

"The First Missionary Journey Continues"

Part 14

Acts 13:13-14:28

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we stopped on Acts 14:19-20.

Notice Acts 14:19-20

Paul was stoned, dragged out of the city, and believed to be dead. But God with His miraculous power raised Paul up, he walked into the city and the next day continued his journey. One of the lessons for us here is that our lives are in the hands of God and no one can take our lives away until God says our time on this earth is finished.

Psalm 31:15, 23-24

¹⁵ **My times are in thy hand:** deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

²³ O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for **the LORD preserveth the faithful**, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

²⁴ Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

Job 14:1-2, 5

Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

² *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

⁵ **Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass:**

➤ **The Return**

Notice Acts 14:21-22

These verses show the care which Paul had for the church. Instead of going back home on a safe pathway they returned through the cities where they had faced persecution. The word "confirming" in verse 22 means that they strengthened the disciples and made every effort to establish them in the faith. Paul knew how the enemy worked and he knew that

it would not be long until wolves in sheep's clothing would come in and do all they could to contaminate the Truth of God's Word.

Application:

I need to stop here and point out that it would be these same churches that would be led astray later by the Judaizers.

Galatians 3:1-3

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

² *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

³ *Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*

These were believers who were taught by Paul, the very man who received the Truth directly from the Lord. You would think that these people would be rock solid in what they believed. I will say that they were solid but in all of this we see clearly how deceptive the enemy can be. This really magnifies the words of Peter.

2 Peter 2:1-3

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

² *And many shall follow their pernicious [destructive] ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. [the way of Truth will be distorted]*

³ *And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*

Notice how Paul addressed the elders at Ephesus.

Acts 20:29-31

²⁹ *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*

³⁰ *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

³¹ *Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*

Notice what John wrote to his readers.

1 John 2:18-20

¹⁸ *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*

¹⁹ *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*

²⁰ *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

The spirit of the antichrist was at work in the first century and we can be sure he is working overtime today. There are many items on his agenda and one that is at the top is to bring false doctrine into the church and get believers to accept it. John tells us that we have an "unction" from the Holy One. What does this mean? This refers to an "anointing of discernment." In other words, God has given to each of His children the ability to be able to discern Truth. We can be sure that the more we learn the greater the discernment becomes.

Notice Acts 14:21-22 again.

They went back to these cities to help the believers to get better established in the faith by TEACHING them. There can never be too much teaching in the church. The more we know the better we are equipped for the battle which we are in. Let us not forget that these people were taught by an Apostle and they still bought into false teaching. Let us always seek to be ever growing and watching because we can be sure that there is coming a time when the enemy will try to distort the Truth here as well.

Notice Acts 14:22 again.

They also informed the believers that they would experience MUCH tribulation before entering into the Kingdom of God. This is a statement of fact for all believers. They are not saying that in order to enter into the Kingdom you must go through tribulation., It simply means that because we are believers and followers of Jesus Christ that we will go

through tribulation before we get to the Kingdom. There will be times of suffering and affliction.

John 15:20-21

²⁰ Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

²¹ But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

John 16:33

³³ These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

1 Thessalonians 3:3-4

³ That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

⁴ For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

It is very important to notice that the Kingdom is spoken of as being in the future. That completely eliminates the "Kingdom now" teaching. It is also important to know that this does not mean that the church will go through the Tribulation. The verse says "tribulation" not "The Tribulation."

1 Thessalonians 5:6-9

⁶ Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

⁷ For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

⁸ But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

⁹ For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

Notice the Words of our Lord to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia.

Revelation 3:10

¹⁰ *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

Notice Acts 14:23

Paul and Barnabas had to ordain elders in the churches because the churches needed leadership. Keep in mind that as these churches were started all they had was the Old Testament to teach and to study. They had none of the church epistles. They had very little Truth concerning the church. All they had was what Paul and Barnabas had taught them. But they did have the Gospel and with the Gospel they could certainly change their communities one life at a time and they had the Holy Spirit living within them. The importance of the elders being selected is seen in the fasting and the prayer. They did not just put men in the position to fill it but they put men in the positions who God led them to choose. I see in all of this the faith of Paul and Barnabas. They were leaving these new churches in the hands of new believers. Most likely the elders were Jews who would have been familiar with the Old Testament but they were still new to the faith. But Paul and Barnabas trusted the Lord to guide these men in leading the church.

Notice the words of Bruce on these elders.

"It has more than once been pointed out that more recent missionary policy would have thought it dangerously idealistic to recognize converts of only a few weeks' standing as leaders in their churches; perhaps Paul and Barnabas were more conscious of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the believing communities."

I really appreciate the words of Boice on what took place here in these churches.

"The apostles had left behind only a tiny core of believers, and these had hardly been taught anything, since the apostles had been there at best for only a few weeks. How could this little group survive? It survived because the work was actually being done by God. The church was His church."

Matthew 16:18

¹⁸ *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Notice Acts 14:24-28

They made their way back to Antioch where they had started and there was much to share. Keep in mind from the time they left there was no contact. So there was much to say concerning the power of God at work in the lives of others who were saved. They would have shared concerning the people they met, the stoning of Paul, the power of God to raise him up, the healing of the crippled man, and all the conversions. What an exciting meeting this must have been when they arrived back at Antioch. All glory was given to the Lord.

Conclusion:

Think of what it will be like when we get to be with our Lord one day! We can sit down in the Kingdom with the Old Testament saints and the Tribulation saints and the church saints and hear testimony after testimony of how they could see the power of God at work in their day. All glory will be given to our Mighty God.