

Fourth Sunday of Easter Reading 1

[Acts 13:14, 43-52](#)

Paul and Barnabas continued on from Perga and reached Antioch in Pisidia.

On the sabbath they entered the synagogue and took their seats.

Many Jews and worshipers who were converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to remain faithful to the grace of God.

On the following sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.

When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and with violent abuse contradicted what Paul said.

Both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first, but since you reject it and condemn yourselves as unworthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.

For so the Lord has commanded us,
*I have made you a light to the Gentiles,
that you may be an instrument of salvation
to the ends of the earth.*"

The Gentiles were delighted when they heard this and glorified the word of the Lord.

All who were destined for eternal life came to believe, and the word of the Lord continued to spread through the whole region.

The Jews, however, incited the women of prominence who were worshipers and the leading men of the city, stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their territory.

So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them, and went to Iconium.

The disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Jerome Biblical Commentary

.14. *Pisidian Antioch*: This town had been built by Seleucus Nikator (300-280 BC) on the frontiers of Pisidia and Phrygia; it actually lay in Phrygia near the Pisidian border. It later became a Roman colony (*Colonia Caesarea*) under Augustus (see Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 5.94). It served as an administrative center of the southern part of the province of Galatia. A considerable number of Jews lived there, as an inscription bears witness (see H. Conzelmann, *Apostelgeschichte*, 75).

Brown, R. E., Fitzmyer, J. A., & Murphy, R. E. 1968]; Published in electronic form by Logos

Research Systems, 1996. *The Jerome Biblical commentary* (electronic ed.). Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ

The reaction to Paul's synagogue discourse is immediately favorable. Paul and Barnabas are invited to speak again; but Luke records no further synagogue discourse (which indicates that vv. 16-37 were intended only as a sample). Instead he reports only further encounters with the Jews.**43. proselytes:** Converts to Judaism, won by Jewish missionary efforts, who submitted to circumcision.**44. the whole city:** To ask how the whole population would have found places in the Jewish synagogue is to miss the point of Luke's story. Luke's purpose is to contrast the widespread enthusiasm of the populace at large with the jealousy of the Jews (cf. 5:17, 14:2; 17:5).**46. first:** The Lucan principle is invoked again (see comment on 17:2). *we now turn to the Gentiles:* This becomes a major theme of Luke's presentation from now on (14:1; 16:13; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 6, 19; 19:8; 28:28).**47. a light to the nations:** This quotation of Is 49:6 ([LXX](#)), a part of a Servant Song, associates Paul as a missionary with the Servant of Yahweh; his preaching of the Word is to be an illumination for the Gentiles (see comment on 1:8).**50. persecution:** Once again the reference to the persecution emphasizes the further spread of the Word (→ 46 above).**51. shook the dust from their feet:** This gesture of repudiation is also found in Lk 9:5; 10:11 (cf. Acts 18:6). *Iconium:* An important town (modern Konya) in central Asia Minor, about 87 mi. ESE of Antioch; it was part of the Roman province of Galatia and capital of the region of Lycaonia (cf. 14:6; 2 Tm 3:11).

(Dupont, J., "Ta hosia David ta pista' (Ac xiii 34 = Is lv 3)," [RB](#) 68 [1961] 91-114. Glombitza, O., "Akta XIII. 15-41. Analyse einer lukanischen Predigt vor Juden," [NTS](#) 5 [1958-59] 306-17.)

[LXX](#) Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT)

[RB](#) *Revue biblique*

[NTS](#) *New Testament Studies*

Brown, R. E., Fitzmyer, J. A., & Murphy, R. E. 1968]; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996. *The Jerome Biblical commentary* (electronic ed.). Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Haydock's Catholic Commentary

Notes & Commentary:

Ver. 1. *Manahen ... foster-brother to Herod, or nursed with the same milk.* (Witham) --- It would appear from his having been brought up with Herod, that he was of noble parentage. He is likewise believed to have been one of the seventy-two disciples. The Latins keep his feast on the 24th of May. (Calmet)

Ver. 2. *As they were ministering to the Lord.*[1] Mr. N. and some others translate, *offering up sacrifice*. There are indeed good grounds to take this to be the true sense, as the Rhemish translators observed, who notwithstanding only put *ministering*, lest, (said they) we should seem to turn it in favour of our own cause, since neither the Latin nor Greek word signifies of itself to *sacrifice*, but any public ministry in the service of God; so the St. Chrysostom says, *when they were preaching*. (Witham) --- *Separate me*. Though Paul and Barnabas are here chosen by the Holy Ghost for the ministry, yet they were to be ordained, consecrated, and

admitted by men; which loudly condemns all those modish and disordered spirits, that challenge and usurp the office of preaching, and other sacred and ecclesiastical functions, without any appointment from the Church. (Bristow) --- Consider, says St. Chrysostom, by whom they are ordained: by Lucius, of Cyrene, and Manahen, rather than by the Spirit. The less honourable these persons are, the more signal is the grace of God."

Ver. 3. *Fasting and prayer, imposing their hands upon them.* By which is clearly expressed, the manner in which the ministers of God were, and are still ordained bishops, priests, deacons in the Church. (Witham) --- Interpreters are much divided in opinion, whether this imposition of hands be a mere deputation to a certain employment, or the sacramental ceremony, by which orders are conferred. Sts. Chrysostom, Leo, &c. are of the latter opinion; nor does it any where appear that St. Paul was bishop before this. Arator, sub-deacon of the Church of Rome, who dedicated in the year 544 his version of *the Acts of the Apostles* into heroic verse to Pope Virgilius, attributes this imposition of hands to St. Peter:

-----Quem mox sacrauit euntem

Imposita Petrus ille manu, cui sermo magistri

Omnia posse dedit.-----

--- See his printed poems in 4to. Venice, an. 1502. Arator was sent in quality of ambassador from Athalaric to the emperor Justinian. --- Following the practice of the apostles, the Church of God ordains a solemn and general fast on the four public times for ordination, the ember days, as a necessary preparation for so great a work, and this St. Leo calls also an apostolical tradition. See St. Leo, serm. ix. de jejun. and ep. lxxxii. chap. 1. and serm. iii. and iv. de jejun. 7. mensis.--- Nor was this fasting a fasting from sin, as some ridiculously affirm, for such fasting was a universal obligation: nor was it left to each one's discretion, as certain heretics maintained. See St. Augustine, hæres. liii.

Ver. 5. *In the synagogues of the Jews, preaching first the gospel to them.* (Witham)

Ver. 6. *A magician ... whose name was Bar-jesu, son of Jesus, or Josue.* In Arabic, *Elymas* is the same as magician. This man did all he could to dissuade the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, from embracing the Christian faith. (Witham) --- Salamina was the capital of the island of Cyprus, and at the eastern extremity, as Paphos was at the western. A. D. 45.

Ver. 9. *Then Saul, who also is Paul.* This is the first time we find the apostle called Paul. Some, therefore, think it was given him when he converted this proconsul, Sergius Paulus. Others, that Saul being a Hebrew word, the Greeks, or rather the Romans, turned it into Paul. (Witham) --- This is the first place in which this apostle is called Paul. He took this name out of respect to the illustrious convert he had made in the person of the proconsul, the governor of the island. (Menochius) --- Or, more probably, his former name, by a small change, was modelled into *Paulus*, which was a sound more adapted to a Roman ear. He begins to bear this name only, when he enters on his mission to the Gentiles. (Calmet)

Ver. 10. *Son of the devil.* Sharp language, when grounded on truth, may be used against those who hinder the conversion of others. St. Chrysostom says, he was struck with this blindness only for a time, to make him enter into himself, and be converted. (Witham)

Ver. 14. *Antioch.* Many cities in Asia Minor bore this name. It is related that Seleucus Nicanor built many, and called them by this name, in honour of his father Antiochus. (Tirinus) --- Pamphylia and Pisidia were two provinces in Asia Minor. --- *The sabbath-day.* Some not only

understand, but even translate, the *first day of the week*: but here is rather meant the Jewish sabbath, as St. Paul went into their synagogues. And in this his first sermon to them, which St. Luke has set down, he speaks nothing that could offend or exasperate the Jews, but honourably of them, to gain them to the Christian faith; he commends in particular David, whose Son they knew the Messiah was to be: and of whom he tells them, that God had given them their *Saviour, Jesus*. He mentions this high eulogium, which God gave of David, Psalm lxxxviii. 21. that he was a man *according to God's heart, who in all things should fulfil his will*, that is, as to the true worship of God; though he fell into some sins, of which he repented, and did penance. (Witham)

Ver. 19. These seven nations are the Chanaanites, the Hethites, the Hevites, the Pherezites, the Gergesites, the Jebusites, and the Amorrhites. (Josue iii. 10. and *alibi*.)

Ver. 20. Chronology only gives about 350 years from the entrance into the land of promise to the end of Samuel's judicial government, who was the last of the judges. (Bible de Vence)

Ver. 24, &c. He then brings the testimony, which John the Baptist gave of Jesus, as it is likely many of them had heard of John, and of the great esteem that all the people had of his virtue and sanctity. He tells them that salvation was offered and sent them by Jesus, against whom the chief of the Jews at Jerusalem obtained of Pilate a sentence, that he should be crucified; but that God *raised him up from the dead the third day*. And we, says he, *publish to you this promise*, the Messiah, promised to our forefathers.

Ver. 33. He then shews them that Jesus was their Messiah, and the Son of God, begotten of his Father from eternity, who rose from the dead, and he applies these words, (Psalm ii. 7.) to prove Christ's resurrection, *thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee*. It is true, these words regard chiefly the eternal generation of Christ, as they are applied by St. Paul, (Hebrews v. 5.) but the resurrection was a necessary consequence of his divinity, since death could have no power over him. St. Paul here also proves Christ's resurrection by the following predictions. (Witham) --- *Second psalm*. The oldest copy reads, first psalm. The difference is merely in words; for the division of the psalter at present is very different from what it formerly was: sometimes a single psalm of ours being divided into many, and many of our divisions making only one, according to the Hebrews. The latter are not even now agreed among themselves on the same division of the psalms. (Calmet) --- Some suppose, that what we call the first psalm was originally looked upon as a preface to the psalter; others, that our first and second psalms united in one. (Mat. Polus.)

Ver. 34. *I will give you the holy things of David sure*. These are the words of the prophet Isaias, iv. ver. 3. According to the Septuagint the sense is, I will faithfully fulfil the promises I made to David. (Challoner)

Ver. 35. *In another place also he saith*, (Psalm xv. 10.) *thou wilt not suffer thy holy one to see corruption*. That is, Christ's body to be corrupted in the grave. See the words of St. Peter, Acts chap. ii. 27. (Witham)

Ver. 36. *After he had served in his generation*. That is, in his life-time, *saw corruption*, or was corrupted in the grave. (Witham)

Ver. 37-38. *Justified*. That your sins being forgiven by the merits of Christ, you may be truly just in the sight of God. (Witham)

Ver. 39. The law of Moses was then imperfect. I shew you its completion, by preaching to you Christ, whom it foretold. You would violate the law of Moses by opposing the new law, to which he leads you. (Tirinus)

Ver. 40. See then that you reject not this divine Saviour, lest what has been denounced by the prophets fall upon your incredulous heads: *I will abandon the holy place which I entrusted to you; I will cease to look upon you as my people; I will transfer my kingdom to the Gentiles.* (Bible de Vence)

Ver. 41. *Ye despisers*[2] of the favours offered you, *behold, wonder, &c.* This citation is out of Habacuc, (chap. i. ver. 5.) according to the Septuagint. The prophet, by these words, foretold to the Jews in his time the evils that would come upon them in their captivity in Chaldea, but St. Paul here applies them at least to the miseries that the incredulous Jews would incur, if they obstinately refused to believe in Christ. (Witham)

Ver. 44. *The whole city.* Not only Jews, but a great many Gentiles, which exasperated the envious Jews. (Witham)

Ver. 48. *As many as were pre-ordained to eternal life*,[3] by the free election, and special mercies, and providence of God. (Witham) --- Some understand this as if it meant, predisposed by their docility, to receive the word of life. But the Fathers unanimously understand it literally of predestination, which is defined by St. Thomas Aquinas, serm. i. qu. 23. a. 1. "The disposition of God, by which he prepares, what he will himself perform, according to his infallible foreknowledge." In other words, it is the manner in which God conducts a reasonable creature to its proper destiny, which is eternal life. In this mystery of the Catholic faith, which cannot be clearly explained to human understanding, because it is a mystery, there are nevertheless several points, which we know for certain. 1st. Though it is certain, that this decree of the Almighty is infallible, and must have its effect, yet it is far removed from the blasphemy of Calvinists, who pretend that it destroys free-will, and therefore removes all motives of exertion to good works. 2nd. For it is a point of Catholic faith, that this foreknowledge of the Almighty no ways interferes with man's liberty, but leaves him still a perfectly free agent, and therefore responsible for his actions. 3rd. It is likewise decreed by the Council of Trent, that no one can certainly know that he is of the number of the predestined, without a special revelation to that effect. These are the most essential points, which it concerns us to know of this doctrine. As to the consequences which may be drawn from these positions, it were better for us to submit our understandings to the obedience of faith, than entangle ourselves in a maze of abstruse errors, far removed from our comprehension. Would that this sober line of conduct were pursued by many moderns, who at present talk and write so much on this subject, and to such little purpose. How excellently well does the great genius of the Latin Church, St. Augustine, say: *Melius est dubitare de occultis, quam litigare de occultis!* How much wiser and better is it to confess our ignorance on mysteries, than idly to dispute on mysteries! (lib. viii. de Gen. ad litt. chap. 5.)

Ver. 51. *Shaking off the dust, &c.* See the Annotations, Matthew x. 14.

[1] Ver. 2. Ministrantibus illis, *leitourgounton de auton*. Erasmus translates, Sacrificantibus, but St. Chrysostom, *toutesti keruttonton*, prædicantibus.

[2] Ver. 41. Habacuc i. 5. In the Latin text, and according to the Hebrew, aspicietis in gentibus: but in the Septuagint and Greek here, *idete kataphronetai*.

[3] Ver. 48. Præordinati, *tetagmenoi*, on which St. Chrysostom says, *toutesti aphorismenoi*, prædefiniti.

Matthew Henry's Precise Commentary (non Catholic)

Verses 42–52

The Jews opposed the doctrine the apostles preached; and when they could find no objection, they blasphemed Christ and his gospel. Commonly those who begin with contradicting, end with blaspheming. But when adversaries of Christ's cause are daring, its advocates should be the bolder. And while many judge themselves unworthy of eternal life, others, who appear less likely, desire to hear more of the glad tidings of salvation. This is according to what was foretold in the Old Testament. What light, what power, what a treasure does this gospel bring with it! How excellent are its truths, its precepts, its promises! Those came to Christ whom the Father drew, and to whom the Spirit made the gospel call effectual, Ro 8:30. As many as were disposed to eternal life, as many as had concern about their eternal state, and aimed to make sure of eternal life, believed in Christ, in whom God has treasured up that life, and who is the only Way to it; and it was the grace of God that wrought it in them. It is good to see honourable women devout; the less they have to do in the world, the more they should do for their own souls, and the souls of others: but it is sad, when, under colour of devotion to God, they try to show hatred to Christ. And the more we relish the comforts and encouragements we meet with in the power of godliness, and the fuller our hearts are of them, the better prepared we are to face difficulties in the profession of godliness.

Henry, M., & Scott, T. 1997. *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*. Logos Research Systems: Oak Harbor, WA

Daily Bible Study Series (non Catholic)

AN ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY FOR A SICK MAN

Acts 13:14, 15

From Perga they went through the country and arrived at Pisidian Antioch. They went into the synagogue on the first day of the week and sat down. After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent to them with this message, "Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation to say to the people say on."

ONE of the amazing things about *Acts* is the heroism that is passed over in a sentence. Pisidian Antioch stood on a plateau 3,600 feet above sea-level. To get to it Paul and Barnabas would have to cross the Taurus range of mountains by one of the hardest roads in Asia Minor, a road which was also notorious for robbers and brigands.

But we are bound to ask, why did they not preach in Pamphylia? Why did they leave the coast with the word unproclaimed and set out on that difficult and dangerous way? Not so very long afterwards Paul wrote a letter to the people of Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra

and Derbe. It is the letter called the Letter to the Galatians for all these towns were in the Roman province of Galatia. In it he says, "You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first" (Galatians 4:13). So when he came to Galatia he was a sick man. Now Paul had a thorn in the flesh which in spite of much prayer remained with him (2 Corinthians 12:7, 8). Many guesses have been made as to what that thorn was—or *stake* as it probably should be translated. The oldest tradition is that Paul suffered from prostrating headaches. And the most likely explanation is that he was the victim of a virulent recurring malaria fever which haunted the low coastal strip of Asia Minor. A traveller says that the headache characteristic of this malaria was like a red-hot bar thrust through the forehead; and another likens it to a dentist's drill boring through a man's temple. It is most likely that this malaria attacked Paul in low-lying Pamphylia and that he had to make for the plateau country to shake it off.

Note that it never struck him to turn back. Even when his body was aching Paul never ceased to drive on and to be an adventurer for Christ.

The Acts of the Apostles. 2000, c1976 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. The Westminster Press: Philadelphia

TROUBLE AT ANTIOCH

Acts 13:42–52

As they were going out, they kept asking that these things should be spoken to them on the next Sabbath. When the synagogue service had spoken up many of the Jews and worshipping proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas. They talked with them and tried to persuade them to abide in the grace of God.

On the next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of God. When the Jews saw the crowds they were filled with envy and they argued against what Paul said, making blasphemous statements. Paul and Barnabas, using the boldest language, said, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you, but since you reject it and since you have proved that you are unfit for eternal life, look you, we turn to the Gentiles; for thus has the Lord enjoined us, 'I have appointed you for a light to the Gentiles so that you may be for salvation even to the utmost bound of the world.'" When the Gentiles heard this they were glad and they glorified the word of God; and all who were appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was carried throughout the whole district. But the Jews incited the devout women who were women of position and the chief men of the city and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas; and they ejected them from their bounds. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

ANTIOCH in Pisidia was an inflammable city. It was a very mixed place. It had been founded by one of Alexander the Great's successors about 300 B. C. Jews very often flooded into new cities in order to get in on the ground floor, to use a modern phrase. Since Antioch was a road centre it had become a Roman colony in 6 B. C. In the population there were therefore Greeks, Jews, Romans and not a few of the native Phrygians who were an emotional and unstable people. It was the kind of population where a spark could cause a conflagration.

The one thing that infuriated the Jews was that any of God's privileges could be for the uncircumcised Gentiles. So they took action. At this time the Jewish religion had a special attraction for women. In nothing was the ancient world more lax than in sexual morality.

Family life was rapidly breaking down. The worst sufferers were women. The Jewish religion preached a purity of ethic and cleanness of life. Round the synagogues gathered many women, often of high social position, who found in this teaching just what they longed for. Many of these women became proselytes; still more were God-fearers. The Jews persuaded them to incite their husbands, who were often men in influential positions, to take steps against the Christian preachers. The inevitable result was persecution, Antioch became unsafe for Paul and Barnabas and they had to go.

The Jews were intent on keeping their privileges to themselves. From the beginning the Christians saw their privileges as something to be shared. As has been said, "The Jews saw the heathen as chaff to be burned; Jesus saw them as a harvest to be reaped for God." And his Church must have a like vision of a world for Christ.

The Acts of the Apostles. 2000, c1976 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. The Westminster Press: Philadelphia