

Acts 13

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Tape #8102
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Nearby the coast there is a port city right nearby and this becomes now the center for the church and the churches' activity. *Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.* First of all I'm interested with what diverse backgrounds make up the church. You see in Christ we are all one! But in this church there were many diverse backgrounds. Barnabas, he was from the island of Cyprus, a Jew. Simeon who was called Niger. Now Niger was an African name, in fact you have Nigeria. And thus, he, was thought by some, interestingly enough, to be the Simon of Cyrene who was called upon to carry the cross of Jesus. Simeon and Simon are the same name. And being from Africa. Of course they compelled one Simon who was a Cyrenian to bear the cross for Jesus. It is thought that perhaps it is this same Simeon that was here. Lucius of Cyrene, which is Africa also and Manaen which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, or Herod Antipas. He was a boyhood friend of Herod Antipas, who of course, ordered the execution of John the Baptist. He was a son of Herod the Great. So here from many backgrounds, from the royal court to fellows from Africa, to Barnabas from the island of Cyprus and Paul who originated in Tarsus, but then was educated in Jerusalem. Notice there were prophets and teachers there in the church. These were the prominent prophets and teachers in the church.

²*As they ministered to the Lord* (Now that's an interesting thing, isn't it? They were there ministering to the Lord. We usually think of ministering to the congregation. They were ministering to the Lord. I believe the primary purpose of the church is to minister to the Lord. I think that the Lord created us for His glory. In order that through the church He might receive praise and glory as Paul repeated over to the Ephesians. That we are for the praise to the glory of His grace! (Ephesians 1:6). And the outflow of course of the ministry to the Lord is the ministry to others.) *and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."* Now, while they were fasting and praying, was there just a voice that just sort of vibrated and said, separate to Me? No, this no doubt happened by prophecy, the word of prophecy. He makes mention of the fact that there were these prophets. And by the word of prophecy, Barnabas and Saul were separated for a calling and a ministry to which the Lord would call them. The gift of prophecy was exercised in the early church. Many times for divine guidance. Paul was warned by Agabus the prophet that he would be bound and imprisoned when he came to Jerusalem. When Paul laid his hands on Timothy to receive the anointing of God and of the Holy Spirit for his ministry, Timothy was gifted by God and thus Paul, later wrote to him and said, (2 Timothy 1:6) stir up the gift that is in you through the laying on of hands and prophecy. So there was the laying on of hands on Timothy. And while they were laid hands on him, there was a prophecy that spoke of the gifts that God was giving unto him. And so this is how the gift of prophecy was often exercised in the early church. One of those with the gift of prophecy by the Holy Spirit, said separate unto Me, Barnabas and Paul for the ministry to which I have called them.

³*Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.* So directed by the Holy Spirit, they fasted and they prayed and then they laid hands on them and sent them forth.

⁴*So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit,* (It says they sent them away, but in reality it was the Holy Spirit directing the activities. And this is the secret of the success of the early church. They were depending upon the Holy Spirit to guide and direct the activities of the church. They were looking to the Holy Spirit to guide in all of the activities of that early church.)

So they were sent forth by the Holy Spirit, *they went down to Seleucia,* (they departed to Seleucia, which is just right next to Antioch. It is the port city of Antioch.) *and from there they sailed to Cyprus.*

(which is not far from Seleucia. It is a short distance across the Mediterranean to the island of Cyprus. Interestingly enough, Barnabas was from Cyprus. So he was going to familiar territory. When they left Cyprus and went over to Pisidia, that is where Tarsus was, there in Pisidia. So they are going still to familiar territory for Paul. He grew up in that area of what is present day Turkey. So they sailed to Cyprus.) ⁵*And when they arrived in Salamis, (which is on the island of Cyprus, closest to the mainland from which they sailed) they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.* This is John Mark, who was a nephew of Barnabas. His mother's house was where they were praying in our study last week, when Peter was delivered by the Holy Spirit from the prison. He went to the house of John Mark's mother where the church was praying. So his mother was active in the church in Jerusalem. Her house was a place where the church gathered for prayer and no doubt for Bible study. Mark was probably around twenty-two or twenty-three years old. He was the author of the gospel according to Mark. It is thought that he was around twelve years old at the time of the crucifixion. He gives an interesting little side light in his gospel that you don't find in the other gospels. And that is when Jesus was arrested there was a small boy there in the garden, about twelve years old. They grabbed him by the coat. But he wriggled free and fled from the garden naked. That's his own little personal account of himself and what happened to him that night. But he was a little boy that was interested with Jesus and the things that were going on and a follower of Jesus. His mother was of course one of the disciples of Jesus and thus Mark sort of grew up in that atmosphere. But now we are about ten years later. So that would put Mark in his early twenties at this point. And he was there to run errands for them. To help them by serving them, carrying p.a. systems and stuff like that.

⁶*Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, (So they actually went sort of the length of the island because Paphos is at the other end. Paphos was the capital of the island of Cyprus.) they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, (now Bar is son and Jesus is Joshua. So he was the son of Joshua. Jesus was a common name. It was the Hebrew name, Joshua. Bar-Jesus. In Greek it is Jesus. That is why when they spoke of Jesus, they often would say, Jesus of Nazareth, to identify Him and to separate Him from all of the other little boys named Jesus. He was Jesus of Nazareth and that gave them which Jesus they were talking about. Here this fellow is the son of Jesus, Bar-Jesus.)* ⁷*who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. (Now notice, Barnabas and Saul. On the island of Cypress and all and of course when they were called, separated to be Barnabas and Saul. As the team went out Barnabas was more or less the leading figure. In time, Paul became the leading figure. Then you read and Paul and Barnabas. But in the beginning it was Barnabas and Saul.) and sought to hear the word of God.* ⁸*But Elymas the sorcerer (this is this Bar-Jesus.) (for so his name is translated) (Now it means the skillful one. He was known as a wizard. The people in those days were very superstitious. They felt that there people who had supernatural kind of powers. Oracles who could speak God's words. That's what this Bar-Jesus was, one of the advisors, wizards, who was an advisor to Sergius Paulus. But advising in a seance kind of a way. A spirit way.*

So Elymas the sorcerer *withstood them, (that is Barnabas and Saul) seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.* Here is a man. He is the governor over the province. Interested in the Word of God. But here is this sly fellow there trying to turn him away from the faith.

⁹*Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him* ¹⁰*and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?"* Now that isn't a politically correct speech! Paul didn't care. Pretty scathing and heavy, isn't it? Full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil! You enemy of all righteousness! Won't you stop trying to pervert the ways of the Lord?

¹¹*And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time." (Not permanent, but for a time or a season.) And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.* Now here is Sergius Paulus. He is listening.

These guys are sharing the gospel, but here is this fellow who has been his advisor or counselor, sort of a spirit kind of a guy. And he's saying, no, no, that's not so. No, no. So Paul finally turns to him and says, you child of the devil, full of deceit and all fraud. How long are you trying to pervert the ways of the Lord? You are going to be blind for a time. And the guy goes blind! Paulus must have thought, wow! What kind of a message is this? ¹²*Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.* (I imagine he was!)

¹³*Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia;* (and so they sailed across to Turkey, present day Turkey, Perga in Pamphylia) *and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.* Now the coastal areas of Pamphylia had a lot of marshes. Malaria fever was quite common. And it is quite possible that Paul came down with malaria fever because they didn't stay in the coastal region but immediately headed for the highlands.)

¹⁴*But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia,* which is up in the highlands. It is a rough, rough journey. They had to go over several ranges of mountains to get there. It was one of the roughest roads of those days. And yet Paul was anxious to get into the highlands, possibly because of malaria fever. They came to Antioch, which of course is inland. And in that plateau area which is about thirty five hundred feet above sea level, they went to the cities of that area with the gospel. Now that area is called Galatia. Paul later wrote the book of Galatians to the churches of Antioch, Lystra and Derbe and Iconium, in this same area. The letter of Galatians was sent to them. And Paul in his letter to the Galatians (Galatians 4:13) said, you remember when I came to you I had these infirmities. I was sick. So that is why it is believed that he perhaps, had malaria fever, which caused splitting headaches. Some have theorized that that was actually the thorn in the flesh that Paul spoke about. The splitting headaches as a result of the malaria fever. All speculation but interesting to consider. We do know that Paul speaks of his problems that he had. His eyes were so bad. Perhaps again from these severe headaches. It was sort of like migraines or these things go in front of your eyes and all. He said that you would have plucked your own eyes for me. (Galatians 4:15) You had such love for me, you would have plucked out your own eyes to give them to me! As he was talking to the people in that area, Galatia.

So 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,* (usually, traditionally they read a portion from the Law and a portion from 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."* ¹⁶*Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen:* Listen up. Now this is the only recorded message of Paul in fullness that we have. We do have Athens on Mars Hill, a portion of the message, but here we find one of Paul's full messages recorded for us. And so he begins to preach to them or exhorts them, starting out with their history.

¹⁷*The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it.* ¹⁸*Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness.* (To the Jew their history was very important. And there was always that reminder that the nation was brought forth by God. They were slaves in Egypt. God brought them out. God delivered them. God preserved them. God brought them into the land that He had promised to their father Abraham. And this was always something that was so important to them. It was just their rich heritage. We are God's people. Our nation was conceived by God.)

¹⁹*And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.* (That is the Caananite land to the children of Israel by lot. You remember Joshua drew lots as to what portion of the land would be occupied by the different tribes.) ²⁰*After that* (After the death of Joshua) *He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.* ²¹*And*

afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²²And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.' So we're moving along in their history. Coming from their being delivered out of Egypt through the forty years of wilderness wandering to the four hundred and fifty years of judges, to the forty years of the reign of Saul and now to David, whom God called a man after His own heart. An interesting, a very interesting statement of God! Because when you look at David, we immediately recognize that David was far from perfect, which indicates that you don't have to be perfect to be a man after God's own heart! David had his faults. He had his flaws, but still he was called a man after God's own heart. Not because of his sinless perfection, because he wasn't, but because when he did sin and God spoke to him about his sin he was quick to repent of his sin and David was a man of praise. In fact, David tells us the Lord inhabits the praises of His people Israel. And David was a man of worship. You might say that he was a man after the heart of God! And being a man after the heart of God, God said, he is a man after My heart. This is the kind of man who is in harmony with the heart of God. And thus God exalted David and God blessed him. As He will every man who seeks the heart of God. He becomes a man after God's heart. So the witness of David and of course, God lets us know that David wasn't perfect to encourage us. To realize that we can still be after the heart of God, in worship and praise. Read the Psalms and you'll discover why David was a man after God's own heart. Throughout the Psalms are beautiful, beautiful, expressions of praise and worship and all. A man after God's heart! *who will do all My will.*' And God said concerning David and this again is why he is man after God's heart. He was a man who will do all My will. He was wanting to do the will of God! He inquired, (how many times do you read that?) David inquired of the Lord. He was always seeking the counsel and guidance of God.

Now coming to David, he said ²³*From this man's seed*, He said of this man's seed, singular, has God, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior--Jesus-- In his later years (2 Samuel 7), David sitting there in the luxury of his palace, watched the people as they were going into the tent, to worship God. And David thought, here I am in this lovely palace with all of its marble and ivory, and all. And God is dwelling over there in the tent. I need to build a house for God that will exceed anything that has ever been built because it will be for God. A glorious, beautiful house, you know. I'm going to build God a house. He sort of came to that determination in his mind. So when his friend the prophet, Nathan, came in, David said, Nathan, I've got it! I've been inspired. I'm going to build a house for God. It's going to be glorious. It's going to be magnificent. Greater than anything that has ever been built! Because it will be for God! Nathan, said, splendid idea, David. Do it! That night the Lord came to Nathan and said, Nathan, you really blew it today! You encouraged David to build a house for Me. Nathan, I can't have David building Me a house. His hands are bloody. He's a man of war! That's inconsistent. I'm a God of love and peace. And so you're going to have to go tell David that I can't allow him to build Me a house because you encouraged him, you're the one that's going to have to tell him that he can't. But to make it easy on you, tell David, I'll build him a house. And from His seed will come the King that will sit on the throne forever. So the next day Nathan came in and said, David, I've got some bad news and some good news. The bad news first. You can't build a house for God. He's rejected that. But the good news is, God said that He's going to build you a house. From your seed the throne will be established forever! David went in before the Lord. He said, Lord, you took me from the sheepcote in following after the sheep and you made a ruler over Your people. I mean he saw where he came from. Humbled, I was just a shepherd. I was just a kid out there in the fields of Bethlehem following after sheep! When Samuel the prophet came down and anointed him with oil to be the king. You took me from the sheepcote and following after sheep and You made me the ruler over Your people! What You have done is absolutely amazing! But now You speak of the time to come. Lord, what can I say? If anybody could say it, David was the one that could. I mean this fellow is so articulate. When I want to enhance my own praise, I turn to the Psalms, because this fellow was so articulate and so capable

in expressing praise and all to God, but even at this David became speechless. What can I say? So here Paul reminds them that God promised David that from his seed the Savior would come. And Paul is saying the Savior did come. He identifies him as Jesus.

²⁴after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not He. (that is the Messiah) But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.' ²⁶Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. So John said, I'm not the One, but the One is coming after me. Paul is declaring that it is to you that this word of salvation is sent.

²⁷For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. ²⁸And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. ²⁹Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. Now notice that Paul is sharing with them and he said to the Corinthians(1 Corinthians 15:3), how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Paul's preaching the gospel to these people. This promise that God made to David was fulfilled. He's sent the Savior! He's Jesus! But the Word of God spoke of the Messiah being put to death, suffering, despised, rejected and that happened. Those prophecies were fulfilled. All the way through He is showing that God's purposes are being fulfilled in Jesus. The prophecies are being fulfilled by Jesus. If you will compare Paul's sermon with Peter's sermon back in the second chapter of Acts, you will find that there are many parallels to Paul and Peter's message. Basically it is the death of Jesus Christ for our sins, His burial and His resurrection. And these are all the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

So Paul is showing that Jesus was the promised Messiah. But he gets to the heart of it. ³⁰But God raised Him from the dead. ³¹He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. For the space of about forty days, Jesus was appearing to His disciples. On different places and on different occasions, to different groups of them. And they became the witnesses of His resurrection. ³²And we declare to you glad tidings--And we declare the Good News and we declare unto you, glad tidings--that promise which was made to the fathers. ³³God has fulfilled this for us their children, God made the promise to our fathers. He has fulfilled those same promises. Again pointing back and showing how that all of the things that relate to the life of Jesus were prophesied and predicted in the Old Testament. All of these promises were fulfilled in Jesus in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: (Psalms 2:7) 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.' Interesting that he should say the second Psalm because in our Psalms as they are in order, it is the second Psalm in the order of Psalms in our Bibles. So he is interestingly enough, as with Peter who preached his message on the Day of Pentecost, when he came to the resurrection, he then began to give Scriptures to them showing the promise of the resurrection. Paul uses some of the very same Scriptures that Peter used as prophetic of the resurrection. But they felt that when they came to the resurrection that it was important to give them the Scriptural basis for the hope of the resurrection.

So Paul goes on now to give the Scriptural basis ³⁴And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: (Isaiah 55:3) 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.' ³⁵Therefore He also says in another Psalm: (Psalms 16:10) 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'

³⁶For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, (or he died) was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; ³⁷but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. And so the prophecy was not to David but it was to the seed of David. And the full prophecy is(Psalm 16:10;

Acts 2:27) For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. Peter quotes it in whole.

³⁸*Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man (Jesus) is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; He died for our sins according to the Scriptures! All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. For the transgression of My people He was smitten. So by Him is preached to you forgiveness of sins, but even more.*

³⁹*and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things* How glorious! God has declared me innocent! Through Jesus Christ not only am I forgiven, I'm justified! The slate has been wiped clean! My past sins are blotted out! Never, never to be brought up against me. The record is clean through Jesus Christ. I've been justified! *from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.* The law of Moses could not justify anybody. It was impossible that the blood of goats or bulls could put away sin. All they could do was cover. But David speaks of how blessed or happy is the man whose sin is covered. If you are happy because your sin is covered, man, you ought to really be jumping when your sins have been exonerated. They don't exist. They have been wiped out! Forgiven yes, that's better than covered, but God takes one step more. He wipes the slate clean! And we have been justified through faith in Jesus Christ. The law of Moses could not do that.

⁴⁰*Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:* In other words there is another prophecy that you need to be careful about. That's the prophecy of Habakkuk. (Habakkuk 1:5) ⁴¹*"Behold, you despisers, Marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, A work which you will by no means believe, Though one were to declare it to you." " God has done the work of redemption. God has done the work of providing the forgiveness of sins and justification through Jesus Christ. God has done the work of salvation. Nothing that we can do. You can't work your way into righteousness. It's not by the works of righteousness which we can do but it is by Jesus Christ. We've been saved and justified. It's God's work of redemption. Now beware lest God had done a work and you don't believe it. And thus you cannot partake. You do not receive because of the unbelief. So you are fulfillment of that prophecy that God said concerning the nation of Israel. I work a work in your days. A work which you will by no means believe, though one were to declare it to you. Paul says, look, I'm declaring it unto you. You know, beware that you are not a part of that prophecy and that you don't believe.*

⁴²*So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.* Hey, I want to bring my friends. I want them to hear this. This is great! Preach the same sermon next Sunday. Pastor Chuck has never had anyone tell him that. They wanted it preached again. Good news! I love to hear it! Preach it again!

⁴³*Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.* God has opened up your eyes to his wonderful grace of provision of salvation. By grace you are saved through faith that not of yourself, a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. God will work in you. So continue in this grace of God.

So ⁴⁴*On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.* How exciting! Just how the news spread. The buzz of the message of these men. The whole city turned out to hear it.

⁴⁵*But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.* ⁴⁶*Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold (They became very bold. Notice no longer Barnabas and Paul but now Paul and Barnabas.) and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.* So, we've given you the

message, but seeing you don't want to hear it. You count yourself unworthy of the everlasting life that God has promised through Jesus. We're going to share with the Gentiles.

⁴⁷*For so the Lord has commanded us : (Isaiah 49:6) 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'* " The message of the gospel is not for any ethnic group, exclusively. It's for the world. Go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, Jesus commanded the disciples. So turning now to the Gentiles that we might fulfill the prophecies that said we would be a light of the Gentiles. Salvation to the ends of the earth.

⁴⁸*Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.* An interesting verse. Interesting Scripture. As many as had been appointed or ordained to eternal life believed. There is a divine mystery incomprehensible to our finite minds. Truths that we cannot in our finite minds reconcile. The truth of the sovereignty of God. The election of God. As many as were appointed or ordained to eternal life. Who appointed or ordained them to eternal life? God. Yet, but though God is sovereign and has elected and chosen that we should be in Christ before the foundation of the earth. God has also ordained that we must exercise our capacity of choice that he has given to us. So the gospel is to whosoever will! Let him come! But the coming is up to you. You must come! You must exercise your power of choice in coming to Jesus Christ. So that mystery of the sovereignty of God and the human responsibility. The choice that God has given a man, remains a mystery, unsolved by all the theologians through their argumentation's throughout the centuries. Men lining up on one side. Men lining up on the other side when both sides are correct and that's why the argument keeps going. God is sovereign. As many as were appointed or ordained to eternal life believed. But their belief was a matter of choice as it always is! I choose to believe. I choose not to believe. As many as had been appointed believed.

⁴⁹*And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.* Now you are in Galatia. In the area of Galatia and God's Word is now spreading. It's a buzz that's going all around throughout Galatia.

⁵⁰*But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women* In the culture of that day, the Roman influence and the Grecian influence, women were held in very low esteem. The Greeks used to say that every man should have, you might say, a courtesan, a girl friend, for the parties, to accompany him at the parties. A prostitute for his sexual pleasure. And a wife to bear his legitimate children. You've got to have someone at home taking care of the kids. And that was their view of marriage and women. A very low view. And sexual immorality was rampant. It was a curse. So women were often drawn to the Jewish religion because it gave a much higher esteem to the position of a wife and a much greater esteem to marriage and to faithfulness to the marriage vows. So the honorable women or the women whose husbands were the judges and the magistrates, the city leaders and so forth, were often times drawn to the Jewish religion because it did place a much higher value upon being a wife, being a mother, and the faithfulness in marriage. It attracted them. And so they would come to the synagogue. They would proselytize into the Jewish faith. And so the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women, whose husbands were the prominent leader within the city *and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.* Get out of here! ⁵¹*But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium.* Not far away. In that same general area in Galatia. ⁵²*And the disciples* (that is, those who believed) *were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.* Those two are synonymous, great joy of the Holy Spirit. They were filled with it in that area.

So next week we go into the work at Iconium and next week we complete the first missionary journey. This first journey of course took a long time but we cover it in two chapters. And so we will see the remainder of Paul's ministry in Galatia and their return to Antioch in our study next week.

Father, we thank You for the forgiveness of sins that is preached to us through Jesus Christ. By His death He atoned. Lord, we thank You for justification. By the resurrection of Jesus from the dead

whereby we have been justified of all of the things we've ever done that were contrary to You. All of the rebellion and all of the laws that we violated. You've cleaned the record! And we thank You for justification by faith. And Lord, we thank You that You have ordained us to eternal life. And thus You've drawn us by Your Holy Spirit to Yourself. And you have opened our hearts to the truth and You have revealed Your truth to us. You gave us, Lord, the capacity to choose. To believe and to have eternal life. Lord, we just pray Your blessing now upon Your church and Your people as we enter into this special week of memories and we remember again the suffering of our Lord upon the cross and we remember again the glories of the resurrection. Bless, Lord, and make it a special week. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.