



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Door of Faith Opened to the Gentiles

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Acts 14:23-28 *“But having appointed elders for them according to each church, praying with fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. 24) And passing through Psidia, they came into Pamphylia, 25) And having preached the Word in Perga, they came down to Attalia, and from there they sailed away to Antioch. 26) From whence they continually had been commended to the grace of God into the work which they accomplished. 27) But having arrived and assembling the church, they reported all things which God did with them, and that he opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. 28) So they continued spending not a little time with the disciples.”*

“IF ANY OF YOU LACKS WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, WHO GIVES TO ALL LIBERALLY AND WITHOUT REPROACH, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN HIM. BUT LET HIM ASK IN FAITH, WITH NO DOUBTING, FOR HE WHO DOUBTS IS LIKE A WAVE OF THE SEA DRIVEN AND TOSSED BY THE WIND. FOR LET NOT THAT MAN SUPPOSE THAT HE WILL RECEIVE ANYTHING FROM THE LORD; HE IS A DOUBLE-MINDED MAN, UNSTABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS.” (JAMES 1:5-8)

Why did Paul and Barnabas fast and pray when they appointed elders in all the churches? Was it necessary to ordain elders in these new churches? What does it mean to “commit them to the Lord”? Is Luke describing a dangerous route which was taken by these first missionaries? Why do they preach in Perga the second time when they had not done so the first time? What is the meaning of “continually commended to the grace of God”? How were all the details of this first mission trip reported? How had the door of faith been opened to the Gentiles? Who was the focus of every part of this report?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- FEBRUARY 23: ACTS 15:1-5 SALVATION BY CIRCUMCISION?
- APRIL 19-21: ACTS 15:6-12 IS JUDIASM OR JESUS THE PATH OF SALVATION?

It had all begun with prayer. As the pastors in Antioch had “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 13:2-3). The pastors of this model church, where they first took the name “Christians” to be a witness to all around them, emphasized their first priority of prayer (6:4). Even their name change seems to have driven them to greater intercession for the lost. Thus, this entire church had participated in fasting and prayer as they sent of their own beloved pastors as the first missionaries. This was how the proconsul or king over the most strategic island of Cyprus had been led to Christ so that it became a lighthouse to the entire Mediterranean community of nations. Saul’s name change to that of the king, “Paulus,” not only signals the fulfillment of his commission (9:15), but also a greater commitment to the Gentiles and their evangelization. It is with this demonstration of leadership that he becomes the leader of the mission team. God uses Paul’s preaching so powerfully in Psidia Antioch that “almost the whole city came together to hear the Word of God” (13:44). In the next capital, Iconium, “the multitude of the city was divided” (14:4). Even when stoned after fleeing to Lystra, the courageous “disciples gathered around him” (14:20). And in Derbe God blessed his ministry so that they “made many disciples” (21). God had truly multiplied the sowing these two faithful soul-winners.

“WHOEVER DOES AND TEACHES THEM [THESE COMMANDMENTS], HE SHALL BE CALLED GREAT IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.” MATTHEW 5:19

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM—PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3RD FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM—BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 4:30 PM—BIBLE STUDY – GAB 330-SENATOR CARRICO’S OFFICE

Virginia

The Door of Faith Opened to the Gentiles

I. YOUR PROOF OF LEADERSHIP

ACTS 14:23

There was a clear pattern that revealed their leadership in almost every place they went. First they preached the Gospel, which brought many to Christ and the church grew. Such growth was followed by division which brought on persecution and suffering. Only a genuine work of God in the hearts of individuals would make them be willing to follow the same pattern of Gospel witness that would end in suffering. Would such leaders emerge from the preaching of Paul? Men who were *“blameless, husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous, one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?), not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil”* (1 Tim. 3:2-7). Not only did the churches desperately need these leaders to shepherd them, and prayer and fasting was exercised to request God’s wisdom in their appointing, but it also verified the leadership of these missionaries that God had raised up other leaders to follow the same pattern of multiplication.

“AND THE THINGS THAT YOU HAVE HEARD FROM ME AMONG MANY WITNESSES, COMMIT THESE TO FAITHFUL MEN WHO WILL BE ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS ALSO. THEREFORE YOU MUST ENDURE HARDSHIP AS A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST.” 2 TIMOTHY 2:2-3

II. YOUR PERSISTENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACTS 14:24-25

This mission team did whatever it took to finish the job that God had given them to do. They did not just win these believers and then go back home on the easiest route to Antioch. Instead they had returned to the cities of greatest danger in order to strengthen the believers in

the truth, exhort them to persistence in their faith, and provide leadership to shepherd them as they were responsible to take the light of the Gospel, planted in their capital, to every part of their province. Paul had exemplified before them that it would not be easy and had repeated a specific quote they probably had memorized: *“It is necessary for us, through many afflictions, to enter the kingdom of God”* (14:22). Thus Luke describes the dangerous robber ridden passes traversed to reach the capital of Perga where they *“preached the Word.”* Not a single capital was to be left without a Gospel witness.

“PAUL AND BARNABAS APPARENTLY HAD NOT PREACHED IN PERGA THE FIRST TIME THEY WERE THERE. LEAVING NOTHING UNDONE, THEY PROCEED TO DO SO. THEY WERE COMMITTED, NO MATTER WHAT THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES, TO FULFILLING THEIR CALLING.” JOHN MACARTHUR

III. YOUR PRAYER FOR LEADERSHIP ACTS 14:26-28

These first missionaries arrive back at their home church in Antioch of Syria *“from whence they continually had been commended to the grace of God into the work which they accomplished.”* This church had faithfully prayed for these leaders, *“continually”* commending them *“to the grace of God”* with their specific work, and God had graciously answered. So the church was assembled specifically to hear the report of the first mission trip. The details were direct answers to their prayers as *“they reported all things which God did with them.”* Such a report of God’s work could not be contained in one service or even many, *“So they continued spending not a little time with the disciples.”* Most importantly, this abundantly loving church of Jews and Gentiles were excited to hear that God had *“opened the door of faith to the Gentiles”* through their prayer for these leaders and their resulting ministry of multiplication, persistence and prayer, all to the glory of God Himself.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Is your spiritual leadership proven by others, whom you have taught, who lead others to the truth of God’s Word?
- 2) Do you take your calling seriously enough to be persistent and finish the work that God has called you to do?
- 3) Is your leadership characterized by prayer for others and for your work so that God receives all the glory?