

Explore the Bible: September 8

The Task • Acts 13:42-52

By Becky Brown



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When I get ready to study a section of scripture, I spend my first few minutes

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Not one word in the Word is insignificant! I look for names. I look for places or locations. I look up their meanings in a Bible dictionary. Sometimes, the definition of the names of people and places might give additional insight to the passage. I look for key words that are sometimes repeated in the passage. Commentary study ALWAYS comes AFTER the simplicity of reading the passage.

I also have maps available so that I can personally locate the places that are mentioned. The events of the Bible occurred in real time in actual places in the lives of specific people. I am well aware that not every ancient biblical location is identifiable. That fact should not stop us from studying with maps that help us see the places we CAN know about.

One other very helpful tool for Bible study is a timeline of biblical events. Just as specific locations are not always identifiable, actual calendar dates cannot be proven in all cases. Timelines of known history are valuable. Placing biblical events in date order helps us see how God rules over

history.

After their commissioning service in Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas and John Mark set sail from the Mediterranean sea coast port nearest the church at Antioch in Syria to the Island of Cyprus. Barnabas had been raised on that island. His name being "son of comfort" proved his heart ached to see that folks in his home country had an opportunity to hear the gospel.

They landed at Salamis on the eastern end of Cyprus. Acts 13:6 states that our first missionary team had gone through the whole island from tip to tip, from Salamis to Paphos. Look up Cyprus on a map and visualize their location. At this place on the map, young John Mark "abandoned" the team and returned to Jerusalem. Lots of speculation is given as to why he would leave. Paul's reaction to his leaving (see Acts 15:38) seems to indicate "abandonment" of the mission. I personally believe that John Mark knew he had a gospel to record and still needed time with Peter extracting his memories of the moments with The Master.

Next, they would set sail northward from Cyprus to Asia Minor and then hike 100 miles inland while climbing 3,600 feet to the church at Antioch in Pisidia. Paul would preach his first recorded sermon in that location. God had called Paul to take the light of the gospel to the Gentiles (non-Jews). Paul's knowledge of the Old Testament was such a valuable part of his spiritual tool box. Because of his training under Rabbi Gamaliel in Jerusalem, Paul was able to connect the dots from Creation to Christ in a way that would astound some and challenge others.

His message presented a capsule of the story of the Jews including the patriarchs, the exodus, the conquest, the judges, and the kings. Paul made sure to connect the Messiah – the Lion of the line of Judah – through King David. He included the gospel of the birth, life, death, burial and

resurrection of Jesus. Paul proved that the keeping of the Law cannot save people. Only the shed blood of Jesus can do that.

The listeners in Antioch of Pisidia loved the word that Paul shared and wanted the team to remain and continue to teach. The whole city came to the next gathering! The response of the Jews to the gospel being shared with non-Jews was appalling. They were jealous and instigated a movement against these two men. They contradicted their words and sought to sidetrack their message. Paul and Barnabas kept on sharing so that whole region was able to hear the gospel.

The task: Expect opposition. Share anyway. When the door closes, move to the next city.

Brown leads LittleBrownLight Ministries.