

The Apostle Paul – Lesson 12: The First Mission (Iconium)

Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he *it is* that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Did we learn our lesson? Study Questions from lesson 11 (First Mission – Antioch in Pisidia)

1. According to Acts 13:14, where did Paul and Barnabas go first?
Answer: To the synagogue.
2. According to Romans 1:16, what is the priority for bringing the gospel?
Answer: a. To the Jew first, b. And also to the Greek.
3. According to Acts 13:15, what prompted Paul to share the gospel?
Answer: He was invited to speak.
4. According to Acts 13:42, who wanted to hear more of Paul's testimony?
Answer: The Gentiles.
5. Complete the following scripture:
Matthew 27:18 For he knew that for **envy** they had **delivered** him.

True / False

False Paul immediately started preaching. (ACTS 13:14 – He sat down)

True The promise of God includes the Gentile. (GEN 26:4 / LUKE 24:47)

False The Jews of Antioch gladly received the gospel. (ACTS 13:45 – Filled with envy)

True The Gentiles gladly received the gospel. (ACT 13:48)

Lesson 12: First Mission (Iconium)

What does being strong and of good courage mean?

Some would say it is facing your hardships with faith, continuing on in the knowledge that the Father protects you and rewards your faith.

Some would say it is the standing up for what is right, even in adversity, being a champion of God when the world seeks your flesh.

I admit both have merit and describe one who is willing to endure hardship in the name of God.

However, My personal view is slightly different:

I see the call for strength and courage as much more than the necessity to get through the tough times with your faith 'intact'. To me, it is the request of God, that we willingly seek the difficult road, the hard task, the hazardous duty – in His name, that we may bring light into the darkness.

God spoke these same words to Joshua (JOS 1:9) to inspire leading the children of Israel before entering the promised land, knowing there were much stronger forces than them, but having faith that the strength of God was much more.

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven

The believer's boldness (strength and courage) should be noticeable – Have an effect on the darkness.

Jesus Christ summarizes the believer's mission

John 17:14-21 = Why we are here

(14) I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Through Christ, the believer has the Word of God, that we (as He) will be hated

(15) I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Christ's petition to the Father is that the believers be protected

(16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Christ reaffirms that the believer (as a new creature) is no longer bound by this world

(17) Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

The truth in the believer separates them from the world (the very Spirit of God within us)

(18) As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Christ has chosen the believer, as He was chosen by the Father, to witness to the world

(19) And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Christ has put Himself aside for the believer, that He will endure the hate of the world for our sakes

(20) Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

(21) That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

- Finally, the fruit of the labor – That others, through the light of the believer (even in the darkest corners of the world) may bring Christ to new hearts:
- That salvation is more than escaping punishment, but it is the adoption of the believer into the heart of God as His children (only when you are a believer are you a 'child of God' – you are born a son / daughter of Adam).

Where we left off...

Acts 13:50 – Bitterness (envy revealed)

But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

Without politeness or regard, Paul and Barnabas were not simply asked to leave, but 'expelled' – To be forcibly removed, for the Jews were 'filled with envy' that the promise was also to the Gentiles.

The Exit of Antioch

Acts 13:51 – Dealing with rejection

But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

Matthew 10:14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

1 Samuel 7:8 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

- The rejection of the witness is the rejection of Christ, denying Christ's reign as Lord

Acts 13:52 – The result of doing as the Lord commands

And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith

Paul and Barnabas in Iconium

Acts 14:1 – The boldness of a witness

And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

This time, we see some similarities and differences:

- Paul / Barnabas are a team – Believers, you are not in this alone, you are of one body, work together! **Philippians 2:2** Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.
 - o Believers – You are not in this alone (you are of one body), work together!
- They start at the synagogue: Consistent with the priority noted by Christ in **Luke 24:47** and **Romans 1:16** (to the Jew first and also to the Greek)
- A couple things to note, it is not uncommon to find Gentiles in the synagogue:
 - o The concept of ‘finding God’ is not new – Many saw the faith of the Jews and sought righteousness under the law by learning and converting.
 - o This building is also a social center, as many Jews are successful in business and have considerable influence in the community (it is a place to ‘rub shoulders’ and shake hands)
- Both Jews and Gentiles (as in Antioch) come to believe the gospel message of Jesus Christ!

Acts 14:2-5 – The conflict between the lie and the truth (again)

(2) But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

The lie will act against the truth – see Mark 4:3-9 (parable of the sower) to see the tactics.

(3) Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

The Apostles were given authority to bring the power of God as a witness – We now have the Word of God to guide our choice.

(4) But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

(5) And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use *them* despitefully, and to stone them.

As before, there is division between the lie and the truth (note – The lie is always violent)
(Star Trek quote – Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent.)

This is the Lord’s plan

Luke 12:51 – I bring division in this world

Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

Matthew 25:32 – I bring division in the end

And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

Acts 14:6 – Time to go

They were ware of *it*, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

The lesson learned in Antioch – Avoid physical confrontation. This conflict is not between the members of humanity, but a spiritual war between the Spirit of love (God) and the spirit of hate (Satan), there is nothing to be gained in physical confrontation (at that point, the conflict is made a personal issue between people, and God is no longer the center of the subject).

Boldness – Strength and courage to go into the darkness to bring Light!

Next lesson, we continue on with Paul to Derbe and Lystra.

Lesson 12: First Mission (Iconium)

Study Questions

1. According to John 17:17, what sanctifies the believer?

2. According to Acts 13:51, what did Paul and Barnabas do upon leaving Antioch?

3. Referencing Galatians 5:22, name one fruit of the Spirit.

4. According to Acts 14:1, where did Paul and Barnabas begin to witness?

5. Complete the following scripture:

Luke 12:51 Suppose ye that I am come to give _____ on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather _____.

True / False

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | The believer is sent into the world. |
| T | F | The believer is expected to bring light to the darkness. |
| T | F | The believer is expected to be bold. |
| T | F | Believers are to work together. |

The Route

1. Cyprus (Salamis and Paphos)
2. Perga in Pamphylia
3. Antioch in Pisidia
4. Iconium
5. Lystra
6. Derbe

(the return is the same in reverse)

