

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

11 Acts – “Paul’s first trip through Asia Minor,” -- with commentary

Acts 13:1 - 12, “Barnabas and Saul Sent Off and On Cyprus;” Acts 13: 13 – 52, “In Pisidian Antioch;” Acts 14: 1 – 7, “In Iconium;” Acts 14: 8 -20, “In Lystra and Derbe;” Acts 14: 21 – 28, “The Return to Antioch in Syria.”

The purpose of the Book of Acts is to record the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Vision and Ministry of Peter and Paul. **Today’s study is the 11th of 20 lessons.**

A contextual statement:

Interestingly, *The Interpreter’s Bible* makes the following observation. In the book of Acts, “The Lord is not returned, but in the meantime the word of God is being carried on by the church. The Gentile mission is itself the eschatological action of God.” (*The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1971. p. 730.)

This I want to affirm as our perspective. **We will study this book from the perspective of the in-breaking of the Holy Spirit.** This puts us out on the cusp of a deep and foreboding spiritual hole that is eternally deep. The Holy Spirit is that intuited presence within us that urges us to “Jump.” “Jump!” To take this leap of faith means to surrender ourselves to the eternal deeps. The discovery, to which I can personally testify, is that this deep, dark, mysterious hole is the place where God lives within us. As we lose control of everything— our-selves, our relationships to neighbor and to God— then we can discover that God really does sustain us. But the experience is like falling, and it is not entirely comfortable. But it works.

According to our Study Chart we are in the second major division of the Book of Acts. The first is “The Testimony of Peter.” The Second is “The Testimony of Paul.” You’ll note on the chart that this is “Paul’s 1st Missionary Journey to Asia Minor,” and this is the first portion of this journey. The second portion deals with the Council at Jerusalem. While this council is not a part of the journey itself, it does function as an interlude between the first and second journeys.

Read the assigned scriptures.

I. Acts 13:1 - 12, “Barnabas and Saul Sent Off and on Cyprus” (Keep a map handy!)

A. Vs. 2, What is the experience to be “set apart” by the Holy Spirit?”

WS: In Gut Trip Analysis, to be set apart by the Holy Spirit is to be awakened spiritually. This can happen by trauma or accountability. Actually, it also can happen through joy, but we seldom associate spiritual awakening with joyful experiences as the occasioning of awakening. Is this because we think we deserve joyful things while we don’t deserve the bad things of life?

B. Vss. 4 – 12, Explain the significance of Sergius Paulus.

WS: Paulus is the Proconsul of a Senatorial province. Does this make him a senator? No, more likely something like the mayor of Paphos.

What is the Gut Trip Analysis of Elymas (Bar-Jesus) and his relationship to the procouncil?

WS: There is some confusion here. Apparently, Luke has combined two people into one. A commentary analysis of this passage notes two people. Elymas is a magician, and Bar-Jesus is a false prophet. My feeling is both of these guys were like "tin men" out to defraud the public. A translation of Bar-Jesus is "son of the devil," while Paul's name can be translated as "son of salvation."

II. Acts 13: 13 – 52, "In Pisidian Antioch"

In Paul's sermon, he illustrates several relationships. Reflect on these relationships and share your insights with us:

A. Vss. 16 – 22, What is the relationship of the "message of salvation" (vs. 26b) to the Old Testament history lesson Paul gives?

WS: The "message of salvation" is a description of the Awakened Life. The historical reference is to Israel coming out of slavery into Egypt into Canaan, then attempting to remain awake through the use of Judges and Kings (waking up through accountability), and then Saul and David are used as two awakened heroes of Jewish faith.

B. Vss. 23 – 31, What is the relationship to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

WS: John the Baptizer preached the Good News of wake-full-ness. The message of the resurrection concerns the necessity of dying to being asleep and to remain fully awake. Jesus is the prime example of one living his life and dying his death as a fully awakened individual.

C. Vss. 32 – 35, What is the relationship to the Prophets?

WS: Paul is proof-texting his message. Vs. 35b is Psalm 2:7; vs. 34 is Isaiah 55:3; vs. 35 is Psalm 16:10. In particular, the reference to 2nd Isaiah is significant since Jesus uses Isaiah as the foundation for his expansion of ministry. Paul uses this reference to justify the ministry to the Gentiles.

D. Vss. 36 – 37, What is the relationship to David? (Identify the quotation sources.)

WS: Again, Luke is proof-texting his message by holding up David who—as a human being—is fully awake. Luke is pushing the comparison between the human David and then fully-aware individual in Jesus. His words for this is to compare that which decays (David) to that which lives in God's presence (Jesus - the non-decaying one?).

E. Vss. 38 – 41, What is the relationship Paul makes to his listeners. (Identify the source of the quotation.)

WS: The quotation is in Hababuk 1: 5. The message of Paul is as follows: 1) the forgiveness of sin is proclaimed to those of you are not spiritually awake. Following the law of Moses is out to convict you of being asleep while God's grace unites you with neighbor, self and God who is Perfect At-One-Ment.

F. Vss. 46 – 48, Observe that this quotation at vs . 47b is from Isaiah. What is significant about the choice of this quotation for the ministry to the Gentiles?

WS: The quotation is in Isaiah 49:6 The reference is to those who are appointed to salvation. The IHOP discussion asked if being "appointed" to salvation was predestination. One member observed that all those who come to know Christ are appointed for salvation. Gut Trip Analysis pushes this information a bit further in support of a universal Christ dynamic. Consequently, all those whose lives reflect the Christ are appointed to live transformed lives (salvation).

Vs. 52 – It is noted that the "disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." Because the Holy Spirit is a spiritual alarm clock to awaken us to full humane living, this condition pleases God. When God is happy, we are happy.

III. Acts 14: 1 – 7, "In Iconium"

A. The experience at Iconium is not good. In vs. 7b, Luke tells us our missionaries continue "to preach the Good News." From the perspective of Gut Trip Analysis, what is the experience of the Good News?

WS: The Good News always is revealed in this statement: When it is *affirmed or confirmed* that God Don't Make No Junk, the result is that our *present* is received at this very moment as a good and precious *gift*; this is why we call it a *present*. In light of this message, this means that our *past is not only forgiven*, but it is *forgotten*. When it is possible to affirm that All is Good, our Present is a Gift, and our Past is forgotten, then our *Future is Open Possibility*. This formula explains what Christianity means by the Good News.

IV. Acts 14: 8 -20, "In Lystra and Derbe"

A. In vs. 9, Paul looks at a man and "saw that he had faith to be healed." What do you think Paul saw in this man?

WS: The IHOP discussed what we believed Paul saw in this man, and how we could describe it. I told them a story about a young woman at a recent spiritual retreat who was challenged to move into a more mature presentation of her material. When she moved away from the podium and began to speak with both her mouth and her body she became very powerful in her presentation. What was it that was "seen" in her that elicited the challenge in the first place. It was an intuition of her readiness to move to a far deeper, and more meaningful, presentation model.

B. Vss. 11 – 18: Our missionaries have big problems here. Describe what happened.

WS: Barnabus and Paul were perceived in a similar way as described in the above section. Their listeners used only the tools and images at hand to explain the fantastic wonder and power of their presentation. Instead of being "God's representatives" they were perceived as gods themselves.

C. Vss. 17 – 18: Describe God's "testimony that is left."

WS: Vss. 14 – 18 needs to be read as one sub-section. Paul's message is that we

are to turn away from "worthless things" (of the world), to the deeply satisfying things (of the spirit). The testimony left to God is that even nature testifies to the goodness of God. Or another way of saying this is that anything and everything can be used to testify to God's goodness for us, even the crops and seasons, the food on our table, and the joy in our hearts.

D. Vss. 19 – 20: How were our missionaries rewarded?

WS: Some of those still unawakened were blinded by their own ignorance of the Good News and stoned Paul almost to death. Why do we believe this is so uncommon?

V. Acts 14: 21 – 28, "The Return to Antioch in Syria."

A. What was the evaluation of this first missionary trip? What did you learn about preaching the Good News?

WS: Churches are strengthened, the meaning of Christianity is defined, the Kingdom of God becomes a realm of faithfulness, the mission to the Gentiles is begun.

Now, the role of the church must be defined after this first missionary journey. So, the next episode takes place as the leadership of the early church gathers in Jerusalem to conference about this role. This episode is taken up next week.

Alright folks, talk to me!