

**July 25**

**Scriptures:** Read Acts 13

**Key Verse:** “And we declare to you glad tidings—the promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus.” (Acts 13:32, 33a)

## **Overview**

Paul made three missionary journeys. In this chapter we see him traveling from Antioch to Derbe and back, by way of Seleucia, Cyprus, Attalia, Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. (See map on page 140)

The Antioch church had a remarkable group of people prophesying and teaching. Men like Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen (a one-time friend of the Tetrarch, Herod), and Saul. During a prayer time, the Holy Spirit instructed them to ordain Barnabas and Saul to an apostolic (missionary) ministry. So they laid their hands on them in prayer and “sent them off” (13:3).

Saul (“who was also called Paul” v.9) and Barnabas usually went first to the synagogue in the towns and cities they visited. There Paul would “proclaim the word of God” and reason with his fellow-Jews to demonstrate that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies (I think our best insight into Paul’s “reasonings” might be gained from reading Romans 9, 10, 11). In this chapter, Paul speaks at synagogues in Salamis, and later on, in Pisidian Antioch.

When you read Paul’s sermon to the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, you see his remarkable ability with the messianic passages in the Old Testament. He speaks to his own people out of their scriptures about their Messiah. And there’s no question, as Paul sees it, this Jesus whom he had so adamantly opposed is the fulfillment of the promise God had made to “our Fathers” (v.32). Not only that, but Jesus has the power to do what the Law of Moses cannot do (v.39)—that is “justify: or satisfy the justice of God which demands death for sin. Paul presents Jesus with such conviction and enthusiasm that, not surprisingly, he polarizes his hearers, indeed whole cities. Pisidian Antioch is in an uproar. And as Paul sees their opposition, he openly declares his intention to take the gospel to the Gentiles (v.46).

## **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, thank You for building Your church and for including slaves, aristocrats, Your former persecutors, and us too. Help us today to be Your helpers in Your great success plan for Your church.