

PARTS 17 & 18: THE HOLY SPIRIT, A BIBLE, A PASSPORT, AND A FIRST-AID KIT

ACTS 13:4-14:28¹

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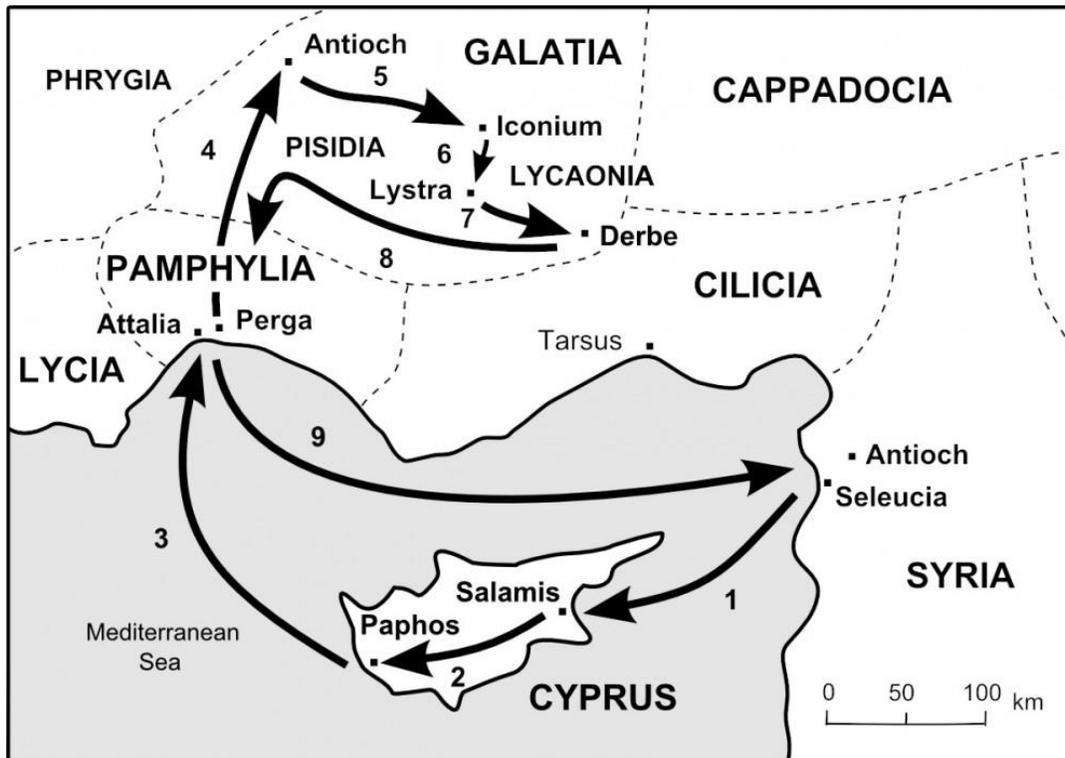


Figure 1 Paul's First Missionary Journey

MAIN IDEA

In these initial stops on the first missionary journey of Barnabus and Paul, we find several important applications for Word-driven, Spirit-empowered missionaries (Merida 180) His first missionary journey, most likely in the years AD 47 through 48, started in Syria and took him to Cyprus and Asia Minor (modern Turkey).

I. BACKGROUND

A. Locations

1. Derbe: A city in the SE corner of Asia Minor
2. Paphos: the capital city of Roman Cyprus.
3. Perga: The chief city of Pamphylia. Here John Mark left Paul and Barnabus and

¹ This summary includes Acts 13:4-14:28 to include all of Paul's first missionary journey.

returned to Jerusalem.

4. Phrygia: A Roman province² in SW Asia Minor
5. Pisidia; A small Roman province in southern Asia Minor.
6. Salamis: A highly populated harbor town with many synagogues.
7. Seleucia: The port of departure for Paul and Barnabus on their first missionary journey.

B. Characters

1. Barnabas: Paul's fellow missionary sent by the church in Antioch.
2. Elymas (also called Bar-Jesus): a sorcerer who confronted Paul.
3. Saul: The Hebrew name for Paul.
4. Sergius Paulus: the Roman Proconsul (governor) of Cyprus.

II. SUMMARY

Paul's first missionary journey began in Antioch. You may notice that maps of the ancient world often have two cities labeled Antioch. The Antioch in Acts 13 was the third largest city in ancient Rome and the capital of the province of Syria. Today, it's part of southern Turkey. The *other* Antioch was part of Pisidia, an ancient region that is also now part of Turkey. Your Bible likely refers to it as Pisidian Antioch or Antioch of Pisidia. In Antioch (the big city in Syria), the Holy Spirit singled out Paul and Barnabas from the believers worshiping there and sent them on their first missionary journey.

1. Salamis: on the island of Cyprus (13:4-5)³

Paul's first journey took him by boat to the Roman province of Cyprus. Today, Paul and Barnabas arrived in the port city of Salamis, where John Mark (who was possibly Barnabas' cousin), helped them share the gospel in Jewish synagogues.

2. Paphos: on the island of Cyprus (13:6-12)

From Salamis, the group moved across the island to Paphos, where they were met by a Jewish sorcerer named Bar-Jesus (also known as Elymas the sorcerer). This sorcerer worked for the governor—Sergius Paulus—who sent for Paul and his companions because he wanted to hear the word of God. Elymas opposed them and tried to turn Sergius from the faith, and so Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, called him a "child of the devil" and struck him blind. Sergius saw what happened and believed. Ironically, Elymas meant to steer Sergius away from Christ, but he became the very vehicle God used to draw Sergius toward him.

3. Perga: in the province of Pamphylia (13:13)

From Paphos, Paul and company set sail for the Roman province of Pamphylia, located in modern-day Turkey. They arrived in the city of Perga, where John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. We don't know why John Mark decided to go, but this would later create a rift between Paul and Barnabas.

² A province is similar to today's counties.

³ The numbers shown correspond to those shown in Figure 1

4. Antioch: in the province of Pisidia (13:14-50)

Together, Paul and Barnabas traveled to Pisidian Antioch, where local synagogue leaders invited them to speak. Initially, the Jewish people were receptive to the gospel, but a week later, the entire city gathered to hear Paul and Barnabas, and the Jewish leaders became jealous. They resisted the message of the gospel, and so Paul and Barnabas made an important pivot: *they began preaching to the Gentiles*. But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from their region.

5. Iconium: in the province of Phrygia (13:51-14:5)

Driven out of Pamphylia, Paul and Barnabas traveled to Iconium, an eastern city in the region of Phrygia. Iconium still exists today as the Turkish city of Konya. Once again, Paul and Barnabas spoke in the synagogue, where Jews and Greeks alike accepted the gospel. But the Jews who didn't accept it stirred up trouble, even as Paul and Barnabas began performing signs and wonders (Acts 14:3). As support for Paul and Barnabas grew, so did the opposition they faced, and eventually, they became aware of a plot to abuse and stone them. So they left.

6. Lystra: in the province of Lycaonia (14:6-19)

Fleeing the threat in Iconium, Paul and Barnabas left Phrygia altogether and traveled to Lystra, a city in the province of Lycaonia. Here, Paul healed a man who was lame. The locals who witnessed this miracle thought Paul and Barnabas were gods in human form, calling Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes. The priest from the temple of Zeus brought bulls and wreaths to offer sacrifices to them. Paul and Barnabas attempted to redirect their praise to God but struggled to keep the crowds from offering sacrifices to them. Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and continued what they'd started. They riled up the crowds and convinced them to stone Paul. Believing he was dead, they dragged him outside the city. When the disciples gathered around him, Paul got up and went back inside the city.

7. Derbe: in the province of Lycaonia (14:20-21a)

Then Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe, another city in Lycaonia. There, they "won a large number of disciples" (Acts 14:21).

8. Returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (14:21b-25)

After a time in Derbes, Paul and Barnabas went back the way they came, working their way through Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch, and Perga. In each city, they encouraged the believers there and strengthened their faith, as they would continue doing on their future missionary journeys. They did, however, stop in a new Pamphylian city on the way: Attalia. Acts only mentions it in passing, but presumably, they established a community of believers there as well.

9. Return to Antioch (14:26-28)

From there, they skipped a return voyage to the island of Cyprus and went straight back to Antioch (Syria), where they told the church what had happened on their journey.⁴

⁴ Ryan Nelson < <https://overviewbible.com/pauls-missionary-journeys/>>. Accessed January 30, 2022.