

The First Missionary Journey

Acts 13 verses 2-3, 9-11, 15-16, 44

- **What is your definition of a missionary?**

This was a missionary journey to the gentiles. While Peter had been given the task of taking the gospel of Jesus the Christ to the Jews, the baton was passed to Paul to go to the gentiles. It is ironic that he used the road system that was so efficiently created by the very regime that enabled the crucifixion of Jesus to take place. Roman roads went to all the corners of the known world and Paul, who once travelled across Israel to persecute Christian believers, and his evangelist companion Barnabas, used those roads to great effect.

God can use anyone and anything to fulfil His purposes.

And God set Paul and Barnabas aside for His special mission.

- **Has God ever used you to achieve something, no matter how small or insignificant you may think it was?**

In the first place they reached there were ordinary people who loved God fasting, praying and worshipping. Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue and when the people heard them speak about Jesus they believed. Then they fasted and laid hands on them before sending them out across the world to spread the Gospel. **This is a powerful way to support others who have been given a mission by God** and still happens today, but it does not guarantee a smooth passage only one where God is constantly called upon by those praying and fasting.

- **What do you think about the place of fasting in our prayer lives?**

Those people were holding fast to the Truth and had the assurance of eternal life **as will we when we hold fast to that Truth.**

Paul and Barnabas certainly had a coloured experience as they travelled with the message. They met a magician who tried to offer magic to

make people believe in Jesus. In verse 9 of chapter 3 we see the proclamation that **Christianity does not require magic or fraud to make people believe in the Gospel. It is by hearing the Word and putting trust in Him.**

- **What causes you to have faith in Jesus?**

The Holy Spirit confronted the magician with his sin and the Roman governor, hearing and seeing what the Holy Spirit was doing, was so impacted that he, a pagan government official, was brought to faith. **No one is too far off to come to Christ. If you are praying for someone to come to Christ don't ever give up.**

Paul and Barnabas went to Pathos along with John Mark, one of the original twelve disciples and the writer of Mark's gospel. Mark went as a helper, not, as might be expected, the leader of the expedition but he served in humility.

There were Jews and Gentiles in that place so at first the team went to the synagogue. They listened to the scripture readings then Paul sat down to speak and retold the history of the Jewish people right through to David and consequently Jesus the promised Messiah of the line of David. He taught everything including the sacrifice and Resurrection of Jesus and the forgiveness of sins through and by Him. **This is the freedom of guilt that is available to all of us who believe and trust in Jesus by our faith in Him. Today and every day.**

- **Have you come across anyone who professes to be a Christian but will not believe in the Resurrection, or perhaps will not believe they are forgiven?**
- **What do you think is a productive reaction to that state of disbelief?**

The people wanted to hear everything about Jesus, and some followed the team asking questions. Eventually the whole town came out to hear the Gospel. They were all thirsty for more of Him. **But it was the religious leaders and elite who were opposed.** Was it because they were jealous that these visitors came with a message that was awry to

the religion they imposed? They did not enjoy the attention and following that these people were given. They were in danger of losing power, influence and their jobs.

Now, because of this opposition, God turned the team outwards towards the Gentiles promising that they would be a light to all nations who would turn to God with joy. Some Gentiles and Jews alike were constantly filled with the joy that comes with the Holy Spirit. **A deep joy comes when we know His presence and that we will be with Him in eternity.**

- **What do you think was the driving force of this missionary journey?**