

Lesson 13
Acts 13-14
GOD OPENS THE DOORS

Memory Verse: “Through Him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.” (Acts 13:39 NIV)

Luke recorded that Jesus came to bring deliverance to the Jews and to the whole world (Luke 4:14-30). In his Gospel, Luke told the story of Jesus' personal ministry, primarily to the Jews. In Acts the emphasis is mainly on Jesus' ministry, through His apostles, to the Gentile world. As the mission to the Gentiles unfolds in Acts, we can see that Luke took pains to show that the ministry to the Gentiles paralleled the ministry to the Jews. He did this by relating many things that the missionaries to the Gentiles did, that were very similar to what the missionaries to the Jews did. This demonstrates that God was indeed behind both missions, and that they are really two aspects of His worldwide plan: to bring the gospel to all people and to build a worldwide church.

The next few chapters do more than just present the geographical expansion of the church into Asia Minor (modern western Turkey). Primarily it shows the legitimacy of dealing with Gentiles as Gentiles—rather than through Judaism—before and after their conversion. It becomes increasingly clear that the church and Judaism are two separate entities. God was not renewing the remnant in Israel by replenishing it with Gentiles who believed in Jesus. He was creating a new body: the church.

Luke recorded the events of Paul's first missionary journey beginning at Cyprus, the homeland of Barnabas, in order to document the extension of the church into new territory, and to illustrate the principles and methods by which the church grew. He also did so to show God's supernatural blessing on the witness of Barnabas and Saul.

Having evangelized Barnabas' homeland, the missionaries next moved into southern Asia Minor (modern western Turkey). Paul and Barnabas proceeded north, inland from the coast, about 100 miles to Antioch of Pisidia. Antioch of Pisidia was a Roman colony, as were Iconium, Lystra, Troas, Philippi, and Corinth. Roman colonies stood at strategic places in the empire along frequently travelled roads. As such, Antioch would have been a good place to plant a church.

The church began in Jerusalem and then spread to other cities, including Samaria, Damascus, Caesarea, and Antioch in Syria. At least forty different cities are named in Acts. From Antioch, Paul and his helpers carried the gospel throughout the then-known world. In fact, the record given in Acts 13—28 is almost a review of ancient geography. About the year 56, the apostle Paul was able to write, “So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 15:19). What a record!

In these two chapters, Dr. Luke described Paul's ministry in six different cities, beginning and ending at Antioch

Scriptural Reading: Acts 13:1-13,14: 21-28

Things to learn: 1) A typical Mission Trip 2) A model Gospel Message
3) Accountability of Missions

Read the introduction to this study and Acts 13:1-14:28

Questions

Q1. Review Acts 13:1-13 to find out how Paul and Barnabas were sent on missions and their field work.

Q2. How was the Gospel message presented in Acts 13:14-52 to the Jews and Gentiles by Paul?

Q3. How did Paul account for the mission trips to Iconium, Lystra when he returned to Antioch with reference to Acts Chapter 14?