

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on January 10, 2021:**

**"Transformation of the Early Church Series on
The Book of Acts – God Opens Doors:
Paul's First Missionary Journey
(Acts 13 – 14:28 [Part 1]) (Part 13)"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman on Zoom shows us that the early church gives us insight as to how we are led by the Holy Spirit as we participate in God's work of sharing the gospel.]

Introduction:

- The troubles in the world continue, so it's good to remember these spiritual anchor points, which will give us hope and carry us through 2021.

Transformative Anchors for 2021 (1/3/21 - Acts 11:19-12:25):

1. Remain true to the Lord with all heart.
2. As we are able, live generously.
3. Remain earnest in prayer to God for protection and political tension.
4. Sleep well, and be at peace with health issues and even death knowing God is in control what we can't control.
5. Place our trust in God (not self) to address political unrest and tension.

Overview outline of today's message:

1. A period of decision of the church (Acts 13:1-4)
 - a. To whom did the Holy Spirit reveal his will?
 - b. What did the Holy Spirit reveal?
 - c. How was the Holy Spirit's message disclosed?
 - d. Who commissioned the missionaries?
2. A period of deception (verses 4-12)
3. A period of disputation (verses 13-52)
4. A period of division (Acts 14:1-7)
5. Determination (verses 8-20)
 - a. Healing of the lame man
 - b. The attempt to worship Paul and Barnabas
 - c. Paul's sermon
 - d. Stoning of Paul
6. Declaration of what the Holy Spirit did (verses 21-28)

Map of Asia Minor to show Paul's direct missionary journey:

- First, let's notice that there are two Antioch cities – one in Syria and one in Pisidia, which is in Asia Minor.
- Antioch, in Syria, was where the believers of Jesus were first called Christians.

- The first place Paul and others went to the Island of Cyprus, which is Barnabas' home place.
- It's mentioned that Paul's group stopped in Salamis and then Paphos in Cyprus.
- Then they went to Asia Minor and stopped in Attalia, Perga, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and then Derbe.
- Then they come back to Antioch in Syria.
- This trip covers two years from 47 to 49 AD.

Poetic Preview of today's message – Pastor Craig's rhyming verses:

*And now we turn to Paul's first missionary Trip,
It's clear the Spirit is guiding that Ship.
Paul and Barnabas tour many Greek Towns,
Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, Paphos, as they make their Rounds.*

*On to Perga, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium to name a few More,
Each time not knowing what God has in Store.
Also to Lystra, Derbe, Pamphylia, and finally Attalia, in Fact.
Their witness was much more than just placing a Tract.*

*The Antioch church worshiped with fasting and Prayer,
Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, Saul appointed for Care.
Barnabas and Saul the Holy Spirit set apart and sent Off.
To proclaim the word and make believers, but some will Scoff.*

*In the Salamis Jewish synagogues they proclaimed the Word,
Although, "John was with them as helper" is all we Heard.
In Paphos they meet two different Men,
A sorcerer and proconsul, with different responses Then.*

*The proconsul had faith, and in the word Believed,
The sorcerer opposed the faith and actively Deceived.
On him Paul predicted blindness, groping, and Reaching.
The proconsul then believed amazed at the Lord's Teaching.*

*On the Sabbath at the synagogue they were invited to Speak,
Addressing Israelites and Gentiles, their hearing Paul did Seek.
He began to recount how God dealt as in Stephen's Story,
From Egypt, the wilderness, Judges, and King David's Glory.*

*He then shared Jesus and the forgiveness of Sin,
Justification not obtained under Mosaic law Therein.
He then provided warning as the prophets of Old,
To not be scoffers but believe, we are Told.*

*At this the next Sabbath they were invited to Return,
While many followed Paul and Barnabas wanting to Learn.
The following week almost the whole city did Gather,
Jews became jealous and began to Blather.*

*Paul and Barnabas' response was Bold,
They rejected eternal life, salvation, pure words of Gold.
So now to the Gentiles and ends of the earth they must Turn,
Jews not realizing that salvation was nothing to Earn.*

*The Gentiles were glad and honored the Word,
But for many Jews it wasn't the right time to have Heard.
The word of the Lord continued to Spread,
Many now wanting Paul and Barnabas to be Dead.*

*So the two decided they must move On,
Disciples filled with Joy and the Spirit not wanting them Gone.
Again at Iconium their numbers Grew,
As did opposition like a poisoned Stew.*

*But the team of two remained Undeterred,
Speaking boldly for the Lord is how it's Referred.
Then both Jews and Gentiles planned for their Stoning,
So they fled to Lystra and Derbe and away from the Moaning.*

*It's in Lystra we see a lame man Healed,
A witness to the entire crowd, his faith isn't Concealed.
"The gods have come down to us in human Form!"
For Paul and Barnabas this wasn't the Norm.*

*They tore their clothes and rushed into the Crowd,
We too are only human they shouted out Loud.
We are bringing good news so you will turn to the Lord,
The one who with blessings upon you has richly Outpoured.*

*At this Paul was stoned and dragged out for Dead,
But then he got up, and back to the city was Led.
In Derbe we are told a large number of disciples were Won,
All the while bringing glory to the Son.*

*They strengthened the disciples to remain true to the Faith,
Endure many hardships entering the Kingdom Luke does Saith.
Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in each Church,
So upon their departure the disciples weren't left in a Lurch.*

*The first missionary journey now comes to an End,
Returning to Antioch sharing stories of where they had Been.
We are told they remained a long time There,
Showing God opened faith to the Gentiles with much Care.*

Acts 13:1 (NIV), Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.

- The church's leaders were called "prophets and teachers."
- Today we call our church leaders as part of the ministerial leadership team.

- Luke mentions Barnabas first, who had a spirit of generosity.
- The names indicate a multicultural leadership team.
- Notice, it's not one leader there in Antioch, but a team of leaders.
- The Holy Spirit brings people to unity, who may have different viewpoints on a subject.

2) While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

- We will see that the church was changing – it went where the Holy Spirit was guiding them.
- And they responded to where the Holy Spirit was moving them.
- Now today, as we do God's work, we participate – we don't take the lead – the Holy Spirit leads us and inspires us to show us how we can be involved.
- Different people are inspired differently by the Holy Spirit, because, in part, there are differences in people's spiritual gifts.
- Now, we're not sure how the Holy Spirit spoke to the church here.
- It could have been an audible voice or perhaps just a clear sense that came to all the people at the same time.

3) So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

- These actions showed their approval and blessings to Barnabas and Saul for their journey to share the gospel message with the Gentiles.
- It's also interesting to note that while Saul was appointed to be the apostle to the Gentiles, he also went first to the Jews.
- What's also interesting is that God had given this commission to Saul, who will now soon be called Paul, 15 years before he actually began fulfilling this role.
- This reminds us to keep a longer term perspective as God deals with us.

4) The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. 5) When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

- This is John Mark, who is an assistant to Barnabas and Paul.

6) They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus,

- Now, remember that Simon Magas, who earlier came in contact with Philip in Antioch, was a sorcerer but became a believer.
- But this sorcerer had a different attitude.

7) who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.

- It's interesting that the proconsul Sergius Paulus, a Roman, had an attitude of openness, wanting to learn.
- It's obvious that the Holy Spirit was leading him to hear Barnabas and Saul.

8) But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. 9) Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, 10) “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?”

- The sorcerer was working against what Barnabas and Paul were going to do.
- This was a special discernment from the Holy Spirit that came upon Paul to see what was really going on and then to speak boldly to the sorcerer.

11) Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.” Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12) When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

- Once again, here is another miracle happening to gain the attention of a person, so he would respond positively to the teaching of the apostles.

13) From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.

- Luke begins to show us a shift in authority as Paul’s name was placed as the lead person now.
- Scholars are not certain as to why John Mark left the group at this point in time.
- Perhaps he was upset with Paul taking the lead of the group.

14) From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. 15) After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak.”

- Now, this was a practice in the Jewish synagogues to invite traveling Pharisees, which Paul still appeared to be.
- So, next time, Pastor Craig will pick up with the message of Paul which shows that Paul uses scripture when talking to the Jews and uses examples of nature when he speaks to the Gentiles.
- Both techniques got the attention of his different audiences to prepare them to hear the gospel of Jesus.

Closing prayer: