

Our **GUIDE**

for little ones

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Writer: Don Doezema Artist: Connie Meyer
Designers: Judi Doezema & Brenda Brands

IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Lesson 70

Jewish Rejection of the Gospel in Antioch

Acts 13:13-48

You know, do you not, that the apostle Saul had another name. As long as he was living among the *Jews*, he went by the name of *Saul*. If someone in Jerusalem would ask him, “What is your name?” he would answer, “I’m Saul.” That was his *Jewish* name. But Saul also had a *Gentile* name — a *Roman* name. It was *Paul*. On the island of Cyprus, therefore, at the very beginning of his first missionary journey, Saul began using his Gentile name. Why? Because Jesus had sent him on a mission to the Gentiles. Saul understands that that will be his *life’s work*. From now on, he is *Paul*.

After spending some time on the island of Cyprus, the missionaries decided it was time to move on. So the three men (that’s Paul and Barnabas and

their helper John Mark) again boarded a ship and headed for the mainland. Soon the ship brought them to the land of Pamphylia, and they came first to the town of Perga.

Imagine, if you can, how you would feel if *you* were a helper, at that time, to Paul and Barnabas. Think about that. The missionaries planned to move on to the larger cities. They would travel *on foot* — through land that was *mountainous* and *wild*. Travel will be *difficult* and *dangerous*. And in the cities are *pagans* — people who worship, not *Jehovah*, but



Note to Parents: These papers are intended for the younger Sunday School students — grade 3 and below. Vocabulary and concepts are such that children in this age group, even the 3rd graders, will profit most if the stories are read *to* them, not *by* them. Most lessons have two stories, for two sittings if that proves to be beneficial. Our hope is that parents will find these lessons to be useful tools in the teaching of Bible stories and Bible truths to their children in the “off” season.

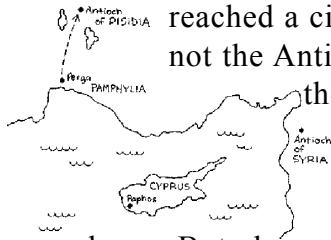
Jupiter. The *cities*, therefore, for two Christian missionaries, could be even more dangerous than the *mountains*.

Would you say, “I think maybe I should go back home”?

Well, that’s what John Mark thought. At one time it had looked good to him to be a helper to Paul and Barnabas. But not anymore. Now he sees all the *hard work*, and the *dangers*. And it’s just too much for him. So he said good-bye to the missionaries and got on the next boat that sailed toward Jerusalem.



So Paul and Barnabas, without a helper, headed away from Perga. They made it through the rugged country and reached a city called Antioch — not the Antioch of *Syria*, where they had once lived, but an Antioch in *Pisidia*.

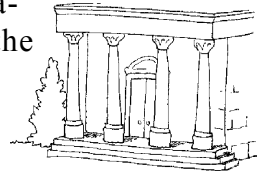


Lots of Gentiles here. Everywhere. But also some Jews. And the Jews must hear the gospel too. In fact, they must hear the gospel *first*. It was the *Jews*, after all, who had been given the promise of a Messiah, a Savior, a Deliverer. They must be told that God had not *failed His promise*.

Paul and Barnabas must have *wanted* to do that too. They must have been *excited* to be able to come to their own countrymen and say, “We have *good news*. The long-awaited Messiah has *come*. God has *fulfilled* His promise.”

In Antioch of Pisidia, therefore, Paul and Barnabas first went to worship

with the Jews in their synagogue. And the rulers of the synagogue asked the missionaries if they would like to speak to the people.



So Paul got up and preached. He reminded the Jews, first, that God had long ago given them the land of Canaan for their inheritance, and then gave them David for their king. But, best of all, God had promised them a Savior, the Messiah, who would come from David’s family. This was the one great hope of all the Jews. And now, Paul said, we are here to tell you that God has *remembered*, and *fulfilled*, that promise. He has *sent the Savior, Jesus!*

That was good news, of course. But now comes the *hard part*. This Jesus, the Savior, was *killed*. He was killed by the *leaders of the Jews in Jerusalem*.

Killed? Yes. Dead and buried? Yes. How, then, can this man possibly be the *Messiah*?

To the Jews in Antioch, this would seem ever so *wrong*. But it isn’t. It’s ever so *right*. In their killing of Jesus, Paul said, the Jews in Jerusalem had *fulfilled what was prophesied about the Messiah*. It was all according to *God’s plan*. And God did not leave Jesus in the grave, but raised Him, raised His Son, from the dead. All of it prophesied — *in their own Scriptures*.

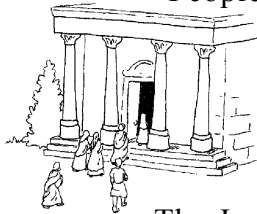
“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren,” Paul said, “that

through this man is preached unto you the *forgiveness of sin*.” Yes, that’s what this is about. *Forgiveness of sin*. Hope of *heaven* — through this Man, the Savior, Jesus. What could be more wonderful, more glorious, more exciting than *that*?

And the people *were* excited. Many of them crowded around Paul and Barnabas, and even followed after them when they left the synagogue. They must have had all kinds of questions for the missionaries. And when they went home they told their friends and neighbors what they had learned about *Jesus*.

Then came the next Sabbath. Paul and Barnabas returned to the synagogue.

People were already there. More came. Then more. And more. “Multitudes,” the Bible says! And, of course, practically all were *Gentiles*.



The Jews saw that. And many of them were not at all happy about it.

Why not? It was because of what they thought about *themselves* — and because of what they thought about the *Gentiles*. *We*, they thought, are children of Abraham. *We* keep the laws of Moses. We are *worthy*. All these Gentiles are nothing but *sinners*. And Paul is talking to them as if they are *equal to us*. If the Jesus whom Paul preaches thinks the Gentiles are as good as *us*, well, then, we don’t want anything to do with *Him*.

So they argued against Paul, and they said bad things about Jesus — hoping also to turn the Gentiles against the

missionaries and against the gospel that they brought.

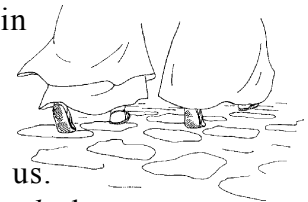
Now listen closely to what Paul and Barnabas answered. “It was *necessary*,” they said, “that the word of God should *first* have been spoken to *you*. But seeing ye *put it from you*, lo, we *turn to the Gentiles*.”

And then one last word for these Jews in Antioch. Are you *angry* — angry that we turn to *the Gentiles*? Well, then, Paul says, look one more time into your own Scriptures, to the prophet *Isaiah*, chapter 49:6. And Paul quotes it for them: “I have set thee to be a *light for the Gentiles*, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the *ends of the earth*.”

With that, Paul and Barnabas *left* them, never to set foot in that synagogue again.

But the *Gentiles* were *glad* — filled with *joy*, the Bible tells us.

Why? Because the *gospel*, the good news of *salvation of sinners*, was for *them*!



How Well Did You Listen?

1. What was Saul’s Gentile name?
2. What young man was helper to Paul and Barnabas?
3. To what city did Paul and Barnabas travel after leaving Perga? In this city, where did they go on the Sabbath day?
4. What were the Jews surprised about on the next Sabbath day?

Paul Stoned at Lystra

Acts 13:48 - 14:20

The Jews of the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia — at least most of them — shut out the light of the gospel. Oh yes, they kept on saying that they believed in *God*. But they had *rejected* God's *Son*. Their religion, therefore, had become *false*. There was only one *true* religion. And it was no longer the religion of the *Jews*. It was the religion of the *Christians* — the New Testament church of Jesus Christ.

Always the false religion hates the true religion. That was true in Antioch. The Jews of the synagogue hated the church of Christ. They saw the church *growing* — even beyond Antioch to the regions around the city. And it was all, they thought, the doing of *Paul and Barnabas*. Somehow they were going to have to *get rid of* those missionaries.

The Jews, therefore, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas. They told *lies* about them, making it look as if the missionaries were *troublemakers*. The rulers of Antioch *believed* them. And they drove Paul and Barnabas out of their city.

So the missionaries moved on to another place, this time to the city of Iconium. Here again, they go first ... to the synagogue.

The Jews must be the first to hear — to hear that God had *remem-*

bered and *fulfilled* His promise. And *many of them believed*. Yes, many Jews here *believe* the gospel. So do many Gentiles. They heard the missionaries *preach* — and they saw them do *miracles*. They saw sick people healed — in the name of *Jesus*. And they *believed*.

At the same time, there were also *unbelieving Jews* in Iconium.

Just like in Antioch, they worked hard to turn the Gentiles *against* the missionaries. And they were successful. Soon



there was a *mob* of people who wanted to catch the missionaries ... and stone them to death. But by this time Paul and Barnabas had many friends in Iconium. Those friends quickly warned the missionaries of the danger, and Paul and Barnabas had time to *escape*.

That seems sad, doesn't it? Always the missionaries are on the *run*. Always they must *flee for their lives*. But remember this, that there was planted in Antioch, and then in Iconium, a *church*. Not the church of *Paul* ... but the church of *Christ*. And Christ is *well able* to preserve, to keep, His church, even after the apostles are *gone*. And the apostles are quickly used ... to start *another church*. This is *good*.

The next city was Lystra. Here there is no synagogue. So Paul and Barnabas must, for the first time, begin by preaching to *heathens*. And they didn't hesitate to do that. Soon the missionaries are preaching to a group of these idol-worshipping people, telling



them about the one true God. Paul sees in his audience a man who is lame. All his life, this man had been a cripple, unable to walk. Paul said to him,

“Stand upright on thy feet.” And he did it. He jumped up and started walking, for the first time in his life.

Well, what would these heathen people think of *that*? They got really excited. They started talking fast, in their own language, which Paul and Barnabas didn’t understand. “The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men,” they say. Barnabas, they think, must be *Jupiter*, the king of the gods. And Paul, who did most of the talking, must be *Mercury*, who is the messenger-god.

And what did these people decide to do? They decided to offer a *sacrifice* to Barnabas and Paul. Off they go, to get what they need for sacrificing. Soon they are back. A whole crowd of

people is gathered at the gate of the city. The priest of Jupiter is there, ready to kill oxen for sacrifice to Barnabas and Paul —

Jupiter and Mercury.

You can imagine, can’t you, that when Paul and Barnabas understood what was going on, they were *horrified*. They ran among the people, trying as hard as they could to *stop* them. “Sirs,” they said, “why *do* ye these things? We are *men*, just like you. And we have come to

tell you to turn away from your vain gods, to the *living God*, the God who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.”

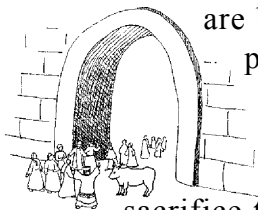
Just then, who should arrive in Lystra but some *Jews*, some *unbelieving Jews* — Jews from *Antioch* and *Iconium*. They had tracked the missionaries down. The Jews from Antioch had to walk about *65 miles* to find them in Lystra! So much do they hate Christianity.

When the Jews saw what the apostles were doing, they started mixing in with the people of Lystra. They said, “Don’t you see what Paul is doing? He’s attacking your gods. Don’t let him get away with that!”

And in no time at all, the men of Lystra change their minds. They will not *sacrifice* to Paul. They will *stone* him. And right then and there, they *did* that! They stoned him. Supposing then that he was *dead*, they dragged his body outside of the city and left it there.

Already, however, Paul and Barnabas had won some *followers*, some *disciples*, in Lystra. These believers now stood around his body — grieving, and probably making plans to give him a decent burial. And then, lo and behold, Paul got up. He was battered and bruised, but, kept alive by a miracle, he was able to walk back into the city with those new friends.

What do you think, will Paul say, “I’ve had enough. I’m going back to



Jerusalem”? No, only one thing mattered to Paul, and that was to obey his Lord, who had sent him to preach to the Gentiles. Early the next morning, therefore, Paul and Barnabas left Lystra, to make their way to the next city.

How Well Did You Listen?

1. Where did Paul and Barnabas go, after they left Antioch?
2. Who made trouble for the missionaries in Iconium?
3. What miracle did Paul do in Lystra?
4. What did the people of Lystra do with Paul after they had stoned him?
5. What did Paul do the next day?

How Well Do You Understand?

1. Why did Saul start using his Gentile name on the island of Cyprus?
2. Why did John Mark decide to go back to Jerusalem?
3. Paul told the Jews in Antioch about Jesus. What great promise to the Jews did God fulfill in Jesus?
4. Why were the Jews unhappy to see so many Gentiles at the synagogue on the next Sabbath day?
5. Why did Paul and Barnabas leave Antioch so soon?

Memory Verse

Acts 13:46b “Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”

Map Work

Follow the numbered dots on the map to draw the path of Paul’s journey in the story.

Color the map.

