

## THE MESSAGE OF FREEDOM

*Acts 13-14*

Henry David Thoreau said that "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation." This was certainly not true of the first Christians. Difficult as their lives might have been, they were like prisoners escaping from the darkness of their culture into the light of God's freedom. That is how true Christianity always looks, and that is the kind of lifestyle that the book of Galatians portrays.

But before we dive into Galatians, it will help if you spend some time getting a feel for what had happened to these people, and how they came to know a man named Paul...

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Briefly trace the second and third Missionary Journeys in the book of Acts (these do not include Paul's journey to Rome at the end of the book.) Record the major cities and events in the boxes below. [Extra credit! How many times did Paul visit the Galatians area in the book of Acts?]

2nd Journey

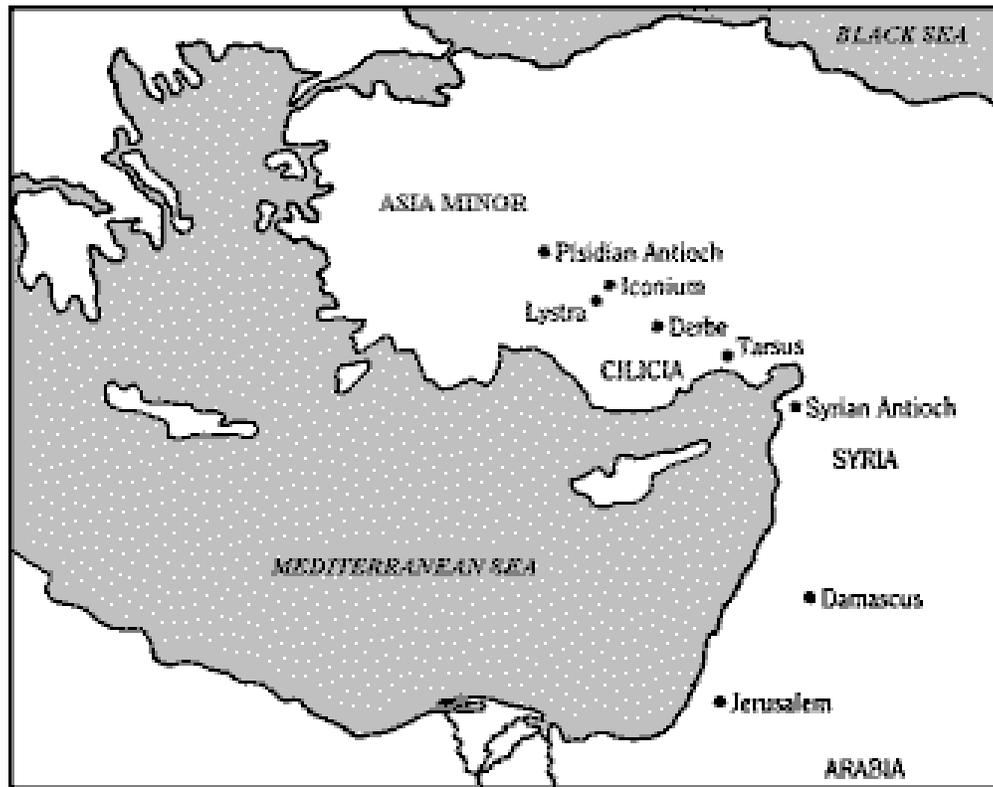
3rd Journey

Now trace the 1st Missionary journey in Acts 13 and 14.

1st Journey

What modern-day country was Galatia part of?

Use the map on the next page to trace the 3 journeys.



**Character Study:** There was a young man living in Lystra when Paul and Barnabas came through. This young man had a Greek father and a Jewish mother and later became one of Paul's favorite travelling companions. Who was he? How many times does he appear in the New Testament (use a concordance for this one) ?

The 1st journey lasted about 1 1/2 years, and then Paul and Barnabas returned home. What had become "home" for them?

Imagine a Missionary slide show after Paul & Barnabas return...

- What was difficult about the trip?
- What was exciting and joyful?

## APPLICATION

As you study, it's a good idea to summarize your findings into "principles" - concepts which are not only found in the passage you're studying, but which are echoed throughout the Bible. The following three principles (there are more!) seem to surface as the 1st journey unfolds:

### 1. SPIRITUAL REALITY IS POWERFUL.

How did the power of the gospel impact Galatia on this first journey?

How has God's power impacted your life?

### 2. CHRISTIANITY OFTEN BRINGS CONFLICT.

Read *Philippians 3:10*. Can you think of other NT passages that support this idea?

Have you had any personal experiences that support this idea?

Sometimes people are told that if they become Christians, all their problems will go away; yet that is not a Biblical teaching. Does this principle surprise you?

### 3. THE GOSPEL BRINGS FREEDOM AND JOY.

Is your life characterized by a noticeable freedom?

Read *Hebrews 2:2*. What do you think "joy" refers to in this verse?