

A Study in Acts

Chapter Thirteen – First Journey of Paul



ACTS 13:13-15:

In our previous lesson, we began the first journey of Paul. It began in Antioch of Syria and from there; Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark went down to Seleucia. From Seleucia, they caught a ship to Cyprus and landed at Salamis. They would share the Gospel of Jesus as Christ in the synagogues of the Jews.

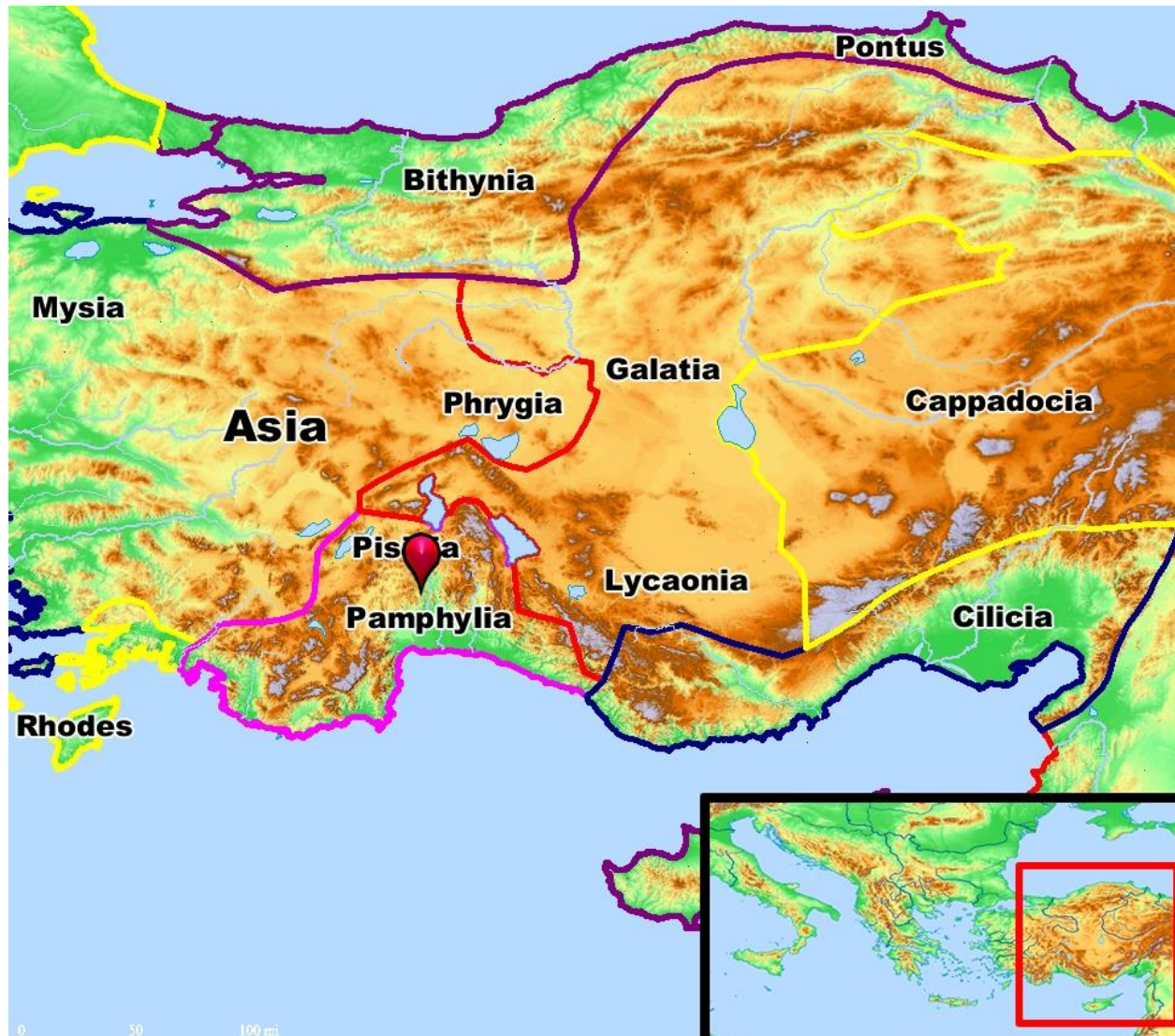
As Barnabas and Saul came to Paphos, they crossed paths with the proconsul and a sorcerer who had been acting as his advisor. As the proconsul wanted to hear from Barnabas and Saul, the sorcerer withstood them.

Saul, who will now be called from this point forward, Paul, openly denounced the sorcerer and struck him blind by the power of the Lord. This would give cause for the proconsul to believe the words concerning the teaching of the Lord.

In this lesson, we will leave the isle of Paphos and actually come to Asia Minor for the first time.

Text #1:

Acts 13:13 “Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.”



Pamphylia: I know this is not the order they are listed; that is simply because one is the city they would come to and other the province. Pamphylia is a small Roman province extending about 75 miles along the coast and about 30 miles inland to the Taurus Mountains. The mention of it being a Roman province is from the understanding that all of Asia Minor is broken up into provinces (Galatia, Phrygia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, etc.) by Rome for the purpose of rule, taxation, etc.

Perga: This is the chief city of this province, located on the Cestrus River, which formed an inland port for shipping.

John Mark: It is noted by Luke that John Mark, who had begun this journey with Paul and Barnabas (13:5), is going to depart from them and return to Jerusalem. Luke does not reveal the reason, so anything offered here would be speculation; however, in Acts 15:37-38, we learn that when Paul wished to go out again, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, but Paul did not. Whatever the reason for this, it became so contentious that Paul went without either of them, John Mark and Barnabas returned to Cyprus (Acts 15:39).

We know also, that much later historically in the work of Paul, John Mark would be beneficial to Paul – Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11.

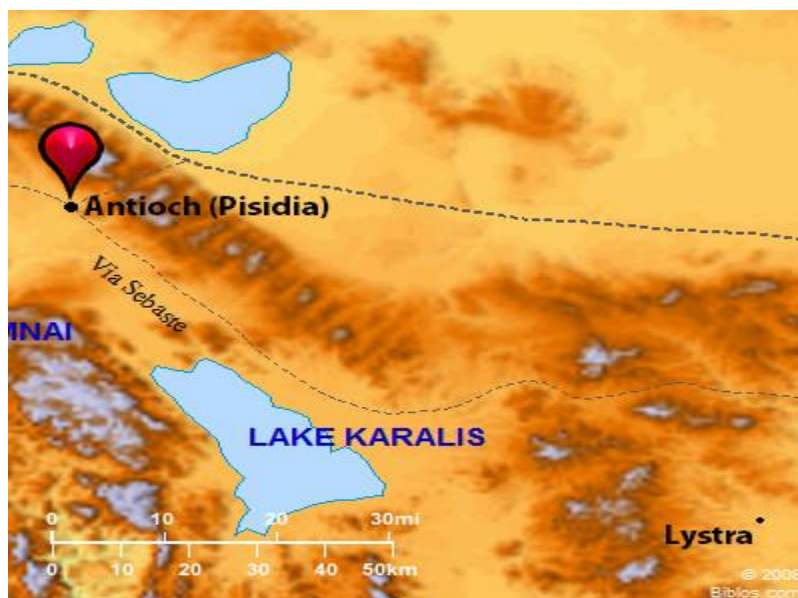
Perga Summary: Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark arrive at this seaport of Asia Minor, only to have John Mark leave them for reasons unknown. Luke makes no mention of any other events that would transpire here.

Text #2:

Acts 13:14-15 “But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. ¹⁵ And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, “Men *and* brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.””

Pisidia: This is another small Roman province in Asia Minor just north of Pamphylia. It was a very mountainous province, but still supported a large population, especially in the city of Antioch.

Antioch: This is a large city and known as Pisidian Antioch, in order to distinguish it from the many other cities by the same name. This is the chief city of this province and also supported a Roman garrison.



Synagogue: As we have already mentioned in the first lesson for this chapter:

“This is going to be a pattern with these men that will continue with the Apostle Paul on all of his journeys, to seek out the synagogues to speak the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Jews and proselytes. This was a pattern that Paul will acknowledge later was necessary; as the Gospel was to come to the Jews first – see: **Acts 13:46** (they were to be those who should have been builders of the kingdom – **Act 4:11**; **Psalms 118:22** “**rejected by you builders**”, spoken to those who rejected Jesus as the Christ and His Gospel).

The pattern does not exist to promote synagogue worship or Sabbath day worship; it is simply a convenient place and time to find many already gathered in order to speak the truth of the Gospel of Christ. Luke acknowledges that this was just a custom of Paul in order to reason from the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ – **Acts 17:2**. This was a practice that was so successful for Paul with the Jews and with the Gentiles (**Acts 13:42**), that for expediency sake, Paul circumcised Timothy (a Gentile), so that he could accompany Paul into the synagogues (**Acts 16:3**).”

Paul is going to take advantage of this invitation to speak (as he does by this same practice in every synagogue he will enter). It is here that we will be introduced to the first recorded sermon of the Apostle Paul.

Outline:

16-22 – Introduction (History of Israel introduced).

23-25 – Jesus Proclaimed the Savior (Savior - “Participle”; In this case, not a title, but a noun with verb properties, describing just what He will do!).

26-29 – Fulfilling prophecy.

30-37 – God vindicating His claim to be the Messiah by raising Him from the dead.

38-39 – Through Him, the remission of sins is preached.

40-41 – Summary warning issued.