



This week's Triennial Torah reading can be found at:

https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf

Lev 5	Jer 26-28	Prov 17	Acts 13-14
-------	-----------	---------	------------

Leviticus 5

Trespass Offerings and Accompanying Regulations

Though the trespass offering is sometimes called a sin offering (compare 5:6-9), there is a general distinction to be made between sin and trespass. Some have argued that sin is against God while trespass is against fellow man. But the Bible makes it clear that it is possible to commit trespass against God (compare verses 15-19). What then, is the difference between sin and trespass? Jukes explains, "With our shortsightedness, our inability to see beyond the surface, we naturally look at what man does rather than at what he is; and while we are willing to allow that he does evil, we perhaps scarcely think that he is evil. But God judges what we are as well as what we do; our sin, the sin in us, as much as our trespasses. In His sight sin in us, our evil nature [compare Romans 7], is as clearly seen as our trespasses, which are but the fruit of that nature. He needs not wait to see the fruit put forth. He knows the root is evil, and so will be the buddings.... Thus in the Sin-offering no particular act of sin is mentioned, but a certain person is seen standing confessedly as a sinner: in the Trespass-offering certain acts are enumerated, and the person never appears. In the Sin-offering I see a person who needs atonement, offering an oblation for himself as a sinner: in the Trespass-offering I see certain acts which need atonement, and the offering offered for these particular offences...."

"Of course, in the Sin-offering, though the man is seen rather than his acts, proof must needs be brought that he is a sinner. But let it be noticed that this is done, not by the enumeration of certain trespasses, but simply by a reference to the law; which, though no particular transgression is mentioned, is said to have been neglected or broken" (pp. 148-149). Of course, there will be particular acts to show that the person is guilty of sin. Yet the sin offering does not atone for these specifically—it atones for sinful nature in general, which stands in rebellion against God (compare Romans 8:7). "In the Trespass-offering, on the other hand, it is exactly the reverse. We have

nothing but one detail after another of particular wrongs and offences; the first class being of wrongs done against God, the other of wrongs against our neighbor” (pp. 149-150). The trespass offerings, then, are to atone for specific sinful acts. It is these specific acts of trespass that require restitution, as detailed in this section.

Jeremiah on Trial for His Life (Jeremiah 26)

The incidents described in this chapter take place at the beginning of Jehoiakim’s reign—thus around 608 B.C. Some commentators believe this chapter is parallel with chapter 7 because in both places God has Jeremiah proclaim at the temple the object lesson of Shiloh. If they are the same incident, then chapters 7 through 10 should fall here in time order. And that may be. However, the wording of chapter 7 could imply that Josiah had not yet destroyed Tophet, the place of child sacrifice, which would lend support to the chronological arrangement followed in the Bible Reading Program. Jeremiah, therefore, may be essentially repeating a proclamation he gave more than 13 years earlier (as he likewise later repeats some of the statements concerning Tophet in chapter 19).

The reference to “all the cities of Judah” coming to worship (26:2) indicates that this was most likely one of the nation’s annual festivals. The essence of Jeremiah’s address to the people was that Judah needed to repent or Jerusalem would suffer the same fate as Shiloh. As explained in the highlights for Jeremiah 7, even though Shiloh had been the resting place of the tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant, God had allowed it to be destroyed. The people were at this time still placing too much trust in the temple and Jerusalem and their forms of worship. God, they reasoned, would never allow His holy temple and city to be destroyed. But they were wrong.

Verse 3 of chapter 26 highlights an important principle found throughout Scripture. Even though God threatens dire consequences, He is prepared to relent if the people respond and turn from their evil ways (see 18:7-8; 1 Kings 21:29; Joel 2:13; Jonah 3:10). If they don’t, the punishment would fall. Jerusalem would be made a “curse to all nations”—that is, destroyed to provide an example to all nations (Jeremiah 26:6).

The religious leaders then stirred up the assembled worshipers against Jeremiah. They basically arrested him, telling him he would receive the death penalty for what they saw as his blasphemy in saying God’s temple would be destroyed. Jesus would later suffer similar reaction from religious leaders over the many proclamations He made that they perceived as a threat to their continuing power, including His declaration that the temple would be destroyed (see Luke 21:5-6; 22:2).

In Jeremiah’s case, a hearing was convened before “all the princes and all the people” (Jeremiah 26:11-12), which may have denoted a bicameral national council or high court. The “princes” here didn’t necessarily belong to the royal family, even though they came from the king’s house. The Hebrew word from which the word “princes” is translated “may denote leaders, chieftains.... [The word] also appears frequently as a word representing royal rulers and officials, no doubt of sundry ranks and titles.... Thus Jeremiah 26:11 speaks of the princes of Judah, and

the context (vv. 10-16) depicts them as occupying the 'king's house,' to possessing judicial power, ordering Jeremiah to die or to be spared" (Harris, Archer and Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1980, Vol. 2, p. 884). Verse 17 says that certain "elders of the land" addressed the "assembly of the people." Perhaps these elders were members of this assembly, serving as clan or town representatives.

"Jeremiah gave a threefold defense on his own behalf. First, he announced that the Lord had sent him to deliver the message they had heard. He was not a false prophet. Second, he announced that his message was conditional. If the people would reform their ways (cf. 3:12; 7:3) God promised not to bring about the disaster. Thus Jeremiah's message did offer some hope for the city. Third, Jeremiah warned that if they put him to death they would bring the guilt of innocent blood on themselves. They would be guilty in God's sight of murdering an innocent man" (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, note on Jeremiah 26:12-17).

While this may have caused some of them a measure of concern, the reaction of the officials in verse 16 is based more on legal technicality than on any belief in what Jeremiah was saying. A prophet could not be put to death unless he spoke in the name of another god or his prophecy turned out to be false. The latter could not as yet be determined. And the former had not been committed, as Jeremiah had spoken in the name of the true God of Israel. So Jeremiah seemed to be off the hook. But what really tipped the scales in his favor was the citing of a precedent by certain elders in verse 17—that of Micah's proclamation of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple given more than 90 years earlier, in which King Hezekiah, the supreme judge of the time, did not have Micah executed. "This is really a fine defense, and the argument was perfectly conclusive. Some think that it was Ahikam [mentioned in verse 24] who undertook the prophet's defense" (*Adam Clarke's Commentary*, note on verse 17).

The chapter ends with a brief story of another prophet of God named Urijah (or Uriah), mentioned only here in Scripture. Jehoiakim had sought to put him to death, so he fled to Egypt. But being a vassal of Egypt at this time, Judah had extradition rights and Urijah was brought home to his execution. This episode may have been inserted here to show that even though Jeremiah's case seemed pretty ironclad, the state still posed a danger—as a corrupt king such as Jehoiakim could quite easily see to it that a prophet was executed. In any event, Jeremiah was saved with the help of Ahikam, which may refer to the preceding court defense or perhaps the prophet actually taking refuge with him.

Interestingly, Ahikam was the son of Shaphan, who had served under faithful King Josiah. "The family of Shaphan played an important part in the final years of Judah.... Shaphan was King Josiah's secretary who reported the finding of the Law to Josiah (2 Kings 22:3-13).

Shaphan had at least four sons—three of whom were mentioned in a positive way by Jeremiah (Ahikam, Gemariah, and Elasah). The fourth son, Jaazaniah, was the 'black sheep' of the family; his presence among the idol-worshippers in the temple caught Ezekiel by surprise (Ezek. 8:11).

Ahikam's son, Gedaliah, was appointed governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 b.c." (Bible Knowledge Commentary, note on verse 24).

The Yoke of Babylon (Jeremiah 27-28)

Jeremiah 27:1 says, "In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah..." Most commentators take "Jehoiakim" to be an ancient copyist error in the Hebrew Masoretic Text, believing it should actually say "Zedekiah," as in some other early manuscripts. It is true that chapter 27 is clearly set in the early part of Zedekiah's reign, his fourth year to be exact, and not Jehoiakim's (compare verses 3, 12; 28:1).

However, another explanation could be that the chapter break between Jeremiah 26 and 27 occurs in the wrong place. Jeremiah 26 is set "in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah" (26:1). Perhaps the last verse of chapter 26 should read, "Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah." The first verse of chapter 27 would then read, "This word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying..." While this may seem unlikely to some, we cannot rule it out as a possibility.

Moving into the substance of the chapter, we encounter a hotbed of political plotting during this fourth year of Zedekiah (594-593 B.C.). "Emissaries from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon met in Jerusalem to plan revolution [against Babylon]. In the Jewish court, pro-Egyptian conspirators probably looked to Egypt for help, especially with the accession of the new king, Psammetichus II (594-589 b.c.e.). Jeremiah [according to God's direction] opposed rebellion, arguing that Judah's only hope was to remain a vassal to the Babylonians" (HarperCollins Study Bible, note on 27:1-28:17).

God here again gives Jeremiah a seemingly strange, but dramatic, task to perform. The prophet is to make and then don "bonds and yokes"—and to give these to the gathered envoys for delivery to their national leaders as part of God's message to them that they were all to submit to Babylon. "The yoke is that used by two oxen to pull a heavy load. Normally, yokes consisted of a crossbar with leather or rope nooses or rods of wood that would be placed around the animals' necks. Attached to the crossbar was a wooden shaft for pulling the load (see Deut 21.3; 1 Sam 6.7; 11.5; 1 Kings 19.19). For the yoke as a symbol of servitude [Jeremiah 27:8, 12], see also 1 Kings 12.1-11" (note on Jeremiah 27:2).

"The task assigned to Jeremiah required great faith, as it was sure to provoke alike his own countrymen and the foreign ambassadors and their kings, by a seeming insult, at the very time that all were full of confident hopes grounded on the confederacy" (Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary, note on verse 3).

God's message through His prophet is intended to make it plain to the leaders of the surrounding nations that they wield power only so long as He allows it. He would promote Nebuchadnezzar

and subjugate these leaders and their peoples under him. Yet in this exaltation of the Babylonian emperor, it is clear that God remains ultimately supreme. He even calls Nebuchadnezzar “My Servant” (verse 6). “With all of his military might and conquests, the king of Babylon was still a servant of the God of Israel, carrying out the Lord’s purposes— namely the judgment of Judah [and these other nations]” (Nelson Study Bible, note on verses 6-7).

In verse 8, the yoke symbol is explained to the emissaries: submit to Babylon or else, the alternative being punishment through the dreadful three-fold cycle of sword, famine and pestilence. Jeremiah then delivers to them a serious warning not to listen to prophets or various occult practitioners who were saying the opposite (verses 9-11). He then proclaims the same message to King Zedekiah, the priests and all the people he encounters as he wanders about wearing the yoke (verses 12-16).

Jeremiah then issues a challenge to the false prophets. Nebuchadnezzar had taken much of the temple furnishings in his prior invasions of Jerusalem (see Daniel 1:1-2; 2 Kings 24:11-13). The false prophets were claiming these would soon be brought back. But Jeremiah says “the vessels which are left” in the temple would also be taken to Babylon in the coming destruction of the city (Jeremiah 27:16-22). Jeremiah challenges the false prophets to intercede with God to try to stop his words from coming to pass and to bring to pass the things they have announced. This would prove who spoke for God.

It may not be quickly noticed but Jeremiah does offer words of hope and encouragement in the midst of this challenge and pronouncement of calamity. In verse 22, he says that Babylon would ultimately be punished and that the temple furnishings would then be brought back as part of Judah’s restoration. Surprisingly, these items were apparently well accounted for in Babylon, being returned in specific numbers when the Persians later took over (see Ezra 1:7-11). It is likely that Daniel played a part in the care and cataloging of them.

Hananiah’s Lies (Jeremiah 27-28)

Jeremiah 28 introduces the prophet Hananiah, who contradicts Jeremiah, falsely claiming that he speaks for God. “Hananiah had the temerity to use the same introductory formula as Jeremiah, implying a claim for inspiration similar to his. The form of the Hebrew verb *sabarti* (‘I will break’) in verse 2 is the prophetic perfect, which emphasizes the certainty of a future event or promise. The yoke refers to the one Jeremiah had just made. Flatly contradicting Jeremiah’s God-given counsel of submission, Hananiah predicted a return of the captives and the temple vessels within two years, emphasizing the time element by putting it first (v. 3)” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary, note on Jeremiah 28:3) This was unbelievably bold—and utterly foolish.

Jeremiah responds to Hananiah’s message of Judah’s imminent national restoration by essentially saying, “Would that it were true!” (compare verses 5-6). But, he continues, this theme of immediate peace and prosperity runs contrary to the long tradition of the messages of God’s prophets (compare verses 7-8). If a purported prophet of God comes along saying everything’s just fine and

predicting “smooth sailing,” the reaction should be as Jeremiah’s: “We’ll have to see it to believe it” (compare verse 9; Deuteronomy 18:21-22).

(We experience a similar situation today, with false ministers speaking a different message from that of God’s true servants. Only those close to God can determine who His ministers are. Thankfully, most people today have access to His Word and can check what religious teachers say against the Bible—see Acts 17:11.)

Hananiah, angry at the rebuke, breaks Jeremiah’s yoke and blasphemously makes his own “sign” out of it, issuing another false prophecy in God’s name. His announcement “reversed every statement by Jeremiah and advanced the cause of rebellion against Babylon by Judah and the surrounding nations, something King Zedekiah had desired all along” (Nelson Study Bible, note on verses 10-11). But Hananiah and those who trust in him soon learn an important lesson about pretending to represent the great Creator God. Hananiah might have broken the wooden yoke on Jeremiah’s neck, but those who embraced his message would soon suffer under a figurative yoke of “iron,” which is unbreakable (verses 13-15). Hananiah, in fact, learns that he won’t even be around long enough to have a yoke on his own neck—except the yoke of death (verse 16).

Remarkably, though Jeremiah said Hananiah would die “this year” (same verse), God doesn’t wait the whole year to fulfill the decree. Instead, the false prophet dies just two months later (compare verses 1, 17). “There was no way the people and priests of Judah, who witnessed the confrontation that took place (28:1), could avoid linking Jeremiah’s prediction with Hananiah’s demise. God shouts out His warnings” (Bible Reader’s Companion, note on verse 17). Yet the stubborn leaders and wayward populace refused to face reality—that all of Jeremiah’s other prophecies were true—and humbly repent.

The false prophets of Jeremiah’s day were powerful and influential, as we can see. Again, even today we need to be wary of false prophets—false preachers—who appear to be true servants of God (Matthew 7:15; 2 Corinthians 11:13; 1 John 4:1). The apostle Peter warns: “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies...and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways.... By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction will not slumber” (2 Peter 2:1-3). The Bible even foretells the rise of a great false prophet who will deceive the world at the end of the present age (see Revelation 19:20; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12).

Proverbs 17

Second Part of Major Solomonic Collection Cont’d

34. Remarks on Behavior (17:2-8)

“TYPE: RANDOM PROVERBS....Although these verses contain the hint of an inclusio [as ‘wise’ in verse 2 and ‘prosper’ in verse 8 are both translated from the Hebrew word *skal*, referring to wise

perception and dealing leading to success] and repeat certain themes and terms [family matters (verses 2, 6), divine judgment (verses 3, 5), the lips (verses 4, 7)], no specific pattern is apparent” (NAC).

Verse 2 shows that “ability and character can overcome the disadvantages of birth. At the same time, those born to advantage can forfeit their birthright through immorality and incompetence” (note on verse 2). We don’t have to stay where we are in life. Through wisdom we can rise above our circumstances. Conversely, through foolish disgrace, we can lose what we have.

Verse 8 apparently says that a gift given to others is very valuable to the one giving it as it leads him to success. This is not the same as Christ’s general maxim that “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). The point in Proverbs 17:8 is not altruistic giving generally but a strategy of using gifts for gain. This could be a mere observation about the power of bribes (compare NIV), but it need not be so. While bribery to pervert justice is condemned (verse 23), other proverbs note that there is a proper social context for giving gifts to promote good relations and open doors (see 18:16; 19:6; Luke 16:9). It was proper in ancient times to come before kings with gifts and perhaps more mundane occasions called for this as well. Also recall Jacob’s giving of gifts to Esau to placate him and reconcile with him (Genesis 32:13-21).

35. Four Conjoined Collections (17:9-26)

“The proverbs of vv. 9-16 have many interconnections, but it is difficult to tell if any specific pattern is intended. It appears, however, that these verses divide into four *inclusio* or *chiasmus* collections (vv. 9-13, vv. 14-19, vv. 20-22, and vv. 23-26) on the basis of thematic parallels or catchwords. The connections among the proverbs are as follows:

“THE SOCIAL AND ANTISOCIAL. Type: *Chiasmus* (17:9-13). This section describes those who are or are not sociable and easy to live with. The implied warning is that one should beware of antisocial, incorrigible, or vindictive behavior in oneself or others” (NAC).

Verse 9 on covering a transgression recalls 10:12.

Verse 11, as *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* notes, shows that “those bent on rebellion will surely meet with severe retribution.... That retribution will be sent in the form of a [‘cruel messenger’]...(mal’ak ‘akzari). This expression could refer to a pitiless messenger that the king would send; but it also could refer to storms, pestilence, or any misfortune that was God’s messenger of retribution.”

QUICK TO QUARREL. Type: *Inclusio* (17:14-19). The boundaries of this text are set by the *inclusio* on quarreling in vv. 14,19” (NAC).

Regarding verse 16, *The NIV Application Commentary* states: “The point of this satiric proverb is two-sided: It is folly to think one can buy wisdom since it is a gift of God and must be acquired through study (2:1-6), and even if wisdom could be bought, the fools lacks the sense (literally, ‘heart’) to know what to do with it. The sharp juxtaposition of having money and lacking sense

makes it clear that heart, both as 'desire' and 'mind' (NRSV), is the prerequisite for learning wisdom. Some see a dunce showing up at the door of a teacher with fee in hand, but evidence for this in Israel is lacking. Rather, we see a fool who does not know what to do with good things like money, responsibility, or even a proverb (26:6-9)!" (note on 17:16).

Speaking of both quarrelling and money, we may note that money can lie at the root of tension between friends, as verse 18 warns about. The caution about becoming surety for a friend, such as in cosigning a loan, recalls 6:1-5 (and 11:15 warned against becoming surety as well, there in the case of a stranger as well as generally). The proverb does not mean you should never help out a friend in this way if you are well off and the friend defaulting would not hurt you or the friendship. But you had better know what you're getting into. And odds are that this is generally an unwise course.

Verse 19 speaks of one who "exalts his gate" seeking or inviting destruction. The Soncino Commentary notes on verse 19 that "his gate" is literally "'his opening' which the Jewish commentators apply to the mouth (cf. Ps [119:]130), understanding the phrase as 'talking big, in loud and arrogant language.' Another explanation is: living in an ostentatious manner which attracts envious attention and can easily be the cause of ruin" (note on Proverbs 17:19).

HEART AND FAMILY. Type: Inclusio (17:20-22)" (NAC). The foolish and scoffing son of verse 21 is probably one with a deceitful heart and perverse tongue as in verse 20? a source of great sorrow to parents, in line with verse 25 and the opening proverb of Solomon's core collection (10:1).

Proverbs 17:22 shows, in contrast, that a happy heart is the key to a full and healthy life. We may observe, too, that this proverb indirectly speaks well of the use of medicine. For consider that it does not say that a merry heart does good like a medicine poisons you. Rather, it implies that a merry heart does good like a medicine does good. This is not to say that everything labeled medicine is good for you, but clearly the use of some medicines promotes the wellness of the body as does staying happy.

JUSTICE AND FAMILY. Type: Chiasmus (17:23-26)... Verse 25 would appear to have nothing to do with bribery and the miscarriage of justice [making it an exception to the other proverbs in this short section], but with v. 21 it provides a link to the previous text [see again the chart on the four conjoined collections here]. The 'foolish son grieves his father' verses in the contexts of vv. 20-22 and vv. 23-26 thus serve a didactic [teaching] purpose; they urge the reader (the implied 'son') not to become the evil man described in these verses [of all four conjoined collections] and thus not to grieve either his real father or the implied father behind the Book of Proverbs" (NAC).

36. Appropriate Use of Words (17:27?18:4)

"TYPE: INCLUSIO AND PARALLEL... Sometimes the Book of Proverbs seems to value nothing so much as appropriate words. This is because it views words as the index to the soul. By paying attention to what a person says (and indeed to how much he or she says), one can determine

whether a person is wise or a fool. Words are the fruit that show the quality of the heart. A parallel structure (17:28?18:3) is imbedded in an inclusio (17:27; 18:4).

The value of being reserved in speech (17:27) is bolstered by the fact that “even an imbecile can appear intelligent if he can avoid putting his foot in his mouth, but this is all but impossible for a fool (17:28:18:2 [compare 15:2])” (note on 17:27?18:4).

Acts 13-14

Chapter 13

We pick up this week in Antioch and the scene is an Assembly of believing prophets and teachers, namely: Barnabas, Simon (called Niger), Lucius of Cyrene, Manahem, and Paul. They are fasting and praying, when they are visited by the Holy Spirit and they are told “separate unto Me Barnabas and Paul for the work for which I have called them” v.2. The believers laid hands on them and prayed over them and Paul and Barnabas went out from there.

Paul and Barnabas sail to Cyprus from the port city of Seleukeia where they preached the Word of God to the Jews in Salamais where John was also there. They preached the Word of God throughout all the island to Pamphos. Barnabas and Paul ran into a Proconsul there who desired to hear the Word of God whose name was Sergius Paulus and so he sent for Paul and Barnabas to come and speak to him. However, there was also a magician there Elumas (his Jewish name was Bar-Joshua) who was against Paul and Barnabas and tried to steal the word which had been delivered to the Proconsul. At this, Paul reprimands this Elumas so greatly to the extent that Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, blinded this man! At this... the Proconsul believed because of the miracle.

Who was this Elumas (Elymus, Bar Jesus)? From the International Standard Bible

Encyclopedia: BAR-JESUS

bar-je'-zus (Bariesous): “A certain sorcerer (Greek magos), a false prophet, a Jew” whom Paul and Silas found at Paphos in Cyprus in the train of Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul (Acts 13:6). The proconsul was “a man of understanding” (literally, a prudent or sagacious man), of an inquiring mind, interested in the thought and magic of his times. This characteristic explains the presence of a magos among his staff and his desire to hear Barnabas and Saul. Bar-Jesus was the magician’s Jewish name. Elymas is said to be the interpretation of his name (Acts 13:8). It is the Greek transliteration of an Aramaic or Arabic word equivalent to Greek magos.

From Arabic `alama, “to know” is derived `alim, “a wise” or “learned man.” In Koran, Sur note 106, Moses is called Sachir `alim, “wise magician.” Elymas therefore means “sorcerer” (compare Simon “Magus”).??The East was flooding the Roman Empire with its new and wonderful religious systems, which, culminating in neo-Platonism, were the great rivals of Christianity both in their cruder and in their more strictly religious forms. Superstition was extremely prevalent, and wonder-workers of all kinds, whether imposters or honest exponents of some new faith, found their task

easy through the credulity of the public. Babylonia was the home of magic, for charms are found on the oldest tablets. "Magos" was originally applied to the priests of the Persians who overran Babylonia, but the title degenerated when it was assumed by baser persons for baser articles Juvenal (vi.562, etc.), Horace (Sat. i0.2.1) and other Latin authors mention Chaldean astrologers and impostors, probably Babylonian Jews. Many of the Magians, however, were the scientists of their day, the heirs of the science of Babylon and the lore of Persia, and not merely pretenders or conjurers (see MAGIC). It may have been as the representative of some oriental system, a compound of "science" and religion, that Bar-Jesus was attached to the train of Sergius Paulus.??Both Sergius and Elymas had heard about the teaching of the apostles, and this aroused the curiosity of Sergius and the fear of Elymas. When the apostles came, obedient to the command of the proconsul, their doctrine visibly produced on him a considerable impression. Fearing lest his position of influence and gain would be taken by the new teachers, Elymas "withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith" (Acts 13:8). Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, worked a wonder on the wonder-worker by striking him blind with his word, thus revealing to the proconsul that behind him was Divine power. Sergius Paulus believed, "being astonished at the teaching of the Lord" (Acts 13:12).??S. F. Hunter

After this, there seems to be a small group traveling around with Paul and Barnabas, and they travel through Pamphulia and then to another Antioch in Pisidia. They go into a congregation there on the Sabbath day, sit, and listen to the Torah and Prophets being read before the people. After this was done, the leaders of the congregation – probably knowing they had some visitors, especially Paul – one of the... if not THE most well-known Pharisee of the day, asked them if they would like to speak to the people.

Paul begins to preach the history of the Israelites to all the congregation from regular men, to Israelite men, and then anyone fearing God. He spoke to them of the choosing of the Nation of Israel by God long ago through their fathers, how he delivered them from Egypt, how He sustained them in the Wilderness for forty years. He spoke of the seven nations that were destroyed and displaced by God for them, so that He delivered to them the land He had promised as an inheritance. How for four hundred and fifty years, they had judges until they asked for a king and He gave them Saul. He reviewed how Saul was removed by God and how He rose up David – a man after His own heart who would finally do His will in ruling over the people of Israel.

Then Paul teaches some and reminds others about the promise and what has happened in v23-24, "From this one's seed, according to the promise, Elohim raised up for Israel a Savior, Yahshua, after John had first proclaimed the immersion of repentance to all the people of Israel, before His coming." Paul recounts the words of John and reminded them that he said, "Who do you suppose I am? I am not He. But see, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to lose." V25 He tells them that unto them, this Word of deliverance has been sent.

Paul told the people how it came to be that Yahshua, the promised Savior, was put to death by the people, rulers of Jerusalem, and Pilot, who had no understanding of who He was even though the Prophets were read to them every Sabbath. He preached to them the Good News, that God raised Yahshua from the dead and many witnesses saw Him raised – from Galilee to Jerusalem. He proceeds to tell them of the fulfilled promises of God through the Word, the Prophets, and the Psalms with this Yahshua who has been raised from the dead, that through this One forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to them. He also admonishes them to not be like those men in Jerusalem who rejected Yahshua as the promised One and became the fulfillment of judgment of God spoken through the prophets.

The people were so joyful at this Good News, the Jews and the new converts followed Paul and Barnabas and urged them to continue speaking and to stay for another Sabbath. The next Sabbath meeting, so many came to hear the word, almost the whole city. At this, the Jewish leaders became jealous, because of the crowds, they began opposing Paul and speaking evil against him. To this Paul says, v.46 “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first, but since you thrust it away, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, we turn to the gentiles.” The Word continued to be spread across that region until the Jewish leaders (Pharisees) were able to gather the Nobles, Chiefs, Politicians of the city together against Paul and Barnabas and had them thrown out of the city. Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet and continued on to Ikonion – with all that had heard and believed, rejoicing in the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 14

In Ikonion, many of both the Jews and Greeks believed in the congregations. Even though some of the Jews who did not believe stirred up strife between the brothers, Paul and Barnabas stayed their a while doing signs and wonders by the Set Apart Spirit. After a little bit, the city became divided between those who did believe and those who did not believe the Good News, until such a time Paul and Barnabas caught wind of a plan being forged by the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles (with the politicians) to stone them, they left the city and went to Lustra and Derbe to take the Good News there.

In Lustra and Derbe, Paul was able to heal a crippled man from birth who believed when he heard the Good News preached. At this, the people of the area began to say, v11 “The mighty ones have become like men and come down to us!” Thinking that Paul and Barnabas were gods themselves. They called Barnabas Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes. The pagan priest even brought them gifts, but Paul and Barnabas were appalled, and they tore their cloths in protest! Paul and Barnabas cried aloud “Men, why are you doing this? We also are men with the same nature as you, bringing to you the Good News: to turn from these worthless matters to the living God, who made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all that is in them, who in past generations allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways.” But the people did not listen to their words, and the Pharisees came and swayed the crowd such that the crowd began to stone Paul and Barnabas, and dragged Paul out of the city nearly dead. After that, they left that city.

They went from there to Derbe proper, continued preaching the Good News and many believed there. They returned back the way they came, through Lustra, Ikonion, and Antioch, encouraging and strengthening all the believers they had come in contact with previously on their journey. They appointed elders in every assembly with prayer and fasting, and committed them to our Master Yahshua. They travelled through Pisidia, Pamphulia, Perge, and Attaleia and back to Antioch where they started. They spoke of all that had happened through the Power of God and that Elohim had opened the door of belief to the gentiles.