

FIRST MISSIONARY TRIP WAS PERILOUS BUT PROSPEROUS

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Paul's first missionary journey was a mixture of triumph and tragedy; a procession of power and problems; a spectacle of blessing and blasphemy. In studying these chapters we should recognize that Paul's faithfulness in the face of continual opposition demonstrates the very courage that we need in our service for God. Paul and Barnabas returned to the churches they had started "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

How were churches involved in the call of Barnabas and Saul for missionary work? 13:2

Shortly after Saul was saved in Damascus, God called him to be a special witness for Christ before Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9:6, 15). He began preaching in Damascus (Acts 9:20-22) and later in Jerusalem (Acts 9:28-29). Then he was sent to Tarsus, his birthplace, where it is assumed he continued to witness for Christ (Acts 9:30; Gal 1:21). He stayed there at least for eight years before Barnabas brought him to the church of Antioch to work with him for a whole year (Acts 11:25-26). Then God called him to special missionary work. Barnabas was sent by his church in Jerusalem to the church in Antioch, where he exhorted and taught the believers for many years (Acts 11:22-27). Then he was called to this special missionary work. This specific call was made known to Saul and Barnabas before the church leaders knew of it: "I have called them" is a perfect tense verb, meaning they had been called and the call continued to be valid. Now the church was to release them.

What did Paul and Barnabas experience in their missionary work in Cyprus? 13:4-13

They preached the gospel in the synagogues and the deputy asked to hear it, too, but a Jewish false prophet tried to prevent it. Then Paul had the Lord blind him for a time. When the deputy saw this happen, he believed on the Lord and was astonished by the power of the gospel.

What did Paul and Barnabas experience in Antioch of Pisidia? 13:14-52

They went to a synagogue and were invited to speak. Paul told them of God's promise to David of a Savior. God kept His promise, but the rulers in Jerusalem demanded that Pilate crucify Him. This was done, but God raised Him from the dead, which was a fulfillment of two of David's psalms: 2:7 and 16:10. Paul said Jesus has been given for the forgiveness of sins and the justification of all things. Then he warned them from Habakkuk not to despise the work of God and perish (Hab 1:5). Many Jews and proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, but the next Sabbath almost the whole city came to hear the word of God. The Jews were filled with envy and contradicted Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles to give them the gospel. Those that were ordained to eternal life believed (15:18; 1 Pet 1:2). The Jews stirred up the city leaders and Paul and Barnabas were cast out of the city.

What did the missionaries experience in Iconium? 14:1-6

They went to the synagogue and preached. A great multitude of Jews believed as well as Gentiles. They stayed there for a long time, but the unbelieving Jews stirred up opposition to Paul and Barnabas. When they heard the unbelievers were planning to stone them, they fled to Lystra and Derbe.

What happened at Lystra and Derbe? 14:7-20

Paul healed a lame man and the people believed they were gods and wanted to offer sacrifices to them. They barely stopped them by telling them of the true God. Jews from Antioch and Iconium turned the people against them and they stoned Paul, leaving him for dead. Some disciples stood around him and he rose up and went into the city. The next day they went to Derbe and preached the gospel.

What did the missionaries do for the disciples that had received Christ? 14:21-23

They returned to the cities to strengthen the disciples, to exhort them to remain strong in the faith in tribulation. They ordained pastors for each church, prayed and fasted, commending them to the Lord.

What did the missionaries do after their missionary trip was finished? 14:26-28

They went back to the church that sent them and reported what God had done. They planted churches to continue the work, so their work was finished and they stayed in Antioch.