



Acts 13:13-45 – In Antioch in Pisidia...Paul Preaches His First Recorded Sermon

### ANTIOCH near Pisidia (not Antioch in Phrygia or Antioch in Syria)

- Prosperous City      - in ancient Phrygia      - in Roman province of GALATIA      - West of Taurus Mountains
- Rome's #1 city in Asia Minor      - a miniature Rome      - large population with native Anatolians
- Home to many Roman senators and upper class      - Sergius Paulus, proconsul of Cyprus, eventually moved here
  - Archaeology revealed from Paul's day: a large Imperial Temple to worship emperor, a large bathhouse, an aqueduct, the street system and a decorated city gate. A stadium has just been discovered west of the city in a valley.
  - In 46 AD Antioch Pisidia was at its construction climax and would have looked like a model of the city of Rome itself
  - Temples there honored the gods Men Askaenos, Jupiter, Dionysus and Asklepios
  - Strong Jewish community from 200 BC when 10,000 plus Jews were forced to settle here out of Babylon

13:13 – Pisidia was mountainous with mountains stretching for 120 east/west and 50 miles north/south. Paul and Barnabus would have had to climb through 50 miles of mountains to leave Attalia on the coastal area of southern Asia Minor and to pass through Perga in order to reach Antioch Pisidia.

- This is Galatia so when Paul says in Galatians 4:12-16, "A you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you." (Antioch, Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium were all part of the Roman province of Galatia by 50 AD.

13:14 – Synagogues had stone benches along the walls with wooden benches in the middle. Seating segregated men and woman. And, hierarchical seating with the older and distinguished members seated up front.

13:15 – Synagogue service:

- Shema – "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" – Deuteronomy 6:4
- Shemoneh Esreh – the eighteen benedictions which was the central prayer in each of the daily services, recited silently and standing ([http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Prayers/Daily\\_Prayers/Shemoneh\\_Esrei/shemoneh\\_esrei.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Prayers/Daily_Prayers/Shemoneh_Esrei/shemoneh_esrei.html))
- Reading from the Torah (the first five books of the Tanakh, or the Old Testament)
- Reading from the Prophets (included Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings and the prophets)
- Blessing of the priests (the "lifting up of the hands")
- The Message - a technical phrase that identified this sermon was "A message of encouragement" as is used by the synagogue rulers to Paul and Barnabus.

Paul is invited to speak because he stood in the middle of Gentile territory amidst a group of dispersed Jews who were trained in Jerusalem by the legendary Gamaliel.

13:16 - standing and motion were part of the presenter's responsibility

## Synagogue Organization:

- There were no “pastors” in the synagogues.
- The **reading** of scripture, the **preaching** and the public **prayers** were given by members.
- The synagogues had the following leadership:
  - **Archontes** (“leaders”) and **Presbyteroi** (“elders”) were the chief leaders who provided direction and oversight. This position was held for one year at a time. Both, **Archontes** and **Presbyteroi** are found in inscriptions from synagogues of this time
  - **Archisynagogos** (“ruler of the synagogue”) was the officer with the responsibility of organizing the public worship for each Sabbath or any other meeting. They were usually one of the Archontes. Normally there was one Archisynagogos, but sometimes there were two because of the size of the synagogue. In Antioch Pisidia there were apparently two, “the synagogue rulers sent word to them.” (Acts 13:15)

## Paul’s Synagogue Message:

1. **3:7-22**, Paul establishes common ground by touching on the exodus, the conquest, the period of the judges and the kingship of David (all the positives of Israel’s rise from slavery to the great monarchy)
2. **3:23**, Paul uses David as a bridge to the Son of David introduced in their days by John the Baptist
3. **3:23-31** – Paul recites the life and ministry of Jesus which include four points of basic Christian faith (The *kerygma*, or the preaching points of the early church, also seen in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4:
  - a. Jesus Crucified
  - b. Jesus laid in tomb
  - c. God raised Jesus from dead
  - d. Witnesses saw Jesus alive
4. **3:32-37** – Paul uses three Old Testament verses:
  - a. Psalm 2:7
  - b. Isaiah 55:3
  - c. Psalm 16:10
5. **3:38-41** – Paul preaches giving the people an exhortation to accept his message, but also a stern, scripturally supported warning about the danger of rejecting his message by quoting Habakkuk 1:5

13:16 – Paul addresses two groups in his opening: Jews (“Men of Israel”) and Gentiles (“Gentiles who worship God”), but half way through his message as he readdresses the crowd as three groups: “Brothers” (Believers of both Jews and Gentiles), “children of Abraham” (the natural seed of Israel) and “God fearing Gentiles” (undecided Gentiles)

13:19 – the Seven nations that were overthrown by Israel are found in Deuteronomy 7:1: Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

13:20 – 400 years in Egypt (Genesis 15:13) + 40 years in the wilderness (Numbers 14:33) + 10 years conquering (Joshua 14:1-5 = 450 years)

Carl Rasmussen’s photos of Antioch Pisidia at <http://www.holylandphotos.org/browse.asp?s=1,3,8,21,60>



Antioch’s city Gate



Augustus’ Temple



Roman Aqueduct

