke says that Peter spoke to the leadership meeting that included the apostles and elders (v.6): Συνήχθησαν τε οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἰδεῖν περὶ τοῦ λόγου τούτου. This private meeting was focused -- in Luke's words -- on ἰδεῖν περὶ τοῦ λόγου τούτου, **"to see about this matter."** This has some echoes of the earlier controversy in the Jerusalem church regarding discrimination against the Hellenistic Jewish widows (cf. 6:1-6). Then the apostles were in the leadership role, but now the local elders are in that role. What was being decided was not whether Paul and Barnabas could continue preaching their message. Neither under debate was the continuation of the ministry to the Gentiles by the church at Antioch or by Paul and Barnabas. The apostles and elders in Jerusalem possessed no authority over this other church nor over Paul and Barnabas. Instead, what was being debated and would be decided was whether these two leadership groups in Jerusalem would accept Gentiles into the Christian faith without requiring Jewish proselyte conversion first. Had the Jerusalem leaders taken the side of the Pharisee party inside the church, the ministry at Antioch as well as Paul and Barnabas' work would have continued on without modification or interruption. Paul makes this absolutely clear in his depiction to the Galatians.

What would have happened though is the creation of a huge rift between Jewish oriented Christianity in Jerusalem and the increasingly Gentile focused Christianity centered at Antioch. This would have given a very different contour to the emerging Christian religion out of the middle of the first century. One would need to remember, however, that the warm welcome given the delegation from Antioch upon their arrival in Jerusalem signals that the outcome of this debate was never in doubt. The private leadership meeting simply allowed these leaders to give a hearing to the Jerusalem members opposed to this trend inside Christianity. It also allowed them to address this issue in ways that could only sharpen and clarify their position on the nature of salvation and how it could be received by all humanity.

Luke indicates that in this private leadership meeting Πολλῆς δὲ ζητήσεως γενομένης ἀναστὰς Πέτρος εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς, **"and after much debate had taken place Peter stood up and spoke to them..."**. The issue was fully discussed and debated by these leaders. Paul and Barnabas, and perhaps others from outside Jerusalem, were present in the meeting but not participating in the debate until asked to contribute. This was a decision being made locally at Jerusalem, not a universal decision for all of Christianity. How long this meeting continue is not specified by Luke. Given the very summary nature of his narration, it most likely extended over several days. Thus somewhat in climax and for purposes of summarizing the view of the apostles, Peter addresses these leaders.

When Peter stood before the assembled group of leaders, he spoke not for himself but for the apostles. Note that he appealed to his own previous experience with Cornelius (vv. 7-9), before summarizing the apostles' view in the first person plural, 'we,' in v. 11. The second person plural, 'you,' in verse ten seems to target the local elders, some of whom possibly sympathized with the opposition element in the church.<sup>212</sup>

In his personal experience appeal, Peter reminded them of God selecting him from the Jerusalem church to preach the Gospel to Gentiles: Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε ὅτι ἀφ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων ἐν ὑμῖν ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεὸς διὰ τοῦ στόματός μου ἀκοῦσαι τὰ ἔθνη τὸν λόγον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου<sup>213</sup> καὶ πιστεῦσαι, **"My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers."** Peter's reference to ἀφ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων, the early days, alludes to his experience of the roof top vision in Joppa that led to his preaching to the Roman soldier Cornelius (cf. Acts 10:1-48) at Caesarea. At the beginning the expansion of the Gospel beyond Jews was done with the direction of Philip in Samaria with Peter and John validating the legitimacy of this (Acts 8:4-25). Then sometime afterwards the opportunity with Cornelius took place. In His wisdom moved first within the church at Jerusalem with and through key leaders in the congregation to broaden the horizons of the Jewish believers. But the Jerusalem congregation did not do much beyond these two events to include Gentiles. Of course, in Judea not very many non-Jews would be

<sup>212</sup>Given the direct mentioning of just two groups present in this meeting, οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι (v. 6), the us / you frame of reference in Peter's words can only apply to 'we apostles' and 'you elders.'

<sup>213</sup>"This the first time in his two-volume work that Luke uses *euangelion*, 'gospel'; it will appear only once again, on the lips of Paul in 20:24. The phrase 'the word of the gospel' occurs only here in the NT. For some reason that escapes us, Luke generally seems to have avoided *euangelion*, which otherwise so aptly sums up the Christian message about Jesus Christ, especially as announced to Gentiles; see *Luke*, 172-74. Schneider's explanation (Apg., 2.179 n. 46) runs: 'Gospel is for Luke the proclamation of the apostles among the heathen.'" [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 547.]

found, so there was not much pressure or incentive to push the boundaries of inclusion in Jerusalem. And those few Gentiles in the Jerusalem church were proselytes who had already converted to Judaism before becoming Christians (e.g., Nicolaus in Acts 6:5). Such individuals posed no issue for the Jewish Christians in the city. In fact, very likely appeals had been made that all Gentiles should follow the example of Nicolaus and other Gentile converts in the Jerusalem church. Emphasis was given to the reality that this initiative in Caesarea came from God, and not Peter. The apostle was merely the divinely chosen vehicle through which God worked.

The importance of this earlier event can not be stressed too much. Although it was controversial back in Jerusalem at the time (cf. 11:1-18), Peter's report to the Jerusalem church satisfied the majority of believers in Jerusalem so that the criticism was silenced and acceptance of what Peter did was granted: ἀκούσαντες δὲ ταῦτα ἡσύχασαν καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν λέγοντες· Ἄρα καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὁ θεὸς τὴν μετάνοιαν εἰς ζωὴν ἔδωκεν, "When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, 'Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.'"

The second part of his recollection of the Cornelius event in vv. 8-9 stresses the spiritual aspect of what God did in Caesarea: 8 καὶ ὁ καρδιογνώστης θεὸς ἐμαρτύρησεν αὐτοῖς δοὺς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον καθὼς καὶ ἡμῖν, 9 καὶ οὐθὲν διέκρινεν μεταξὺ ἡμῶν τε καὶ αὐτῶν, τῇ πίστει καθάρισας τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν, "8 And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; 9 and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us." What Peter alludes to here is what Luke had described in 10:34-48, and that Peter had earlier reported to the Jerusalem church in 11:15-17. Even before Peter finished preaching to the assembled group of Gentiles the Holy Spirit came upon these Gentiles in a visually obvious fashion that somewhat paralleled the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2). The emphasis on conversion as the coming of the Holy Spirit in an obvious manner gave visual verification of the divine acceptance of Gentiles on a faith response basis without proselyte Jewish conversion to Peter and the others present that day. This was Peter's conclusion initially (Acts 10:46b-48):

τότε ἀπεκρίθη Πέτρος· 47 Μῆτι τὸ ὕδωρ δύναται κωλύσαι τις τοῦ μὴ βαπτισθῆναι τούτους οἵπινες τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔλαβον ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς; 48 προσέταξεν δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ βαπτισθῆναι. τότε ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν ἐπιμεῖναι ἡμέρας τινάς.

Then Peter said, 47 "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

Additionally it was the conclusion reached by the church in Jerusalem when Peter reported his actions to them afterwards (11:18):

ἀκούσαντες δὲ ταῦτα ἡσύχασαν καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν λέγοντες· Ἄρα καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὁ θεὸς τὴν μετάνοιαν εἰς ζωὴν ἔδωκεν.

When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

Thus the Jerusalem church in reality had already made the decision of including Gentiles solely on the basis of their faith response. But this was an isolated event that happened several years before, and evidently had not been repeated in connection to the Jerusalem church again. Plus, Cornelius lived in Caesarea quite some distance away from Jerusalem and thus this Gentile convert was not constantly before their eyes as a reminder. Probably this had given space for the alternative viewpoint to develop inside the Jerusalem church. Now it had to be addressed again and this time more decisively, because the reports coming in were suggesting that a flood of Gentiles were coming into Christianity rather than a few isolated instances. The rigidly traditionalist atmosphere prevailing in Jerusalem generally was felt inside the church and this news about Gentiles was very threatening.

Peter's conclusion was clear and to the point: καὶ οὐθὲν διέκρινεν μεταξὺ ἡμῶν τε καὶ αὐτῶν, τῇ πίστει καθάρισας τὰς καρδίας αὐτῶν, "and in cleansing their hearts by faith He has made no distinction between them and us." Peter had witnessed with his own eyes a divine confirmation that Gentiles and Jews were saved the exact same way, by a faith response to the Gospel. Earlier the Jerusalem church had acknowledged the legitimacy of that understanding; now they needed to reaffirm it more decisively.

At this point, Peter spoke directly to the πρεσβύτεροι segment of leaders (i.e., the "you" segment) with a probing question (v. 10):

νῦν οὖν τί πειράζετε τὸν θεόν, ἐπιθεῖναι ζυγὸν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον τῶν μαθητῶν ὃν οὔτε οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν οὔτε ἡμεῖς ἰσχύσαμεν βαστάσαι;

Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear?

Strong accusatory tones are built into this rhetorical question. Implicit is most likely the reality that some of the

πρεσβύτεροι were sympathetic to the opposition element, if not themselves members of the Pharisee group in the church. Very likely the latter was the case, since these individuals with extensive knowledge of and training in the Hebrew Bible as Pharisees would have been natural leaders among the house church groups in the city. Peter's graphic language accuses them of putting an impossible 'yoke' (ζυγόν) on the necks of 'disciples' (ἐπί τὸν τράχηλον τῶν μαθητῶν), who were Gentiles. He reminded them that neither the Jews of that day nor their ancestors had successfully worn that yoke. The image comes from oxen pulling a plow with a yoke attached around their necks which was attached to the plow. In its figurative meaning here, the yoke represents Torah obedience imposed on people. The logic behind Peter's question is clear: If we Jews can't even obey adequately the Torah, how can we then impose it on Gentiles? His larger point is that God did not make such an imposition, and for these leaders to attempt to do it constituted a sinful provocation (πειράζετε) of God Himself. Not something that any sensible person would try to do!



The corollary position, already adopted by οἱ ἀπόστολοι whom Peter represented (the 'we' group), was clear (v. 11): ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ πιστεύομεν σωθῆναι καθ' ὃν τρόπον κάκεῖνοι, "On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." Thus in blunt fashion Peter positioned himself and the apostles firmly with Paul and Barnabas on this issue. It would now be up to James, the leader of οἱ πρεσβύτεροι to position the local leaders on one side or the other of this issue.

**Scene three (v. 12): Report of Paul and Barnabas.** 12 Ἐσίγησεν δὲ πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος, καὶ ἤκουον Βαρναβᾶ καὶ Παύλου ἐξηγουμένων ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν δι' αὐτῶν. **12 The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles.**

Before James addresses the group,<sup>214</sup> Paul and Barnabas are given opportunity to present their case by explaining what had been going on in their ministry among the Gentiles.<sup>215</sup> Luke does not recap the details which he has already described at length in chapters thirteen and fourteen. But he does summarize their report to the leaders stressing the same theme as Peter's speech has stressed: God validated His approval of the preaching of the Gospel with visible expressions of His power and authority: ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν δι' αὐτῶν.<sup>216</sup>

To be clear, only two miracles by Paul are recorded on the first missionary journey: the blinding of Bar-Jesus at Paphos on Cyprus (13:11) and the healing of the crippled man at Lystra (14:8-10). But mention of σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα taking place at Iconium is given in 14:3.<sup>217</sup> Luke does not put much emphasis on the miraculous as a part of the first missionary journey.<sup>218</sup> And no mentioning of any miracle is given in his account of the church at

<sup>214</sup>Although Luke's phrase πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος (v. 12, "all the crowd") could be taken to mean τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, (v. 4, "the church, and apostles and elders"), the context favors it referring to οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, (v. 6, "the apostles and the elders") meaning the leadership group in private session, rather than a general session. According to v. 4b, Paul and Barnabas had already related the working of God among the Gentiles to the general session.

<sup>215</sup>To the general assembly Paul and Barnabas had described (v. 4) ὅσα ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν μετ' αὐτῶν, "what all God had done with them." But to the leadership group of apostles and elders they described (v. 12) ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν δι' αὐτῶν, "what all God had done in signs and wonders among the Gentiles through them." The common stress is on the actions of God, done either in association with them or through them for the benefit of Gentiles.

<sup>216</sup>The divine accreditation is seen to come from Jesus' miracles, called dynamis, 'powers, powerful deeds,' the term regularly used for his miracles in the Gospels (Luke 10:13; 19:37; cf. Luke, 542-43, 581-82, 853); it will be used of Paul's miracles in Acts 19:11. To it Luke joins *terata kai semeia*, 'portents and signs,' a phrase occurring again in 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 14:3; 15:12. This phrase is derived from the LXX, where it often describes God's mighty acts on behalf of Israel (e.g. Exod 7:3; Deut 4:34; 28:46; 29:2; 34:11; Ps 135:9; Isa 8:18). Cf. Josephus, J.W. 1.0.11 §28." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 255.]

<sup>217</sup>His mentioning of σημεῖα, signs (singular, σημεῖον), is limited to chapters two through fifteen: 2:19, 22, 43; 4:16, 30; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 8:6, 13; 14:3; 15:12. The use of τέρατα (singular, τέρας) is found in Acts 2:22, 43; 4:40; 5:12; 6:8; 7:36; 14:3; 15:12. The use of both in the plural shows up in Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 14:3; 15:12 in the sequence of σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα. Only in Acts 2:22 does he use the full gamut of words for the miraculous: δυνάμεις καὶ τέρασι καὶ σημείοις. The more common word for miracle, δύναμις, in the New Testament generally is only used by Luke in Acts 2:22; 8:13; and 19:11. In Acts 8:13 δύναμις is used with signs σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις μεγάλας in reference to the work of Philip. The δυνάμεις of Paul are mentioned in 19:11. Thus, when a miraculous action in Paul's ministry is mentioned after 15:12, Luke calls it a δύναμις rather than either a σημεῖον or a τέρας. But when miracles are done through either Peter and/or the apostles, Luke refers to them as σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα (2:43; 4:30; 5:12). Philip did σημεῖα (8:6) or σημεῖα καὶ δυνάμεις (8:13).

<sup>218</sup>Six of the miracle stories in the gospel of Mark are not included in the gospel of Luke; five of these (Mark 6:45-52; 7:24-30; 7:31-37; 8:1-10; 8:22-26) occur in Mark 6:45-8:26, the "Great Omission." Whether the evangelist did not include the cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11:12-14, 20) so as not to cast doubt on Jesus' rationality or his ethical character is unclear (see Cotter 1986; Achtemeier 1975:

Antioch (11:19-28; 12:25-13:3). Thus the emphasis on the miraculous in the report is driven by concerns other (548). Common to Luke and Matthew (“Q”) are Luke 7:1–10 = Matt 8:5–13 and probably Luke 11:14 = Matt 12:22. Peculiar to Luke are 5:1–11; 7:11–17; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 17:11–19; 22:50–51, and the resurrection and ascension accounts (24:13–35, 36–49, 50–53).

Among the NT gospels only the gospel of Luke has a sequel by the same author—the Acts of the Apostles—and the two writings illuminate one another, also in the miracle accounts (see Achtemeier 1975; Conzelmann 1960: 177–83; Held 1963: 277, n. 2). The characterization of Jesus in Peter’s missionary sermon in Acts 2 as “a man attested to you by God in mighty works and wonders and signs” (2:22; cf. Acts 10:38) is an apt summary of the evangelist’s treatment of the synoptic miracle traditions. Unlike the gospel of Mark, which has proportionately more miracle stories than either Matthew or Luke but carefully subordinates them to the passion and death, and unlike Matthew, which uses miracle accounts as vehicles for themes central to that gospel, in the gospel of Luke the focus of the miracle stories is on their evidentiary and missionary function: more than in the other gospels the miracles demonstrate that Jesus is the one anointed by God’s Spirit to carry out a divine mission in fulfillment of God’s promises (Luke 4:18, a quotation from Isa 61:1–2 and 58:6) both through teaching and miracles, which thus serve as the basis of faith and discipleship.

The evangelist’s careful balancing of teaching and miracles, and indeed the prominence he accords miracles, are seen already in the programmatic sermon in the synagogue in Nazareth. Much longer than the parallels in Mark (6:1–6) and Matthew (13:54–58), the sermon, after announcing that Jesus will both teach and work miracles (Luke 4:18–22), refers to miracles he has already performed; the account then concludes with a miracle (4:23–30). Whereas the Markan account of the healing of a leper closes with a summary statement of Jesus’ popularity (1:45), Luke explains that people come “to hear and to be healed” (5:16); similarly, Luke 6:18, “to hear him and to be healed” (Mark 3:8, people come only because they heard what Jesus “did,” i.e., worked miracles); 9:11, Jesus teaches and heals (Mark 6:34, Jesus only teaches).

Luke’s customarily careful treatment of synoptic traditions is evident also in the miracle stories. In the Markan account of the healing of a blind man at Jericho the man hears Jesus is coming and, though blind, comes (how?) to Jesus on his own (10:47, 50); in the Lukan version Jesus commands the blind men to be brought to him (18:40). In Mark 1:45 it is unclear whether it is the healed leper or Jesus who goes out and begins to “proclaim much” and “to spread the word” (of the healing? the gospel?) and is therefore unable to enter openly into a city; all of these difficulties are avoided in Luke’s account (5:15). Moreover, while the Markan account may be taken to mean that the leper disobeyed Jesus’ command to tell no one of his healing (1:44), Luke states that the report of the healing simply “spread” (Luke 5:15), with no indication of any involvement by the leper and thus no disobedience on his part. Similarly, in Luke 4:33–34 the demon does not speak again after Jesus has commanded it to be silent, in contrast to Mark 1:24–26; Luke is also careful to report obedience to Jesus’ commands by sick persons, details lacking in Mark (contrast Luke 5:24–25, the man “went home,” with Mark 2:12, no such mention; Luke 6:8, the man “stood up,” with Mark 3:3, no such mention).

Prominent in the Lukan miracle accounts is a concluding acclamation: people praise God (5:26; 7:16; 9:43; 13:13; 18:43) or rejoice (13:17). This typical characteristic of miracle stories confirmed to hearers or readers of a story that a miracle had indeed occurred and commonly identified the power(s) responsible. In the gospel of Luke the acclamations affirm that God is working through Jesus, who by performing miracles is carrying out his divine mission (4:18–30). That miracles perform this evidentiary function in Luke is suggested already by the attention the author devotes to them but is also indicated further in various ways.

In contrast with the Matthean version of John the Baptist’s questioning of Jesus (11:2–6), which might be seen as occasioned by miracles worked by Jesus’ disciples (Matthew 10), Luke’s account is preceded directly by two miracle stories (7:17), so that “all the things” John has heard about Jesus are specifically miracles. Moreover, before Jesus replies he performs many healings (7:21), thus anticipating and substantiating the reply; and he instructs John’s disciples to report what they have “seen [i.e., miracles] and heard” (7:22), in contrast to Matthew’s Jesus, who places hearing before seeing (11:4; Achtemeier 1975: 552). While the author of Luke may not have shared Philo of Alexandria’s view of sight as the most superior and least deceptive of the senses (Abr 57, 60, 150, 153, 156, 158–62, 166; cf. his invidious comparison of Ishmael, meaning “hearing God,” and Israel, “seeing God,” Fuga 208), in this passage as well as in others in his gospel “seeing” is conspicuous. At Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem his followers praise God for “all the mighty works [dunameōn] that they had seen” (19:37). “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see,” says the Lukan Jesus (10:23), in contrast to the version of the saying recorded in Matthew, which concludes, “and your ears, for they hear” (13:16). When the risen Jesus eats a piece of fish in the presence of the disciples to demonstrate that it is indeed he, they see him do so, though Luke does not state that in so many words (24:41–43).

As was indicated above, trust in the miracle worker and/or the power(s) responsible for a miracle is the expected response to thaumatogy. This expectation is especially evident in both Luke and Acts, where faith and discipleship often follow a miracle (Achtemeier 1975: 553–56). Whereas in Mark (1:16–20) and Matthew (4:18–22) the first disciples respond to a simple summons of Jesus, in Luke the call comes after the miraculous catch of fish (5:1–11) and after Jesus’ miraculous power has been demonstrated to Peter (healing of his mother-in-law, 4:38–39, which follows the call in Mark and Matthew) and to readers (4:31–41). The call of Levi (5:27–28) follows immediately upon a miracle (5:17–26) whereas in Mark teaching intervenes (2:13). Only Luke states that Jesus’ women disciples were persons who had been healed by him (8:2).

That Jesus is a *thaumaturge* in the tradition of Moses, Elijah, and Elisha—that is, that he stands in the tradition of those great Hebrew prophets, thus setting him apart from other *thaumaturges* of the Greco-Roman world—is suggested by the evangelist in various passages in Luke-Acts that recall or imitate traditions in the Scriptures (on such *imitatio* in Luke-Acts, see Brodie 1984). As Moses worked “signs and wonders [*terata kai semeia*]” (Acts 7:36; cf. Exod 7:9 LXX, *semeion ē teras*) and predicted that “God will raise up for you, from among your compatriots, a prophet like me” (Acts 7:37; see Deut 18:15; similarly, Acts 3:22), so Jesus was “a man attested to you by God through mighty works and wonders and signs [*dunamesi kai terasi kai sēmeiois*]” (Acts 2:22)—indeed, a man “whom God raised” (2:24). After Jesus, like Elijah, resuscitated a dead son and “gave him to his mother” (Luke 17:15 = 1 Kgs 17:23 LXX), the people exclaim that “a great prophet has been raised up among us” (Luke 17:16; cf. a similar story told of Elisha, 2 Kgs 4:18–37; on pagan parallels to the Lukan account, especially Philostratus, VA 4.45, see Fitzmyer Luke 1–9 AB, 656–57). When Jesus’ fellow townspeople expect him to work miracles in Nazareth such as those he had performed in Capernaum, he replies that “no prophet is accepted in his home country” (Luke 4:23–24), and by citing the examples of Elijah and Elisha and their miracles among non-Jews he implicitly compares himself to them (4:25–27). Elijah’s miraculous assumption (*analēmphthē*) into heaven (2 Kgs 2:11) is echoed in the announcement at the

than just reporting the events that happened.

The language of their report to the Jerusalem leadership focuses on the first missionary journey more than on the church at Antioch (e.g., ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν). What Luke seeks to do is what he has consistently done all through Acts: whenever God took action among the Jews for the Gospel, He also took similar action among the Gentiles for the Gospel. In an era prior to having sacred scriptures beyond the Hebrew Bible, this visible demonstration of God's approval of the Christian Gospel both to Jews and then to Gentiles played an important role in validating the work of Peter and of Paul. Their common message of salvation solely based on a faith response by Jews and Gentiles was affirmed in dramatic fashion by the demonstration of God's power through the Holy Spirit. And everyone present and observing would recognize this preaching of the Gospel as prompted and directed by God Himself. It was not a perversion or twisting of either the teachings of Jesus and certainly not a corrupting of the sacred scriptures of the Hebrew Bible. The thrust of the report emphasized strongly that what God began with Jesus, continued to do in the Jewish Christian movement, He now was doing among Gentiles in the same manner of divinely expressed approval of their preaching of the Gospel to these folks. The combination of visibly expressed approval of the preaching of the Gospel to Gentiles first by Peter and now by Barnabas and Paul amounted to sizeable evidence that what was happening at Antioch was indeed of God, and not a perversion of the message that Jesus had taught while on earth.

The interest level of these leaders to what Barnabas and Paul<sup>219</sup> had to say was intense: Ἐσίγησεν δὲ πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος, "the entire group kept quiet." Although some scholars see the crowd's silence as signaling the approval of the entire crowd,<sup>220</sup> the grammar of the Greek clearly indicates that their silence was in anticipation of

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beginning of the Lukan travel narrative, of Jesus' assumption (analēpsis) (9:51; cf. Acts 1:11, Jesus "was assumed [analēphtheis] into heaven"). Sometimes, however, the Lukan Jesus is dissociated from Elijah and indeed appears as his anti-type (Talbert 1984: 93–94); unlike him, Jesus refuses to call down avenging fire from heaven (Luke 9:54–55; cf. 2 Kgs 1:10, 12; contrast also Luke 9:62 and 1 Kgs 19:21), in accord with the general Lukan stress on Jesus' compassion, also present in miracle accounts (Luke 7:13; 8:52).

When Jesus summarizes his ministry in a message to Herod Antipas, it is as a prophet who works miracles and perishes as a result (13:31–33), and in mourning his death his disciples remember him as "a prophet mighty in deed and word" (24:19) who was handed over to be crucified (24:20).

It is as one empowered by the Spirit which inaugurates the various phases of his ministry in Luke (Fitzmyer Luke 1–9 AB 227–28) that Jesus performs his miracles (4:18; Acts 10:38, "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with him"). His final words to his disciples in the gospel are a promise that he will send them what the Father has promised, namely, "power from on high" (24:49). This promise is repeated at the beginning of Acts (1:4) and fulfilled on Pentecost, when in fulfillment of prophecy (2:17, citing Joel 3:1) God's spirit is poured out upon the disciples (Acts 2:4, 33). In Luke's characteristic sequence, the bystanders "see [the wondrous giving of the Spirit and of tongues, 2:3–4] and hear" (2:34), and thousands come to faith (2:41). In the next chapter, Peter, calling on the name of Jesus, heals a lame man (3:1–11); Peter then addresses the astonished witnesses of the miracle, attributing it not to any power or piety of his own (3:12) but to God, who glorified his servant Jesus by raising him from the dead (3:13–15) and through faith in his name worked "what you see and hear" (3:16); then follow both hostile reaction and faith (4:1–4).

This pattern is characteristic of the miracle accounts in Acts: empowered by the Spirit (mentioned 57 times), and often in Jesus' name (see D. above, and Conzelmann 1960: 178, n. 3), his followers work miracles that continue Jesus' ministry and, alongside missionary preaching, win many times more followers than he did (e.g., 2:41; 4:4) while at the same time arousing opposition.

In addition to various summary statements of "signs" (*sēmeia*), "wonders" (*terata*), and "mighty works" (*dunameis*) wrought by Jesus' followers (2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 8:6; 14:3; 15:12), Acts contains accounts or summary statements of healings and exorcisms (3:1–16; 5:16; 8:7–8, 13; 9:17–18, 33–35; 14:8–10; 16:16–18; 28:7–9; by remote means, whether through Peter's shadow [5:15] 19:11–12 or through handkerchiefs and aprons that have touched Paul [19:11–12]), as well as accounts of resurrections (9:36–42; 20:9–12), of punitive miracles (5:1–11; 9:1–9; 12:20–23; 13:6–11; 19:13–16), of miraculous liberations (5:17–25; 12:5–11; 16:23–30), of nature miracles (2:2–3; 4:31; 8:39), and of dispensations of gifts or powers exceeding normal human capabilities (2:4–6; 28:3–6).

As Peter is featured as the leading apostle in the first half of Acts, and Paul in the second half, so also the miracles attributed to each correspond closely in number and kind (Hardon 1954: 308–9); cf. Acts 2:43 and 14:3; 3:1–16 and 14:8–10; 5:1–11 and 13:6–11; 4:31 and 16:25–26; cf. also 5:15 with 19:11–12; 9:33–35 with 28:7–9; 9:36–42 with 20:9–12; 5:17–25 and 12:5–11 with 16:23–30.

The miracles cited by Jesus in reply to John the Baptist's question (Luke 7:22 = Matt 11:5) are in Acts worked by his followers as well, thus attesting that he is indeed "the one who is to come" (Luke 7:19 = Matt 11:3). Each time the Christian movement is established in a new location, moving from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and "the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8), miracles are an essential element in the process, so that, finally, all opposition overcome, the reign of God and teaching about Jesus Christ are proclaimed and taught "openly and unhindered" (28:31).

[Harold E. Remus, "Miracle: New Testament" In vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 863–65.]

<sup>219</sup>"Note the order of names, Barnabas and Paul, a sign of Luke's Antiochene source, as in 14:14; 15:25, whereas Luke himself writes Paul and Barnabas (15:2, 35)." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 549.]

<sup>220</sup>"At that the whole assembly grew silent. I.e., the controversy or debate mentioned in v 7 comes to an end with Peter's words, which in effect counsel against the imposition of circumcision and the obligation to observe the Mosaic law on Gentile converts. The

the report from Barnabas and Paul, not in response to Peter's speech.

**Scene four (vv. 13-21): Leadership of James over the meeting.** 13 μετὰ δὲ τὸ σιγῆσαι αὐτοὺς ἀπεκρίθη Ἰάκωβος λέγων· Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἀκούσατέ μου. 14 Συμεὼν ἐξηγήσατο καθὼς πρῶτον ὁ θεὸς ἐπεσκέψατο λαβεῖν ἐξ ἐθνῶν λαὸν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. 15 καὶ τούτῳ συμφωνοῦσιν οἱ λόγοι τῶν προφητῶν, καθὼς γέγραπται· 16 Μετὰ ταῦτα ἀναστρέψω καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀνοικοδομήσω καὶ ἀνορθώσω αὐτήν, 17 ὅπως ἂν ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν κύριον, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτούς, λέγει κύριος ποιῶν ταῦτα 18 γνωστὰ ἀπ' αἰῶνος. 19 διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω μὴ παρενοχλεῖν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐπιστρέφουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, 20 ἀλλὰ ἐπιστεῖλαι αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων καὶ τῆς πορνείας καὶ τοῦ πνικτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος· 21 Μωϋσῆς γὰρ ἐκ γενεῶν ἀρχαίων κατὰ πόλιν τοὺς κηρύσσοντας αὐτὸν ἔχει ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἀναγινωσκόμενος. **13 After they finished speaking, James replied, "My brothers, listen to me. 14 Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. 15 This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written, 16 'After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up, 17 so that all other peoples may seek the Lord — even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things 18 known from long ago.' 19 Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, 20 but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. 21 For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues."**

Now it is the turn of the moderator over the meeting to speak. He waited until both Peter and then Barnabas and Paul had shared their reports to the assembled leadership group: Μετὰ δὲ τὸ σιγῆσαι αὐτοὺς.<sup>221</sup> James' words to the group is characterized by Luke as ἀπεκρίθη Ἰάκωβος λέγων, that is, a response to what the others had shared. The logic here is clear: both Peter, Barnabas, and Paul shared evangelizing activities among Gentiles, which James had no personal experience with.

What follows in vv. 13b-21 is a brief summation of James' speech to the assembled leaders. Interestingly he highlights Peter's words by comparing them to the prophets in the Old Testament. He then draws his conclusion that supports the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles. But it contained a proviso about diet for the benefit of synagogue Jews.

The opening address of the speech, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, men, brothers, is the same opening line of Peter's speech in vv. 7b-11.<sup>222</sup> It reflects a standardized formal speech opening found universally across the ancient world. James was not presenting a pep talk to the group; rather a formal address that was very serious in tone: ἀκούσατέ μου. The same had been true for Peter in his speech before James spoke.

James **first** summarized Peter's speech: Συμεὼν ἐξηγήσατο καθὼς πρῶτον ὁ θεὸς ἐπεσκέψατο λαβεῖν ἐξ ἐθνῶν λαὸν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ, **Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name.** This statement provides an interpretive summation of vv. 7b-11.<sup>223</sup> What James saw in Peter's words was a fundamental action of God to create a people for Himself from among the Gentiles. This captures Peter's language of faith based conversion by Gentile believers. The expression τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ, **for His name**, alludes to Gentile believers becoming the special children of God for the benefit and advancement of God's name as Lord and Creator over all.

**Next** James saw in this the culmination of what had been foreseen by the OT prophets: καὶ τούτῳ συμφωνοῦσιν οἱ λόγοι τῶν προφητῶν καθὼς γέγραπται, **This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written.**

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apostles and elders accept the view of Peter in this matter (see the WT above). 'Silence gives consent' (Goldsmith, Goodnatured Man), or, as the Latin proverb has it, 'Qui tacet consentire videtur.' See too Roloff, *Apg.*, 231; Pesch, *Apg.*, 2.78; Johnson, *Acts*, 263; but also Weiser, *Apg.*, 381." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 548.]

<sup>221</sup>Note how Luke employs the verb σιγᾶω, "to be quiet," here in the narrative of the leadership meeting in vv. 12-13. The crowd had been chatting with one another either while Peter was speaking or immediately after he spoke. But they got quiet when Barnabas and Paul gave their report (v. 12). Now James did not speak until after these other leaders had finished speaking (v. 13).

<sup>222</sup>The combination of *andres* with another noun in apposition was a common mode of address in Greek oratory: *andres Athenaioi*, 'Athenians' (Demosthenes, *Olynthiac* 1.1, 1.10; Lysias, *Or.* 6.8); *andres Israēlitai*, "Israelites" (Josephus, *Ant.* 3.8.1 §189). See Acts 1:11; 2:14, 22, 29, 37; 3:12; 5:35; 7:2, 26; 13:16, 26; 15:7, 13; 17:22; 19:35; 21:28; 22:1; 23:1; 28:17. Cf. 4 Macc 8:19." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 222-23.]

<sup>223</sup>**Acts 15:7b-11.** "My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. 8 And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; 9 and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. 10 Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? 11 On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

Two of these prophets provide written validation of James' contention: Amos 9:11-12 (vv. 16-17)<sup>224</sup> and Isaiah 45:21 (v. 18).<sup>225</sup> Compare how the two Old Testament texts are used here:

Acts 15:16-17	16 'After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up, 17 <i>so that all other peoples may seek the Lord — even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things</i>	16 Μετά ταῦτα ἀναστρέψω καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀνοικοδομήσω καὶ ἀνορθώσω αὐτήν, 17 <i>ὅπως ἂν ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν κύριον, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτούς, λέγει κύριος ποιῶν ταῦτα</i>	11 ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἀναστήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὰ πεπτωκότα αὐτῆς καὶ τὰ κατεσκαμμένα αὐτῆς ἀναστήσω καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω αὐτήν καθὼς αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ αἰῶνος, 12 <i>ὅπως ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐπ' αὐτούς, λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα.</i>	11 On that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen, and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; 12 in order that they may possess the remnant of Edom and <i>all the nations who are called by my name, says the Lord who does this.</i>	Amos 9:11-12 (LXX)
Acts 15:18	18 known from long ago.	18 γνωστὰ ἀπ' αἰῶνος	εἰ ἀναγγελοῦσιν, ἐγγισάτωσαν, ἵνα γνῶσιν ἅμα τίς ἀκουστὰ ἐποίησεν ταῦτα ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. τότε ἀνηγγέλη ὑμῖν Ἐγὼ ὁ θεός, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλος πλὴν ἐμοῦ· δίκαιος καὶ σωτὴρ οὐκ ἔστιν πάρεξ ἐμοῦ.	21 D e c l a r e and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? There is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is no one besides me.	Isaiah 45:21 (LXX)

In the table above one can quickly see even from the translations that Luke's narrating of James' reference does not include a quotation of either Amos or especially of Isaiah. The wording in Acts differs considerably from the two Old Testament sources in the LXX, the Greek translation of the Hebrew text.<sup>226</sup> Most likely James originally quoted from a Hebrew text source since he was speaking to the group in Aramaic at the meeting in Jerusalem, but Luke is writing to a Greek speaking audience and thus he brings the scripture references over into Greek.

The Amos text is part of a "restoration blessing" (vv. 9-15) which brings the book to a close.<sup>227</sup> The LXX differs considerably from the Hebrew text particularly in verse twelve, which is reflected in the above English translation rather than the LXX.<sup>228</sup> The LXX translates over into English as "On that day I will raise up the fallen tent of David and I will rebuild its fallen parts and its destroyed parts I will raise up and I will rebuild it just as in the days of old, so that the remnant of men and all the nations, upon whom is called my name down upon them, will search for (it), says the Lord who does these things." What James saw in the Hebrew text, which is clearer in the Greek translation,

<sup>224</sup>Septuaginta: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Am 9:11–12.

<sup>225</sup>Septuaginta: SESB Edition, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), Is 45:21.

<sup>226</sup>Save for what appears in v 18, which is a Lucan addition drawn from Isa 45:21, the prophetic utterance is derived from a Greek form of Amos 9:11–12. The Jewish Christian head of the Jerusalem church might have been expected to quote Amos according to the Hebrew original, but what is put on James's lips depends on a wording of Amos that does not agree with either the Hebrew or the LXX. At its beginning, the Greek text is also influenced by the *meta tauta*, 'hereafter,' possibly of Jer 12:15 (LXX)." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 555.]

<sup>227</sup>The book concludes with a restoration blessing oracle. It has three subsections: a promise of power over enemies (vv 11–12, restoration blessing type 9); a promise of agricultural bounty (v 13, type 5); and a promise of return and repossession (vv 14–15, type 7). Verse 15 reads like prose rather than poetry and would appear to be a prose conclusion to an otherwise poetic oracle (9:1–10)." [Douglas Stuart, vol. 31, *Word Biblical Commentary : Hosea-Jonah*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 396-97.]

<sup>228</sup>*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* : SESB Version., electronic ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2003), Am 9:11–12.

11 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אָקִים אֶת־סֹכֶת דָּוִד הַנִּפְּלֹת וְגִדְרֹתַי אֶת־פְּרֻצֵיהֶן וְהִרְסֹתַי וְאָקִים וּבְנִיתֶיהָ כִּימֵי עוֹלָם:  
 12 לְמַעַן יִרְשׁוּ אֶת־שְׂאֵרֵית אֲדוֹם וְכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרְאוּ שְׁמִי עַל־יְהוָה נְאֻם־יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה זֹאת: פ

was a time when Gentiles (ἐθνῶν; πάντα τὰ ἔθνη; **all the nations**) would be sought by the Lord God.<sup>229</sup> Even though Amos was speaking of a time when the Jewish exiles would return to the homeland, James saw in this a principle of spiritual hunger by people beyond just the Jews for the God of Abraham.<sup>230</sup> He realized that what was happening in his day with Gentiles beginning to turn to God through Jesus Christ was a realization of that ancient prophecy. The words summarizing Isaiah 45:21 that are added by Luke in verse 18 are not a quote but an idea expression,<sup>231</sup> and they parallel ἀφ' ἡμερῶν ἀρχαίων, **from ancient days**, in Peter's speech in verse 7. While we may wonder at some of the ways the Old Testament is used in the New Testament, it is important to understand the freedom and the core idea focus of many of these references, rather than in a detailed sense of fulfillment.<sup>232</sup>

**Finally**, James drew a conclusion (δοῦναι, vv. 19-21) from the connecting up of Peter's reports to Old Testament prophecy. He introduces it as his interpretation of the implications of what he just said regarding the reports about Gentile conversions taking place: ἐγὼ κρίνω. It should be noted that he is not making the decision for either the leadership groups or for the Jerusalem Christian community.<sup>233</sup> He makes two conclusions about what the church in Jerusalem needed to do in response to the issues. **First**, that the church "should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God," μὴ παρενοχλεῖν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐπιστρέφουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν. **Second**, that "we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood," ἀλλὰ ἐπιστεῖλαι αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων καὶ τῆς πορνείας καὶ τοῦ πνικτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος. The reason for this second conclusion is given as "for in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues," Μωϋσῆς γὰρ ἐκ γενεῶν ἀρχαίων κατὰ πόλιν τοῦς κηρύσσοντας αὐτὸν ἔχει ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἀναγινωσκόμενος.

A close examination of these conclusions is in order. The first conclusion in verse 19 is clear and easy to understand: μὴ παρενοχλεῖν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐπιστρέφουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν. The single use of the infinite παρενοχλεῖν here in all of the New Testament suggests causing unnecessary trouble to someone.<sup>234</sup> James proposes that the church leadership recommend to these churches with uncircumcised Gentile members that no additional requirements for being a Christian beyond faith commitment to Christ be made. In the classical Greek use of this verb παρενοχλέω the major thrust of the meaning goes beyond causing trouble to someone so that it **centers on this action as generating substantial annoyance**.<sup>235</sup> James wisely saw that the demands of the Juda-

<sup>229</sup> Hebrew *šē'ērūt 'ēdôm*, 'the remnant of Edom,' has become in Greek *hoi kataloipoi tōn anthrōpōn*, 'the rest of human beings.' The Hebrew name *'ēdôm*, with the triconsonantal root *'dm*, looks like *'dm = 'ādām*, 'man,' and so has been rendered in Greek by the pl. of *anthrōpos*, 'humanity.'" [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 555.]

<sup>230</sup> "Amos was referring to the restoration of the Davidic dynasty. The fallen 'hut of David' would have meant the dynasty that came to an end, when Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, the last kings of Judah, were carted off to Babylonian Captivity (2 Kgs 24:15–25:7; cf. Jer 36:30). Yahweh promises the prophet that the Davidic line will be restored, and God's people will inherit what is left of Edom and other nations that will come to be called God's people." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 555.]

<sup>231</sup> "that have been known from of old. These words, perhaps derived from the LXX Isa 45:21 (not a verbatim quotation), are added to the quotation from Amos to support Peter's use of 'some time ago' (15:7). Thus the whole speech of James is related to the Lucan view of God's salvation history." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 556.]

<sup>232</sup> "The same passage of Amos 9:11 is used in CD 7:16 and again in 4QFlor 1–2 i 12–13, but in different senses. In the latter instance it stresses the restoration of the Davidic dynasty by the one 'who will arise to save Israel,' by which is meant 'the scion of David' (*šemaḥ Dāwīd*), mentioned in the preceding context (derived from Jer 23:5). In CD 7:16 'the books of the Law' are identified with 'the hut,' as a way of affirming a renewed promulgation of the Mosaic law. Here, however, James uses the words of Amos in a sense quite different from either way in which it was interpreted in the Essene community of Qumran." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 556.]

<sup>233</sup> To translate ἐγὼ κρίνω as "I have reached the decision that..." is inaccurate and potentially misleading. Both the language and the context clearly suggest that James puts a proposal on the table for the larger group to make a decision about. Verse 22 makes this abundantly clear. James does what every good leader should do: make a proposal to the group he is leading with them making the final decision about whether to accept or reject his proposal. The larger context also clearly implies that his proposal grew out of the implications of the reports from Paul, Barnabas, and Peter to the group. And these reports essentially were affirming the implementation of sacred scripture in its declaration of salvation for all nations, rather than just for Jews. Ultimately then James proposal was an attempt to put in place appropriate implications of God's clear decision to save all nations through faith in Christ.

<sup>234</sup> "παρενοχλέω fut. 3 sg. παρενοχλήσει Job 16:3; 1 aor. παρενόλησα LXX. Pass.: fut. 3 sg. παρενοχληθήσεται 2 Macc 11:31 (Hippocr. et al.; ins, pap, LXX) **to cause unnecessary trouble, cause difficulty** (for), **trouble, annoy** w. dat. of pers. (Polyb. 1, 8, 1; Plut., Timol. 237 [3, 1]; Epict. 1, 9, 23; PGen 31, 4; LXX) **Ac 15:19**. Anything beyond the requests noted vs. 20 would be an extra (παρα-) imposition.—New Docs 4, 166f. DELG s.v. ὄχλος. M-M." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 775.]

<sup>235</sup> "παρενοχλέω, **cause one much annoyance**, Hp.Ep.13, Arist.Rh.1381b15, Mem.453a16; π. τινὶ περὶ τινοῦ Plb.1.8.1: simply τινὶ

izing element in the church at Jerusalem were going to add requirements to being a believer in Christ that were unwarranted by scripture and represented a cultural, religious bias rather than the will of God. Thus he proposed to the meeting that such requirements not be insisted upon by this group. In Luke's terminology, these Gentiles were already doing all that God expected them to do: τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἔθνῶν ἐπιστρέφουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν. They were turning to God in sincere repentance and conversion commitment.

The implications of this proposal were enormous. It meant a victory for the apostolic Gospel message that had been preached to the Gentiles. Both Peter and Paul had proclaimed this message of salvation by faith only in Jesus Christ to non-Jews and both had witnessed first hand God's validation of that message in the way He worked in these Gentiles lives to turn them around spiritually. This was interpreted against the background of the Old Testament scriptures (cf. Amos 9:11-12 & Isa. 45:21 as cited in 15:16-18) as the will of God.

Additionally James' proposal here echoes the call of Peter in his report (cf. 10-11): "Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? 11 On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." Thus clearly both Peter and James affirm the ministry of Paul and Barnabas in their work with uncircumcised Gentiles.

The second conclusion along with its basis in vv. 20-21 is more difficult.<sup>236</sup> And it posed the greatest issue for Gentiles. The proposal is first given: ἀλλὰ ἐπιστεῖλαι αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων καὶ τῆς πορνείας καὶ τοῦ πνικτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. This second proposal attempted to address the very difficult issue of how Christian Jews still practicing their traditions of ritual purity could have table fellowship with uncircumcised Gentiles.<sup>237</sup> Central to this was physical touching or physical contact with one another, and this would especially be challenging at meal time since everyone ate from common bowls and drank from common cups. James was seeking to provide a way where both Jewish and Gentile Christians could fellowship together while preserving the freedom to the Jewish Christians to continue practicing most of their Jewish customs. This would not be easy to do, because those Jewish customs had built into them intense bias against things not Jewish.

Successful implementation of this would become one of the great challenges to early Christianity. By the LXXJd.14.17, al., Phld.Ir.p.86 W., Act.Ap.15.19.

2. c. acc., annoy, Plb.16.37.3, OGI139.16 (Egypt, ii B.C.), Hierocl.in CA8p.431 M.:—Pass., παρηνώχλησθε D.18.50; ὑπό τινος Plb.3.53.6; of disease, ὑπὸ νευρικής διαθέσεως OGI331.10 (Pergam., ii B.C.).

παρενόχλημα, ατος, τό, annoyance, Ph.2.519, al.

παρενόχλησις, εως, ή, annoyance, Aët.8.16.

[Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones and Roderick McKenzie, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1336.]

<sup>236</sup>One should remember that this part of James' proposal is repeated twice later on in Acts:

**Acts 15:29** (in the letter sent). "29 that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well." 29 ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας· ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε.

**Acts 21:25** (reference to this letter). "But as for the Gentiles who have become believers, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication." περι δὲ τῶν πεπιστευκότων ἔθνῶν ἡμεῖς ἀπεστείλαμεν κρίναντες φυλάσσεσθαι αὐτοὺς τό τε εἰδωλόθυτον καὶ αἷμα καὶ πνικτὸν καὶ πορνείαν.

<sup>237</sup>Resolving it, however, raised another problem. If Gentiles were not being required to observe the Jewish ritual laws, how would Jewish Christians who maintained strict Torah observance be able to fellowship with them without running the risk of being ritually defiled themselves? James saw the question coming and addressed it in his next remark (v. 20). Gentiles should be directed to abstain from four things: from food offered to idols, from sexual immorality (*porneia*), from the meat of strangled animals (*pnikton*), and from blood (*haima*).

"When looked at closely, all four of these belong to the ritual sphere. Meat offered to idols was an abomination to Jews, who avoided any and everything associated with idolatry. 'Strangled meat' referred to animals that had been slaughtered in a manner that left the blood in it. Blood was considered sacred to the Jews, and all meat was to be drained of blood before consuming it. The prohibition of 'blood' came under the same requirement, referring to the consumption of the blood of animals in any form.<sup>95</sup> These three requirements were thus all ritual, dealing with matters of clean and unclean foods. The fourth category seems somewhat less ritual and more moral: sexual immorality (*porneia*). It is possible that this category was also originally intended in a mainly ritual sense, referring to those 'defiling' sexual relationships the Old Testament condemns, such as incest, marriage outside the covenant community, marriage with a close relative, bestiality, homosexuality, and the like.<sup>96</sup> It is also possible that a broader meaning was intended including all illicit 'natural' relationships as well, such as fornication, concubinage, and adultery. Gentile sexual mores were lax compared to Jewish standards, and it was one of the areas where Jews saw themselves most radically differentiated from Gentiles. The boundary between ritual and ethical law is not always distinct, and sexual morality is one of those areas where it is most blurred. For the Jew sexual misbehavior was both immoral and impure. A Jew would find it difficult indeed to consort with a Gentile who did not live by his own standards of sexual morality.<sup>97</sup>"

[John B. Polhill, vol. 26, *Acts*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 330-31.]

end of the first century the few remaining pockets of Jewish Christianity had pretty much isolated themselves off from Gentile Christians. The force of James' proposal here later began to be watered down to moral demands, even in the copying of this portion of the text.<sup>238</sup> In some of his later writings Paul would offer his view on these matters, which provides interesting insight into his understanding: (1) Romans chapters 14:1 - 15:13 goes into great details addressing this essential issue from the perspective of the Gentiles. (2) First Corinthians chapter 8 focuses on eating meat offered to idols.

One should note that the four stipulations contained in James' proposal are laid out in the same order in Leviticus 17-18 in the Old Testament for both Jews and non-Jews living in Israel.<sup>239</sup> Thus what James proposes to those in the meeting at Jerusalem is grounded in Torah principle from the Law of Moses. This aspect should not be overlooked in trying to evaluate the credibility of what James proposed to be done.

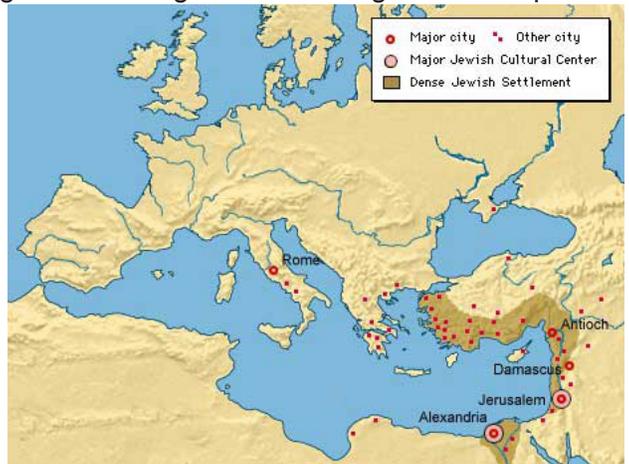
That this would be difficult to implement is reflected in the confrontation between Paul and Peter at Antioch not too long after the agreements were made in Jerusalem. Paul describes this in Gal. 2:11-14:

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; 12 for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. 13 And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

11 Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν Κηφᾶς εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην, ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν· 12 πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἔλθειν νίνας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνήσθιεν· ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον, ὑπέστειλλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτόν, φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς. 13 καὶ συνυπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, ὥστε καὶ Βαρναβᾶς συναπήχθη αὐτῶν τῇ ὑποκρίσει. 14 ἀλλ' ὅτε εἶδον ὅτι οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, εἶπον τῷ Κηφᾷ ἐμπροσθεν πάντων· Εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐκ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς, πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαΐζειν;

As idealistic as the proposal was, it gradually proved to be largely unworkable. But one would have to conclude that at this meeting with the tensions as high as they were about the place of uncircumcised Gentiles in the Christian community the proposal was the best one possible. It sincerely sought to find a way toward compromise that didn't compromise the basics of the Gospel message about being saved. The organizational pattern of the early church that mostly met in various house church groups rather than in one central location would enable implementation of this somewhat easier. But completely successful implementation was not going to be possible, as time proved.

The basis for James' second proposal is given in verse 21: Μωϋσῆς γὰρ ἐκ γενεῶν ἀρχαίων κατὰ πόλιν τοὺς κηρύσσοντας αὐτὸν ἔχει ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἀναγινωσκόμενος, For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues. James recognized that where Christian churches had been planted by Paul and Barnabas thus far there also existed numerous Jewish settlements. Diaspora Judaism was concentrated in the eastern Mediterranean world, and



<sup>238</sup>“The original function of the decrees no longer had any force, and they tended to be viewed in wholly moral terms. This tendency is very much reflected in the textual tradition of Acts 15:20, 29 and 21:25, particularly in the Western text, which omits ‘strangled meat,’ adds the negative form of the golden rule, and reads ‘idolatry’ rather than idol meat. There are thus four moral prohibitions: no idolatry, no sexual immorality, no murder (‘blood’ now viewed as the shedding—not consuming—of blood), and ‘do not do to another what you wouldn’t wish done to yourself.’” [John B. Polhill, vol. 26, *Acts*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 331.]

<sup>239</sup>“The stipulations. These are the prohibitions of Leviticus 17–18 (in vs 29 they are even in the same order),<sup>22</sup> which were also valid for non-Jews living in Israel.<sup>23</sup> ἀλισθήματα τῶν εἰδώλων, ‘the pollutions of idols,’ is explained by εἰδωλόθυσια, ‘what has been sacrificed to idols,’ in vs 29 (cf. Lev 17:8; 1 Cor 8:1–13; 10:19–30; Justin Dial. 34.8). The prohibition of πορνεία, ‘unchastity’ (according to Lev 18:6–30) is an established component of early Christian paraenesis (1 Thess 4:3; Gal 5:19, etc.; with εἰδωλόλατραι, ‘idolaters,’ 1 Cor 6:9\*). πνικτόν, ‘what is strangled,’ is meat from animals which have not been slaughtered ritually (Gen 9:4; cf. the expansion of the instructions regarding ‘what is torn’ in Lev 17:15; also Origen Cels. 8.30; Philo Spec. leg. 4.122–23).<sup>24</sup> The prohibition of αἷμα, ‘blood,’ is in accordance with Lev 17:10–14. It is significant that ‘blood’ is mentioned after πνικτόν, ‘what is strangled,’ that is, first the partaking of meat is forbidden, then of the blood. Both stipulations are explained by Lev 17:10–14 (cf. further Josephus Ant. 3.260).” [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 118–19.]

especially where Paul's first missionary journey had taken place in the province of Galatia, and Cyprus. Antioch of Syria contained massive numbers of Jews as well. Thus most all of these Christian communities would be made up of both Gentiles and Jews, who would be attempting to figure out how to properly relate to one another. Without the Gentiles having to formally convert to Judaism through being circumcised and making a formal public commitment to obey the Law of Moses, interacting with one another would indeed be a tricky issue for the Jewish Christians and thus subject to differing interpretations. James' concern was centered on protecting the integrity of the Gospel witness to the Jewish communities where the message of Jesus was proclaimed. Additionally for the decision to be made in Jerusalem that the Christian communities would try to avoid actions highly offensive to Jewish people generally would help relieve potential criticism of this new religious movement from the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem.

It is interesting that Paul states the agreement reached in this meeting differently in Gal. 2:9-10:

9 καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι εἶναι, δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἐμοὶ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ κοινωνίας, ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομήν· 10 μόνον τῶν πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν, ὃ καὶ ἐσπούδασα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι.

9 and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.

Paul's reference to "the right hand of fellowship" agrees with the first proposal of James to not add burdensome requirements on the Gentiles. But Paul does not mention anything relating to James' second proposal regarding the four prohibitions. Instead, he focuses on an aspect not mentioned by Luke in his description of the agreement: benevolent concern for the poor.<sup>240</sup> With Paul's objective of emphasizing acceptance of his mission to the Gentiles by the leadership in Jerusalem, he chose to emphasize one area of agreement which would indicate a sense of connectedness between the Gentile oriented churches he was establishing and the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem. The so-called 'relief offering' sent to Jerusalem by the believers in Antioch reflects one effort to do this very thing (Acts 11). Sometime later in the mid 50s a similar effort only substantially larger in objective would occupy major attention for Paul on the third missionary journey.

With Galatians written about a year or so after the Jerusalem meeting and then having to address the same rigid Jewish mind-set that had not accepted the terms of the earlier agreement in Jerusalem, Paul obviously did not seek to erupt the controversy further regarding the Judaizing influence among the Galatian churches. Quoting the terms of the agreement regarding the four prohibitions on Gentile believers would not have served a worthwhile purpose. Subsequent to this agreement, Paul would have to deal with related issues of dietary matters and table fellowship issues between Jews and Gentiles inside the church in some of his letters. This distraction surely must have grieved him sorely for it took away from the more important objective of sharing Christ with a lost world.

**Scene five (vv. 22-29): The agreement in support of Antioch.** 22 Τότε ἔδοξε τοῖς ἀποστόλοις καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις σὺν ὅλῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐκλεξαμένους ἄνδρας ἐξ αὐτῶν πέμψαι εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν σὺν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ, Ἰούδαν τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν καὶ Σιλᾶν, ἄνδρας ἠγουμένους ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, 23 γράψαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν· Οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἀδελφοὶ τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς ἐξ ἐθνῶν χαίρειν. 24 Ἐπειδὴ ἠκούσαμεν ὅτι τινὲς ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξελθόντες ἐτάραξαν ὑμᾶς λόγοις ἀνασκευάζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν οἷς οὐ διεστείλαμεθα, 25 ἔδοξεν ἡμῖν γενομένοις ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐκλεξαμένοις ἄνδρας πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς σὺν τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἡμῶν Βαρναβᾶ καὶ Παύλῳ, 26 ἀνθρώποις παραδεδοκόσι τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. 27 ἀπεστάλακαμεν οὖν Ἰούδαν καὶ Σιλᾶν, καὶ αὐτοὺς διὰ λόγου ἀπαγγέλλοντας τὰ αὐτά. 28 ἔδοξεν γὰρ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν μηδὲν πλέον ἐπιτίθεσθαι ὑμῖν βᾶρος πλὴν τούτων τῶν ἐπάναγκες, 29 ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας· ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε. ἔρρωσθε. **22 Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers, 23 with the following letter: "The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the believers of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. 24 Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled**

<sup>240</sup>This seeming incongruity between Luke and Paul over the details of the agreement reached at Jerusalem sometimes causes concern for modern interpreters who want every detail to nicely synchronize between multiple accounts of the same event. But to make such a demand on ancient writers is to falsely impose modern western standards on to the first century world. Both Luke and Paul had their own specific, distinct agendas in view that guided what they described and how they described it. Thus they emphasized what was most relevant to their own purpose in writing. That these distinctive patterns will show up multiple times between Luke and Paul is well documented and thus should not be surprising in places like this one.

your minds, 25 we have decided unanimously to choose representatives and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: 29 that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

At some unnamed point the leadership group got back together with the church in a more general meeting and came to an agreement over the issues largely along the lines of what James had proposed. One could assume that they were meeting in the ‘upper room’ of the home of John Mark’s mother (cf. Acts 1:13ff) which was large enough to accommodate at least 120 people.<sup>241</sup> But where they met was not important to Luke’s purposes here; what was decided was the critical matter that he centers on with his narrative.

Luke’s initial statement in verse 22 makes that point strongly. The two groups of leaders, the apostles and the elders, working in agreement with the entire Christian community in Jerusalem, made the decision to send a delegation with a formal letter confirming their agreement with the position of Paul and Barnabas on the Gospel: ἔδοξε τοῖς ἀποστόλοις καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις σὺν ὅλῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. Luke centers his narrative now on the delegation and a copy of the letter.

The leadership with the approval of the larger congregation selected<sup>242</sup> two of their own leaders<sup>243</sup> to accompany Barnabas and Paul back to Antioch to report to the church there the results of the meeting in Jerusalem: ἔδοξε τοῖς ἀποστόλοις καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις σὺν ὅλῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐκλεξαμένους ἄνδρας ἐξ αὐτῶν πέμψαι εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν σὺν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ Βαρναβᾷ.<sup>244</sup> The two men who were selected were Ἰοῦδαν τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν καὶ Σιλᾶν, *Judas called Barsabbas and Silas*. Perhaps, although not certain, this Judas<sup>245</sup> was the brother of Ἰωσήφ τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν, ὃς ἐπεκλήθη Ἰοῦστος, *Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus*, (Acts 1:23). This Joseph was one of the two candidates nominated to take Judas’ place among the Twelve Apostles. The common surname Βαρσαββᾶς is the link between these two men.<sup>246</sup> Unfortunately this is all the

<sup>241</sup>The Christian community in Jerusalem some twenty years after the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 around AD 30 claimed several thousand members. With not having a central meeting place where the entire community could come together at one time, different meetings would be conducted in places where larger numbers could be accommodated. But seldom if ever would the entire community be able to be in one place at the same time. The outer court of the temple was one of those meeting places, but with growing opposition to the Christian movement in the city this would not have been the most convenient meeting place. By conducting their weekly gatherings in private homes scattered across the city in small groups of a dozen or more people, the church could keep a lower profile and not attract as much negative attention. Leaders from these small groups, named πρεσβύτεροι by Luke, would then get together regularly in different places for coordination of activities etc. James served as the acknowledge leader of this group of leaders, as Luke makes clear in Acts 15.

<sup>242</sup>The process of selection is not spelled out by Luke with the expression ἔδοξε...ἐκλεξαμένους ἄνδρας ἐξ αὐτῶν πέμψαι εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, *to send men to Antioch after having chosen (them) was decided....* The decision to do this was made by τοῖς ἀποστόλοις καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις σὺν ὅλῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, *by the apostles and the elders together with the entire church*. Whether it was a voting process, and if so, who voted, or whether by common consent, the one point that Luke does make clear is that both leadership groups and the entire Christian community in Jerusalem were involved somehow in this decision making process. Commentators differ in their opinions at this point. Wise caution is offered by Barrett at this point: “The representation of monarchical, oligarchical, and democratic elements in the NT church needs, as Braun shows, qualification; categorization in such ready-made terms is dangerous.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 738.]

This advice comes about because modern commentators find it difficult to resist reading the ecclesiastical system and decision making process from their own church background back into the biblical text in the very questionable assumption that the early church functioned like a modern Roman Catholic Church, a Presbyterian Church, a Baptist church etc.

<sup>243</sup>The phrase ἄνδρας ἐξ αὐτῶν, *men from them*, is not clear whether these men came from the apostles, the elders, or -- more likely -- from the church.

<sup>244</sup>“The assembled company decided (ἔδοξε; the impersonal use of this verb, very common in ‘official’ Greek, appears in the NT at Lk. 1:3; Acts 15:22, 25, 28, 34; 25:27; Heb. 12:10—a Lucan characteristic) to write to the church at Antioch, sending the message by men whom they chose to accompany Paul and Barnabas.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 738.]

<sup>245</sup>“The name *Judas* occurs several times in Acts, *Judas Barsabbas* (for this surname, used also of Joseph, see on 1:23) only in the present context, at vv. 22, 27, 32, and 34 (si v.l.). Nothing else is known of him.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 738-39.]

<sup>246</sup>**Βαρσα(β)βᾶς, ᾰ, ὁ** (Βαρσαβᾶς t.r. [so Aa I 108, 13]; Βαρζάβας AcPI Ha 11, 10–11; בַּר סַבְבָּא or בַּר שְׁבָא) *Barsabbas* (Diod S 32, 15, 7 as the name of a king of the Thracians, but with only one β.; PBenoit et al., *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, II, ’61, 25, 5 [133 A.D.]).

1. *patronymic of a certain Joseph, surnamed Justus, a member of the earliest Christian community* **Ac 1:23**; Pa. (2:9; 11:2); name used for a servant of Nero AcPI Ha 11, 10; s. index of names Aa I 298.

2. *patronymic of a certain Judas who, with Silas, was appointed by the Jerusalem apostles as a companion of Paul and Barnabas when they returned to Antioch fr. the meeting described* **Ac 15:22**. (On the name and spelling s. Dalman, *Gramm.* 2 180; Cadbury, *Harris Festschr.* [s. Βαρναβᾶς] 48–50.)—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian* Page 266

information we have about this individual. The second man, **Silas**, is much better known. His Greek name Σιλᾶς was the Greek version of **Saul**<sup>247</sup> and the Latin **Silvanus**.<sup>248</sup> In Acts, Luke calls him Σιλᾶς, while Paul and Peter refer to him as Σιλουανός. He surfaces at this meeting in Jerusalem for the first time, and then becomes Paul's traveling companion on the second missionary journey.

For Luke the defining trait that qualified these two men to be chosen was that they were ἄνδρας ἡγουμένους ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, **leaders among the brothers**. The importance of this is clear: in their capacity as recognized leaders in the Jerusalem community<sup>249</sup> their testimony would have greater credibility to the church at Antioch.

The letter contained the details of the agreement reached at the meeting. The writing of the letter was a joint project by the leadership sometime after the conclusion of the meeting: γράψαντες διὰ χειρὸς αὐτῶν. The first person plural frame of reference in the contents of the letter further clarify this.<sup>250</sup> The agreement reached in the meeting by both groups of leaders in concord with the entire congregation was then subsequently written up in a formal letter to be sent to the church in Antioch. The χειρὸς αὐτῶν, **by their hand**, alludes back to the leadership delegating someone to do the actual writing of the letter, perhaps James himself.

The form and contents of the letter (vv. 23b-29) adhere to the ancient Greek style of letter writing very closely:

**Praescriptio:**

*Superscriptio:* Οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἀδελφοὶ

*Adscriptio:* τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Αντιόχειαν καὶ Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς ἐξ ἔθνῶν

*Salutatio:* χαίρειν.

**Body:**

24 Ἐπειδὴ ἠκούσαμεν ὅτι τινὲς ἐξ ἡμῶν [ἐξεληθόντες] ἐτάραξαν ὑμᾶς λόγοις ἀνασκευάζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν οἷς οὐ διεστείλαμεθα,

**1)** 25 **ἔδοξεν ἡμῖν** γενομένοις ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐκλεξαμένοις ἄνδρας πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς σὺν τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἡμῶν Βαρναβᾶ καὶ Παύλῳ, 26 ἀνθρώποις παραδεδωκόσι τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. 27 ἀπεστάλκαμεν οὖν Ἰούδαν καὶ Σιλᾶν καὶ αὐτοὺς διὰ λόγου ἀπαγγέλλοντας τὰ αὐτά.

**2)** 28 **ἔδοξεν γὰρ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν** μηδὲν πλέον ἐπιτίθεσθαι ὑμῖν βάρος πλὴν τούτων τῶν ἐπάναγκες, 29 ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας, ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε.

**Conclusio:** Ἔρρωσθε.

*Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 167.]

<sup>247</sup>Σιλᾶς, **a** or Σίλας, **ᾱ** (still other spellings are attested for the NT; s. B-D-F §53, 2; 125, 2), ὁ (several times in Joseph. as a Semitic name; OGI 604, 4; IGR III 817, 1. Evidently=𐤎𐤋𐤃𐤃, the Aram. form [in Palmyrene inscriptions] of 𐤎𐤋𐤃𐤃 Saul) **Silas**. This name, which occurs only in Ac, is borne by a respected member of the church at Jerusalem who was prophetically gifted **15:22, 27**; he was sent to Antioch and stayed there vs. **32, 33 [34]** v.l.; later he accompanied Paul on his so-called second missionary journey **15:40–18:5** (mentioned nine times). Despite CWeizsäcker, *Das apost. Zeitalter* 2 1892, 247 et al., incl. LRadermacher, ZNW 25, 1926, 295, it is hardly to be doubted that this Silas is the same pers. as the Σιλουανός who is mentioned in Paul and 1 Pt. See the next entry and s. AStegmann, *Silvanus als Missionär u. 'Hagiograph'* 1917. S. also s.v. Ἰωάν(ν)ης 6.—TRE III 609. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 923.]

<sup>248</sup>Σιλουανός, **οὔ, ὁ** (Diod S 11, 27, 1, a Σ. as contemporary with the battle of Salamis [480 B.C.]; OGI 533, 50 [time of Augustus] and later ins and pap; Jos., *Ant.* 20:14; in rabbinic lit. סִילְוָנוֹס; CIJ I, 596) **Silvanus**; surely the same man who appears in Ac as Σίλας (q.v.). Either he had two names (like Paul), one Semit. and one Lat. (Zahn), or Σιλουανός is the Lat. form of the same name that is Grecized in Σίλας (B-D-F §125, 2; Mlt-H. 109f; 146). **2 Cor 1:19** (v.l. Σιλβανός, which is also found Diod S 11, 41, 1); **1 Th 1:1**; **2 Th 1:1** (s. also the subscr. of 2 Th); **1 Pt 5:12** (this pass. has given rise to the conclusion that Silvanus was somehow or other [as translator? in Sb 8246, 38 Germanus speaks before the court δι' Ἀνουβίου ἐρμηνεύοντος] connected w. the writing of 1 Pt; e.g., Zahn [Einleitung II 3 10f], GWohlenberg [NKZ 24, 1913, 742–62], WBornemann [Der erste Petrusbrief—eine Taufrede des Silvanus?: ZNW 19, 1920, 143ff], Harnack [Mission I 4 1923, 85], LRadermacher [Der 1 Pt u. Silvanus: ZNW 25, 1926, 287ff]; ESelwyn, 1 Pt 46, 9–17 but s. WKümmel [Introd. NT, tr. HKee, '75, 416–25]).—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 923.]

<sup>249</sup>Probably the expression ἡγουμένους implies leadership among the πρεσβύτεροι.

<sup>250</sup>γράφαντες is another false concord (cf. ἐκλεξαμένοις in v. 22), perhaps better described as anacolouthon; so BDR § 468:2, n. 3, who point out that Luke continues as if he had written οἱ ἀπ. καὶ οἱ πρεσβ. ἐβουλεύσαντο ... πέμψαι ... γράψαντες, and draw attention to a close and interesting parallel in Thucydides 3:36:2 (ἔδοξεν αὐτοῖς ... ἀποκτεῖναι ... ἐπικαλοῦντες ...).” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 739.]

The interesting aspect of this rather convoluted grammar explanation is the simple grammar pattern present. The accusative case participle γράψαντες, having written, goes back to the infinitive πέμψαι, to send, which is the subject of the verb ἔδοξε, decided. This verb is here used as an impersonal verb in large part because in ancient Greek it carried with it in such usage a formal, almost legal tone regarding decision making. Modern commentators seem often to either have forgotten their Greek or perhaps not to have known it very well to begin with.

The introductory *Praescriptio* elements are very close to ancient Greek patterns. The letter comes from (=Superscriptio) Οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἀδελφοί, the apostles and elders brothers. Some copyists struggled with the naturalness of adding ἀδελφοί to Οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι. Does it apply to both apostles and elders? Or just to elders? Consequently variation in wording surfaces in some manuscripts at this point.<sup>251</sup> Various explanations exist in trying to understand the construction.<sup>252</sup> Whether ἀδελφοί applies just to οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, or to both Οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, the point made by Luke in his likely translation of the letter from an original Aramaic version is to stress that the Jerusalem leadership greets the Christian community in Antioch warmly as brothers in the faith, which included uncircumcised Gentiles.

The letter is addressed to (=Adscriptio) τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς ἐξ ἔθνῳν, to the at Antioch and Syria and Cilicia brothers who are from Gentiles. The construction τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν groups these three regions together as one unit (article noun and noun and noun). Although commentators quibble over the precise implication of this construction, it simply brings together a larger region where Christian activity had taken place as a single reference. Clearly the letter focuses on the city of Antioch but includes the other regions in its scope. The primary reference is to τοῖς... ἀδελφοῖς, to the brothers. This matches the emphasis on ἀδελφοί, brothers, in the *Superscriptio*. In ancient letters generally, the formula style *Superscriptio* and *Adscriptio* were intended to establish friendly connections between the letter sender and its recipients. This letter goes out of its way to emphasize friendly links between the church in Jerusalem and the one in Antioch especially. The final qualifier of the recipients stresses the Gentile orientation of those receiving the letter: τοῖς ἐξ ἔθνῳν. This does not exclude the Jewish Christian members, of whom there were many at Antioch. But it does emphasize that the thrust of the contents is going to apply primarily to the non-Jewish members of the churches in the northeastern Mediterranean world.



The greeting (=Salutatio) is pure Hellenistic letter style: χαίρειν. Interestingly this more typical Greek greeting is found only here, in Acts 23:26 with Claudius Lysias' letter to Felix about Paul, and in James 1:1.

The letter skips the typical Proem, which was a prayer expression for the welfare of the recipients. Instead, it goes directly to the letter body and makes two essential points as is reflected by the formal use of ἔδοξεν in vv. 25 and 28: it seemed good....

**The first point** in vv. 24-27 stresses the credentials of Judas and Silas as officially representing the church at Jerusalem. The core expression is ἔδοξεν ἡμῖν γενομένοις ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐκλεξαμένοις ἄνδρας πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς σὺν τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἡμῶν Βαρναβᾶ καὶ Παύλῳ, it seemed good to us who became unified and chose men to send to you together with our beloved Barnabas and Paul. Clearly this was designed to affirm to the church in Antioch that the church in Jerusalem had sided with Paul and Barnabas in the Gospel message of salvation by faith without the necessity of proselyte conversion to Judaism as was being advocated by these brethren at

<sup>251</sup>\* καὶ οἱ ἀδ. κ<sup>2</sup> E Ψ 1739 M sy bo<sup>mss</sup>

| – pc vg<sup>ms</sup> sa; Or<sup>lat</sup>

| txt P<sup>33,74</sup> κ\* A B C D 33. 81 pc lat; Ir<sup>lat</sup>

[Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 367.]

<sup>252</sup>c The whole ἐκκλησία of v. 22 now disappears and the letter is written in the name of the apostles and elders, though they (or at least the elders) are characterized as brothers. The brothers do appear as a *tiers état* in κ<sup>c</sup> EΨ M sy bo<sup>mss</sup>, which have καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί. At the other extreme ἀδελφοί is omitted by pc vg<sup>ms</sup> sa Or<sup>lat</sup>; but P<sup>73</sup> P<sup>74</sup> κ\* A B C D 33 81 pc lat Ir<sup>lat</sup> are to be followed with the simple ἀδελφοί (after πρεσβύτεροι): the elders if not the apostles are at the same time members of, brothers within, the local church, and it is as such that they address the members of the other churches—including Gentiles. Bruce (1:302) quotes Torrey to the effect that the opening words are faultless Aramaic idiom (שְׁלִיחֵיהֶם וְקִשְׁיָאֵיהֶם אֶחָדִים), and that brothers applies to both apostles and elders; if we may suppose that there was an Aramaic original this is a valid observation. Bultmann (*Exegetica* 416; so earlier Preuschen 96) thinks that the letter referred to its senders only as ἀδελφοί, (οἱ) ἄπ. καὶ πρεσβ. being a redactional addition by the author. He thinks further that the specific address, to Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, points to the use of a written source. It is perhaps more probable (see pp. 710f., 741) that Luke wrote the whole paragraph apart from the Decree itself, notwithstanding 'some old features which suggest that it may be pre-Lukan' (Wilson, *Gentiles* 187). The place names indeed are a feature that may be original. Luke himself believed that the letter (or at least the Decree) was of wider relevance and circulation. Paul and Silas (16:4) delivered it more widely, and v. 19 suggests that it would apply to all areas where Jews lived in the Dispersion. Syria and Cilicia suggest more than the hinterland of Antioch, but the omission of Pisidia is inexplicable if it was intended to suggest the mission area of chs. 13 and 14. For Antioch see 11:19; 13:1; 14:28; for Cilicia see on 6:9. Syria, at this time a Roman province, was the large tract of land in northern Palestine. Till A.D. 72 eastern Cilicia was administered by Syria; Vespasian made all Cilicia a separate province (CAH 11:603). This however does not prove (Hemer 179) that Acts was written in the period of the double province. The two names are mentioned as if they referred to two distinct administrative areas. The use of one article (κατὰ τὴν Α. καὶ Σ. καὶ Κ.) groups them together but does not make a unit of them, or exclude reference to other areas." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 740.]

Antioch. Emphasis is given that this was an overwhelming choice by the folks at Jerusalem, and especially by the leadership of the church. The reason for this assertion of sending the men is given as ἐπειδὴ ἠκούσαμεν ὅτι τινὲς ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξεληθόντες ἐτάραξαν ὑμᾶς λόγοις ἀνασκευάζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν οἷς οὐ διεστείλαμεθα, *since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds.* The Jerusalem leaders acknowledge that individuals had come from Jerusalem teaching ideas contrary to those of the Jerusalem leadership as Luke already referenced in 15:1.<sup>253</sup> It is made clear in the letter that these men were not authorized in any way by leaders in Jerusalem to teach these ideas. They had done it on their own, and evidently without any knowledge by the Jerusalem leadership. Without serious question these individuals had come from the subgroup in Jerusalem that Luke mentions in 15:5.<sup>254</sup> The same individuals had opposed Peter when he reported on the conversion of Cornelius earlier, as Luke describes in 11:1-3.<sup>255</sup> The letter acknowledges that these individuals had caused problems in the church at Antioch.

Particular affirmation is given to Barnabas and Paul. They are called τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἡμῶν, *our beloved...* This signals a positive attitude by the Jerusalem leaders toward Barnabas and Paul. Then their heroic efforts to preach the Gospel are acknowledged: ἀνθρώποις παραδεωκόσι τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, *who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The letter leaves no doubt where the church in Jerusalem with its leaders stand in this issue about circumcision for Gentiles. What Paul and Barnabas have taught in Antioch is the same understanding adopted in Jerusalem.

The responsibility of Judas and Silas to explain in person all these details is then set forth directly: ἀπεστάλακαμεν οὖν Ἰούδαν καὶ Σιλᾶν, καὶ αὐτοὺς διὰ λόγου ἀπαγγέλλοντας τὰ αὐτά, *We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth.* Both the formal letter and the validation in person by these two authorized representatives of the church should be enough to clear up the confusion in Antioch about where the church in Jerusalem stood on these issues.

**The second point** in vv. 28-29 stresses the request to avoid the fourfold ritual actions that were offensive to Jewish people and would complicate efforts at table fellowship with Jewish Christian members of the church. The core expression here is ἔδοξεν γὰρ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν μηδὲν πλέον ἐπιτίθεσθαι ὑμῖν βάρος πλὴν τούτων τῶν ἐπάναγκες, *For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials:....* Here the will of God through the Holy Spirit is added to the decision of the Jerusalem leadership. This reflects the leaders conviction that these prohibitions were legitimate and had their origin in God's will. Very likely a part of this conviction, at least, stemmed from the similar emphasis in Leviticus 17-18 as a part of the Law of Moses. Although the language here is different from James' proposal in vv. 19-21,<sup>256</sup> the essential point is the same. The letter indicates their desire μηδὲν πλέον ἐπιτίθεσθαι ὑμῖν βάρος πλὴν τούτων τῶν ἐπάναγκες, *to lay upon you no other burden beyond than these essentials.* Some commentators and translations imply that this was an order given by superiors to secondary level individuals. Such understanding is not justified by the language of the text. This came as a request, not as a demand from the Jerusalem church.

The fourfold list in v. 29 is the same as that in James' proposal in v. 20, just in a slightly different order:

ἀπέχεσθαι (v. 29):

ἀπέχεσθαι (v. 20):

1) εἰδωλοθύτων (v. 29)

1) τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων (v. 20)

<sup>253</sup>Acts 15:1. Καί τινες κατελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐδίδασκον τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὅτι Ἐὰν μὴ περιτμηθῆτε τῷ ἔθει τῷ Μωϋσέως, οὐ δύνασθε σωθῆναι.

Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

<sup>254</sup>Acts 15:5. ἐξανέστησαν δὲ τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευκότες, λέγοντες ὅτι δεῖ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς παραγγέλλειν τε τηρεῖν τὸν νόμον Μωϋσέως.

But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, "It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses."

<sup>255</sup>Acts 11:1-3. 11.1 Ἦκουσαν δὲ οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ οἱ ὄντες κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν ὅτι καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ. 2 ὅτε δὲ ἀνέβη Πέτρος εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, διεκρίνοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς 3 λέγοντες ὅτι Εἰσῆλθες πρὸς ἄνδρας ἀκροβυστίαν ἔχοντας καὶ συνέφαγες αὐτοῖς.

11.1 Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, 3 saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?"

<sup>256</sup>Acts 15:19-21. 19 διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω μὴ παρενοχλεῖν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἐπιστρέφουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, 20 ἀλλὰ ἐπιστεῖλαι αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων καὶ τῆς πορνείας καὶ τοῦ πνικτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος· 21 Μωϋσῆς γὰρ ἐκ γενεῶν ἀρχαίων κατὰ πόλιν τοὺς κηρύσσοντας αὐτὸν ἔχει ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἀναγινωσκόμενος.

19 Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, 20 but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. 21 For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues.

2) καὶ αἵματος (v. 29)

3) καὶ πνικτῶν (v. 29)

4) καὶ πορνείας (v. 29)

4) καὶ τοῦ αἵματος (v. 20)

3) καὶ τοῦ πνικτοῦ (v. 20)

2) καὶ τῆς πορνείας (v. 20)

The most notable difference is that πορνείας, *immorality*, is listed fourth in the letter but second in James' proposal. James had indicated τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων, *things polluted by idols*, while the letter says εἰδωλοθύτων, *things offered to idols*. No essential difference between these exists. The reference what is strangled is plural in the letter (πνικτῶν) but singular in James' proposal (πνικτοῦ). The appropriate Greek article (τῶν / τοῦ / τῆς) is used in James' proposal but no article is used in the letter. Nothing significant emerges from these variations. What is interesting is that much later copyists had particular trouble with καὶ πνικτῶν, *and things strangled*, which prevented the eating of meat with the blood still in it.<sup>257</sup> This was perceived as too Jewish to have any validity later on in Christian circles.

Tacked on to the end of the lengthy sentence in vv. 28-29 is ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε, *from which things keeping yourselves you will do well*. The importance of this relative clause is a signal of the request nature of the stated, rather than a demand. Additionally, the letter distinguishes clearly between requiring Torah obedience as the opponents were,<sup>258</sup> and considerate volunteer abstaining from actions that would complicate table fellowship with Jewish Christians. The leadership in Jerusalem faced a delicate issue here. To demand Torah obedience of any sort would be to give into the Judaizing element that opposed Paul and Barnabas. But to ignore completely issues that would greatly complicate matters for Jewish Christians in these churches to both have table fellowship with uncircumcised Gentiles and to continue observing their Jewish religious heritage would place huge burdens on the Jewish Christian members of these Diaspora churches. Most, if not virtually all of these Jewish Christians, desired to continue participating in the synagogue and to maintain their Jewish ethnic heritage along side their Christian commitment. How to do that inside a Christian community made up also of uncircumcised Gentiles would not be easy.

The greeting (=Conclusio) in v. 29c, ἔρρωσθε, *farewell*, from ῥώννυμι is very typical Greek letter expression.<sup>259</sup> The *Conclusio* of ancient letters often contained a variety of elements, but shorter letters often reduced the number down to a simple wish for good health as a farewell expression, as is the case here. This was especially the case when the *Proem*, a health wish in the form of a prayer at the beginning of the letter, was omitted, as is done in this letter.

Into this picture by Luke comes also Paul's depiction of the meeting in Gal. 2:1-10. This text also is an episodic narrative but with a stronger theological overtone. It divides out into multiple segments. Scene one in vv. 1-2 sets up the narrative. Scene two in vv. 3-5 describes the confrontation with the opponents over Titus. Scene three 6-10 describes Paul's agreement with the Jerusalem leadership. This division of the text also matches the three Greek sentences in the original text.

Before we examine this text in detail, consideration to the history of interpretation is important because of the different ways of connecting Galatians 2:1-10 to Acts. A quick survey of Galatians is in order, although references have already been made to this document in the above discussion of the Acts account.

<sup>257c</sup>MS D and some MSS of the VL omit *kai tou pniktou*, but (along with other MSS [323, 945, 1739, 1891, and Irenaeus]) add a form of the Golden Rule: 'and whatever they do not wish to be done to them, they should not do to others.'" [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 556.]

<sup>258</sup>The opponents were demanding Torah obedience at Antioch:

**Acts 15:1b.** Ἐὰν μὴ περιτμηθῆτε τῷ ἔθει τῷ Μωϋσέως, οὐ δύνασθε σωθῆναι.

"Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

The Pharisee church members in Jerusalem were demanding the same thing:

**Acts 15:5b.** δεῖ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς παραγγέλλειν τε τηρεῖν τὸν νόμον Μωϋσέως.

"It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses."

<sup>259c</sup>ῥώννυμι in the act. (obsolete in NT times) 'to strengthen'; the perf. pass. (in the sense 'be strong', since Eur., Thu.; also LXX.—Tat. 32, 3; Ath. 27, 1 [both ἔρρωμένος]) ἔρρωμαι, inf. ἔρρωσθαι, impv. ἔρρωσο, ἔρρωσθε (always w. double ρ: B-D-F §11, 1; Mlt-H. 101f). Gr-Rom. letters gener. included at the beginning inquiries about a recipient's health and at the conclusion a wish for the recipient's well-being. The latter formulation was freq. expressed w. the verb ῥ. in the perf. pass. impv. *be in good health, farewell, goodbye* (Hippocr., X., Pla.+; ins [SIG 4 p. 549b index]; pap [very oft.; s. FExler, *The Form of the Ancient Gk. Letter* 1923, 74ff; HLietzmann, *Kl. Texte* 14, 2 1910, nos. 3; 4; 6; 7; 8 al.] 2 Macc 11:21, 33; 3 Macc 7:9; TestSol 22:5 B; EpArist 40; 46; Jos., Vi. 227; 365) **Ac 15:29; 23:30 v.l.**; IEph 21:2; IMg 15; ITr 13:2; IRo 10:3; IPhd 11:2; ISm 13:1f; IPol 8:3b (in Ign. the greeting is combined w. various additions fr. Christian usage). ἔρρωσο ἐν κυρίῳ AcPICor 1:16. Periphrastically ἔρρωσθαι ὑμᾶς εὐχομαι (oft. pap) IPol 8:3a; MPol 22:1.—DELG. M-M." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 908-09.]

**Scene one (vv. 1-2): Trip to Jerusalem.** 2.1 Ἐπειτα διὰ δεκατεσσάρων ἐτῶν πάλιν ἀνέβην εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα μετὰ Βαρναβᾶ συμπαραλαβὼν καὶ Τίτον· 2 ἀνέβην δὲ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν· καὶ ἀνεθέμην αὐτοῖς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, κατ' ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς δοκοῦσιν, μή πως εἰς κενὸν τρέχω ἢ ἔδραμον. **2 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. 2 I went up in response to a revelation. Then I laid before them (though only in a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure that I was not running, or had not run, in vain.**

Here Paul indicates the motivation for making this trip to Jerusalem.

Luke indicates in Acts 15:2 that the church in Antioch designated Paul, Barnabas, and 'some of the others' to go to Jerusalem περὶ τοῦ ζητήματος τούτου, **concerning this dispute**. Luke had specified the στάσεως καὶ ζητήσεως οὐκ ὀλίγης, **no small dissension and debate** between Paul and Barnabas with the men from Judea over the teaching of these men that Ἐὰν μὴ περιτμηθῆτε τῷ ἔθει τῷ Μωϋσέως, οὐ δύνασθε σωθῆναι, **"Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."** Thus the delegation sent to Jerusalem was to meet πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ πρεσβύτερους concerning this matter. Then Luke's introductory line in 15:6 is Συνήχθησαν τε οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι ἰδεῖν περὶ τοῦ λόγου τούτου, **The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter**. This private meeting of leaders invited Barnabas and Paul to report on their activities to the group (v. 12).

Paul's account of this, although using different language, reflects a compatible perspective to Luke's, with a few additional details. **1)** Paul made the trip fourteen years after his conversion on the road to Damascus, thus placing the trip in 46 to 47 AD. **2)** This trip was a subsequent trip, πάλιν, to Jerusalem. Actually from Luke's narrative in Acts it was the third time Paul had visited Jerusalem since his conversion (Acts 9:26-30; 11:27-30; 15:1-4). **3)** Both Barnabas and Titus<sup>260</sup> are mentioned specifically as accompanying him. Titus would probably have been one of the τινὰς ἄλλους ἐξ αὐτῶν, mentioned by Luke (15:2). In repeated emphasis Paul indicates κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν, **according to revelation**. Paul then only agreed to go to Jerusalem at the request of the Antioch church because God gave him a green light to go.

**4)** He presented to these leaders τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ κηρύσσω ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, **the Gospel which I am preaching among the Gentiles**. This compares to Luke's summation of their report to the leaders in 15:12, Ἐσίγησεν δὲ πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος καὶ ἤκουον Βαρναβᾶ καὶ Παύλου ἐξηγουμένων ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν δι' αὐτῶν, **all the group kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles**. Paul stresses that this was in a private meeting with the leaders: κατ' ἰδίαν δὲ τοῖς δοκοῦσιν, **but privately to the acknowledged leaders**. When Luke's multi-tiered description of the meeting in Jerusalem is properly understood, not tension exists between his account and Paul's. In Acts 15 the meeting is described in three parts: 1) the gathering of both leaders and church members, vv. 4-5; 2) the private meeting of just leaders, vv. 6-21; 3) a subsequent communication between the leaders and the entire church in Jerusalem agreeing on a response to the Antioch issue, vv. 22-29. Luke correctly places Paul and Barnabas' main report to the leadership, οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, in v. 12. Many translations mistakenly imply this was to the entire meeting of leaders and church by falsely translating πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος as The whole assembly (i.e., NRSV), while the context is clear that this was a gathering of all the leaders made up of οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι. With the large size of the Jerusalem Christian community the number of local house church leaders, οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, would have been a considerable size.

**5)** Paul's goal in doing this was μή πως εἰς κενὸν τρέχω ἢ ἔδραμον, **lest some how in vain I am running or have been running**. In no way does this imply that Paul was seeking permission from the leaders in Jerusalem to do ministry among the Gentiles. The rest of his narrative makes this abundantly clear. Instead, his athletic based metaphor stresses the need to be certain that the efforts to undercut his ministry that were coming from Jerusalem were not being authorized by the leadership, either apostle or elders, in Jerusalem. They all needed to be in

<sup>260</sup> **Τίτος, οὐ, ὁ** (Polyb.; Diod S 11, 51, 1; 15, 23, 1; 16, 40, 1 et al.; ins, pap; Jos., Ant. 14, 229f) **Titus**.

**1. friend and colleague of Paul, mentioned in our lit. only in Paul's letters.** As a Gentile Christian he accompanied Paul to a meeting at Jerusalem; Paul did not have him circumcised, though Judaizers demanded that he do so **Gal 2:1, 3**. Later he effected a reconciliation betw. Paul and the Corinthian church when the latter seemed lost to the apostle, and he arranged for a collection: **2 Cor 2:13; 7:6, 13f; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18**; subscr.—**2 Ti 4:10** mentions a journey of Titus to Dalmatia. Acc. to **Tit 1:4** the apostle left him, his γνήσιον τέκνον, behind in Crete to organize the churches there (s. vs. 5); see also title and subscr. of Tit for the name. Τίτον καὶ τὸν Λουκᾶν AcPl Ha 11, 16 (Aa I, 116, 16f); AcPl Ant 13, 13 (Aa I, 237, 1).—AJülicher, RE XIX 1907, 798–800; CBarrett, MBlack Festschr. '69, 1–18. Lit. s.v. Τιμόθεος (Pözl 103ff) and Ἰωάν(ν)ης 6.

**2. surnamed Justus Ac 18:7** v.l.; s. Τίτος.—LGPN I. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1009.]

agreement with him about the Gospel to be preached to the non-Jews. Although not stated in exactly these same words, Luke's narrative in Acts supports the recognized need for common agreement about the Gospel message to be preached to the Gentiles.

The efforts to see irreconcilable differences between Acts 15 and Galatians 2 in describing the same meeting in Jerusalem fail to have any persuasion with careful comparison of the two accounts. Fundamental to each description is the literary purpose in the mind of each writer, which in this case is very different from each other. Luke is highlighting commonality between Paul and the Jerusalem church, while Paul is adamantly asserting his independency of the Jerusalem leadership for authority to preach the Gospel. Narrative distinctives then are expected and one would be suspicious if they did not occur.

**Scene two (vv. 3-5): Confrontation over Titus.** 3 ἀλλ' οὐδὲ Τίτος ὁ σὺν ἐμοί, Ἕλληνας ὢν, ἠναγκάσθη περιτμηθῆναι· 4 διὰ δὲ τοὺς παρεισάκτους ψευδαδέλφους, οἵτινες παρεισήλθον κατασκοπεῖν τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἡμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν— 5 οἷς οὐδὲ πρὸς ὥραν εἴξαμεν τῇ ὑποταγῇ, ἵνα ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου διαμείνῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς. **3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. 4 But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us— 5 we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you.**

This second scene in Paul's account is unique to Paul's narrative. Here not only do we catch a glimpse of the passion of Paul for the integrity of the Gospel, but also his very negative view of the opponents in Jerusalem comes to the surface as well. Luke makes no mention of Titus at all, since this episode lies beyond his purposes. But it is central to those of Paul, and thus he includes it. Titus, Paul says, was completely Greek. But some in the Jerusalem church insisted on him being circumcised. It is important to remember that in Jerusalem the non-Jews who had been a part of this congregation from the beginning had also been proselyte Jews. That is, they had converted to Judaism before becoming Christians. Thus the "Gentile" members of the Jerusalem church were okay Gentiles in the eyes of the Jews both inside and outside the church in Jerusalem. The insistence was that Titus should conform to this pattern that dominated the church in Jerusalem.

The source of this insistence is described more mildly by Luke in terms of *τινες κατελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας, certain ones came down from Judea* (15:1) and *τινες τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν Φαρισαίων πεπιστευκότες, some of the believers from the sect of the Pharisees*. With his goal of unifying, Luke describes these individuals rather diplomatically, although he clearly takes the side of Paul in the issues.

Paul, however, describes these same individuals in very blunt direct language. In 2:4, he says, *διὰ δὲ τοὺς παρεισάκτους ψευδαδέλφους, οἵτινες παρεισήλθον κατασκοπεῖν τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἡμῶν ἣν ἔχομεν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα ἡμᾶς καταδουλώσουσιν, But because of false brothers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us*. This is 'fifth columnist' military terminology describing in part what the church in Jerusalem had initially thought that Paul was trying to do on his first trip to Jerusalem as a Christian; cf. Acts 9:26. Instead, Paul saw these people as phoney believers who had not actually shed their commitments to the Pharisees in order to become genuine Christians. Although claiming Christianity, and most likely having been properly baptized as believers, none the less their lives had not undergone the transformation that true faith produces. Thus he viewed them as rogues inside the church who were causing havoc.

Consequently, he pointedly stressed that he would not allow Titus to be circumcised: *οἷς οὐδὲ πρὸς ὥραν εἴξαμεν τῇ ὑποταγῇ, ἵνα ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου διαμείνῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you*. Also he strongly implies that the Jerusalem church leadership took his side on this issue as well: *οὐδὲ Τίτος ὁ σὺν ἐμοί, Ἕλληνας ὢν, ἠναγκάσθη περιτμηθῆναι, even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek*. The passive voice verb usage implies clearly that others also -- most likely the leaders -- did not feel that Titus needed to be circumcised. The emphatic negative *οὐδὲ* most likely intensifies the sense of these leaders not demanding the circumcision of Titus.

If memory serves one well, there is the recollection from Acts 16:3 that Paul did require Timothy to be circumcised: *τοῦτον ἠθέλησεν ὁ Παῦλος σὺν αὐτῷ ἐξελεῖν, καὶ λαβὼν περιέτεμεν αὐτὸν διὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους τοὺς ὄντας ἐν τοῖς τόποις ἐκείνοις· ἤδρισαν γὰρ ἅπαντες ὅτι Ἕλληνας ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ ὑπῆρχεν, Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and had him circumcised because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek*. What's the difference? Very simple! Timothy with a Jewish mother, was considered to be a Jew, even though having a Greek father. But Titus was Greek with both parents not being Jewish. Paul's opposite actions regarding these two associates is entirely consistent with the views of that time about Jewish heritage.

Paul's narrative here ultimately stresses his unbending stance on the circumcision of Titus as for the integ-

rity of the Gospel, especially among the Gentiles who were the central target of Paul's ministry. On fundamentally important issues such as the heart of the Gospel Paul was completely uncompromising. On lesser matters he could be and was very flexible, as he asserts to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 10:31-11:1):

31 εἴτε οὖν ἐσθίετε εἴτε πίνετε εἴτε τι ποιεῖτε, πάντα εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ ποιεῖτε. 32 ἀπρόσκοποι καὶ Ἰουδαίους γίνεσθε καὶ Ἑλλησιν καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, 33 καθὼς κἀγὼ πάντα πᾶσιν ἀρέσκω μὴ ζητῶν τὸ ἑαυτοῦ σύμφορον ἀλλὰ τὸ τῶν πολλῶν, ἵνα σωθῶσιν. 11.1 μιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε καθὼς κἀγὼ Χριστοῦ.

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. 11.1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

The situation at Jerusalem demanded an uncompromising stance, which Paul was prepared to make.

**Scene three (vv. 6-10): Agreement with Jerusalem leadership.** 6 ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν δοκούντων εἶναι τι— ὅποιοι ποτε ἦσαν οὐδὲν μοι διαφέρει· πρόσωπον θεὸς ἀνθρώπου οὐ λαμβάνει— ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἱ δοκοῦντες οὐδὲν προσανέθεντο, 7 ἀλλὰ τοῦναντίον ἰδόντες ὅτι πεπίστευμαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς ἀκροβυστίας καθὼς Πέτρος τῆς περιτομῆς, 8 ὁ γὰρ ἐνεργήσας Πέτρῳ εἰς ἀποστολὴν τῆς περιτομῆς ἐνήργησεν καὶ ἐμοὶ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, 9 καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι εἶναι, δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἐμοὶ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ κοινωνίας, ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομήν· 10 μόνον τῶν πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν, ὃ καὶ ἐσπούδασα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι. **6 And from those who were supposed to be acknowledged leaders (what they actually were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those leaders contributed nothing to me. 7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised 8 (for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles), 9 and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.**

Paul's depiction of the agreement reached with the leaders in Jerusalem stresses a different angle from that of Luke in Acts 15:6-21. Both Acts 15 and Galatians 2 allude to two separate agreements. The first was a common affirmation among all of them of the Gospel as salvation by faith alone. The second agreement is where differences between the two accounts surface. Acts 15 has to do with a request for Gentiles to honor Jewish sensitivity to core dietary patterns and morality patterns. Galatians 2 defines the second agreement as Gentile benevolence toward the poor.

Luke makes it very clear that the apostles under Peter's leadership agreed with Paul's view of the Gospel, vv. 7-11. And also that the local leaders under James' leadership concurred, vv. 13-21. Paul's way of depicting this agreement is consistent with his literary purpose of stressing independency; note especially v. 6: Ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν δοκούντων εἶναι τι, - ὅποιοι ποτε ἦσαν οὐδὲν μοι διαφέρει· πρόσωπον [ὁ] θεὸς ἀνθρώπου οὐ λαμβάνει - ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἱ δοκοῦντες οὐδὲν προσανέθεντο, **And from those who were supposed to be acknowledged leaders (what they actually were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those leaders contributed nothing to me.**

The major agreement is defined in vv. 6-9 and Paul describes the Jerusalem leaders (vv. 6, 9) as acknowledging Paul's calling to preach the Gospel to Gentiles (vv. 7, 9) just as Peter's calling was centered on Jews. One should clearly understand that the Paul is not specifying exclusive ministry, but dominant ministry focus. In reality, and completely within the framework of this agreement was ministry to both Jews and Gentiles by both leaders. Also in agreement with Acts 15, Barnabas is included in the agreement as well (v. 9). Paul describes the agreement in terms of a 'shaking of right hands' of he and Barnabas with James, Peter, and John. This was in the ancient world a more formal way to conclude an agreement, that might or might not have been written out on paper. Paul labels the shaking of hands the δεξιὰς...κοινωνίας, **the right hands of fellowship**, (note the creative way of expressing this in Greek which is not possible to replicate in modern languages).

The secondary agreement in both Acts 15 and Galatians 2 is not presented as a demand but as a request from the Jerusalem leaders to Paul and Barnabas, which is also the nature of the major agreement:

**Acts 15:20**, ἀλλὰ ἐπιστεῖλαι αὐτοῖς τοῦ ἀπέχεσθαι τῶν ἀλισγημάτων τῶν εἰδώλων καὶ τῆς πορνείας καὶ τοῦ πνικτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος, **but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood.**

**Gal. 2:10**, μόνον τῶν πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν, ὃ καὶ ἐσπούδασα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι, **They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.**

The interpretive issue centers on the content of the request, which is different between the two accounts. Some see this difference as irreconcilable, but this is largely due to a modern mind-set that demands precise details of every aspect of a meeting in a summarizing report. This was not a point of concern, or even interest, in the ancient world. To insist that both texts must give a 6:00 o'clock evening news accounting of the details is a

gross mistake, that both doesn't understand either the interpretive angle of the 6:00 o'clock news reporting<sup>261</sup> or the way of reporting events in the ancient world.

Luke is true to his unifying objective and stresses the agreement that sought to work out a compromise between Jews and Gentiles inside the congregations. The agreement indeed proved problematic and eventually was discarded, clearly by the end of the first century.<sup>262</sup> This in part, because Jewish Christians dwindled to almost zero inside the Christian churches, which made the agreement irrelevant. The few Jews who claimed to be Christians mostly segregated themselves into isolated pockets of Jews only in their groups, and came to be known as the Ebionites at least in the second century.<sup>263</sup>

With Paul's independency objective, this request, which he did honor as Acts subsequently indicates (cf. 16:4), seemed problematic to him and at odds with his objective in the Galatians 2 report. He chose instead to stress another more workable request made by the Jerusalem leaders that these missionaries uphold the distinctive Jewish tradition of benevolent help to the poor: *μόνον τῶν πτωχῶν ἵνα μνημονεύωμεν*.<sup>264</sup> Many have mistakenly assumed that this meant only benevolent relief for Jerusalem Christians, which Luke describes in Acts 11 and on the third missionary journey of Paul and Silas. But Paul's language only underscores benevolent help given to the poor, something that was a huge part of the Jewish tradition of taking care of their own people in times of need. For a glimpse of how important this was see Matt. 6:1-18, especially vv. 2-4 which describe this as *ἐλεημοσύνη*, *almsgiving*. Luke indicates that this became an important part of the Jerusalem church in Acts 6:1-7. Paul indicates that honoring this request was something that he endeavored to do: *ὃ καὶ ἐσπούδασα αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι*, *which very thing I have also endeavored to do*. The two instances, described in Acts 11 and the third missionary journey with Paul's depiction of that in 2 Cor. 8-9, highlight that during his ministry he did uphold that Jewish tradition and taught its implementation in the Gentile churches he established. He could gladly comply with this request with the Jerusalem leaders.

Although many see tensions between Acts 15 and Gal. 2 that lead to disconnecting the accounts from one another,<sup>265</sup> my estimation is that both accounts clearly describe the same event that happened in Jerusalem about AD 46 or 47. It was a watershed moment for the early Christian movement, because it clarified a common understanding that non-Jews did not need to convert to Judaism as a part of their becoming Christians. One of the implications of this common agreement would be to plant the seeds for Christianity to become a separate, distinct religious movement from Judaism. This happened in the early decades of the second half of the first century. And the work of Paul in the Gentile world of the northeastern Mediterranean region in the 40s and 50s played a pivotal role in that trend. Interestingly, all of this took place during the tragic era of the 50s through the

<sup>261</sup>Once you have been interviewed by TV reporters recording your comments and then watch how it is treated in the evening news, you clearly understand what I'm alluding to here. Huge editing and 're-contextualizing' of your comments are done as a normal course of reporting. After having experienced this early in my teaching career I became very hesitant to grant interviews to reporters for any reason.

<sup>262</sup>One clear signal of this is the later re-writing of the agreement in subsequent copies of the text, mostly in the Byzantine text family, of Acts 15: 20 where *καὶ τοῦ πνικτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος*, *and that strangled and that from blood*, was replaced by the negative version of the Golden Rule from Matt. 7:12. The letter contents were also adapted to read a similar way.

<sup>263</sup>An early Christian sect known for its observance of some form of the Jewish law. Its members were regarded as heretical by the Church Fathers. The earliest undisputed use of the term Ebionites (usually *Ebiōnaioi* in Gk, *Ebionaei* or *Ebionitae* in Lat) appeared in the 2d century in the *Contra Haereses* of Irenaeus of Lyon, who recorded it as the name of a Christian group he considered heretical because they lived according to Jewish law. However, the term has an earlier history, having evolved into a sectarian name from the generic biblical Hebrew word *'ebyōnīm*, meaning "the poor." The significance of this earlier evolution has long been a subject of dispute." [Stephen Goranson, "Ebionites" In vol. 2, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 260-61.]

<sup>264</sup>Terms from *šdq* and their Greek translation, usually as *dik*-words, are frequent in the literary remains from Jewish sources in the centuries before and at the beginning of the Common Era. It is possible to combine these together, as Cronbach has done for the period 200 B.C.–A.D. 100, to obtain the following picture of how 'righteous (ness)' was spoken of with regard to human beings, above all pious Israelites, and with regard to God (IDB 4: 85–91). In this composite, righteousness is identified on the one hand with a host of traits such as mercy, beneficence, and gentleness, and with the absence of avarice or wrongdoing on the other; *the righteous person is especially given to prayer (2 Esdr 7:41–42[111–12]; 1 En. 47:1–2; 97:1, 3, 5, on earth and in heaven; 39:5–7) and almsgiving (Dan 4:27[24], RSV righteousness; NEB charity, for Aramaic šidēqā; Sir 3:14, RSV kindness; Heb šēdāqā, Gk eleēmosynē)*. Righteousness is especially looked for in judges. There can, however, be a sense of vindictiveness about justice, even the justice that God works, above all eschatologically (2 Macc 12:40–41; Ps. Sol. 4:8)." [John Reumann, "Righteousness: Early Judaism" In vol. 5, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 736-37.]

<sup>265</sup>Modern scholarship has raised a number of questions relating to the account of the Jerusalem Council in Acts. A number of these involve uncertainty about the date of Galatians and the relation of Paul's visits to Jerusalem recorded in Galatians 2:1–10 to those mentioned in Acts 11:30; 15. Many students believe Galatians 2:1–10 to be an alternate (possibly contradictory) account of the meeting also described in Acts 15. A few students suggest that the Galatians passage describes a Jerusalem visit of Paul not mentioned in Acts." [Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1137-38.]

60s when Jewish people in Palestine became embroiled in a suicidal effort to push out the Romans from the Jewish homeland in Palestine. When the Romans crushed this abortive revolt in AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and of its temple, the lives of Jewish people all over the Mediterranean world were forever changed.

### 5.1.3 Ministry in Antioch, Acts 15:30-35; Gal 2:11-14

**Acts 15:30** So they were sent off and went down to Antioch. When they gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. 31 When its members read it, they rejoiced at the exhortation. 32 Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. 33 After they had been there for some time, they were sent off in peace by the believers to those who had sent them. 35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, and there, with many others, they taught and proclaimed the word of the Lord.

30 Οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀπολυθέντες κατήλθον εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, καὶ συναγαγόντες τὸ πλῆθος ἐπέδωκαν τὴν ἐπιστολὴν· 31 ἀναγνόντες δὲ ἐχάρησαν ἐπὶ τῇ παρακλήσει. 32 Ἰουδᾶς τε καὶ Σιλᾶς, καὶ αὐτοὶ προφῆται ὄντες, διὰ λόγου πολλοῦ παρεκάλεσαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ἐπεστήριζαν· 33 ποιήσαντες δὲ χρόνον ἀπελύθησαν μετ' εἰρήνης ἀπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστείλαντας αὐτούς. 35 Παῦλος δὲ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς διέτριβον ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι μετὰ καὶ ἑτέρων πολλῶν τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου.

Paul's continued ministry in Antioch is summarized by Luke in Acts 15:30-35. Vv. 30-34 center on the delegation returning home to Antioch<sup>266</sup> from Jerusalem and reporting to the church what had been agreed upon at the meeting in Jerusalem. The response of the Christian community in Antioch was ἐχάρησαν ἐπὶ τῇ παρακλήσει, they rejoiced at the exhortation. Judas and Silas were the ones who formally delivered the letter (cf. 15:23-30) to the congregation; this was appropriate since they were instructed by the Jerusalem leadership to represent them at Antioch as v. 33 mentions.<sup>267</sup>



Luke closes this segment in v. 35 with a short reference to an extended ministry by Paul and Barnabas in Antioch. The verb διατρίβω simply means to spend some time in a place. But Luke indicates in v. 36 that the decision to revisit the Galatian churches took place Μετὰ τινὰς ἡμέρας, after some days, in the sense of the passing of considerable time, perhaps a year or more. The ministry of these two missionaries in Antioch centered, in Luke's words, on διδάσκοντες καὶ εὐαγγελιζόμενοι...τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου, teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord. This was a wonderful time of strengthening the commitment of the believers and of evangelizing the city with the Gospel message about Christ. Luke also stresses that they were not alone in this work; it was done μετὰ καὶ ἑτέρων πολλῶν, with many others also.

Interestingly, enough the church at Antioch will functionally disappear from the Acts narrative at this point. It will be mentioned only once more in 18:22 when Paul and Silas return to Antioch at the end of the second missionary journey.<sup>268</sup> But this congregation had paved the way for profound changes in the Christian movement

<sup>266</sup>“Antioch of Syria was founded about 300 B.C. by Seleucus I Nicator (‘The Conqueror’), who named it after either his father or his son, both of whom bore the name Antiochus. It was situated at the foot of Mt. Silpius on the Orontes River about three hundred miles north of Jerusalem and twenty miles east of the Mediterranean at the joining of the Lebanon and Taurus mountain ranges where the Orontes breaks through and flows down to the sea. To distinguish it from fifteen other Asiatic cities built by Seleucus and also named Antioch, it was commonly called ‘Antioch on the Orontes’—also ‘Antioch the Great,’ or ‘Antioch the Beautiful,’ or ‘Antioch by Daphne’ (alluding to its celebrated suburb five miles to the south). Because of its strategic location, political importance, and great beauty, it was frequently given the epithet ‘Fair Crown of the Orient’ or ‘The Queen of the East.’ During the first century it was, after Rome and Alexandria, the third largest city of the Roman Empire, with a population of over 500,000. In A.D. 540 after a catastrophic fire (A.D. 525) and two major earthquakes (A.D. 526 and 528) in which over 360,000 of its inhabitants perished, Antioch was sacked by the Persians, who took most of the remaining people to Mesopotamia as slaves. Those who remained suffered the terrible plague of A.D. 542. By the time the Arabs captured it in A.D. 637, Antioch was not much more than a frontier fortress. Today Antakya (Antioch) is a sleepy, rather dingy town of about 35,000 inhabitants, part Turkish and part Arab.” [Richard N. Longenecker, vol. 41, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 65.]

<sup>267</sup>“Verse 34 is one of the Western readings that found its way into the *Textus Receptus* and from thence into many of the sixteenth and seventeenth century translations. It is the consensus of textual criticism that it was not in the original text of Acts and is thus omitted in modern translations. It reads: ‘But Silas decided to remain with them. Only Judas departed.’ Undoubtedly the scribe responsible for this addition wanted to solve the problem of Silas’s being present in Antioch again in v. 40. In so doing, a much more serious conflict was created with v. 33, which clearly states that they (plural) both returned to Jerusalem. There really is no problem with v. 40 anyway, because it takes place some time later (v. 36), allowing plenty of room for Silas to return to Antioch from Jerusalem.” [John B. Polhill, vol. 26, *Acts*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 336.]

<sup>268</sup>**Acts 18:22-23.** 22 When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. 23 After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

22 καὶ κατελθὼν εἰς Καισάρειαν, ἀναβὰς καὶ ἀσπασάμενος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν κατέβη εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν. 23 καὶ ποιήσας χρόνον τινὰ ἐξῆλθεν διερχόμενος καθεξῆς τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν καὶ Φρυγίαν, ἐπιστηρίζων πάντας τοὺς μαθητάς.

by opening its doors to non-circumcised Gentiles and then by supporting the missionary efforts of Paul and his associates to expand this path with the missionary travels that established Christianity solidly as inclusive of all peoples who were willing to make a faith commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord.

**Gal. 2:11-14.** 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; 12 for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. 13 And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

11 Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν Κηφᾶς εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην, ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν· 12 πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνήσθην· ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον, ὑπέστειλλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτὸν, φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς. 13 καὶ συνυπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, ὥστε καὶ Βαρναβᾶς συναπήχθη αὐτῶν τῇ ὑποκρίσει. 14 ἀλλ' ὅτε εἶδον ὅτι οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, εἶπον τῷ Κηφᾷ ἐμπροσθεν πάντων· Εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐκ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς, πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαΐζειν;

One of the interpretive issues in this passage is establishing clear boundaries to the pericope. The beginning point in v. 11 is clear and beyond serious questioning. But the stopping point is the problem. The question is at what point does Paul cease describing what happened at Antioch and begin focusing on his Galatian readers? Clearly by 2:17 he has reached this point with the shift to the first person singular narrative perspective. Verses 17-22 signal a climatic summation of his *narratio* arguments from 1:11-2:16. Verses 15-16 seem to be a subtle shifting from Antioch to the Galatian readers with the first person plural perspective. This is a shift from the second person singular perspective in v. 14b when Paul is clearly recounting what he said directly to Peter at Antioch in the public rebuke of him. In the long but single Greek sentence in vv. 15-16, Paul seems to have pretty much shifted to his Galatians readers by the end of this sentence in verse 16. Consequently most will see vv. 11-14 as the natural pericope with vv. 15-16 moving into the clear summary of vv. 17-22.

This episode bothers a lot of commentators both in its contents of Peter's embarrassing mistake and in Paul's listing it after the Jerusalem council meeting with its agreements.<sup>269</sup> There seems often to be a "Save Peter from embarrassment" campaign going on among commentators.<sup>270</sup> Of those coming from a Roman Catholic background, such is easily understandable; but from others it is not so easy to understand.

Clearly Paul's literary strategy in Galatians chapters one and two is thematically based about defending his right to preach the Gospel as a divinely called apostle. Thus he was not compelled to present the various historical events in chronological sequence in order to make his point that various events in his ministry point to

<sup>269c</sup>The Antioch episode of 2:11–14 is the last account in Paul's *narratio* of 1:11–2:14. It is not introduced by the adverb *ἔπειτα* ('then,' 'next'), as are the three preceding stages of Paul's defense (cf. 1:18ff.; 1:21ff.; 2:1ff.), but by the indeterminate particle *ὅτε* ('when?'). This has led a number of commentators to postulate that the Antioch episode is not related in its true historical order, but must be seen as having taken place before the meeting narrated in 2:1–10 (so Augustine, *Epistulam ad Galatas* on 2:11; T. Zahn, *Galater*, 110–11; J. Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, 74–75, 100–103; H. M. Féret, *Pierre et Paul à Antioche et à Jérusalem*; though for a penetrating critique of this position, see J. Dupont, *RSR* 45 [1957] 42–60, 225–39). It is most natural, however, to take the Antioch episode of 2:11–14 as having occurred after the meeting narrated in 2:1–10. And that is how the vast majority of commentators have taken it, whether they see the meeting of 2:1–10 as being the famine visit of Acts 11 or the Jerusalem council of Acts 15." [Richard N. Longenecker, vol. 41, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 63–64.]

<sup>270c</sup>The importance of the Antioch episode for an understanding of the development of early Christianity is highlighted by the many diverse interpretations given it during the first five centuries of Christian history. The Ebionites, for example, made it the basis for an attack on Paul (cf. *Ps. Clem. Hom.* 17.19). Marcion, on the other hand, used it to attack Peter and to prove the direct antagonism of Christianity to everything Jewish (so Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 1.20; 5.3; idem, *De Praesc. Haer.* 23; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.12.15). And early critics of Christianity, such as Celsus (late second century) and Porphyry (c 230–305), seem to have frequently used this incident to assail the Christian faith itself, impugning the characters of both Paul and Peter for their shameful quarreling (on Celsus, see Origen, *Contra Celsum* 5.64; on Porphyry, see Jerome, *Epistulam ad Galatas* on 2:1ff).

"Within the mainstream of Gentile Christendom, Tertullian, arguing against the Marcionites, took the rebuke of Peter to be an over-reaction on Paul's part (*Adv. Marc.* 1.20; 5.3; *De Praesc. Haer.* 23); Clement of Alexandria asserted that 'Cephas' here was not Cephas the apostle, the one called by Jesus 'Peter,' but one of the seventy apostles bearing the same name (cf. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 1.12, referring to Clement's Hypotyposes 5); while Origen, Chrysostom, and Jerome saw it as a staged event concocted between Peter and Paul in order to bring the issues out into the open and so to condemn the Judaizers more effectively (Origen, *Stromateis* 10 [though not in his later *Contra Celsum* 2.1]; Chrysostom, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* on 2:11–12; idem, *In illud, in faciem Petro restiti* [Latin title of PG 51:371ff.]; Jerome, *Epistulam ad Galatas* on 2:11 [though abandoned in his later *Adv. Pelagium.* 1.22]). Augustine, however, in direct opposition to Jerome, interpreted it as a case of the higher claims of truth over rank and office—of Peter's error despite his primacy, of Paul's rightful rebuke and defense of the gospel, and of Peter's humility in accepting correction from an inferior in both age and standing (*Epistulam ad Galatas* on 2:11ff.; for the relevant correspondence between Augustine and Jerome, see Augustine, *Epp.* 28.3; 40.3f.; 82.4ff.; Jerome, *Ep.* 112.4ff.). And many of these views continue in one form or another today.

[Richard N. Longenecker, vol. 41, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 64–65.]

his independency from the Twelve and of Peter in particular for any authorization to preach the Gospel. But the reality is that all of the preceding historical events described by Paul are presented chronologically: pre-conversion (1:13-14); conversion and calling (1:15-17); first trip to Jerusalem as a Christian (1:18-24); subsequent trip to Jerusalem (2:1-10). In order to contend that the episode with Peter at Antioch must precede some of these events or somehow not follow the Jerusalem meeting of 2:1-10 defies clear logic, and no one that I have ever analyzed at this point makes a credible case to contending that 2:11-10 is not listed chronologically.<sup>271</sup>

In the period of time after Paul and Barnabas, along with Silas and Judas, traveled to Antioch after the meeting in Jerusalem, and prior to the beginning of the second missionary journey, Peter made a trip to Antioch in order to encourage the church and the preaching of the Gospel. That this would be entirely within the framework of the Jerusalem agreement stated by Paul in 2:9, ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομὴν, is clear when one understands that agreement in general terms. The Jewish community at Antioch was huge with several thousand Jews living in the city.<sup>272</sup> Quite naturally Peter would seek to encourage the Jewish Christians

<sup>271</sup>The so-called South Galatian Theory that tries to posit Galatians being written at the close of the first missionary journey and prior to the Jerusalem council meeting of Acts 15 is forced to stretch the exegesis of parts of 2:1-10 beyond credible limits in order to attempt to justify its position that Gal. 2:1-10 is alluded to the Acts 11 famine visit of Paul to Jerusalem.

One interesting side note, that will be picked up in much greater detail in a later chapter, is that this South Galatians Theory has become in recent decades identified as the evangelical view of Galatians. Consequently, almost all more recent commentaries written from a non-evangelical viewpoint have adopted automatically the older North Galatians Theory that sees Galatians written on the third missionary journey at Corinth in the mid 50s at the same time as Romans. These writers seem to intentionally reject the South Galatians Theory simply because of its evangelical associations. Most do not even allude to the view that I came to believe is the correct one several decades ago from the work of Herman Ridderbos on Galatians in the NIC commentary series. This sees Galatians as coming on the second missionary journey from Macedonia and prior to the writing of First and Second Thessalonians from Achaia (Athens & Corinth) on that same trip in the early 50s. But more about that later on.

<sup>272</sup>Jews were among the original settlers in the city founded by Seleucus I about 300 B.C. Antioch's proximity to Palestine, its importance as the administrative center of so much of the Orient, and its commercial prosperity made it attractive to many Jews. For most of the Seleucid period Jews at Antioch seem to have been free to follow their own customs and to carry on their own affairs without governmental interference. Only during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, when repressions in Palestine seriously affected Jews in Syria as well, was the peace and tranquillity of the Jewish population in Antioch broken. Generally, however, under the Seleucid monarchs the Jewish community at Antioch grew and prospered.

“Josephus summarizes the situation of Jews at Antioch during the first century as follows:

The Jewish race, densely interspersed among the native populations of every portion of the world, is particularly numerous in Syria, where intermingling is due to the proximity of the two countries. But it was at Antioch that they especially congregated, partly owing to the greatness of that city, but mainly because the successors of King Antiochus [i.e., Antiochus I Soter] had enabled them to live there in security. For, although Antiochus surnamed Epiphanes sacked Jerusalem, and plundered the temple, his successors on the throne restored to the Jews of Antioch all such votive offerings as were made of brass, to be laid up in their synagogue, and, moreover, granted them citizen rights on an equality with the Greeks. Continuing to receive similar treatment from later monarchs, the Jewish colony grew in numbers, and their richly designed and costly offerings formed a splendid ornament to the temple. Moreover, they were constantly attracting to their religious ceremonies multitudes of Greeks, and these they had in some measure incorporated with themselves (J. W. 7.43–45, tr. H. St. J. Thackeray, LCL).

“Rome's capture of Antioch in 64 B.C. did little to diminish the economic and social status of Jews in the city. Rather, in many ways it proved highly beneficial, at least for the next one hundred years. In the first century of Roman domination, in fact, the Jewish community of Antioch reached its greatest numerical strength, numbering somewhere around 65,000 or about one-seventh of the city's entire population. Few Jews, however, except for some mercenaries discharged from the Roman army and a few merchants, were Roman citizens, for that usually required sacrificing their Jewish religious and national identity. So as foreigners and a distinguishable minority they lived in three or more separate settlements in and around the city. Probably one such settlement was to the southwest of the city, near Daphne; another, northeast of the city in the Plain of Antioch; a third, in the city proper; with smaller enclaves possibly elsewhere.

“There may not have been genuine legal equality between Jews and their Gentile neighbors at Antioch. Yet Rome for purposes of its own encouraged a state of toleration between various peoples of unequal station. So it was that there were no strong antagonistic feelings on the part of Greeks and Romans against Jews at Antioch during the first century or so of Roman rule. Likewise, the Jews of Antioch seem not to have been split into rival parties as they were in Palestine or antagonistic to Gentiles as they were in Jerusalem. As relatively wealthy inhabitants of a foreign land, who possessed almost all of the privileges of full citizenship, they were cooperative with their Gentile neighbors and willing to compromise with the Roman authorities. Many Gentiles, in fact, became attracted to the monotheism and ethics of Judaism, and so attended its synagogues as “God Fearers” or “Proselytes of the Gate.”

“The period of acceptance and prosperity that Antiochene Jews enjoyed, however, came to an end toward the middle of the first century. In A.D. 40, mobs were organized in Antioch to attack the Jews; they burned their synagogues and killed many of them. This took place in the third year of the reign of Caligula (A.D. 37–41), who in the winter of A.D. 39–40 had ordered a statue of himself erected in the temple precincts of Jerusalem. So while details of this mob action at Antioch are obscure, it seems safe to posit that such action should be seen in the context of Caligula's totally insane program of self-aggrandizement and antagonism against Jews generally (as also at Alexandria and Jerusalem), which Claudius (A.D. 41–54), on becoming emperor, put an end to.

“The greatest crisis for Jews at Antioch, however, came during the Palestinian Jewish revolt against Rome in A.D. 66–70. Josephus tells us that although there were massacres of Jews throughout Syria in reprisal, the Jews of Antioch, Sidon, and Apamea were at first shielded to a great extent from the people's rage by the Roman authorities. But this did not last for long, for shortly after Vespasian's

in the congregation there.<sup>273</sup> Unfortunately he got caught in catch 22 dilemma while visiting the Christians in the city, and did not make the best decision about resolving it.

The only depiction of this episode comes from Paul in a text where Paul is stressing the independency of his calling as an apostle to preach the Gospel from authorization by the Twelve in Jerusalem. Thus the structure of Paul's words are built about this objective. The details of what happened are thus somewhat limited. In 2:11-14 two core assertions are made by Paul: κατὰ πρόσωπον αὐτῷ ἀντέστην, *I opposed him to his face* (v. 11), and εἶπον τῷ Κηφᾶ ἔμπροσθεν πάντων, *I said to Cephas in front of everyone* (v. 14). It is in the expansion of these two arrival in Syria, a Jew named Antiochus, who was the son of the leader of the Jewish community and who evidently thought of himself as no longer Jewish, turned the pagan population of Antioch against the Jews with a story of how the Jews were planning to burn the city down to the ground in one night. As a result, an intense persecution of Jews broke out, with Jewish leaders burned to death in the theater, sabbath privileges revoked, demands made on Jews to sacrifice to pagan deities, and wholesale massacres. Added to all this, a fire of extensive proportions did, indeed, break out in Antioch during the winter of A.D. 69–70, which, of course, was immediately blamed on the city's Jews, and so became the occasion for further persecutions and massacres.

"The rage of the city's pagan population against Jews during the latter 60s was largely unchecked, since during these years there was no resident governor and no effective garrison at Antioch. Vespasian had sent Mucianus, the governor of Syria from A.D. 67 to 69, off with an army to the west to oppose Vitellius; Titus was in Caesarea making preparations for the siege of Jerusalem; and Vespasian himself was in Alexandria. With the arrival of Caesennius Paetus as governor of Syria in A.D. 70, however, the persecutions were halted and the Jews' legal rights restored. Yet the civic standing of Jews at Antioch was no longer what it had been, and thereafter the Jewish role in the life of the city was greatly diminished.

"Jews at Antioch were further discredited by the imposition of the *fiscus Iudaicus* (Jewish poll tax) of Domitian (A.D. 81–96) and the decrees of Hadrian (A.D. 96–138) penalizing circumcision. They were also seriously affected by the active interests of Domitian, Hadrian, and their successors in prosecuting charges of "atheism" against all infidels and monotheists, which, of course, effectively put an end to Jewish proselytism and so severed the strongest tie existing between Jews and pagans. To shame the Jews further, Hadrian erected over a western gate of Antioch the Cherubim that had been taken from the Jerusalem temple in A.D. 70. Thus while they continued to live in the city and their legal status remained officially unchanged, the civil status of Jews in Antioch after the Palestinian uprisings of A.D. 6–70 (and again those of A.D. 132–35) was considerably lowered—almost, in fact, to the point of insignificance. Thereafter when the pagans of Antioch needed a scapegoat for their disaffections, they turned on the Christians."

[Richard N. Longenecker, vol. 41, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 68-70.]

<sup>273</sup> "Apart from Jerusalem, no city of the Roman Empire played as large a part in the early life and fortunes of the Christian church as Antioch of Syria. The Acts of the Apostles tells us that it was Hellenistic Jewish Christians who, on fleeing Jerusalem, first brought the gospel to Antioch, preaching first only to Jews, but soon including Gentiles within their outreach as well. With the increase of believers at Antioch, the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to check on the situation. And it was through his efforts, Acts tells us, that the Christian community at Antioch was joined to the Christian community at Jerusalem, thereby preventing any possible alienation or split because of Antioch Christendom's rather unusual beginnings. Furthermore, it was through Barnabas's efforts that Saul of Tarsus became involved in the ministry at Antioch.

"First-century Antioch was a hotbed for various philosophies, cults, and religions. It was a city that prided itself on its toleration, with even its Jewish population more open to Gentiles than anywhere else in the Jewish diaspora (and certainly more open than in Palestine). Yet many Antiochenes were looking for a more significant religious experience and more meaning to life than paganism offered. Many Gentiles, in fact, were associated in one way or another with the Jewish synagogues of the city, being impressed by the monotheism and ethics of Judaism. So when the Christian gospel came to Antioch, it was received not only by Jews but also by Gentiles who had been mentally and spiritually prepared by Judaism.

"A great number of people at Antioch, Acts tells us, accepted the gospel message and committed themselves to Jesus. Since, however, this group was made up of both Jews and Gentiles, the city's population had to find a name for them that would distinguish them from Jews and from all the devotees of the various pagan religions of the city. So they nicknamed them 'Christians,' which means literally 'Christ Followers' or 'People of Christ.' And it is this name, rather than the earlier 'Those of the Way,' that stuck, simply because it was seen by the Christians themselves to be highly appropriate.

"During a particularly severe famine that ravished Palestine in A.D. 45–47 (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 20.51–53; possibly also *Ant.* 3.320–21)—with sporadic bad harvests and famine conditions occurring elsewhere throughout the empire during Claudius's reign (cf. Suetonius, *Vita Claudius* 18.2; also Tacitus, Dio Cassius, and Orosius)—the Christian community at Antioch, after only a year or so in existence, was strong enough and wealthy enough to send aid to Christians at Jerusalem in distress. Furthermore, it was the Christian community at Antioch that responded to God's call to send out missionaries to other Gentile cities, and so Antioch became the birthplace of the Church's foreign missions program. Throughout Paul's missionary journeys, it was Antioch, in fact, that was the apostle's home base. In addition, Antioch was the place where controversy between Jewish believers and Gentile believers first erupted within the Christian church (as we believe, following our 'South Galatian' hypothesis), with that eruption being ultimately the occasion for the first ecumenical church council at Jerusalem.

"Acts tells us nothing further about Antioch on the Orontes, for Luke's concern is with the forward movement of the Christian mission until it comes to Rome. That should not be taken, however, as suggesting that Antioch was no longer important as a Christian center. On the contrary, throughout the succeeding centuries Antioch played a significant role in the history of the Christian church (contra W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 63), and Antiochene Christianity was an important factor in the history of civilization within the Roman Empire. (For more on Christianity at Antioch during the succeeding centuries, see the latter part of my article "Antioch of Syria" in *Major Cities of the Biblical World*; also, more importantly, see the works by R. E. Brown and J. P. Meier, R. M. Grant, S. E. Johnson, W. S. McCullough, W. A. Meeks and R. L. Wilken, K. Pieper, and D. S. Wallace-Hadrill in the Bibliography above.)"

[Richard N. Longenecker, vol. 41, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 70-71.]

core affirmations that the details of what happened emerge. Two dependent clauses qualify the core statement in verse eleven. 1) Ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν Κηφᾶς εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, and when Cephas came to Antioch. The temporal clause implies a definite point when Peter made a trip to Antioch but doesn't provide any more information. Only from the contextual listing of this pericope can the conclusion be drawn that it happened sometime after the Jerusalem council meeting and prior to the beginning of the second missionary journey, within the framework of Acts 15:30-41. This text in Acts signals the passing of considerable time in these statements: ποιήσαντες δὲ χρόνον ἀπελύθησαν μετ' εἰρήνης, after spending some time, they (Judas & Silas) were sent off in peace (v. 33); Παῦλος δὲ καὶ Βαρναβᾶς διέτριβον ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ, Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch (v. 35); and Μετὰ δὲ τινας ἡμέρας εἶπεν πρὸς Βαρναβᾶν Παῦλος, and after some days Paul said to Barnabas (v. 36). Just how much time passed after the delegation arrived back in Antioch and before the beginning of the second missionary journey is not specified in precise time markers. But these which Luke uses do suggest a period of up to a year, and perhaps even longer. It was at some point during this period that Peter made his trip to Antioch.

2) ὅτι κατεγνωσμένος ἦν, because he stood condemned. This second expansion element gives the reason why Paul publicly opposed Peter. Coming at the end of the sentence in v. 14, this causal clause sets up the second sentence in vv. 12-14. Exactly why Peter stood condemned is explained in v. 12: πρὸ τοῦ γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τινας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνήσθιν· ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον, ὑπέστελλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτὸν φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς, for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. The causal γὰρ conjunction continues the causal ὅτι-clause in v. 11. The essence of Peter's condemnation is described by Paul as his hypocrisy. This is signaled by the two temporal statements -- πρὸ τοῦ ἐλθεῖν and ὅτε δὲ ἦλθον -- in regard to the arrival of τινας ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου, certain ones from James.

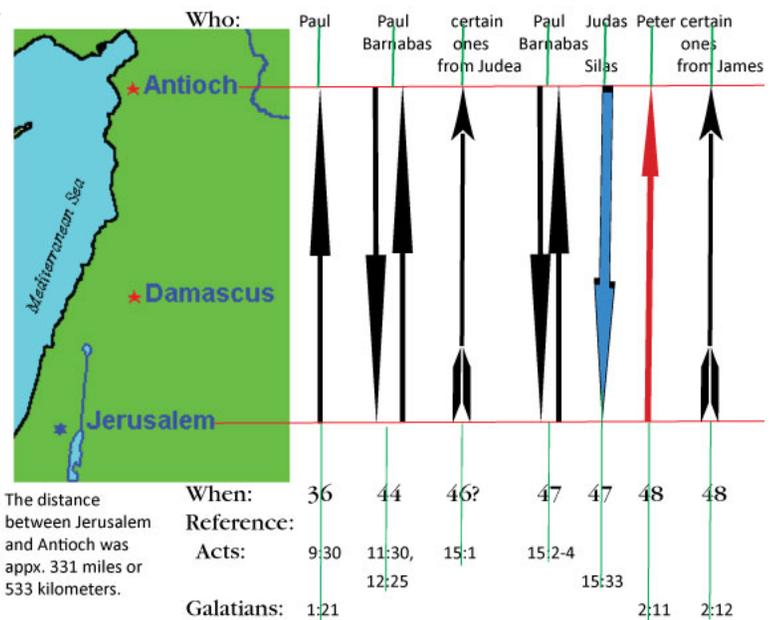
Exactly who these men were remains a mystery. Paul seems to present these individuals as legitimately coming to Antioch with the approval of James in Jerusalem.<sup>274</sup> Did they correctly represent James' views to Peter and the Christian community at Antioch? Since Paul does not describe what they said, we are left in doubt about their legitimacy. This is unlike an earlier group that came from Judea (Acts 15:1, τινες κατελθόντες ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐδίδασκον τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὅτι,..., And certain ones having come down from Judea were teaching the brothers that...., which Luke spells out what they were teaching in summary (v. 1b). James at the end of the conference meeting in Jerusalem in the letter to Antioch indicates that these individuals came to Antioch completely unauthorized and totally not representing the viewpoint of either the apostles or the local leaders (v. 24): Ἐπειδὴ ἠκούσαμεν ὅτι τινὲς ἐξ ἡμῶν [ἐξελθόντες] ἐτάραξαν ὑμᾶς λόγοις ἀνασκευάζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν οἷς οὐ διεστείλαμεθα, Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds. It was to correctly present the views of the leadership in Jerusalem that both the letter and the leaders, Judas and Silas, were sent to Antioch along with Paul and Barnabas. Acts 15:33 indicates that Judas and Silas spent some time in Antioch, ποιήσαντες χρόνον, before returning back to Jerusalem.

In Paul's depiction we don't sense that this later group that came from Jerusalem was another delega-

<sup>274</sup>“It would be unwise to identify the ‘certain people’ who came down from James with the ‘certain people’ (τινες) of Acts 15:1 who came down to Antioch from Judea and insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation. These men are disowned by the authors of the apostolic letter (Acts 15:24); it is more likely that they were connected with the ‘false brethren’ of v 4. The τινας mentioned here were simply messengers from James.” [F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 130.]

## Travel between Jerusalem and Antioch

Early Period: AD 36 to 48



tion coming without proper authorization from James, as did the first group. Although not stated directly in either Acts or Galatians, my suspicion is that this group came from Jerusalem at some point after Judas and Silas left Antioch to return to Jerusalem (as is reflected in the above timeline). Whoever they were -- legitimate or phoney representatives of James -- it is clear that they had an impact on Peter.

Before their arrival, πρὸ τοῦ ἔλθειν, Paul says that Peter μετὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν συνήσθιεν, *was regularly eating with the Gentiles*.<sup>275</sup> But upon the arrival of these men, Peter ὑπέστειλλεν καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτὸν φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς, *began withdrawing and separating himself fearing those of the circumcision*. That is, Peter stopped having table fellowship with the Gentile members of the church. The significance of this is that meals in the ancient world were taken out of common bowls and cups. Everyone ate directly from a single bowl containing one of the meats, vegetables, or fruits served during the meal. Also, everyone drank from a single large cup containing the wine for the drink during the meal. No silverware was used to eat with; everything was ‘finger’ food. Thus Jewish ritual laws of purity were at risk at meal time, because if one person at the table was ritually impure he ‘contaminated’ everyone else eating from the same dishes. From Paul’s statements, it is clear that these men from Jerusalem strongly refused to participate in table fellowship with uncircumcised Gentiles, even though they were Christian brothers. Beyond that they seriously objected to Peter participating in the common meals as well. And were able to persuade him to cease doing it.

Paul indicates that the incentive for Peter withdrawing from the Gentile members was φοβούμενος τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς, *fearing those of the circumcision*.<sup>276</sup> Is this a reference to these τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου, *certain ones from James*? Or, does it refer to a broader group of people, such as the Jews generally? Additionally, does Paul mean by φοβούμενος, either ‘fearing’ and thus being intimidated by, or ‘respecting’ in the sense of showing deference to the view points of? Although φοβέω can refer to either fearing or respecting others, the consensus of most scholars and Bible translators here is that the negative idea of fearing is the intended meaning. The identification of τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς remains unclear, although the tendency is to see this phrase as designating a larger group than the men from James. With the rapidly rising political turmoil in Palestine by the late 40s, fears of violent repercussions from the radical elements among the Jewish people against Christians who would be seen as contaminating the purity of Jewish traditions by their mixing with uncircumcised Gentiles may very well have been behind whatever appeals these men made to Peter.<sup>277</sup> If the expression τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς is centered

<sup>275</sup>“This picture of Cephas enjoying unreserved table-fellowship (which included participation in the memorial breaking of bread) with the Gentile members of the Antiochene church is in complete accord with the picture given of him in Acts, where, after learning on Simon the tanner’s roof-top in Joppa not to call any one unclean whom God had cleansed, he is happy to visit Cornelius in Caesarea and eat with him and his family (Acts 10:28; 11:3). ‘The figure of a Judaizing St. Peter is a figment of the Tübingen critics with no basis in history’ (K. Lake, EEP, 116). This free and easy fellowship with Gentiles, then, was practised by Cephas at Antioch as a matter of course (συνήσθιεν, imperfect) until some people (τινὰς) came from James.” [F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 129.]

<sup>276</sup>“οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς may have various meanings according to the context: ‘the circumcision party’, i.e. Judaizers within the church (Acts 11:2; Tit. 1:10); the circumcised members of the church, i.e. Jewish Christians in a non-partisan sense (Acts 10:45; Col. 4:11); circumcised people, i.e. Jews (Rom. 4:12b). Of whom was Peter afraid on this occasion? Not of his fellow-Jewish Christians in Antioch; they with him had been sharing table-fellowship with their Gentile brethren (cf. v 13, οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι); not even James’s messengers (there is no reason for equating τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς with τινὰς ἀπὸ Ἰακώβου) nor of James himself—he may have respected James’s authority, but why should he be afraid of him? The people who inspire fear were the Jewish militants to whom James’s message possibly referred. See for various views (G. Dix, *Jew and Greek* (London, 1953), 43ff.; J. Munck, *Paul*, 106–109 (he thinks that οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς were Gentile Christians); W. Schmithals, *Paul and James*, 66–68. Schmithals points out that ‘Paul utters no word of criticism against either James’s messengers or James himself’ (68), although his interpretation of this fact is open to doubt.

“C. K. Barrett (‘ΨΕΥΔΑΠΙΟΣΤΟΛΟΙ’, 387) regards τοὺς ἐκ περιτομῆς as the Jewish Christian party in Jerusalem, who frightened Cephas ‘presumably by threats of breaking off fellowship’—although more forceful measures may be implied in Paul’s reference to ‘dangers from false brethren’ in 2 Cor. 11:26.”

[F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 131.]

<sup>277</sup>“What was their message? It may have been something like this: ‘news is reaching us in Jerusalem that you are habitually practising table-fellowship with Gentiles. This is causing grave scandal to our more conservative brethren here. Not only so: it is becoming common knowledge outside the church, so that our attempts to evangelize our fellow-Jews are being seriously hampered’ (cf. T. W. Manson, *Studies*, 178–181).

“It may have had even graver import. The mid-forties witnessed a revival of militancy among Jewish freedom fighters, adherents of the ‘fourth philosophy’, as Josephus calls it (War 2.118; Ant. 18.23). Repressive action was taken against them by Tiberius Julius Alexander, procurator of Judea (c. AD 46–48), who crucified two of their leaders, Jacob and Simon, sons of that Judas the Galileean who led the revolt against the provincial census of AD 6 (Jos. Ant. 20.102). B. Reicke (‘Der geschichtliche Hintergrund des Apostelkonzils und der Antiochia-Episode, Gal 2, 1–14’, *De Zwann FS*, 172–187) thinks rather of the period beginning AD 52, when the insurgency was intensified, and dates this ‘Antioch episode’ during Paul’s visit to Antioch mentioned in Acts 18:22f. In the eyes of such militants, Jews who fraternized with Gentiles and adopted Gentile ways were traitors, and the leaders of Jerusalem church may have felt themselves

in the folks back in Jerusalem, rather than referring to anyone in Antioch -- as is likely -- then Peter's fears had some substance to them, either for witnessing efforts among the Jews in Jerusalem, or out of pastoral concern to not subject the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem to increased danger of violent repercussions by the extremists creating havoc in Jerusalem generally.

From Paul's perspective, however, Peter's withdrawal of table fellowship was an act of hypocrisy. The real problem came when Peter's action began influencing the Jewish Christians in the church at Antioch: *καὶ συνυπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ [καὶ] οἱ λοιποὶ Ἰουδαῖοι, ὥστε καὶ Βαρναβᾶς συναπήχθη αὐτῶν τῇ ὑποκρίσει*, *And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy*. The 'final straw' came when Barnabas joined this separatist movement. This action had the possibility of destroying the Christian community in Antioch. No matter whatever arguments used for justifying the action, the impact it began to have on the church was disastrous. And Paul saw this as sheer *τῇ ὑποκρίσει*, *hypocrisy*. The agreements had been reached in Jerusalem that table fellowship would have been legitimate with Gentile observing of the adopted guidelines of abstaining from eating *καὶ τοῦ πνικτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος*, *from whatever has been strangled and from blood*. Perhaps Paul was wise enough to have anticipated the potential trouble from this aspect of the agreement, and thus did not include it in his reporting of the agreement (cf. Gal. 2:10). Sure enough it didn't take long for the weakness of this agreement to explode in the Christian community at Antioch. Although, to be clear, the stated issue in this confrontation episode seems to have included issues broader than whether kosher meat was served in the common meals.

The group's hypocrisy was not just to eat or not to eat with Gentiles. Paul defines it as *οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*, *they were not walking in line with the truth of the Gospel* (v. 14). He saw in this hypocritical action a much deeper issue at stake: the integrity of the Gospel. The essence of their hypocrisy Paul saw as actions in conflict (*οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν*) with *τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*, *the truth of the Gospel*. The verb *ὀρθοποδέω* specifies walking a straight line.<sup>278</sup> The Gospel carries implications for behavior and relationships with other people. To walk straight means that a person walks within the boundaries of these implications. This is walking straight in the truth. Remember that *ἀλήθεια* inside the New Testament is patterns of belief and actions that correspond exactly to God who is Truth Himself (cf. John 14:6). To step outside those boundaries into patterns of behavior inconsistent with God and His character is *οὐκ ὀρθοποδοῦσιν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν*. What Paul saw, *ὅτε εἶδον*, was that Peter's actions and those of the other Jews in withdrawing table fellowship with the Gentile Christians was stepping outside the boundaries of God's will and desire as expressed through the Gospel. It represented a willful violation of God's will! If these leaders could ignore God's will and 'get away with it' the integrity of the Gospel message of justification by faith apart of works of law would be seriously compromised.

When Paul realized what they actually were doing, *ὅτε εἶδον ὅτι...*, the apostle did not hesitate to confront Peter directly with his hypocrisy, *εἶπον τῷ Κηφᾶ*, *I said to Cephas*. Because Peter's actions were having public impact on the congregation, Paul confronted Peter publicly, *ἐμπροσθεν πάντων*, and not privately. What we do not know, and probably are curious about is how Peter took this public rebuke from Paul.

The bottom line of Paul's rebuke is found in the direct discourse statement in v. 14: *εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς, πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαΐζειν*; *"If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"* Paul leaves the question opened ended and doesn't predispose an expected answer from Peter. But the content of the question clearly signals that Paul did not expect Peter to be able to make a legitimate reply to his question. Paul alludes to Peter's table fellowship with the Gentiles prior to the arrival of the group from James in the protasis if-clause: *εἰ σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὑπάρχων ἐθνικῶς καὶ οὐχὶ Ἰουδαϊκῶς ζῆς*. The apodosis main clause then raises the question of how Peter could subsequently compel Gentiles to live like Jews: *πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαΐζειν*. Paul accuses Peter of blatant hypocrisy in

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endangered by their colleague's free-and-easy conduct at Antioch (see on 6:12)."

[F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982), 130.]

<sup>278</sup>*ὀρθοποδέω* (ὀρθόπους [ὀρθός, πούς]; Soph. et al.; cp. Nicander, Alexiph. 419 [II B.C.] ὀρθόποδες βαίνοντες.—ὀρθοποδία='progress': Papiros della Univers. di Milano, ed. AVogliano no. 24, 8 [117 A.D.]) basic mng. 'walk straight, upright', fig. ext. **act rightly, be straightforward** ὀρθοποδεῖν πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου be straightforward about the truth of the gospel **Gal 2:14** (cp. OGI 48, 9 μὴ ὀρθῶς ἀναστρεφομένους [restoration certain]). But perh. progress, advance in the direction of the truth (CRoberts, JTS 40, '39, 55f. Also JWinter, HTR 34, '41, 161f, after an unpubl. pap in the Michigan collection [no. 337: III A.D.] ὀρθοποδεῖ τὸ παιδίον 'the child is getting on, growing up').—GKilpatrick, NT Studien f. RBultmann '54, 269–74 ('they were not on the right road toward the truth of the gospel'; includes informative survey).—M-M. TW. Spicq." [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 722.]

his actions.

The subsequent statements in vv. 15-17 elaborate Paul's argument by turning to the foundational spiritual principle of how people are made right before God:

15 Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἐθνῶν ἀμαρτωλοί· 16 εἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεύσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιωθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ. 17 εἰ δὲ ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ εὐρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀμαρτωλοί, ἄρα Χριστὸς ἀμαρτίας διάκονος; μὴ γένοιτο.

15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; 16 yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. 17 But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not!

Implicit in these words is a signal of the arguments being used on Peter by the men from James. Table fellowship with uncircumcised Gentiles was sinful -- something that God would not and could not accept. Justification before God had been achieved solely through faith in Christ Jesus. Therefore, table fellowship with Gentiles in no possible way promoted sinful conduct. Although from traditional Judaism a Jew having table fellowship with an uncircumcised Gentile reduced the Jew down to the level of a Gentile sinner, that was a phoney assessment based on false Jewish interpretive tradition about the Law of Moses. In no possible way can Christ be construed to become a promoter of genuinely sinful conduct.

The difference between Paul and Peter comes to light clearly in this episode. Peter was thinking pragmatically and concerned about functional witness to Jews and protection of Jewish Christians from violent repercussions. Paul, with his extensive training as a Pharisee, saw the deeper and more dangerous issue of a serious violation of the Gospel to refuse table fellowship with Gentiles. Such refusal in effect made Christ a promoter of sinful conduct, rather than rescued the Gospel from charges of promoting sinful conduct with Gentiles. Continuing table fellowship as a Jew with uncircumcised Gentile Christian brothers might indeed risk persecution, but such was no price to pay in order to be true to the Gospel. Paul was already paying that price. And he was calling on Peter, Barnabas, and the other Jewish Christians to be willing to do the same thing. A compromised gospel would not be blessed of God for winning Jews to Christ!

What has bothered commentators in the modern era is how Peter could compromise the promises made at the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15) so quickly afterwards. Thus a huge diversity of proposals for understanding this episode -- chronologically, historically etc. -- have surfaced over the last two or three centuries. In my estimation they constitute a 'save Peter' campaign more than anything else. Some very bizarre interpretive efforts are made to rescue Peter as the early leader of the Christian movement from actions that question his integrity and commitment to Christ. But in my opinion these efforts ignore the natural contextual pattern of Paul's arguments in Galatians 1 - 2. That Peter made a bad choice after the Jerusalem conference regarding associating with Gentile believers should be no real surprise, considering the difficulty Peter was having through this period of time in moving away from the legalism of his Jewish religious heritage while at the same time seeking to witness to his fellow Jews regarding the Gospel. The agreements<sup>279</sup> at the Jerusalem conference centered on affirming officially among the apostles, local leaders, and the Jerusalem Christian community that Paul's preaching of the Gospel with all its implications was clearly being validated by God through His blessings on that ministry. The requests made for Gentiles to adopt some basic patterns of Jewish behavior including three dietary guidelines and one moral guideline<sup>280</sup> did pose some challenge to Gentiles, but careful examination of the texts in Acts 15 will clearly indicate that in no way did they prohibit table fellowship by Christian Jews with Gentile believers.

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<sup>279</sup>Modern scholarship tends to label the decision reached at the Jerusalem council by the leadership and the church as an agreement with Paul, Barnabas and the rest of the delegation from Antioch present at the conference. The reality of Luke's description both in the words of Peter and James, in the contents of the letter, and in narrative bits and pieces from the Acts 15 episode is that Luke clearly indicates that the 'agreement' was among the apostle and elders with the support of the entire church at Jerusalem. Paul, Barnabas, and the other delegation members are never described as entering into a mutual agreement.

When Paul describes the decisions made at Jerusalem in Gal. 2:6-10, it is an agreement of the pillars of James, Peter, and John to support the Gentile ministry of Paul and Barnabas on Paul's terms. The only request was that this Gentile mission not forget the poor and Christian ministry to them. This was not centered on the 'poor in Jerusalem' although many interpreters take it so. This was the general spiritual principle with distinctive Jewish heritage of showing benevolent concern for those in need. This by Paul's own words, was what he agreed to do.

<sup>280</sup>Acts 15:29. ἀπέχεσθαι εἰδωλοθύτων καὶ αἵματος καὶ πνικτῶν καὶ πορνείας, ἐξ ὧν διατηροῦντες ἑαυτοὺς εὖ πράξετε.

that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

The issue of table fellowship had more basic origins in the legalistic system of Judaism during this era. Peter had already been ‘stung’ once over table fellowship with uncircumcised Gentile in connection with his preaching of the Gospel to Cornelius. His critics in the Jerusalem church did not criticize his preaching of the Gospel to the gathered group of Gentiles in Cornelius’ home at Caesarea; instead they condemned his table fellowship with these Gentiles after their conversion (Acts 11:2b-3): διεκρίνοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ ἐκ περιτομῆς λέγοντες ὅτι εἰσήλθες πρὸς ἄνδρας ἀκροβυστίαν ἔχοντας καὶ συνέφαγες αὐτοῖς, *the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, “Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?”* Peter’s justification of his actions (cf. 11:4-17<sup>281</sup>) actually did not mention table fellowship, and the acceptance of his explanation by the church in Jerusalem seemed to overlook the table fellowship charge as well (cf. 11:18<sup>282</sup>). Perhaps this experience left Peter rather sensitive to table fellowship issues, and given his limited interaction with uncircumcised Gentile believers up to the time of the trip to Antioch, he had not yet fully sorted out in his own thinking the implication of the Gospel to the Gentile world. This left him rather vulnerable to Jewish believers, in particular if they came authorized by James in Jerusalem, to arguments against such table fellowship in behalf of the Gospel supposedly. Consequently, he made another bad choice and was publicly rebuked for it by Paul. Unquestionably within a decade afterwards all this was clearly worked out in Peter’s own mind and his extended ministry outside Judea as reflected in First Peter included Gentiles as well as Jews with no distinctions to be made between them.

Rather than trying to rescue Peter we do much better to learn from him and his ups and downs in Gospel ministry that God used to hone him into a sharp tool of Gospel witness and ministry over time.

## Conclusion

When Christ confronted Paul on the road leading to Damascus in AD 33 to not only save him but to call him to become a missionary to the Gentile world, Paul could not have imagined how all that would unfold over the next fifteen to eighteen years of his life. I seriously doubt that he understood that it would take from AD 33 to AD 46 to get him ready to preach the Gospel to Gentiles. When the Holy Spirit led the church at Antioch to set aside Paul and Barnabas for the first missionary trip, again excitement had to be mixed with uncertainty over just what lay ahead as the apostle began to fulfill this initial calling from the risen Christ. Only God knew how controversial this ministry would become, and at the same time how profoundly significant it would be for the future of the Christian movement.

The openness of the congregation at Antioch to the larger world and its spiritual needs uniquely positioned this church to serve as the launch pad for this expansion of the Gospel into the non-Jewish world. God

<sup>281</sup> Acts 11:4-17. 4 Ἀρξάμενος δὲ Πέτρος ἐξετίθετο αὐτοῖς καθεξῆς λέγων· 5 ἐγὼ ἤμην ἐν πόλει Ἰόππῃ προσευχόμενος καὶ εἶδον ἐν ἐκστάσει ὄραμα, καταβαῖνον σκευὸς τι ὡς ὀθόνην μεγάλην τέσσαρσιν ἀρχαῖς καθιεμένην ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἦλθεν ἄχρι ἐμοῦ. 6 εἰς ἣν ἀτενίσας κατενόουν καὶ εἶδον τὰ τετράποδα τῆς γῆς καὶ τὰ θηρία καὶ τὰ ἔρπετα καὶ τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. 7 ἤκουσα δὲ καὶ φωνῆς λεγούσης μοι· ἀναστάς, Πέτρε, θύσον καὶ φάγε. 8 εἶπον δέ· μηδαμῶς, κύριε, ὅτι κοινὸν ἢ ἀκάθαρτον οὐδέποτε εἰσήλθεν εἰς τὸ στόμα μου. 9 ἀπεκρίθη δὲ φωνὴ ἐκ δευτέρου ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ· ἃ ὁ θεὸς ἐκαθάρισεν, σὺ μὴ κοίνου. 10 τοῦτο δὲ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ τρίς, καὶ ἀνεσπάσθη πάλιν ἅπαντα εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν. 11 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐξαντῆς τρεῖς ἄνδρες ἐπέστησαν ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκίαν ἐν ἣ ἤμην, ἀπεσταλμένοι ἀπὸ Καισαρείας πρὸς με. 12 εἶπεν δὲ τὸ πνεῦμά μοι συνελθεῖν αὐτοῖς μηδὲν διακρίναντα. ἦλθον δὲ σὺν ἐμοὶ καὶ οἱ ἐξ ἀδελφοῦ οὗτοι καὶ εἰσήλθομεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ ἀνδρός. 13 ἀπήγγειλεν δὲ ἡμῖν πῶς εἶδεν [τὸν] ἄγγελον ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ σταθέντα καὶ εἰπόντα· ἀπόστειλον εἰς Ἰόππην καὶ μετάπεμψαι Σίμωνα τὸν ἐπικαλούμενον Πέτρον, 14 ὃς λαλήσει ῥήματα πρὸς σὲ ἐν οἷς σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ πᾶς ὁ οἶκός σου. 15 ἐν δὲ τῷ ἄρξασθαί με λαλεῖν ἐπέπεσεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς ὡς περ καὶ ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς ἐν ἀρχῇ. 16 ἐμνήσθη δὲ τοῦ ῥήματος τοῦ κυρίου ὡς ἔλεγεν· Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. 17 εἰ σὺν τὴν ἴσην δωρεάν ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεὸς ὡς καὶ ἡμῖν πιστεύσασιν ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, ἐγὼ τίς ἤμην δυνατὸς κωλύσαι τὸν θεόν;

4 Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, 5 “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. 6 As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. 7 I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’ 8 But I replied, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ 9 But a second time the voice answered from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, you must not call profane.’ 10 This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. 11 At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. 12 The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. 13 He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; 14 he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.’ 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ 17 If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?”

<sup>282</sup> Acts 11:18. Ἀκούσαντες δὲ ταῦτα ἠσύχασαν καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν λέγοντες· ἄρα καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὁ θεὸς τὴν μετάνοιαν εἰς ζωὴν ἔδωκεν.

When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, “Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.”

would use this congregation even to open the eyes of the more provincially minded congregation in Jerusalem, even with the apostles present and in leadership roles. It would take a major explosion inside the Jerusalem church concerning Gentiles that spilled over into the church at Antioch for a paving of the way for the core Christian leaders in Jerusalem, both the apostles and the local leaders, to see the wider implications of the Gospel for the entire world. Learning how this would function on a practical day to day basis would take trial and error, that included occasional controversy. Peter's journey in all this somewhat reflects the experience of Jewish Christianity generally, especially in Judea. This segment of Christianity lived rather insulated from the pressures of day to day interaction with uncircumcised Gentiles, since those few non-Jews in the Jerusalem Christian community were proselyte Jews as well as Christians.

The issue became harder and more real in Diaspora Judaism where daily interaction was completely inescapable. The Christian community at Antioch had found a solution that worked well for them. Yet one must recognize that the very open cultural atmosphere of both the city generally, and especially of the large Jewish community in the city, with unusual openness and acceptance of different peoples provided the church there with a much easier atmosphere for experimenting with a very progressive acceptance of non-Jews into the community of believers that exemplified itself in table fellowship across ethnic lines. No such atmosphere existed in rigidly closed and legalistic minded Jerusalem and in Judea generally.<sup>283</sup>

*What can we learn from the first missionary journey and the Jerusalem conference?* Let me suggest some things that are intended to trigger exploration of other possible applications as well.

**1) We must be completely open to God leading us out of our comfort zones.**

When Paul left Jerusalem with authorization to arrest and bring Christians back to Jerusalem for trial and punishment, he could not have imagined his life being so turned upside down as it was going to be. Everything he had been taught was going to be challenged; things he considered utter heresy were going to shape the pattern of his living through the rest of his days. But not only did his conversion to Christianity change his life, the calling to ministry in a world of Gentiles was about as far from his comfort zone as a Jewish Pharisee as he could get. His relatively secure and structured world in Jerusalem as a rapidly advancing young Pharisee would give way to a chaotic world with little predictable structure during the days of preaching the Gospel. About the only thing that was certain was that in every new city where he traveled there would be new enemies who so hated him that they would be willing to kill him. There would not be possible for him a family with wife and children in a stable home life. He would find family in the communities of faith established through his missionary travels. Several young men who joined him in itinerant ministry would become his 'sons' that he would especially turn to in the final years of his life. His religious focus would not focus on preserving a past heritage from corruption by new ideas and thinking. Rather, he would spend most of his ministry blazing new trails in completely uncharted waters that were deeply controversial and uncomfortable to most every Jew, even Christian Jews.

Out of this example from Paul's ministry I find tremendous challenge in seeking to serve God without me imposing conditions and limits on God's leadership of my life. I don't think that Paul ever found a continuing 'comfort zone' after his Damascus road experience. God kept him moving from place to place so that he never stayed in one location over a couple of years. The longest stretch came early on when he returned home to Tarsus the first time as a Christian, but he never stayed in any location that long the rest of his life. To contemplate such a turbulent life as Paul's as my calling to serve God stretches my faith enormously. To live and serve God the way Paul did could not be possible without a completely unconditional faith commitment to Christ. Such an example challenges me to the very core of my being.

Often we hear preachers calling people to serious faith commitment to Christ and yearning for spiritual awakening among God's people. I seriously doubt that most of these preachers are willing to follow in Paul's tracks with the kind of faith commitment he exhibited so that God could move in spiritual awakening through their lives. It may very well be that we live in a mediocre Christianity because we crave comfort and structure and are not willing to allow God to turn our world upside down like He did Paul's life.

To be sure, following God at the level Paul did would not necessarily mean the same kind of chaotic life

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<sup>283</sup>One comparison that may throw light onto the situation is to remember that it was one thing to pastor a Baptist church in rural Georgia in the 1960s and a completely other atmosphere to pastor a Baptist church in a ghetto of Los Angeles California during that same period. A pastor could much more easily apply the Gospel for all races in CA than in GA during those days. And particularly when it came to interpersonal actions between races, which is inevitable when the Gospel is genuinely applied. Rural Georgia would have readily accepted the need of Afro-Americans of being saved, but adamantly rejected the idea that this same Gospel implied table-fellowship with these same people. In the Baptist church in California, table fellowship would have been taken for granted as clearly implied in the nature of the Gospel message. Peter in the first century 'lived in Georgia', not in California, while Paul was ministering in California.

that Paul lived. We are not Paul and are not living in the first century world. Fear of something like this happening stands as an easy tool that Satan uses to convince us to pull back from unconditional surrender to God. The will of God for believers takes on distinctive contours for each person at certain levels simply because God customizes His leadership of our lives to His purposes for each believer. But the basic principle of no limits and boundaries being imposed in our commitment to God as reflected in Paul's life stands as a continuing challenge to every believer. And in that kind of commitment we must be willing to let God push us out of our comfort zones, whatever they may be.

## **2) We need to faithfully serve in every opportunity even when it is not the ultimate goal of service.**

One of the traits that emerges from Paul's missionary travels, especially in the early stages of the mid to late 40s, is his amazing ability to seize every opportunity for witness and ministry. He wasn't straight jacketed into a rigid program that had to be followed whether or not it was appropriate for the situation. During those long years after conversion and prior to the first missionary journey Paul preached only to Jews, even though this was not his ultimate calling from God. I'm confident he must have wondered at times when and how this calling to become a missionary to Gentiles would be realized. But for close to fifteen years he served God as a preacher to Jews while learning his 'ropes' so to speak in how to best present the Gospel message to an usually hostile audience. God was preparing him for the later ministry by putting him in situations he was better suited for at the beginning of ministry. He needed some background experience before stepping into the ultimate calling.

When he and Barnabas began the first missionary trip on Cyprus their focus was on preaching in the Jewish synagogues. Christian churches already existed on the island and so the focus was not on church planting. Yet when they arrived at Pamphos on the western end of the island the opportunity to witness to the Gentile Roman governor presented itself. And they seized the opportunity. In most of the cities on the mainland, the basic strategy of Jews first and then Gentiles was possible to implement because of the presence of Jewish synagogues in Antioch and Iconium. The missionaries' task was even easier because of the presence of large numbers of Gentile sympathizers to Judaism existed in the synagogues. Paul and Barnabas took advantage of this in their presentation of the Gospel. But in Lystra the Jewish segment was limited and was non-existing in Derbe. Thus a different tactic had to be adopted in each city for presenting the Gospel to the residents.

What seems fascinating to me is that seemingly each successive city on the mainland during the first missionary journey had less and less Jews and was more and more dominantly Gentile. God was easing Paul into the focus on Gentile by stages, rather than all at once. Ironically, from Luke's very brief summary statement about Derbe in Acts 14:21, Paul and Barnabas had their most successful ministry in the completely Gentile setting of Derbe. Plus it was the one place they traveled to that was without controversy and confrontation with individuals opposing their preaching. I am sure that this did not go unnoticed by these two missionaries, somewhat battered by the physical abuse they had suffered in the previous cities.

What this should teach us is flexibility in ministry. Later on Paul would put this concept into words in his first letter to the church at Corinth: γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω, *I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some* (1 Cor. 9:22). God has unique ways to putting opportunities before us to share our faith and to minister to people. And these opportunities come in all kinds of ways and situations. Our challenge is to be as sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit as Paul was so that we can and will seize these opportunities for service to Christ.

Over the half century plus of my vocational Christian ministry, I have been very leery of 'canned programs' that define ministry in very precise categories and methods. Paul came out of that kind of approach as a Pharisee and never adopted it as a Christian minister. Thankfully God freed him of the straight jacket of dead 'tradition' and put him on the cutting edge of innovation and exploration of new ways of ministry. Some times this proved to be controversial; a few times he made mistakes, such as the issue over John Mark in the second missionary journey (but that's getting ahead of our story into the next chapter).

One caution here that is important. With his innovation and experimentation Paul was careful to never compromise the Gospel of Christ in his flexibility. He made this point verbally to the Galatians: Ἄρτι γὰρ ἀνθρώπους πείθω ἢ τὸν θεόν; ἢ ζητῶ ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκειν; εἰ ἔτι ἀνθρώποις ἤρεσκον, Χριστοῦ δοῦλος οὐκ ἂν ἦμην, *Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ* (Gal. 1:10). The apostle possessed a keen sense of the boundary line between innovation and compromise, and he refused to cross over it, even when it meant publicly rebuking the leader

of the Christian movement, the apostle Peter. Peter didn't have such a keen sense of understanding and thus crossed over the boundary in his behavior with Gentiles while visiting the church at Antioch.

There is so much for us to learn from Paul at this point. Always knowing that boundary line is hard. We tend to be more like Peter than Paul here. Paul possessed that wisdom through following the leadership of the Holy Spirit day by day. We can gain such wisdom by doing the same thing.

### **3) Evangelizing and church planting are two sides of the same missionary coin.**

When it comes to missionary service, some of the modern discussions about how to do missions would have seemed strange to Paul. One thing that emerges clearly from the first missionary journey, and especially the mainland segment of it, is that preaching the Gospel to challenge them to become Christians is but the beginning stage of missionary work. The next stage, and ultimately the most important stage, is helping them organize themselves into communities of believers who can help and encourage one another. In each of the cities on the mainland Paul and Barnabas left behind a new community of believers in every place they preached the Gospel. At Derbe they turned around and revisited each of the new congregations to help them organize themselves with leaders and further instruction about their new religious faith. In almost every instance they had very limited time to accomplish all this. In Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra it was limited to just a few weeks if that long. When they revisited each of the places, it was not possible to linger long in each city because these missionaries had been forced to flee each of the cities initially and to stay long in each city would have put the newly established communities in jeopardy from either the synagogue leaders and / or the local governmental leaders. But Paul felt that discipling new believers in a Christian community was essential to the stability and growth of the Gospel in each city. This strategy would pay off when Paul came back through these cities a third time a few years later on the second missionary journey and discovered the young man Timothy at Lystra (Acts 16:1-5) who would become a major leader in early Christianity.

When modern mission strategists began debating whether to define missions basically as evangelization or as church planting, one should recognize immediately they are debating something Paul would reject immediately as incorrect and inappropriate. For Paul it was a 'both and' responsibility. The modern ability to pit these approaches against one another stems out of the western cultural mentality of individualism that defines evangelization as getting one's soul saved and not a lot beyond this. Thus some supposed 'missionaries' focus on conducting evangelistic crusades in new places with the goal of maximizing the number of people 'getting saved.' Little or no discipling follow up is done as they move from place to place with their 'evangelizing.' This is not missions in comparison to the model exemplified by Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. And such inadequate strategy works off a highly questionable understanding of the biblical teaching of salvation. It reflects more than anything else nineteenth and twentieth century western cultural watering down of the Gospel. Biblical salvation is becoming disciples of Christ who begin a lifelong journey of spiritual growth and service. And this can only be done inside a community of believers. It's not just 'getting one's soul saved.'

Thus in our world ways of creatively combining evangelization and church planting need to stand as the foundation of missionary strategy. Contemporary culture will always play some shaping role but it must never be allowed to supplant this essential foundation. The wise missionary will follow the example of Paul and Barnabas in preaching the Gospel and planting churches as the heart of his or her ministry.

### **4) Establishing the Gospel in a new place must take advantage of every opportunity present in the location.**

One of the aspects that caught my attention in studying the biblical materials about the first missionary journey is how Paul adapted his approach to each place he visited. To be sure, what I'm talking about here, is closely related to point 2) above, but it is also distinct from that point. Luke's description of the first missionary journey in chapters thirteen and fourteen of Acts depicts Paul and Barnabas focusing on Jews on Cyprus, but concluding that ministry by preaching to the Gentile Roman governor. They move to the mainland, and in spite of losing their assistant, John Mark, continue their ministry beginning with a focus on the Jewish synagogue in the large city of Antioch. That leads to a massive interest by the non-Jewish segment of the city the following week, which in turn provokes jealousy and maneuvering by Jewish authorities to get the governmental authorities to ban these two missionaries from the region. Fleeing to Iconium to the east nearly the same thing happens. They managed to stay there longer than in Antioch but gradually their preaching divides the city and generates an assassination plot against them forcing them to again flee to another city in another district. In Lystra to the south

their ministry centered more on Gentiles and created a sensation in the town with the healing of a lame man. Outside pressure from Antioch and Iconium fairly came on the local residents and nearly succeeded in killing Paul with a stoning that left him unconscious. It wasn't until Derbe quite some further distance to the east that they got beyond the reach of the Jewish opposition in Antioch and Iconium, and there they enjoyed a contention free productive ministry with Gentiles.

What is evident is that these missionaries could 'roll with the punches' in each place they traveled. Each place presented its own distinct challenges to ministry and witness. Luke suggests they knew how to adapt their approach to each city while maintaining an over arching strategy of preaching the Gospel and establishing churches where none already existed. I strongly suspect that this diversity of local situations stretched these missionaries considerably in seeking the best approach in each city. And God evidently used Paul's extensive background training as a Pharisee and as a Diaspora Jew to help him, as well as Barnabas' background as a former resident of Cyprus. The creativity of both these men enabled them to adapt and serve effectively in each place.

Modern missionaries will seldom bring to the table the wealth of background training and experience that Paul and Barnabas possessed. But if the missionary of today is alert and sensitive to God's leadership he or she will seek to draw upon the background experience and training they possess in order to adapt their work to the distinctive needs of the places where they minister. The Diaspora Jewish background of both Paul and Barnabas provided them with an ancient limited version of an 'international' perspective which proved invaluable in knowing how to relate to both Jews and Gentiles in the cities and towns of the first missionary journey. At the heart of such an international or global perspective is first understanding who you are in terms of your own cultural background and heritage. Then it centers on learning the cultural distinctives of the people you are working with in an international setting. Most missionary sending agencies put a lot of emphasis on these matters in the orientation phase of missionary appointment. To do missions effectively we must know the mind-set of the people we seek to minister to. And learning that mind-set means we try to understand every aspect of the cultural world they live and work in. Only through this can we understand how to adapt without compromising the Gospel. Without this perspective modern missionaries will repeat the same mistakes made in the early decades of the Modern Missions Movement when western missionaries did more cultural transporting of either European or American culture into South America, Africa, and Asia than they did Gospel planting. Thankfully that era of doing missions is largely history today and much better approaches dominate the scene.

But learning from Paul and Barnabas here is an ongoing need, and each new missionary needs to assimilate this understanding as rapidly as possible. The advantage of working through a missionary sending agency is that if they are doing their job well advanced preparation and training in this area will come to each new appointee before even arriving on the mission field. There will always be the necessity of learning individual customs and ways of doing things in each specific location, but having basic training in knowing what to look for and how to interpret it against one's own culture will be invaluable.

## **5) Church planting centers on helping the congregation function on its own as rapidly as possible.**

One of the amazing accomplishments of the first missionary journey was that new functioning congregations could be started within two or three weeks by Paul and Barnabas. These missionaries did not plan it that way, but circumstances, centered on persecution, forced them to have to do it. We do not know the total length of time taken by Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. But it seems reasonable to conclude from Luke's occasion insertion of time markers in his description in chapters thirteen and fourteen of Acts that at least a year and probably closer to two years was the total time spent by these missionaries. They traveled to and spent some time in a total of eight specifically named cities and towns. Probably many more towns were visited than these, given Luke's occasion statements like Acts 13:49: διεφέρετο δὲ ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου δι' ὅλης τῆς χώρας, [Thus the word of the Lord spread throughout the region](#). See also 14:5-7 for a similar statement about Lystra and Derbe.<sup>284</sup> Very likely when these missionaries traveled from the east side of Cyprus starting at Salamis and going to the far western end of the island nearly 200 miles westward at Paphos, they traveled over land, rather

<sup>284</sup> Acts 14:4-7. 5 ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο ὁρμὴ τῶν ἐθνῶν τε καὶ Ἰουδαίων σὺν τοῖς ἄρχουσιν αὐτῶν ὑβρίσαι καὶ λιθοβολῆσαι αὐτούς, 6 συνιδόντες κατέφυγον εἰς τὰς πόλεις τῆς Λυκαονίας Λύστραν καὶ Δέρβην καὶ τὴν περίχωρον, 7 κάκει εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ἦσαν.

5 And when an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, 6 they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country; 7 and there they continued proclaiming the good news.

than by boat around the southern shore of the island. This would have put them in contact with many more places and opportunities to preach the Gospel on the island than just the two highlighted by Luke. Also to be factored into this is the time required for the revisiting of the churches on the mainland, and the travel time by boat from Attalia to Antioch in Syria. The travel distances both on the island and the mainland would have totaled well over 500 miles from Salamis on Cyprus to Derbe on the mainland, not counting the retracing of well over half that with the revisiting of the churches on the mainland. Simple mathematics means that not much time was spent in each place either on Cyprus or on the mainland. Even if twenty four months is allowed for the trip there is only a small amount of time possible for each place.

That a big fist full of new churches came out of that endeavor is indeed amazing. And it is a testimony to the reality that starting churches is God's doing, and not man's. Missionaries are the tools that God uses to build His churches but it must never be forgotten that God is doing the building, not missionaries. What Paul and Barnabas did on the first missionary journey was to get the community started in private homes during the evangelizing phase. Then they returned to the churches on the mainland to help get them organized and to give them further teaching, as per Acts 14:21-23,

21 εὐαγγελισάμενοί τε τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην καὶ μαθητεύσαντες ἱκανοὺς ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς τὴν Λύστραν καὶ εἰς Ἰκόνιον καὶ εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν 22 **ἐπιστηρίζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν μαθητῶν, παρακαλοῦντες ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει** καὶ ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. 23 **χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς κατ' ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους, προσευξάμενοι μετὰ νηστειῶν παρέθεντο αὐτοὺς τῷ κυρίῳ εἰς ὃν πεπιστεύκεισαν.**

21 After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch. 22 **There they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith,** saying, "It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God." 23 **And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.**

These house church groups did not need elaborate organization, but they did need official leadership and they needed the basics of the Gospel. Paul and Barnabas helped the churches with these needs. And then with serious spiritual resolve they "entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe," προσευξάμενοι μετὰ νηστειῶν παρέθεντο αὐτοὺς τῷ κυρίῳ εἰς ὃν πεπιστεύκεισαν. That is, the missionaries literally handed these local leaders over to God to guide and protect them. But they did not forget them. Over the next several years at the beginning of both the second missionary journey and of the third missionary journey Paul re-visited these churches in Galatia to help strengthen them further.

There is much to learn here from Paul and Barnabas. Local congregations are essential for nourishing new believers. Without it, they won't grow into genuine disciples of Christ. Very likely they will quickly become one of the first three soils rather than the fourth one that Jesus talked about in the parable of the sower (cf. Matt. 13:1-9 with parallels in Mark and Luke). The Gospel will flourish only in fertile soil, and the atmosphere of a community of encouraging believers is a part of that fertile soil. Local congregations can meet wherever there is space to meet, in homes etc. The important thing is to meet, and to do so regularly and frequently. And those meetings need to genuinely help the believers grow spiritually; they are not a social club or an entertainment gathering. Authentic spiritual help needs to come from every meeting that encourages every believer to faithfulness to Christ.

## **6) Missionary service means adjusting and adapting to new cultural settings, but without compromising the basics of the Gospel.**

One implication from this period of ministry is not just flexibility in ministry but the ability to size up each new situation and know how to best approach it. Doing this effectively requires knowledge of localized custom and culture. Although a lot of commonalities existed between Cyprus and the mainland where these two missionaries traveled, each region possessed substantial differences. The clearest expression of this comes in Acts 14:11, ἐπήραν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτῶν Λυκαονιστὶ λέγοντες, **they shouted in the Lycaonian language**, at Lystra. This was a language that neither Paul nor Barnabas understood, and it created communication problems for them in the city. Fortunately they were able to get their ideas across to the people of the city using Greek, which was understood by the residents. This episode at Lystra illustrates the need of adapting to individual situations.

The Jewish synagogue does not come into the picture in this small town south of Iconium, so Paul used the town marketplace as his preaching point. By God's leadership he was able also to heal a lame man, and this miracle created the uproar that caused these missionaries great concern. Only with considerable effort were they able to convince the people that they were not the Greek gods Zeus and Hermes in human form. But through

preaching the Gospel, they were able to establish a group of disciples of Jesus in the community (cf. Acts 14:20). This town provided never before experienced challenges to these missionaries. Paul went from being the Greek god Hermes in the eyes of the people to being stoned into unconsciousness by these same folks.

The idea of accepting the adulation of the people as Greek gods after the healing of lame man never entered their minds. Such compromise of the Gospel would have killed any opportunity to see people genuinely saved and delivered from such paganism. When Paul did get the opportunity to speak to the crowds after the commotion (cf. 14:14-17), Paul preached pure Gospel to them, but adapted the angle of his presentation to a non-Jewish audience. The differences between his preaching to this Gentile audience at Lystra and to the Jewish dominated audience at Antioch (13:16-41) are dramatic. Yet, the same Gospel message was presented to both groups.

There is much to be learned from these missionaries here also. One of the fundamental principles of effective communication is to know your audience. As preachers of the Gospel this becomes even more important. The challenge is to communicate the truths of the Gospel to every audience in terms they can understand. Paul's quoting of Hebrew scriptures to the Gentile audience at Lystra would have been meaningless and rather strange. But his extensive use of Hebrew scriptures to the Jewish audience at Antioch was entirely appropriate and made his message more persuasive. The famous Swiss theologian Karl Barth once described a sermon in terms of taking the ideas of scripture and connecting them up to the daily newspaper. By this he meant the preacher must both know his Bible well and his audience well. He then in preaching shows how God addresses the issues in the lives of his audience in terms they can clearly understand.<sup>285</sup>

## **7) Preaching the Gospel must not duck controversy, but also must not create needless controversy.**

A frequent problem in some modern church traditions is a preacher with a chip on his shoulder. Some personality types seem bent toward looking for someone to quarrel with. A few preachers possess this personality. Usually it is connected to extreme egotism and dogmatism. Little people pretending to be big people can create havoc in the pulpit. And the opposite type of preacher, one who preaches a phoney love everybody at all costs, is just as damaging to authentic Christianity.

Unquestionably the apostle Paul did not duck controversy when it arose in his ministry. He challenged existing authorities in government and religion when they opposed the spread of the Gospel. He stood clearly for the integrity of the Gospel message. But on the other side neither did he seek out controversy.

This comes to the light in his interaction with the Roman governor of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, and the Jewish fortune teller, Bar-Jesus (cf. Acts 13:6-12). At the end of their stay on the island they came to the capital city of Paphos and encountered both these men. The Gentile governor was curious about the message Paul was preaching in the synagogues on the island and invited him to speak about his beliefs. The Jewish magician tried to oppose Paul out of jealousy and fear of loss of influence with the governor. To this Jewish magician in the presence of the governor Paul, "filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, '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? And now listen — the hand of the Lord is against you, and you will be blind for a while, unable to see the sun'" (Acts 13:9-11). And the man became blind immediately in the presence of the government officials gathered to hear Paul speak.

The apostle displayed raw courage that day in taking on this Jewish magician. But he did it under God's leadership and also took a powerful stand in defense of the Gospel message. Now Paul did not do this to impress this Gentile Roman government that he possessed some kind of spiritual power. Most bully preachers are more interested in impressing others with their prowess and power. To the contrary, Paul sought to convince the governor -- and the magician -- that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was a message about the power of Almighty God.

When the false brethren came from Judea to Antioch in Syria teaching a false gospel message that insisted on Gentiles first converting to Judaism before becoming Christians (Acts 15:1-4), Paul, along with Barnabas, vigorously challenged their phoney teaching; Luke describes it interestingly as *στάσεως και ζητήσεως οὐκ ὀλίγης*, *no small dissension and debate*, in v. 2. Paul was willing to travel all the way south some 300 plus miles to Jerusalem in order to get this non-sense straightened out with the leadership in Jerusalem. At the conference with the leadership in Jerusalem demands were made for Titus, a Gentile Christian, to be circumcised. Paul adamantly refused to let this happen as he said to the Galatians: "*we did not submit to them even for a moment, so*

<sup>285</sup>One side note. The challenge of doing this effectively is even greater for a pastor of an international congregation. His audience represents a wide variety of cultures and religious perspectives -- and languages. Thus it becomes an even greater imperative for him to know his audience well, and then to be able to relate the Gospel to this diversified audience clearly and understandably.

that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you,” οἷς οὐδὲ πρὸς ὥραν εἶξαμεν τῇ ὑποταγῇ, ἵνα ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου διαμείνῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς (Gal. 2:5). Notice his assertion of not compromising the Gospel so that its integrity for other Gentile believers, including the Galatians, might be upheld.

When he experienced severe persecution at the hands of the enemies of the Gospel, he was not the least bit intimidated. At Lystra (cf. Acts 14:19-20), the pagan crowds under the motivation of Jewish authorities from Antioch and Iconium stoned Paul into unconsciousness and dragged his limp body out of town thinking he was dead. But when he regained consciousness, what did he do? Flee? No, he got right up and went straight back into the town with the Christian disciples he and Barnabas had made in the city. Then the next day after reassuring the believers to not be afraid of these people, he and Barnabas left the city for Derbe.

Being in ministry means having to face controversy on occasion. In some places of missionary service the atmosphere is very hostile to Christianity; but fortunately in most places this is not the case. But more likely will be some level of hostility against, if not suspicion of, you simply because you are a foreigner in their midst. And this hostility may not just be outside the Christian community where you serve. Paul experienced it both outside and inside the church. Christian leaders typically face it from both sources as well.

How you handle hostility and controversy will be a key to your work. You can take a bully stance, and then end up damaging the integrity of the Gospel even though you may get your way. The better alternative is that of Paul and Barnabas of standing firm for the integrity of the Gospel in order to bring glory to God, not to demonstrate one's own prowess.

### **8) Missionary service must be done in partnership with Christian congregations, rather than as a “Lone Ranger” service in isolation from the Christian community.**

If one thing only emerges from this study of the first missionary journey and the Jerusalem conference, my prayer is that we can clearly see Paul and Barnabas working in partnership with the churches at Antioch and at Jerusalem. It was through divine leading of the church at Antioch that the first missionary journey happened at all (Acts 13:1-4). And the first thing Paul and Barnabas did at the end of that trip was to return to that church to report to them everything that God accomplished on the journey (Acts 14:26-27). When the controversy over Gentile participation in the Gospel arose at Antioch because of the false brethren from Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-4), Paul and Barnabas made the long tiring journey south to Jerusalem in order to straighten out the positions of the leaders at Jerusalem. Paul was deeply concerned that the views of the Christian community supported his ministry of preaching to Gentiles, as he later wrote to the Galatians: “in order to make sure that I was not running, or had not run, in vain,” μή πως εἰς κενὸν τρέχω ἢ ἔδραμον. He clearly understand that Christianity is a community religious experience, not an isolated individual experience. To be clear, the communal orientation of all of first century society, over against modern western individualism, played an important role in this thinking. But beyond culture was the theological reality that Christians need one another in organized communities of faith if they are to advance in the Christian life, and if the Gospel is to impact increasing numbers of other people.

This concern was central to the revisiting of the mainland churches on the first missionary journey that Luke describes in Acts 14:21-25. The missionaries had two objectives in making this second visit to each of the towns where churches had been established:

21 After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch. 22 There **they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith**, saying, “It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God.” 23 And after **they had appointed elders for them in each church**, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.

21 εὐαγγελισάμενοί τε τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην καὶ μαθητεύσαντες ἱκανοὺς ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς τὴν Λύστραν καὶ εἰς Ἰκόνιον καὶ εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν 22 **ἐπιστηρίζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν μαθητῶν, παρακαλοῦντες ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει** καὶ ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. 23 **χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς κατ’ ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους**, προσευξάμενοι μετὰ νηστειῶν παρέθεντο αὐτοὺς τῷ κυρίῳ εἰς ὃν πεπιστεύκεισαν.

They sought to strengthen the believers with instruction about the Gospel and they helped each church get organized with local leaders. Paul knew very well that apart from participation in a local community those who professed faith in Christ would quickly melt back into the paganism they came out of. The Gospel would not have a lasting impact in a town apart from the existence of a growing Christian congregation.

This is so fundamental to the teaching of the New Testament generally that it should be self evident. Unfortunately, some in modern missions are under the false thinking that if God called me then all I have to do is launch out on my own in missionary service; I don't need any group supporting me. Nothing is further from the

truth! Every missionary needs a support group for prayer, encouragement, guidance, financial help etc. If nothing else, that group functions to hold the missionary accountable for what he or she does in ministry. Most every missionary who has been on the field in service for any length of time knows quite well how important a support group is. Missionaries can do their best work, when they know folks 'back home' are standing with them in supportive ministry.

### 9) The bottom line of missionary service must be faithful obedience to the calling of God.

One thing becomes clear in this study of Acts 13 -14 and Galatians 2: these missionary travels began in prayer and under the leadership of God (Acts 13:1-4), and at each step of the trip Paul and Barnabas were sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in choosing where to go and what to do in each place. Paul makes it very clear that his willingness to travel to Jerusalem to settle the dispute over Gentiles was promoted by God: "I went up in response to revelation," ἀνέβην δὲ κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν (Gal. 2:2).

It was this high level of obedience to the leadership of God that enabled their ministry to be so fruitful and to have lasting impact. Evidently John Mark wavered in that obedience and thus abandoned Paul and Barnabas (cf. Acts 15:38, τὸν ἀποστάντα ἀπ' αὐτῶν) once they landed at Perga (Acts 13:13). It probably good that he left the two missionaries to return home at that point. His uncertainty about continuing with these two men would have become a severe obstacle to the effectiveness of their work. Relieved of that burden Paul and Barnabas were better able to face the horrific challenges that awaited them on the mainland. John Mark would not have made it through with them, since the rather easy service on the familiar territory of Cyprus proved more than he wanted.

If you aspire to doing missionary service, one central lesson from Paul and Barnabas is this: ***make absolutely certain that God is leading you every step of the way!*** This insight comes not only through your own prayer life, but it should come through the support group standing with you in ministry. Listen to God speaking to you in prayer and through the counsel of other believers who support you in service to God. The divine leadership should shape and guide every aspect of your missionary service.

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I pray that you have learned as much about this period of ministry for Paul and Barnabas as I have through this study. Indeed, it is but a small chunk of time, appx. AD 46-48, of Paul's ministry from AD 33 - 64. But it stands as one of the most important periods of time in his ministry. His life changed drastically during that two to three years. He now began realizing the ultimate calling of God as apostle to the Gentiles. And he also experienced more of the sufferings that Jesus had predicted in the Damascus road encounter in AD 33. For the first time he was physically abused in being stoned into unconsciousness. Verbal abuse and threats had come earlier, but until now no physical violence had been done to him. Lystra changed all that!

In spite of these challenges, Paul remained unwaveringly faithful to God's leadership. His work along with that of Barnabas began a new phase of the Christian movement. The model of the church at Antioch in Syria with both Jewish and Gentile members participating equally in church life was reproduced over and over again on the first missionary journey. The Christian community at Antioch now was taking the leadership role in spreading the Gospel to all nations, while the church in Jerusalem even with the leadership of the apostles and the local pastors under the guidance of Peter and James was struggling to break out of a limited vision of the great commission of Jesus. God used Antioch and the subsequent controversy over Gentiles to break open their understanding of how the Lord intended the Gospel message to impact the entire world. Thus a major disaster was avoided in getting past a potential split of Christianity into a Jerusalem based Jewish Christian version and an Antioch based Gentile Christian version. These two segments of Christianity found ways to work together in the common cause of spreading the Gospel to everyone in that world.

But the story is just beginning. The next chapters will take a close look at the continuing story of spreading the Gospel to the whole world of the first century.