



Portion:

Title:

SCRIPTURES

- Acts 13-14
- II Corinthians 12:7-10

CHRISTIAN IDOLATRY

- The Mission
- The Temptation

Maybe it's happened to you before, both applause and persecution, celebration and suffering. Can you imagine the successive occurrence of these polar opposites? One moment you are being extolled, the next you are being stoned. And quite frankly, it is easy to understand that perseverance in the midst of persecution is an admirable quality. But, what may be even more difficult, and therefore more commendable, is when you don't become a victim of your own fame. When the whole world wants to applaud you, how do you respond? When praise, acclamation, admiration, adulation, compliments, and tribute are forthcoming, do you accept the worship, draw attention to yourself, soak it up, or deflect it away?

Maybe you are the one offering worship. Do you turn leaders into idols? Do you bow in the wrong direction, worshipping the worship? Are you applauding the worship, the one who worships,

or the One being worshiped? Are you involved in Christian idolatry or the Christian faith. Is Y'shua the Lord of your life or one of the many objects of your idolatry, your religion? That's a scary thought. Are you addicted to the truth or are you addicted to the experience.

The journey never turns out the way you've planned. You can certainly be confident that you are called and you can certainly be sure of your destination, but the road you will travel has many questions strewn along the path, many roadblocks, a myriad of twists and turns. There will be victories and some losses along the way; there will be persecution and there will be many things to tempt you, maybe none worse than the temptation to become full of yourself, imagining, "I'm all that!" Or possibly you tempt another by fostering that idea about him, "He's all that!" Don't do either, but rather, bow your knees only to the Father of your Lord Y'shua the Messiah, from whom the whole family of mankind receives breath. And, if you are ever tempted to boast or to feed someone's boasting, do this instead; boast in the Lord. For it is not someone who commends himself that is approved by God, but the one whom the Lord commends. That says it all!

PROPHETIC SEED:

"Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have

come down to us in the likeness of men!” And **Barnabas** they called **Zeus**, and **Paul, Hermes**, because he was the chief speaker. **Then the priest of Zeus**, whose temple was **in front of their city**, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, **intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.”** Acts 14:11-13 NKJV

PROPHETIC FRUIT:

“But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out and saying, **“Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you**, and preach to you that **you should turn from these useless things to the living God**, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” **And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.”** Acts 14:14-18 NKJV

Let's Set the Scene: Portion in a blurb

Introduction

Last week in [Prepared Beforehand](#) the Church took its first turn towards the Gentiles. Sure we know that Saul, who had his great about-face last week, will eventually, as Paul, focus a large portion of his ministry towards the nations, but Peter was first to jump in the water. This was not an easy task, and impetuous Peter would not go quietly. As usual with him, it took a supernatural experience to move him in the right direction.

We began first with the Gentile side of the equation. Cornelius was a God fearing Roman Centurion in Caesarea. This means, although not a complete convert to Judaism, he was worshiping and obeying the one true God, he and his household. An angel came to him and told him to send for Peter who was in nearby Joppa. "Peter has something to tell you."

Meanwhile, Peter was simultaneously having his famous vision with the unclean animals on a blanket. (Just like we saw with Saul and Ananias in Acts 9, God inspired both men about one another simultaneously.) Peter was told three times to kill and eat and three times he rejected the idea of consuming unclean animals. Why three times? Because Peter can be a bit thickheaded and it took three times for him to recognize that the vision is not at all about

food. "Peter, don't call anything unclean that I call clean," God said. And right as he came out of his trance, three messengers from Cornelius arrived with the invitation to his house in Caesarea. It was perfect timing because had they arrived before Peter's vision, he would have rejected the invitation, not believing he should visit an "unclean household." Peter thought, "If God called Cornelius to send for me, then I guess I should go and not call anything unclean that He calls clean."

Here's the thing; Peter was clear that the vision was not about food, so why do Christians worldwide and throughout Church history insist on using Peter's vision as proof God changed His mind on biblical dietary laws? In short: it wasn't, and He didn't, so you shouldn't. And when Peter finally met with Cornelius, he made it definitive. "I'm here because God prepared to send me, and it's clear that simultaneously He had you send for me. And it's also clear that my tradition would have prevented me from coming, had I not had the vision and revelation that I should never call a man common or unclean whom God has made clean, no matter what their religious background or national heritage." So, just in case you still thought the vision was about food, the matter has now been settled, as Peter interpreted the vision for us. (In other words, he DID NOT leave it for you to interpret)... "I should not call ANYTHING unclean that God calls clean means I should never call

a MAN common or unclean whom God has made clean! The vision was given to remove my prejudice against Gentiles.” “Let me also elaborate for a moment about our tradition,” Peter said. “The tradition that we should not visit or fellowship with Gentiles, is just that, a manmade tradition. The Torah teaches the exact opposite. We were called to be a light to the Gentiles and it took this wild vision to break through my extreme prejudice.” I pray whatever prejudice you have carried all these years, about the interpretation of these passages, is now also gone!

Cornelius then told Peter that God said to him that Peter had something important to share, and Peter did... “So, why have I come to this household? It’s simple. God is not prejudice (even though we have been); the Messiah of Israel is for every person of any nation, as long as they repent and believe. And that Messiah is Y’shua of Nazareth. Through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive the remission of sins.” Well, that is all the entire household of Cornelius had to hear. They all believed, his family and friends; they encountered the Holy Spirit and were baptized in the name of Y’shua.

Then Peter returned to Jerusalem to explain to his Jewish brothers what happened in Caesarea and that Y’shua is for everyone, not just Israel. They had a religious response at first, but the testimony was so compelling that they quickly came into

agreement and rejoiced. "God is not prejudiced; we should not call any man unclean that God calls clean."

Then our attention turned to Saul for a bit. Barnabas, who already took a chance on Saul when he visited Jerusalem for the first time after his conversion, was ready to take another chance. He went to Tarsus, Saul's hometown, to fetch Saul to bring him to Antioch for ministry. Saul had moved back to Tarsus after he was chased from Jerusalem shortly after the first time he visited post-conversion. Barnabas brought him to Antioch where they worked in ministry together for a whole year. They even successfully managed some of the resources collected to support those in Judea.

Finally our attention turned to Herod Agrippa. He became the first official Roman enemy of the Church. He had James, the brother of John killed and he arrested Peter during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and put him in a Roman prison. He intended to put Peter on trial after the Passover holiday, and we expected the outcome would be similar to James'. However, Peter was supernaturally freed from his chains and released from prison by an angel and his testimony encouraged the many who were fervently praying for him. It does not go so well for the prison guards who Herod had executed for insubordination. In addition, it ended very badly for Herod as well. He accepted worship as if he was a God and Yahweh had him eaten to death by worms.

This week Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch from Jerusalem. It was prophesied that they be in ministry together and sent out on a mission. So, they head out west to the coast and they sail to Cyprus to minister in Salamis on the eastern shore and then they head over to Paphos on the western shore. In Paphos, they encounter a Jewish sorcerer who has become an advisor to the local proconsul. He does whatever he can to run interference between the missionaries and the proconsul, so he will not get converted. However, Paul speaks judgment over the sorcerer, pronouncing he would become blind. It happens just as he declared and that is all the proconsul had to see; he believed in that moment!

Paul and his group leave Paphos, and sail north to Perga in Pamphylia (the southern coast of modern-day Turkey). From Perga they moved inland, further north to Antioch in Pisidia (in Galatia, still modern-day Turkey). Paul teaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath and he gives a little turbocharged history lesson starting with Israel in Egypt. He mentions the judges, kings Saul and David, and then how John the Baptist pointed to the Christ. He speaks of how many Jews missed Him and then had him executed and how Christ raised from the grave to fulfill God's promises. You see, David died and stayed dead, but Y'shua got right up out of the grave and never rotted in the earth. He goes on to teach that Y'shua came with the message of forgiveness, and not just what it means, but how it

actually works. Paul warns them that they don't want to be in the group that misses Him.

The next week the whole city (Antioch in Pisidia) comes out to hear him and the controversy really heats up; the Gentiles are overjoyed that they have the same path to salvation, but the jealous Jews attempt to deny, refute, and counter every word Paul spoke, to the point of blasphemy. Paul and Barnabas drop the hammer on these obstinate Jews, but they still stir up trouble against those who believe. Persecution is the name of the game and they chase Paul and Barnabas from the region. Then, exactly the way Y'shua instructed His disciples to do, they shake the dust off their feet and move on.

In the next city, Iconium, they go right back to the synagogue. The same thing happens; some believe and the ones who don't become aggressive—this time they want to kill Barnabas and Paul. Once they realize their intention, they flee the city for their next stop on their mission.

Lystra is the next destination. This is where Paul encounters a crippled man from birth and heals him. The pagans witness the miracle and begin to worship Barnabas, who they call Zeus (the supreme god), and Paul who they see as Hermes (because in Greek mythology Hermes, the son of Zeus, was the messenger of the gods). Barnabas and Paul run into the crowd to stop the madness:

“We are literally here to preach against this very thing. We want you to reject useless idols and accept the true and living God. He is the creator of all things and your gods are fake and can do nothing.”

Nevertheless, it is impossible to control them. Pagans do what pagans do; they will sacrifice to anything they think is a god!

Then Jews from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium showed up in Lystra to stir up trouble. They finally get what they want as they instigate the people to stone Paul until they believe he is dead. They drag him outside the city and dump him off. But Paul got up, dusted himself off and went back into the city overnight. The next day he leaves Lystra with Barnabas and heads to Derbe.

He preaches the gospel in Derbe and makes many more disciples. Then, he goes back through each city in which he was recently persecuted, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia. His experience allows him to teach one of the most important lessons for every believer; *“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”* Finally, Paul sets up a leadership structure in each local church and then they head back to Antioch (in Syria) to report all that happened among the Gentiles.

Acts 13

Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch from Jerusalem (Acts 13:1-3)

1. In the church in Antioch (in Syria) a few prophets received a word from the Holy Spirit about Barnabas and Saul.
 - (a) Set them apart for a specific ministry; it's time to send them on a mission.
 - (b) The prophets fasted, prayed, laid hands on them, and then sent them!

Preaching in Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12)

2. Barnabas and Saul head out from Antioch by mandate of the Holy Spirit.
 - (a) They went west to the coastal town of Seleucia so they could sail west to Cyprus.
 - (b) They arrived in Salamis (a city on the eastern shore of Cyprus) and they preached in the synagogues. (John Mark is with them to assist.)
 - (c) Then they head west to the other end of the island to the city of Paphos on the western shore.
3. That is where they encounter a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet (Bar-Jesus, AKA Elymas).
 - (a) This sorcerer seems to be an advisor to the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. He's a sharp guy but somehow values this sorcerer's ideas.

- (b) Sergius Paulus wants to hear what Barnabas and Saul have to say, but the sorcerer comes against them with the intention to keep the proconsul from believing. (Saul is referred to as Paul for the first time.)
4. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to put the sorcerer in his place!
 - (a) You are a deceptive fraud!
 - (b) You are the offspring of Satan!
 - (c) You are the enemy of God's virtue!
 - (d) You distort, corrupt and twist the ways of God!
 5. Then he pronounces God's judgment.
 - (a) You will grope in the darkness as a blind man.
 - (b) Instantly he lost his sight and had to be led by the hand.
 - (c) That is all the proconsul had to see!
 - (d) He believed in that moment!

The Ministry Continues in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:13-41)

A Turbocharged History Lesson (Acts 13:13-25)

6. Paul and his group leave Paphos, and sail north to Perga in Pamphylia (the southern coast of modern-day Turkey).
 - (a) John (John Mark) leaves the group and heads back to Jerusalem.
 - (b) From Perga they moved inland, further north to Antioch in Pisidia (in Galatia, still modern-day Turkey).
 - (c) Again Paul heads right to the synagogue on the Sabbath.

(d) After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue wanted to know if he had any specific message for them.

7. Paul stands and gives them a history lesson:

(a) Notice he addresses both Jews and God-fearers (Men like Cornelius who love Yahweh and seek to obey His laws, but have not officially converted to Judaism.)

(b) He begins with Israel in Egypt and the exodus.

(c) He moves on to the forty years in the wilderness.

(d) Then he mentions how they conquered the promised land.

(e) He speaks of the period of judges that lasted around four hundred and fifty years, until the time Samuel when the people asked for a king.

(f) That is how they got Saul for forty years, but God removed him, and raised up David, a man after My own heart.

(g) From David's seed came the promised Messiah—Paul says. That is Y'shua, the one who John the Baptist preached about, while he was doing baptisms of repentance.

(h) As John's ministry was coming to an end, he pointed to the one who was coming after him, whose feet he was not even worthy to wash!

Paul brings history into that present day... (Acts 13:26-37)

8. To the decedents of Abraham and God-fearers, the true message of salvation had arrived.
 - (a) The Jewish people and their religious leaders did not recognize Him.
 - (b) They basically ignored the prophecies of His coming and essentially fulfilled the prophecies that said some would ignore Him!
 - (c) They accused Him of crimes and was He found innocent of all charges, but they used Pilate (Rome) to execute Him anyway.
 - (d) It was all a completion of prophecy when they took him off the cross, buried Him in a tomb, and the Father raised Him from the grave.
 - (e) And there are plenty of witnesses who can testify to the veracity of these facts.
 - (f) We have traveled around preaching the good news that God has fulfilled the promises He made to our ancestors.
9. Three Scriptures come to mind when I think of what has happened:
 - (a) *"You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."* (Psalms 2:7)
 - (b) And to fulfill His promise to David, he would raise that Son from the dead instead of letting Him decay in the ground... *"I will give you the sure mercies of David."* (Isaiah 55:3)

- (c) Which can be explained by yet another Psalm: *“You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.”* (Psalms 16:10)
- (d) You see, David died and stayed dead, but Y’shua got right up out of the grave and never rotted in the earth.

Here’s the bottom line about Y’shua... (Acts 13:38-41)

10. Y’shua came with the message of forgiveness, and not just what it means, but how it actually works.

- (a) It is through Him that we are cleansed from our sins, something the law of Moses was not able to do, nor was it ever meant to do.

11. So, you should all be worried that you might be the ones of whom Habakkuk 1:5 was prophesying when he said...

- (a) Take a look at all those who feel contempt or a deep repugnance for Y’shua.
- (b) You’d be amazed by who they are, those who will reject Him and who will ultimately be destroyed because of it.
- (c) This is how you can recognize them: miracles will happen all around them; and they will be well aware of them because those who believe will make it known to them openly, but they will still reject Him!

Blessing and Conflict in Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:42-52)

12. Obviously the ones who do not believe will be offended by this message.

- (a) Notice here the Jews leave the synagogue, but the Gentiles asked them to come back the next week, on the Sabbath, to preach again.
- (b) Gentiles are coming to the light of the one true God right in their midst.
- (c) When the service was over and people were dispersing, many Jews and proselytes (those Gentiles evangelized by Judaism), followed after Paul and Barnabas, who encouraged them to walk in God' grace.
- (d) The next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear them preach the word of God.
- (e) But the Jews of whom Habakkuk 1:5 was speaking... *“Those who feel contempt or a deep repugnance for Y’shua,”* were so jealous of all the attention Paul and Barnabas were getting that they attempted to deny, refute, and counter every word Paul spoke, to the point of blasphemy.

13. Paul and Barnabas dropped the hammer on obstinate Jews.

- (a) The order of things was necessary; we had to bring the message to Israel first and wait for them to reject the offer of eternal life, so we could then go to the nations.
- (b) It’s prophetic that we would be a light to the Gentiles. Just read Isaiah 42:6; 49:6 and 60:1-5. The call is to bring this message to the ends of the earth and this is where it begins!

- (c) Of course these God-fearing Gentiles are happy to be included and all those destined to eternal life believed. This message spread like wildfire throughout the whole region.
- (d) But, the unbelieving Jews do what we've seen many times before; they stir up trouble against those who believe. Persecution is the name of the game and they chased Paul and Barnabas from the region.
- (e) Then, exactly the way Y'shua instructed His disciples to do, they shook the dust off their feet and moved on to Iconium.
- (f) Joy among believers, from the Holy Spirit, filled the atmosphere.

Acts 14

At Iconium: wash, rinse, repeat (Acts 14:1-7)

14. In the next city they went right back to the synagogue [on the Sabbath].

- (a) Many Jews and Greeks believed [notice again that non-Jews are in the synagogue].
- (b) Once more, the unbelieving Jews stir up trouble.
- (c) This time they try to pervert what the Gentiles think; they want to turn them against Barnabas and Paul.
- (d) Barnabas and Paul remained in Iconium for a while peaching, witnessing, and doing miracles.

- (e) This caused a great divide in the city between believers and unbelievers.
- (f) Both the Jewish and Gentile unbelievers became aggressive and wanted to stone Barnabas and Paul.
- (g) Once they realized it, they fled the city for their next stop on their mission.

Idolatry in Lystra (Acts 14:8-18)

15. In Lystra Paul encountered a crippled man (from birth).

- (a) The man heard Paul's message and Paul could see he was filled with faith, so he told him loudly to "Stand!"
- (b) The man was healed instantly and he leapt with joy.
- (c) The pagans watching began to worship them like they were gods. Barnabas they saw as Zeus (the supreme god), and Paul as Hermes (because in Greek mythology Hermes, the son of Zeus, was the messenger of the gods).
- (d) The priest of Zeus, whose temple was in a prominent place in Lystra, brought animals to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, while all the people took place in the ceremony.
- (e) Barnabas and Paul ran into the crowd and tried to stop them by insisting openly that they were just regular men, not gods!
- (f) They yelled, "We are literally here to preach against this very thing. We want you to reject useless idols and accept the true

and living God. He is the creator of all things and your gods are fake and can do nothing.”

- (g) They continued, “In the past Yahweh just let pagans do their own thing, but now it’s time for the truth to go to the nations. The testimony of who He is was there all along. You could see it in nature: the rain, the seasons, the harvest, the earth’s provision.”
- (h) It did not matter to many of these pagans. Pagans do what pagans do; they sacrifice to anything they think is a god!

Stoning and Escape to Derbe (Acts 14:19-20)

16. Then Jews from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium showed up in Lystra.

- (a) They finally get what they wanted. They convince the people to stone Paul.
- (b) They literally believed that they had stoned him to death, so they hauled him outside the city and left him for dead.
- (c) However, when all the would-be murderers had dispersed, the disciples surrounded his seemingly lifeless body and he got right up and went back into Lystra.
- (d) The next day he left Lystra with Barnabas and headed to Derbe.

Strengthening the Converts (Acts 14:21-28)

17. After being being beaten to an inch of his life...

- (a) Paul gets up, goes into the next city, preaches the gospel and makes many more disciples.
- (b) Then he goes back through each city in which he was persecuted, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia.
- (c) He connects with and edifies those who just came to the faith on his recent visit.
- (d) He brings them strong encouragement to walk powerfully in their new faith.
- (e) He teaches them one of the most important lessons every new Christian should know. Discipleship has a cost; being like Y'shua has a price. In other words, *"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."*

18. Paul set's up a leadership structure in each local church...

- (a) He fasts and prays with the new leaders and then he commissions them with the Lord's blessing.
- (b) Then they headed south back through Pisidia and into Pamphylia all the way to Perga on the southern coast and then west to Attalia.
- (c) They left by boat from there and headed back to Antioch in Syria, where they began this mission.
- (d) They reported all that happened among the Gentiles and were commended for a job well done.
- (e) They remained in Antioch for quite some time.

THE MISSION

1. Organized Chaos

A. Excellent Ministry Mixed Results

(1) Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch from Jerusalem
(Acts 13:1-3)

(a) Barnabas and Saul are set-apart and anointed.

1. “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. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, **the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”** Then, having **fasted** and **prayed**, and **laid hands** on them, they **sent** them away.” Acts 13:1-3 NKJV

- a) **Prophecy:** In the church in Antioch (in Syria) a few prophets received a word from the Holy Spirit about Barnabas and Saul.
- b) **Set-Apart:** They are to be separated from the others for a specific ministry. It’s time to send them on a mission.
- c) **Anointed:** The prophets fasted, prayed, laid hands on them, and sent them!

(2) Preaching in Cyprus (**Acts 13:4-12**)

(a) Resistance is Futile!

1. “So, **being sent out by the Holy Spirit**, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they **preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews**. They also had John as their assistant. Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they **found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus**, 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. But **Elymas** the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) **withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.** {9} **Then Saul, who also is called Paul**, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 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? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.**” And immediately a **dark mist fell on him**, and he went around seeking

someone to lead him by the hand. **Then the proconsul believed**, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.”

Acts 13:4-12 NKJV

- a) Barnabas and Saul headed out from Antioch (in Syria) by mandate of the Holy Spirit.
- b) They went west to the costal town of Seleucia so they could sail west to Cyprus.
- c) They arrived in Salamis (a city on the eastern shore of Cyprus) and they preached in the synagogues.
 - 1) Notice: Paul goes to minister in the synagogues first. (John Mark is with them to assist)
 - 2) It was a hallmark of his ministry: “**He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath**, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.” Acts 18:4 NKJV
- d) Then they head west to the other end of the Island to the city of Paphos on the western shore.
- e) That is where they encounter a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet (Bar-Jesus, AKA Elymas).
- f) This sorcerer seems to be an advisor to the *proconsul, Sergius Paulus. He’s a sharp guy but somehow values this sorcerer’s ideas.

- 1) *The Roman Empire was divided in provinces that were either senatorial or imperial.
 - 2) The former were presided over by proconsuls; the latter were administered by legates of the emperor, sometimes called propraetors (an officer who, after having served as praetor in Rome, was sent to govern a province with praetorial authority).
- g) Sergius Paulus wants to hear what Barnabas and Saul have to say, but the sorcerer comes against them with the intention to keep the proconsul from believing.
- h) ***Then in Acts 13:9** we see Saul referred to as Paul for the first time.
- 1) Saul (means “prayed for”)
 - 2) Paul (means “small, humble”)
- i) The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to put the sorcerer in his place!
- 1) You are a deceptive fraud!
 - 2) You are the offspring of Satan!
 - 3) You are the enemy of God’s virtue!
 - 4) You distort, corrupt and twist the ways of God!
- j) Then he pronounces God’s judgment!

- 1) You will grope in the darkness as blind man.
- 2) Instantly he lost his sight and had to be led around by the hand.
- k) That is all the proconsul had to see! He believed in that moment!

(3) The Ministry Continues in Antioch in Pisidia (**Acts 13:13-41**)

(a) A Turbocharged History Lesson (**Acts 13:13-25**)

1. “Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. But when they departed from Perga, they came to **Antioch in Pisidia**, and **went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day** and sat down. And **after the reading of the Law and 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.**” Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, “**Men of Israel, and you who fear God**, listen: 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. Now for a time of about forty years He put up

with their ways in the wilderness. And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. **“After that** He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 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. And 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.’** From this man’s seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus—after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his course, he said, **‘Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.’**” Acts 13:13-25 NKJV

- a) Paul and his group leave Paphos, and sail north to Perga in Pamphylia (the southern coast of modern-day Turkey).

- b) John (John Mark) leaves the group and heads back to Jerusalem.
- c) From Perga they moved inland, further north to Antioch in Pisidia (in Galatia, still modern-day Turkey).
- d) Again Paul heads right to the synagogue on the Sabbath.
- e) After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue wanted to know if they had any specific message for them.
- f) Paul stands and gives them a history lesson:
- g) Notice he address both Jews and God-fearers (Men like Cornelius who love Yahweh and seek to obey His laws, but have not officially converted to Judaism.)
 - 1) He begins with Israel in Egypt and the exodus.
 - 2) He moves on to the forty years in the wilderness.
 - 3) Then he recounts how they conquered the promised land.
 - 4) He reviews the period of judges that lasted about four hundred and fifty years, until the time Samuel when the people asked for a king.

- 5) That is how they got king Saul for forty years, but God removed him, and raised up David, a man after His own heart.
- 6) From David's seed came the promised Messiah —Paul says.
- 7) The Messiah is Y'shua, the one who John the Baptist preached about while he was doing baptisms of repentance.
- 8) And, as John's ministry was coming to an end, he is the one who pointed to the One who was coming after him, whose feet he was not even worthy to wash!

(b) Paul brings history into that present day (**Acts 13:26-37**)

1. ""Men 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. For 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**. And though they **found no cause for death** in Him, they **asked Pilate** that He should be put to death. Now when **they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him**, they **took Him down**

from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His **witnesses** to the people. **And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us** their children, **in that He has raised up Jesus.** As it is also written in the **second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’** And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: **‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’** Therefore He also **says in another Psalm: ‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’** “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; **but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.”** Acts 13:26-37 NKJV

a) To the decedents of Abraham and God-fearers, the true message of salvation had arrived.

1) You see again he addresses *“those among you who fear God.”*

2) These non-Jewish believers in Yahweh were a prevalent bunch who were at various stages of

“conversion.” They had access to certain places in the temple. *“Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with **the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers [God-fearers]**, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.”* Acts 17:17 NKJV

- 3) Later we will see, throughout Paul’s years in ministry and countless false accusations about him, the one thing he did do is that he brought Gentiles into the temple. Why would that be a problem (according to tradition)?
- 4) *“Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore **he also brought Greeks into the temple** and has defiled this holy place.”* (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)” Acts 21:28-29 NKJV
- 5) Who were they? They were Gentiles who were NOT in any stage of conversion; OTHER THAN they had an encounter with Christ! THAT WAS A GREAT OFFENSE TO THE RELIGIOUS ELITE!

- b) The Jewish people and their religious leaders did not recognize Y'shua. They basically ignored the prophecies of His coming and essentially fulfilled the prophecies that said some would ignore Him!
- c) They accused Him of crimes and He was found innocent of all charges but they used Pilate (Rome) to execute Him anyway.
- d) It was all a completion of prophecy when they took him off the cross, buried Him in a tomb, and the Father raised Him from the grave.
- e) And there are plenty of witnesses who can testify to the veracity of these facts.
- f) We traveled around preaching the good news that God has fulfilled the promises He made to our ancestors.
- g) Three Scriptures come to mind when I think of what has happened, Paul says:
 - 1) *"You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."* (Psalms 2:7)
 - 2) And to fulfill His promises to David, he would raise that Son from the dead instead of letting him decay in the ground... *"I will give you the sure mercies of David."* (Isaiah 55:3)

3) Which can be explained by yet another Psalm:
“You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.” (Psalms 16:10)

h) You see, David died and stayed dead, but Y’shua got right up out of the grave and never rotted in the earth.

(c) Here’s the bottom line about Y’shua... **(Acts 13:38-41)**

1. “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that **through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.** Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets **come upon you: ‘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.’ ”” Acts 13:38-41 NKJV

a) He came with the message of forgiveness, and not just what it means, but how it actually works.

b) It is through Him that we are cleansed from our sins, something the law of Moses was not able to do, nor was it ever meant to do.

- c) So, you should all be worried that you might be the ones of whom Habakkuk was prophesying [in Habakkuk 1:5] when he said...
 - 1) Take a look at all those who feel contempt or a deep repugnance for Y'shua.
 - 2) You'd be amazed by who they are, those who will reject Him and will ultimately be destroyed because of it.
 - 3) This is how you can recognize them: miracles will happen all around them; and they will be well aware of them because those who believe will make it known to them openly, but they will still reject Him!

B. Jealously Invokes Conflict

(1) Blessing and Conflict in Antioch (in Pisidia) (**Acts 13:42-52**)

(a) Shake the dust from your feet and move on...

1. "So when the **Jews** went out of the synagogue, **the Gentiles** begged that these words might be preached to them **the next Sabbath**. 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. **On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.** But when **the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.** Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold 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.** For so the Lord has commanded us: **‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’** ” 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. And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.** But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, **raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.** But **they shook off the dust from their feet** against them, and came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” Acts 13:42-52 NKJV

- a) Obviously the ones who do not believe will be the ones offended by this message.
- b) Notice here the Jews leave the synagogue, but the Gentiles (God-fearers) asked them to come back the next week on the Sabbath to preach again.
- c) Again, why are Gentiles in the synagogues? They are God-fearers (those who love Yahweh, want to follow His laws, but have not converted to Judaism or been circumcised yet, just like Cornelius and his family from our last study.) See [Prepared Beforehand](#)
- d) **The Irony of Ironies:** Gentiles are coming to the light of the one true God right in their midst, and yet we saw last week how Peter was under the delusion about, *“how **unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation.** But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”*
Acts 10:28 NKJV
- e) When the service was over and people were dispersing, many Jews and proselytes (those Gentiles evangelized by Judaism) followed after

Paul and Barnabas, who encouraged them to walk in God' grace.

- f) The next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear them preach the word of God.
- g) However, the Jews of whom Habakkuk 1:5 was speaking... *“Take a look at all those who feel contempt or a deep repugnance for Y’shua,”* they were so jealous of all the attention Paul and Barnabas were getting that they attempted to deny, refute, and counter every word Paul spoke, to the point of blasphemy.
- h) Then Paul and Barnabas dropped the hammer on these obstinate Jews. The order of things was necessary; we had to bring the message to Israel first and wait for them to reject the offer of eternal life, so we could then go to the nations.
 - 1) Read all of Romans 11, but this one verse really summarizes God’s plan, as later described by Paul:
 - 2) “For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that **blindness in part**

has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” Romans 11:25 NKJV

- i) It's prophetic that Israel would be a light to the Gentiles. Just read Isaiah 42:6; 49:6 and Isaiah 60:1-5. Our calling is to bring this message to the ends of the earth and this is where it begins!
 - 1) “I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, **As a light to the Gentiles,**” Isaiah 42:6 NKJV
 - 2) “Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; **I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.**’ ”” Isaiah 49:6 NKJV
 - 3) “Arise, shine; For your light has come! ... **The Gentiles shall come to your light,** ...” Isaiah 60:1-5
- j) Of course these God-fearing Gentiles are happy to be included and all those destined to eternal life believed. This message spread like wildfire throughout the whole region.

- 1) This idea of being destined is something Paul later elaborates on in Romans 9 (read it all). But to just touch on the concept read these few verses.
 - 2) “But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. **For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham;** but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; **but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.”** Romans 9:6-8 NKJV
- k) And now we see how faith is the key factor, not bloodline or national heritage!
- 1) “For **he is not a Jew who is one outwardly**, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; **but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart**, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.” Romans 2:28-29 NKJV
 - 2) “What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has

something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? **“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”**” Romans 4:1-3 NKJV

- 3) **“just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”** Therefore know that only **those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.** And the Scripture, **foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith,** preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, **“In you all the nations shall be blessed.”** So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.” Galatians 3:6-9 NKJV
- 4) **“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.** For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is **neither Jew nor Greek,** there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”** Galatians 3:26-29 NKJV

- l) But, the unbelieving Jews do what we've seen many times before; they stir up trouble against those who believe.
- m) Persecution is the name of the game and they chased Paul and Barnabas from the city.
- n) Then, exactly the way Y'shua instructed His disciples to do, they shook off the dust from their feet and moved on to Iconium.
 - 1) "And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, **shake off the dust from your feet.**"
Matthew 10:14 NKJV [See [Apostolic Footprints](#)]
- o) And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

THE TEMPTATION

2. Will you enjoy the attention?

A. The Object of Praise or The Object Persecution

(1) At Iconium (Acts 14:1-7)

(a) A Divided City

1. "Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the **synagogue of the Jews**, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the **Jews and of the Greeks**

believed. But the **unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds** against the brethren. Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was **bearing witness** to the word of His grace, **granting signs and wonders** to be done by their hands. But **the multitude of the city was divided:** part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when a **violent attempt** was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, **to abuse and stone them,** they became aware of it and **fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia,** and to the **surrounding region.** And they were preaching the gospel there.” Acts 14:1-7 NKJV

- a) In the next city (Iconium) they go right back to the synagogue [on the Sabbath].
- b) Many Jews and Greeks believed [again we see non-Jews are in the synagogue].
- c) And once again, the unbelieving Jews stir up trouble. This time they try to pervert what the Gentiles think; they want to turn them against Barnabas and Paul.

- d) They remained in Iconium for a while peaching, witnessing, and doing miracles.
- e) This caused a great divide in the city between believers and unbelievers.
- f) The Jewish and Gentile unbelievers became aggressive and wanted to stone them.
- g) Once they realized it, Barnabas and Paul had to flee the city for their next stop on their mission.

(2) Idolatry in Lystra (**Acts 14:8-18**)

(a) Worship Directed in the Wrong Direction

1. “And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked. This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and **seeing that he had faith to be healed**, said with a loud voice, **“Stand up straight on your feet!” And he leaped and walked.** Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the **Lycaonian language**, **“The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”** And **Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes**, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the

gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul **heard this**, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out and saying, **“Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, *who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things** that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, ****gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons**, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” **And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.”** Acts 14:8-18 NKJV

- a) In Lystra Paul encountered a crippled man (from brith), like the man Peter encountered at the Temple Gate in Acts 3.
- b) The man heard Paul’s message and Paul could see he was filled with faith, so he told him loudly to “Stand!”

- c) The man was healed instantly and he jumped around with joy.
- d) The pagans watching began to worship them like they were gods, Barnabas as Zeus (the supreme god), and Paul as Hermes (because in Greek mythology Hermes, the son of Zeus, was the messenger of the gods).
- e) The priest of Zeus, whose temple was in a prominent place in Lystra, brought animals to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, while all the people took place in the ceremony.
- f) Barnabas and Paul ran into the crowd and tried to stop them by insisting openly that they were just regular men, not gods!
 - 1) That is exactly what Peter did when Cornelius bowed to him... *“As Peter was coming in, **Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him.** But Peter lifted him up, saying, **“Stand up; I myself am also a man.”**”* Acts 10:25-26 NKJV
- g) Barnabas and Paul insisted, “We are literally here to preach against this very thing. We want you to reject useless idols and accept the true and living

God. He is the **creator of all things* and your gods are fake and can do nothing."

1) **"Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the Lord his God, **Who made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that is in them; Who keeps truth forever,**" Psalms 146:5-6 NKJV*

h) They continued, "In the past Yahweh just let pagans do their own thing, but now it's time for the truth to go to the nations. The testimony of who He is was there all along. ***You could see it in nature: the rain, the seasons, the harvest, the earths provision."*

1) ***"Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O Lord our God? Therefore we will wait for You, Since You have made all these."* Jeremiah 14:22 NKJV

i) But it did not matter to many of these pagans. Pagans do what pagans do. They sacrifice to anything they think is a god!

B. The Key Inflection Point

(1) Applause and Applauded

(a) Praise, acclaim, acclamation, admiration, commendation, adulation, approbation, approval, extolment, compliments, tribute, assent, accolades—
NOW WHAT?

1. “Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, **“The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”** And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. **Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city,** brought oxen and garlands to the gates, **intending to sacrifice** with the multitudes.” Acts 14:11-13 NKJV

a) The People’s Side (Questions to ponder!)

- 1) Do you worship the worship?
- 2) Have you made Christianity an idol?
- 3) Have you made your Christian leader an idol?
- 4) Have you made Jesus an idol?
- 5) Are you an experience junky?
- 6) To whom do you applaud?
- 7) Are you bowing in the wrong direction?

b) The Leader’s Side (Questions to ponder!)

- 1) Are you accepting worship?

- 2) Are you accepting applause?
- 3) Have you made yourself into an idol?
- 4) Do you revel when the people bow?

(2) **“The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”**

Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes...

- (a) See that you do not do that; I am your fellow servant!
 1. “Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.” **And I fell at his feet to worship him.** But he said to me, **“See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant,** and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. **Worship God!** For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”” Revelation 19:9-10 NKJV
 2. “Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, **I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.** Then he said to me, **“See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant,** and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. **Worship God.**”” Revelation 22:8-9 NKJV
- a) We see the admonition as John saw himself bowing to an angel in his vision.

- b) It is common for man to extol the one from whom they receive something valuable.
 - c) The Angel says, "See that you do not do that. Don't worship me, worship God!"
 - d) And yet today, we have seen the rise of a brand of leader who does not discourage the adulation, but rather, on many occasions, invites it!
- (3) **"Then the priest, whose temple was in front of their city..."**

(a) The Prominent Church

1. "Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and **worship of angels**, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, **and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body,** nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, **grows with the increase that is from God.**" Colossians 2:18-19 NKJV

- a) So often in today's culture we see the rise of a prominent church or denomination that becomes the center of faith.
- b) At times, the brand or charismatic representative seems to attract such attention, and become so famous, that the focus shifts from "holding fast to

the Head” to “holding fast to the brand or charismatic leader.”

- c) At that point the brand of Christianity, and/or the brand of Jesus it portrays, and/or the charismatic leader, become an idol, hence, Christian Idolatry.

(b) There is a law against such idolatry!

- 1. ““You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; **you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations** of those who hate Me,” Exodus 20:4-5 NKJV

(c) Bad things are in store for those who...

- 1. “So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, **“The voice of a god and not of a man!”** Then **immediately an angel of the Lord struck him**, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.” Acts 12:21-23 NKJV

- a) ...accept worship

- b) ...accept applause
- c) ...make themselves into an idol
- d) ...revel when the people bow.

(d) Persist in doing so and...

1. "Therefore God **also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts**, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, **and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator**, who is blessed forever. Amen." Romans 1:24-25 NKJV

- a) ...God will give you over to your lusts for adulation

(4) **Bad Churches (It's not uncommon!)**

(a) The Compromised Church (Pergamos)

1. "**But I have a few things against you**, because you have there those who hold **the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.** Thus you also have those who hold **the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.** Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth." Revelation 2:14-16 NKJV

- a) The Doctrine of Balaam: the pay for play prophet who eventually encouraged Israel to commit sexual sin!
- b) Note: eating things sacrificed to idols (in and of itself is no big deal) unless the person's conscience is defiled.
 - 1) *“Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, **we know that an idol is nothing** in the world, and that there is no other God but one.”* I Corinthians 8:4 NKJV
 - 2) *“However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; **and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.**”* I Corinthians 8:7 NKJV
- c) The Doctrine of the Nicolaitans:
 - 1) Nicolaitans were the spiritual descendants of Nicolas of Antioch, who had been ordained as a deacon in Acts 6:5.
 - 2) The name “Nicolaitans” is derived from the Greek word “nikolaos”, a compound of the words (nikos) and (laos). The word nikos is the Greek word that means to conquer or to

subdue. The word laos is the Greek word for the people (laity).

- 3) When these two words are compounded into one, they form the name Nicolas, which literally means one who conquers and subdues the people/laity.
- 4) It seems to suggest that the Nicolaitans were somehow conquering and subduing the people.
- 5) It is a leadership style of oppression!
- 6) According to the writings of the Early Church leaders, Nicolas taught **a doctrine of compromise**, implying that total separation between Christianity and the practice of occult paganism was not essential. From Early Church records, it seems apparent that this Nicolas of Antioch was so immersed in occultism, Judaism, and Christianity that he had a stomach for all of it. He had no problem intermingling these belief systems in various concoctions and saw no reason why believers couldn't continue to fellowship with those still immersed in the black magic of the Roman empire and its countless mystery cults.

d) Repent! Y'shua HATES this doctrine!

(b) The Corrupt Church (Thyatira)

1. "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman **Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.** And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.

Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, **unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works."** Revelation 2:20-23 NKJV

a) Jezebel:

- 1) False prophet
- 2) False teaching
- 3) Sexual immorality

b) Repent! Or sickness and death await.

(c) The Dead Church (Sardis)

1. ... "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, **but you are dead.** Be watchful, and

strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.” Revelation 3:1-3 NKJV

- a) The church that is about to die...
 - 1) Activities are not right before God.
 - 2) Forgetful of from where they came.
- b) Repent! Or, you will be found with those to whom I come as a thief in the night!

(d) The Lukewarm Church (Laodicea)

- 1. **“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be**

revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. **As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.** Therefore be zealous and repent.”

Revelation 3:15-19 NKJV

- a) You are lukewarm...
 - 1) Hot water purifies.
 - 2) Cold water preserves.
 - 3) Disease proliferates in lukewarm water.
 - 4) You think you have everything you need but you really have nothing of lasting value.
 - 5) You are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.
- b) Give it all up for God or you will be exposed.
- c) He rebukes the children He loves!

(5) **Bowing in the Right Direction**

(a) No Applause Please (Paul get's it right!)

- 1. “Men, **why are you doing these things?** We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from **these useless things to the living God.**” Acts 14:15 NKJV

- a) “We are literally here to preach against this very thing. We want you to reject useless idols and accept the true and living God. He is the creator of

all things and your gods are fake and can do nothing.”

(b) Here is a “Safety Net” whenever you feel like becoming the object of attention!

1. “He must increase, but **I must decrease.**” John 3:30
NKJV

(c) To whom shall you bow?

1. “For this reason **I bow my knees to the Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ, **from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,**” Ephesians 3:14-15
NKJV

(d) Every knee shall bow to one God for His glory.

1. “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth,** and of those under the earth, and that **every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**”
Philippians 2:9-11 NKJV

C. From Worshiped to Stoned

(1) Stoning and Escape to Derbe (**Acts 14:19-20**)

(a) Jealousy finds a way!

1. “Then Jews from **Antioch** and **Iconium** came there; and **having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.** However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And **the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.**”

Acts 14:19-20 NKJV

- a) The Jews from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium showed up in Lystra. Remember they had to escape from both cities in fear of their lives. (from Antioch in Pisidia in Acts 13:50 and from Iconium in Acts 14:5-6). Their jealousy and unbelief drives them!
 - 1) **Antioch in Pisidia:** “But when **the Jews** saw the multitudes, they were **filled with envy**; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.” Acts 13:45 NKJV
 - 2) **Iconium:** “But **the unbelieving Jews** stirred up the Gentiles and **poisoned their minds** against the brethren.” Acts 14:2 NKJV
- b) They finally get what they wanted; they convince the people to stone Paul.

- c) They literally believed that they had stoned him to death, so they hauled him outside the city and left him for dead.
- d) However, when all the would-be murderers had dispersed, the disciples surrounded his seemingly lifeless body and he got right up and went back into Lystra.
- e) The next day he left Lystra with Barnabas and headed to Derbe.
- f) What if Paul had chosen to receive the worship in Acts 14:8-18? It is likely that would have prevented his persecution!

(2) Strengthening the Converts (**Acts 14:21-28**)

(a) “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

1. “And **when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch**, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, **“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”** So when **they had appointed elders in every church**, and **prayed with fasting**, they **commended them to the Lord** in whom they had

believed. And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. **From there they sailed to Antioch**, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, **and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.** So they stayed there a long time with the disciples." Acts 14:21-28 NKJV

- a) After being being beaten to an inch of his life, Paul gets up, goes into the next city [Derby] and preaches the gospel and makes many more disciples.
- b) Then, from Derbe, he goes back through each city in which he was persecuted, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia.
- c) He connects with and edifies those who just came to the faith on his recent visit.
- d) He brings them strong encouragement to walk powerfully in their new faith.

- e) And he teaches them one of the most important lessons every new Christian should know. Discipleship has a cost; being like Y'shua has a price.
- f) In other words, *"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."*
- g) Paul set's up a leadership structure in each local church; he fasts and prays with the new leaders and then he commissions them with the Lord's blessing.
- h) Then they headed south back through Pisidia and into Pamphylia all the way to Perga on the southern coast and then west to Attalia.
- i) They left by boat from there and headed back to Antioch in Syria, where they began this mission.
- j) They reported all that happened among the Gentiles and were commended to for a job well done.
- k) They remained in Antioch for quite some time.

D. Conclusion

- (1) When you are tempted believe, "I'm all that..."
 - (a) You will realize that God does not work quite the way you think!

1. **“For you see your calling**, brethren, that **not many wise** according to the flesh, **not many mighty, not many noble**, are called. But **God has chosen** the **foolish things** of the world to put **to shame the wise**, and God has chosen the **weak things** of the world to **put to shame the things** which are **mighty**; and the **base things** of the world and the things which are despised **God has chosen**, and the **things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are**, that **no flesh should glory in His presence**. **But of Him you are in Christ Jesus**, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— {31} that, as it is written, **“He who glories [boasts], let him glory in the Lord.”**” I

Corinthians 1:26-31 NKJV [Inspired from Jer. 9:24]

- a) God has chosen foolish things to shame the wise.
- b) God has chosen weak things to shame the mighty.
- c) God has chosen base things and despised things.
- d) God has chosen those who are nothing over those who think they are everything!
- e) Because...no flesh can boast before Him except if he boast in Christ Jesus!

(b) For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends!

1. **“But “he who glories [boasts], let him glory [boast] in the Lord.” For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.”** II

Corinthians 10:17-18 NKJV

(c) And in case that is not enough to keep things in proper perspective.

1. **“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.** Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, **for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”** II Corinthians 12:7-10 NKJV

- a) God leaves as many irritants in your life as necessary to remind you that you need Him!

Summary: THE MISSION

1. Organized Chaos

A. Excellent Ministry Mixed Results

(1) Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch from Jerusalem

(Acts 13:1-3)

(a) Barnabas and Saul are set-apart and anointed.

1. **Prophecy:** In the church in Antioch (in Syria) a few prophets received a word from the Holy Spirit about Barnabas and Saul.
2. **Set-Apart:** They are to be separated from the others for a specific ministry. It's time to send them on a mission.
3. **Anointed:** The prophets fasted, prayed, laid hands on them, and sent them!

(2) Preaching in Cyprus **(Acts 13:4-12)**

(a) Resistance is Futile!

1. Barnabas and Saul headed out from Antioch (in Syria) by mandate of the Holy Spirit.
2. They went west to the costal town of Seleucia so they could sail west to Cyprus.
3. They arrived in Salamis (a city on the eastern shore of Cyprus) and they preached in the synagogues.

4. Notice: Paul goes to minister in the synagogues first.
(John Mark is with them to assist)
5. Then they head west to the other end of the Island to the city of Paphos on the western shore.
6. That is where they encounter a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet (Bar-Jesus, AKA Elymas).
7. This sorcerer seems to be an advisor to the *proconsul, Sergius Paulus. He's a sharp guy but somehow values this sorcerer's ideas.
 - a) *The Roman Empire was divided in provinces that were either senatorial or imperial.
 - b) The former were presided over by proconsuls; the latter were administered by legates of the emperor, sometimes called proprætors (an officer who, after having served as prætor in Rome, was sent to govern a province with prætorial authority).
8. Sergius Paulus wants to hear what Barnabas and Saul have to say, but the sorcerer comes against them with the intention to keep the proconsul from believing.
 - a) ***Then in Acts 13:9** we see Saul referred to as Paul for the first time.
 - 1) Saul (means "prayed for")
 - 2) Paul (means "small, humble")

- b) The Holy Spirit moves Paul to rebuke the sorcerer!
 - 1) You are a deceptive fraud!
 - 2) You are the offspring of Satan!
 - 3) You are the enemy of God's virtue!
 - 4) You distort, corrupt and twist the ways of God!
- c) Then he pronounces God's judgment!
 - 1) You will grope in the darkness as blind man.
 - 2) Instantly he lost his sight and had to be led around by the hand.
- d) That is all the proconsul had to see! He believed in that moment!

(3) The Ministry Continues in Antioch in Pisidia (**Acts 13:13-41**)

(a) A Turbocharged History Lesson (**Acts 13:13-25**)

1. Paul and his group leave Paphos, and sail north to Perga in Pamphylia (the southern coast of modern-day Turkey).
2. John (John Mark) leaves the group and heads back to Jerusalem.
3. From Perga they moved inland, further north to Antioch in Pisidia (in Galatia, still modern-day Turkey).
4. Paul heads right to the synagogue on the Sabbath.

5. After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue wanted to know if they had any specific message for them.
6. Paul stands and gives them a history lesson:
 - a) Notice he address both Jews and God-fearers (Men like Cornelius who love Yahweh and seek to obey His laws, but have not officially converted to Judaism.)
 - 1) He begins with Israel in Egypt and the exodus.
 - 2) He moves on to the forty years in the wilderness.
 - 3) Then he recounts how they conquered the promised land.
 - 4) He reviews the period of judges that lasted about four hundred and fifty years, until the time Samuel when the people asked for a king.
 - 5) That is how they got king Saul for forty years, but God removed him, and raised up David, a man after His own heart.
 - 6) From David's seed came the promised Messiah.
 - 7) The Messiah is Y'shua, the one who John the Baptist preached about while he was doing baptisms of repentance.

8) And, as John's ministry was coming to an end, he is the one who pointed to the One who was coming after him, whose feet he was not even worthy to wash!

(b) Paul brings history into that present day (**Acts 13:26-37**)

1. To the decedents of Abraham and God-fearers, the true message of salvation had arrived.
2. You see again he addresses "*those among you who fear God.*" These non-Jewish believers in Yahweh were a prevalent bunch who were at various stages of "conversion." They had accesses to certain places in the temple.
3. Later we will see, throughout Paul's years in ministry and countless false accusations about him, the one thing he did do is that he brought Gentiles into the temple. Why would that be a problem (according to tradition)?
4. Who were they? They were Gentiles who were NOT in any stage of conversion; OTHER THAN they had an encounter with Christ! THAT WAS A GREAT OFFENSE TO THE RELIGIOUS ELITE!
5. The Jewish people and their religious leaders did not recognize Y'shua. They basically ignored the

prophecies of His coming and essentially fulfilled the prophecies that said some would ignore Him!

6. They accused Him of crimes and He was found innocent of all charges but they used Pilate (Rome) to execute Him anyway.
 7. It was all a completion of prophecy when they took him off the cross, buried Him in a tomb, and the Father raised Him from the grave.
 8. And there are plenty of witnesses who can testify to the veracity of these facts.
 9. We traveled around preaching the good news that God has fulfilled the promises He made to our ancestors.
 10. What comes to mind when I think of what has happened, Paul says: to fulfill His promises to David, he would raise that Son from the dead instead of letting him decay in the ground...
 11. You see, David died and stayed dead, but Y'shua got right up out of the grave and never rotted in the earth.
- (c) Here's the bottom line about Y'shua... **(Acts 13:38-41)**
1. He came with the message of forgiveness, and not just what it means, but how it actually works.

2. It is through Him that we are cleansed from our sins, something the law of Moses was not able to do, nor was it ever meant to do.
3. So, you should all be worried that you might be the ones of whom Habakkuk was prophesying [in Habakkuk 1:5] when he said...
4. Take a look at all those who feel contempt or a deep repugnance for Y'shua.
5. You'd be amazed by who they are, those who will reject Him and be destroyed because of it.
6. This is how you can recognize them: miracles will happen all around them; and they will be well aware of them because those who believe will make it known to them openly, but they will still reject Him!

B. Jealously Invokes Conflict

(1) Blessing and Conflict in Antioch (in Pisidia) (**Acts 13:42-52**)

- (a) Shake the dust from your feet and move on...
 1. Obviously the ones who do not believe will be the ones offended by this message.
 2. Notice here the Jews leave the synagogue, but the Gentiles (God-fearers) asked them to come back the next week on the Sabbath to preach again.

3. Again, why are Gentiles in the synagogues? They are God-fearers (those who love Yahweh, want to follow His laws, but have not converted to Judaism or been circumcised yet, just like Cornelius and his family from our last study.) See [Prepared Beforehand](#)
4. **The Irony of Ironies:** Gentiles are coming to the light of the one true God right in their midst, and yet we saw last week how Peter was under the delusion about, *“how **unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation.**”*
5. When the service was over and people were dispersing, many Jews and proselytes (evangelized by Judaism) followed after Paul and Barnabas, who encouraged them to walk in God’s grace.
6. The next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear them preach the word of God.
7. However, the Jews of whom Habakkuk 1:5 was speaking... *“Take a look at all those who feel contempt or a deep repugnance for Y’shua,”* they were so jealous of all the attention Paul and Barnabas were getting that they attempted to deny, refute, and counter every word Paul spoke, to the point of blasphemy.

8. Then Paul and Barnabas dropped the hammer on these obstinate Jews. The order of things was necessary; we had to bring the message to Israel first and wait for them to reject the offer of eternal life, so we could then go to the nations.
9. Read all of Romans 11, but this one verse really summarizes God's plan, as later described by Paul: **"blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in."**
10. It's prophetic that Israel would be a light to the Gentiles. Just read Isaiah 42:6; 49:6 and Isaiah 60:1-5. Our calling is to bring this message to the ends of the earth and this is where it begins!
11. Of course these God-fearing Gentiles are happy to be included and all those destined to eternal life believed. This message spread like wildfire throughout the whole region.
12. This idea of being destined is something Paul later elaborates on in Romans 9 (read it all).
13. And now we see how faith is the key factor, not bloodline or national heritage!
14. The unbelieving Jews do what we've seen many times before; they stir up trouble against those who believe.

15. Persecution is the name of the game and they chased Paul and Barnabas from the city.
16. Then, exactly the way Y'shua instructed His disciples to do, they shook off the dust from their feet and moved on to Iconium.
17. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Summary: THE TEMPTATION

2. Will you enjoy the attention?

A. The Object of Praise or The Object Persecution

(1) At Iconium (Acts 14:1-7)

(a) A Divided City

1. In the next city (Iconium) they go right back to the synagogue [on the Sabbath].
2. Many Jews and Greeks believed [again we see non-Jews are in the synagogue].
3. And once again, the unbelieving Jews stir up trouble. This time they try to pervert what the Gentiles think; they want to turn them against Barnabas and Paul.
4. They remained in Iconium for a while peaching, witnessing, and doing miracles.

5. This caused a great divide in the city between believers and unbelievers.
6. The Jewish and Gentile unbelievers became aggressive and wanted to stone them.
7. Once they realized it, Barnabas and Paul had to flee the city for their next stop on their mission.

(2) Idolatry in Lystra (**Acts 14:8-18**)

(a) Worship Directed in the Wrong Direction

1. In Lystra Paul encountered a crippled man (from brith), like the man Peter encountered at the Temple Gate in Acts 3.
2. The man heard Paul's message and Paul could see he was filled with faith, so he told him loudly to "Stand!"
3. The man was healed instantly and he jumped around with joy.
4. The pagans watching began to worship them like they were gods, Barnabas as Zeus (the supreme god), and Paul as Hermes (because in Greek mythology Hermes, the son of Zeus, was the messenger of the gods).
5. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was in a prominent place in Lystra, brought animals to sacrifice to Paul

and Barnabas, while all the people took place in the ceremony.

6. Barnabas and Paul ran into the crowd and tried to stop them by insisting openly that they were just regular men, not gods!
7. That is exactly what Peter did when Cornelius bowed to him...
8. Barnabas and Paul insisted, "We are literally here to preach against this very thing. We want you to reject useless idols and accept the true and living God. He is the *creator of all things* and your gods are fake and can do nothing."
9. They continued, "In the past Yahweh just let pagans do their own thing, but now it's time for the truth to go to the nations. The testimony of who He is was there all along. *You could see it in nature: the rain, the seasons, the harvest, the earths provision.*"
10. But it did not matter to many of these pagans. Pagans do what pagans do. They sacrifice to anything they think is a god!

B. The Key Inflection Point

- (1) Applause and Applauded

(a) Praise, acclaim, acclamation, admiration, commendation, adulation, approbation, approval, extolment, compliments, tribute, assent, accolades—
NOW WHAT?

1. The People's Side (Questions to ponder!)

- a) Do you worship the worship?
- b) Have you made Christianity an idol?
- c) Have you made your Christian leader an idol?
- d) Have you made Jesus an idol?
- e) Are you an experience junky?
- f) To whom do you applaud?
- g) Are you bowing in the wrong direction?

2. The Leader's Side (Questions to ponder!)

- a) Are you accepting worship?
- b) Are you accepting applause?
- c) Have you made yourself into an idol?
- d) Do you revel when the people bow?

(2) **“The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”**

Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes...

(a) See that you do not do that; I am your fellow servant!

- 1. We see the admonition as John (in Revelation) saw himself bowing to an angel in his vision.

2. It is common for man to extol the one from whom they receive something valuable.
 3. The Angel says, "See that you do not do that. Don't worship me, worship God!"
 4. And yet today, we have seen the rise of a brand of leader who does not discourage the adulation, but rather, on many occasions, invites it!
- (3) **"Then the priest, whose temple was in front of their city..."**
- (a) The Prominent Church
 1. So often in today's culture we see the rise of a prominent church or denomination that becomes the center of faith.
 2. At times, the brand or charismatic representative seems to attract such attention, and become so famous, that the focus shifts from "holding fast to the Head" to "holding fast to the brand or charismatic leader."
 3. At that point the brand of Christianity, and/or the brand of Jesus it portrays, and/or the charismatic leader, become an idol, hence, "Christian Idolatry."
 - (b) There is a law against such idolatry!
 - (c) Bad things are in store for those who...

1. ...accept worship
 2. ...accept applause
 3. ...make themselves into an idol
 4. ...revel when the people bow.
- (d) Persist in doing so and...
1. ...God will give you over to your lusts for adulation

(4) **Bad Churches (It's not uncommon!)**

- (a) The Compromised Church (Pergamos)
1. The Doctrine of Balaam: the pay for play prophet who eventually encouraged Israel to commit sexual sin!
 2. Note: eating things sacrificed to idols (in and of itself is no big deal) unless the person's conscience is defiled.
 3. The Doctrine of the Nicolaitans:
 4. Nicolaitans were the spiritual descendants of Nicolas of Antioch, who had been ordained as a deacon in Acts 6:5.
 5. The name "Nicolaitans" is derived from the Greek word "nikolaos", a compound of the words (nikos) and (laos). The word nikos is the Greek word that means to conquer or to subdue. The word laos is the Greek word for the people (laity).

6. When these two words are compounded into one, they form the name Nicolas, which literally means one who conquers and subdues the people/laity.
 7. It seems to suggest that the Nicolaitans were somehow conquering and subduing the people.
 8. It is a leadership style of oppression!
 9. According to the writings of the Early Church leaders, Nicolas taught **a doctrine of compromise**, implying that total separation between Christianity and the practice of occult paganism was not essential. From Early Church records, it seems apparent that this Nicolas of Antioch was so immersed in occultism, Judaism, and Christianity that he had a stomach for all of it. He had no problem intermingling these belief systems in various concoctions and saw no reason why believers couldn't continue to fellowship with those still immersed in the black magic of the Roman empire and its countless mystery cults.
 10. Repent! Y'shua HATES this doctrine!
- (b) The Corrupt Church (Thyatira)
1. Jezebel:
 - a) False prophet
 - b) False teaching

c) Sexual immorality

2. Repent! Or sickness and death await.

(c) The Dead Church (Sardis)

1. The church that is about to die...

a) Activities are not right before God.

b) Forgetful of from where they came.

2. Repent! Or, you will be found with those to whom I come as a thief in the night!

(d) The Lukewarm Church (Laodicea)

1. You are lukewarm...

a) Hot water purifies.

b) Cold water preserves.

c) Disease proliferates in lukewarm water.

d) You think you have everything you need but you really have nothing of lasting value.

e) You are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

2. Give it all up for God or you will be exposed.

3. He rebukes the children He loves!

(5) **Bowing in the Right Direction**

(a) No Applause Please (Paul get's it right!)

1. "We are literally here to preach against this very thing. We want you to reject useless idols and accept

the true and living God. He is the creator of all things and your gods are fake and can do nothing.”

(b) Here is a “Safety Net” whenever you feel like becoming the object of attention! “He must increase, but **I must decrease.**”

(c) To whom shall you bow?

1. **to the Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ...

(d) Every knee shall bow to one God for His glory.

C. From Worshiped to Stoned

(1) Stoning and Escape to Derbe (**Acts 14:19-20**)

(a) Jealousy finds a way!

1. The Jews from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium showed up in Lystra. Remember they had to escape from both cities in fear of their lives. (from Antioch in Pisidia in Acts 13:50 and from Iconium in Acts 14:5-6). Their jealousy and unbelief drives them!

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D. Conclusion

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 - 1. God has chosen foolish things to shame the wise.
 - 2. God has chosen weak things to shame the mighty.
 - 3. God has chosen base things and despised things.
 - 4. God has chosen those who are nothing over those who think they are everything!
 - 5. Because...no flesh can boast before Him except if he boast in Christ Jesus!
- (b) For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends!
- (c) And in case that is not enough to keep things in proper perspective.
 - 1. God leaves as many irritants in your life as necessary to remind you that you need Him!

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

- 1. How did Barnabas and Saul wind up in ministry together? (See Acts 13:1-3)**
 - A. What was their first recorded stop on their mission? (See Acts 13:4-12)
 - B. What type of resistance did they encounter?

- C. How did Saul handle it and what was the result?
- D. What do we see for the first time about Saul?

2. Their next stop is Antioch in Pisidia in Acts 13:13-41...

- A. What did Paul do in Acts 13:13-25 to get the people's attention?
- B. In Acts 13:26-37, Paul was able to bring his audience into the present day. How did he do that and what three Scriptures did he refer to as proof?
- C. In Acts 13:38-41, Paul sealed the deal. How did he do that and what prophecy did he quote?

3. How did jealousy play a role in Acts 13:42-52?

- A. What was the positive and negative effect of the ministry in Antioch in Pisidia?
- B. What was Paul and Barnabas' response?

4. Paul and Barnabas had to move on to yet another City in Acts 14:1-7...

- A. Where was their first stop in the city and how does that compare the cities they visited in Acts 13?
- B. Jews who refused to accept that Y'shua was the Messiah were a constant irritant to the mission. How so?
- C. Again, as in Antioch in Pisidia, what were the mixed results and what were Paul and Barnabas forced to do?

- 5. Once again, Paul and Barnabas arrive in a new city in Acts 14:8-18.**
- A. In this new city something wild happens. Please describe it.
 - B. How was the initiating factor similar to an event involving Peter in Acts 3?
 - C. How did Paul and Barnabas deal with the bizarre situation?
 - D. Describe how their reaction was similar to Peter's in Acts 10:25-26?
- 6. It today's Church, we have seen the rise of a brand of leader who does not discourage adulation toward themselves, but rather, on many occasions, invites it!**
- A. Use Revelation 19:9-10 and 22:8-9 to describe how leaders should act?
- 7. Consider the following statements and journal about what you think about them:**
- A. Read the following scriptures to prepare yourself. (Colossians 2:18-19; Exodus 20:4-5; Acts 12:21-23; Romans 1:24-25)
 - B. In today's culture we see the rise of a prominent church or denomination that becomes the center of faith.
 - C. The brand or charismatic representative of a church or denomination seems to attract such attention, and become so famous, that the focus shifts from "holding fast to the Head" to "holding fast to the brand or charismatic leader."

D. The brand of Christianity, and/or the brand of Jesus it portrays, and/or the charismatic leader, become an idol, hence, "Christian Idolatry."

8. Consider and journal about following questions:

- A. Do you worship the worship?
- B. Have you made Christianity an idol?
- C. Have you made your Christian leader an idol?
- D. Have you made Jesus an idol?
- E. Are you an experience junky?
- F. To whom do you applaud?
- G. Are you bowing in the wrong direction?
- H. Are you accepting worship?
- I. Are you accepting applause?
- J. Have you made yourself into an idol?
- K. Do you revel when the people bow?

9. Bad Churches are not new to the 21st Century. Describe the character traits of each ancient Church that was warned they were off track!

- A. The Compromised Church in Pergamos. (Revelation 2:14-16)
- B. The Corrupt Church in Thyatira. (Revelation 2:20-23)
- C. The Dead Church in Sardis. (Revelation 3:1-3)
- D. The Lukewarm Church in Laodicea. (Revelation 3:15-19)

10. Use the following passage to insure you will always bow in the right direction. (Describe each)

- A. Acts 14:15
- B. John 3:30
- C. Ephesians 3:14-15
- D. Philippians 2:9-11

11. The evil unbelievers finally catch up to Paul in Acts 14:19-20...

- A. What do they do?
- B. What does Paul do?
- C. In Acts 14:21-28 we learn that nothing will deter Paul from his calling. What does he do as a response to what just happened in Lystra and what one sentence best describes his explanation?

12. The conclusion of the matter...

- A. Use the following scripture passages to craft a short essay describing how you will fight the temptation to invite adulation or to make yourself the object of praise. (See: I Corinthians 1:26-31; II Corinthians 10:17-18; 12:7-10)