

## **Enjoy Acts: Faith in Action**

### **Session 6 – Ends of the Earth: Paul's Mission in Asia (Chapter 13-15)**

#### **The Mission Begins (Acts 13:1-12)**

- As the multi-ethnic church at Antioch was fasting and worshiping, the Holy Spirit told them to send Barnabas and Saul on mission – the reason Saul was saved.
- They preach across the island of Cypress.
- After a powerful spiritual encounter with a Jewish magician, the highest Roman official on the island becomes a Christian.

#### **Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:13-52)**

- They arrive in modern-day Turkey and continue their pattern of first preaching in synagogues, then preaching to Gentiles.
- Paul delivered a synagogue sermon explaining how all of Jewish history led up to Jesus the Savior, then presented the Gospel.
- Many Jews and Gentiles were quite interested, but Jewish leaders stirred up persecution.
- Whenever Paul and Barnabas are driven away they move on, but in each case disciples have been made and churches have been planted.

### **Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Home (Acts 14)**

- The pattern of preaching, planting, and persecution continues through several more cities in the region: Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.
- In Lystra, the people mistook Barnabas and Paul for Greek gods – they use this to present the Gospel, beginning by explaining that there is One True God Who created all things.
- Paul is stoned (almost) to death, but recovers.
- After making disciples in Derbe, they return to check in on the churches they've planted.
- They make clear that Christians should expect suffering and persecution.
- They appoint elders (pastors) for each church as God had raised up clear leaders.
- Returning home, they report all He did – this is the transition to the crisis in chapter 15.

### **What is Christianity? The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)**

- Some Christians visited Antioch claiming you had to become fully Jewish to be saved.
- This set off a huge debate that was ultimately taken to the church in Jerusalem to resolve.
- Was Christianity a kind of Judaism or a new religion?
- Peter reminded the church that Gentile inclusion was proven by the Holy Spirit.
- Paul and Barnabas described all God did without requiring Gentiles to become Jewish.
- James said this was the fulfillment of prophecy and proposed basic standards that would permit Gentile and Jewish Christians to fellowship together without offending one another: avoid things sacrificed to idols, meat containing blood, and sexual immorality.
- The congregation agrees and writes this up, the church in Antioch rejoices.
- Christianity is set free to grow across any and every cultural divide!

**Next Week: Ends of the Earth: Paul's Mission in Europe – Acts 16-18**