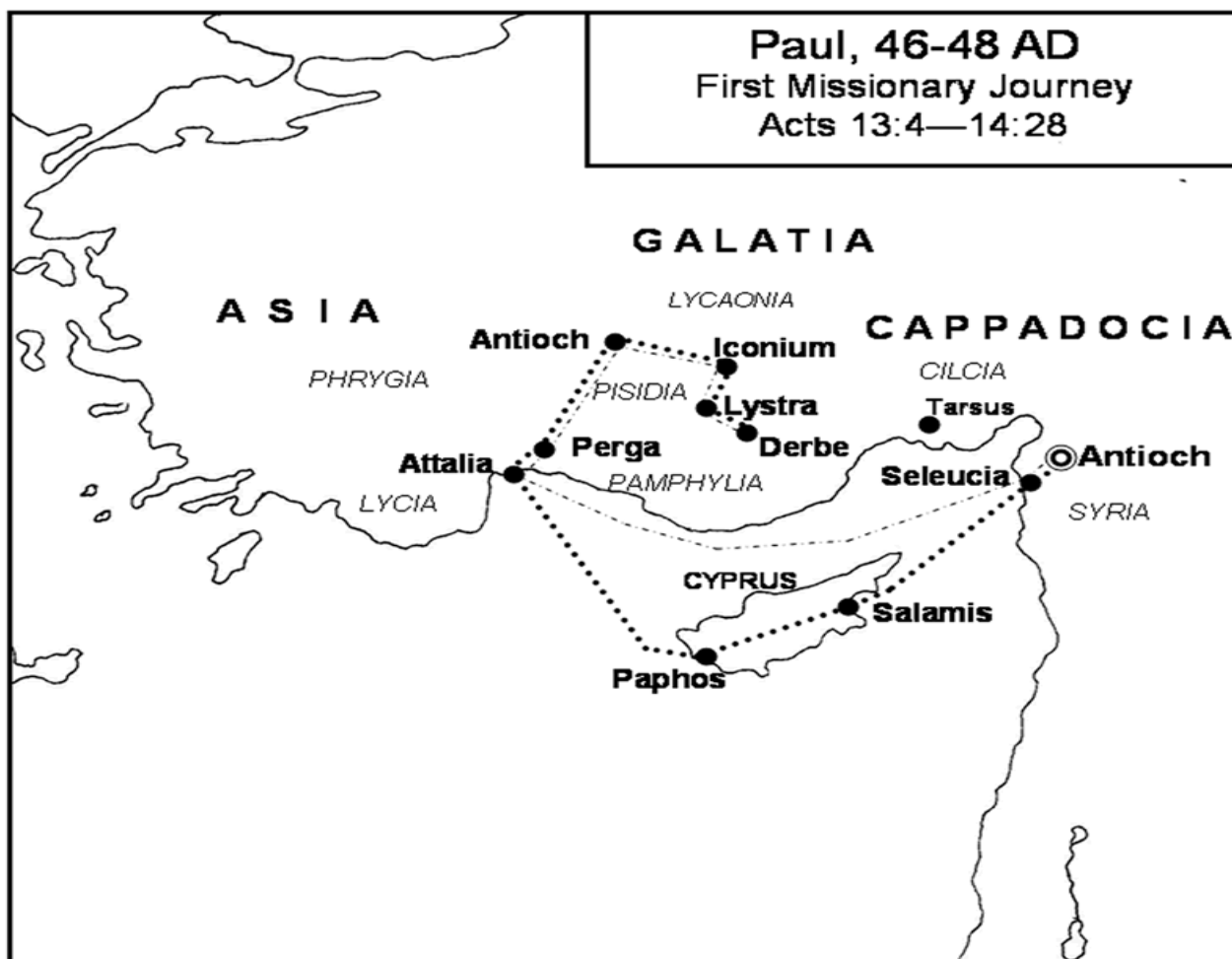


**REACTIONS TO GOD'S PROMISED ONE!**  
**ACTS CH13:42-53**

**ILLUSTRATION**

We need batteries to power things! Which batteries do you buy and why? There is always a long standing debate over which batteries are the most powerful, longer lasting and best value for money. In this passage there is an issue over power, good verses evil, the glorious Gospel verses false teaching, true authentic disciples verses false replicate disciples and what happens if you receive or refuse the Glorious Gospel!



Google Images - (Missionary Map Project | Paul's First Missionary Journey)

**BACKGROUND**

"The Acts of the Apostles was originally written as the second part of a two volume work, and its inseparable relation to Luke's Gospel must be kept in mind if we are to understand the work. The prologue (Introduction) to the two volume work (Luke Ch1:1-4) suggests, in fact, that the authors intention was to write "an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us" - things that stretched from the birth of John the Baptist to the entrance of the Good News into Rome. And the use of the emphatic verb "began" (erxato) as he commences his second volume (Acts Ch1:1) sets up the parallel between "all that Jesus **began** to do and to teach" as recorded in his Gospel and what he continued to do and to teach through his Church as is shown in Acts"(Cited in Richard Longenecker, Commentary on Acts, pg231-232).

Luke is only mentioned **three times in the New Testament** and each time through the apostle Paul's writings we learn something about the qualities of Luke, **Colossians**

**Ch4:14 (my dear friend Luke the Doctor), Philemon 24 (my fellow worker) and 2 Timothy Ch4:11 (Only Luke is with me).**

We need to see the Book of Acts as Luke wants his friend, Theophilus, to see it, with Luke as:

- **A dear friend (Colossians Ch4:14)**
- **A doctor (Colossians Ch4:14)**
- **A fellow and faithful worker (Philemon 24 + 2 Timothy Ch4:11)**

What do we learn about Luke? He is a dear friend to Paul and others, along with being a medic! He is regarded by Paul as a fellow worker in the Gospel and remains a faithful friend, helper and encourager to the end, **as he was present in Rome for both of Paul's imprisonments!**

Along with the above references, in the Book of Acts also written by Luke, he is mentioned in the we/us accounts, during Paul's second missionary journey covered from Acts Ch15:36 – Ch18:22. Finally he is mentioned once on the third missionary journey of Paul in Acts Ch20:15, where we can gather that Luke was part of the team that Paul had assembled to spread the Gospel, making Luke an evangelist!

According to Howard Marshall "Luke is both historian and theologian, and .... the best term to describe him is evangelist, a term which we believe, includes both of the others ... As a theologian Luke was concerned that his message about Jesus and the early Church should be based upon reliable history .... He used his history in the service of his theology" (Cited in John Stott Commentary on Acts – pg 29-30).

"Luke's theology of salvation is already adumbrated (future event, foreshadow) in the 'Song of Simeon' or Nunc Dimittis which he records in his Gospel. **Three fundamental truths stand out.**

**First, salvation has been prepared by God.** In speaking to God, Simeon referred to 'your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people' (Luke Ch2:30-31). Far from being an afterthought, it had been planned and promised for centuries. The same emphasis recurs throughout the Acts. In the sermons of Peter and Paul, not to mention Stephen's defence, Jesus' death, resurrection, reign and Spirit-gift are all seen as the culmination of centuries of prophetic promise.

**Secondly, salvation is bestowed by Christ.** When Simeon spoke to God of 'your salvation', which he had seen with his own eyes, he was referring to the baby Jesus whom he held in his arms and who had been 'born a Saviour' (Luke Ch2:11). Jesus himself later made the unequivocal statement that he had come 'to seek and to save what was lost' (Luke Ch19:10), and he illustrated this by his three famous parables of human lostness (Luke Ch15:1-32). Then after his death and resurrection his apostles declared that forgiveness of sins was available to all who would repent and believe in Jesus (Acts Ch2:38-39; Ch13:38-39). Indeed, salvation was to be found in no-one else (Acts Ch4:12). For God had exalted Jesus to his right hand 'as Prince and Saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins ...' (Acts Ch5:31).

**Thirdly, salvation is offered to all peoples.** As Simeon put it, it had been prepared 'in the presence of all the peoples' (literally), to be both a light to the nations and the glory of Israel (Luke Ch2:31-32). Without doubt it is this truth on which Luke lays his major emphasis. In Luke Ch3:6, in reference to John the Baptist, he continues his quotation

from Isaiah Ch40 beyond where Matthew and Mark stop, in order to include the statement 'all flesh will see God's Salvation'. In Acts Ch2:17 he records Peter's quotation of God's promise through Joel: 'I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.' These two words *pasa sarx*, 'all flesh' or 'all humankind', stand as a sign-post near the beginning of each of Luke's two volumes, in both cases embedded in an Old Testament prophecy, to point to Luke's principle message. ***Jesus is the Saviour of the world***; nobody is beyond the embrace of his love. In his Gospel, Luke shows Jesus' compassion for those sections of community whom others despised, namely women and children, the poor, the sick, the sinful and the outcast, Samaritans and Gentiles, while in the Acts, Luke explains how Paul came to turn to the Gentiles, and describes the Gospel's triumphal progress from Jerusalem the capital of Jewry to Rome the capital of the world" (Cited in John Stott commentary on Acts, pg 30-31).

### **REQUESTED! V42-43**

As Paul finishes his sermon, there is a request for him to return the following week. Wonderful news! Not only is there a request for him to return, but people from the congregation are so taken with the Gospel that he has been preaching, the text suggests that they have been saved or are close to being saved, when Luke records the evangelists saying "to continue in the grace of God!"

We know that Paul had a strategy of preaching in the Jewish synagogues first (where there were ones) before preaching to the Gentiles – Ch13:5; Ch13:14; Ch14:1; Ch17:1; Ch17:10; Ch17:17; Ch18:4; Ch18:19; + Ch19:8 (9 times). He knew that the synagogues would have both Jews and those gentiles who had converted to Judaism and he also knew that each Sabbath as was their custom the "Scriptures" (for us the Old Testament) would be opened up, read and explained! ***But what would happen if he could not return to the synagogue?***

#### ***Paul's revealed strategy:***

1. Hits major cities.
2. Speaks at the places the Jews gathered.
3. Turns to the Gentiles.
4. Is rewarded for such a bold move.

***The Scriptures are wonderfully sufficient, they protect us from the error of thinking that the only way God guides us in good work is by reasoning and planning from circumstances and principles (though this is good), and they show us that there are works God may lead us to do by means of extraordinary guidance. And since there is no teaching anywhere in the New Testament that says this work of the Lord is limited to the time of the Book of Acts, we should assume that one of God's ways today of building His Church is to give direction to His people in extraordinary ways as well as more ordinary ones.***

#### ***Scripture gives us all we need for two things:***

1. ***It gives all the authoritative truth (trusted) we need in order to be saved and grow spiritually, and***
2. ***It gives all the authoritative truth (trusted) we need in order to make good judgments about what is right and wrong.***

### **REJECTED! V44-47**

The following Sabbath, Luke records that the whole city turned out to hear the Gospel! But as the Word of the Lord spreads, opposition to it will start and grow! Have a look at the following references:

Antioch – Acts Ch13:50	-	Stirred up persecution and expelled!
Iconium – Acts Ch14:2-6	-	Poisoned the minds against them!
Lystra – Acts Ch14:19-20	-	Stoned Paul!
Philippi – Acts Ch16:19-34	-	Stripped and imprisoned!

### ***Paul and suffering in Acts:***

- *Acts Ch13:45 – Filled with jealousy and talking abusively about what Paul!*
- *Acts Ch13:50 – Stirred up persecution for Paul!*
- *Acts Ch14:5 – Plot afoot to ill-treat Paul!*
- *Acts Ch14:19 – They stoned Paul!*
- *Acts Ch16:22 – Paul was stripped and beaten!*
- *Acts Ch16:23 – Paul was severely flogged!*

V46 - This being filled with jealousy and contradicting God's Word translates "blasphmoutes" - meaning to blaspheme against God resulting in V50 persecution! Paul and Barnabas' response to this blaspheming by the Jews is to speak the gospel boldly - ***Boldness translates "as the freedom of speech by those empowered by the Holy Spirit to speak the Word of God."*** ***It highlights the rights of citizens of the heavenly Kingdom to say anything in public, with an openness to speak the truth BOLDLY.***

There is such a contrast with the phrase "eternal life" here in V46 and in V48, with one group deemed judged unworthy to accept it and another group deemed appointed to it (eternal life)!

### **RECEIVED! V48-52**

V48 - Luke records how God uses the Gospel to draw out His elect and save them, along with using the Gospel to expose those with hard hearts who reject the call of salvation. According to David G. Peterson "Not everyone is affected in the same way by the preaching of the Gospel. God must open hearts, to enable people to listen and respond with faith. Those who seek the Lord from among the nations are those whom he has already claimed as his own" (Cited in David G. Peterson, The Acts of the Apostles, page 399-400).

V48 - The Greek word for "appointed" that Luke uses is "*TASSO*" meaning to ordain

No power can stop the spread of God's Word, yet at the same time persecution increased, as V50 "drove them out" asserts some kind of violence towards both Paul and Barnabas! This is confirmed when Paul reminds Timothy of the "persecutions and sufferings" he experienced in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra " (2 Tim Ch3:10-11).

There was and perhaps still is an agreed historic meaning for the non Christian Jew in the symbolism when one "shakes the dust off ones sandals", or as Luke records "but they shook off the dust from their feet." That meaning was customary for the Jews when leaving a pagan town, not to contaminate their own country upon arrival! Jesus instructed His disciples to use the same symbolism – but with a different meaning (Luke Ch9:5). It would be used by the disciples as a testimony that they had not been received. In an

identical way, Paul and Barnabas “shook off the dust from their feet” to testify how certain people rejected the Gospel at Antioch, Perga!

### **APPLICATION**

Examples of Persecution of Protestants under Queen Mary I (1553–1558):

**Many people were exiled, and hundreds of dissenters were burned at the stake**, earning her the nickname of "Bloody Mary". The number of people executed for their faith during the persecutions is thought to be over 300 men, women and children in the UK, who were burnt alive for three words, “It's by faith!! ***Including three Welshman:***

***Rawlins White*** a fisherman – White was executed on 30 March 1555, the fire that took his life being built outside Bethany Church in the centre of Cardiff. The site of the old church is now occupied by James Howells Department Store; a plaque on one interior wall of the shop marks the spot where White breathed his last

***Robert Ferrar*** the Bishop of St Davids – March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1555 Carmarthen

***William Nichol*** – April 9<sup>th</sup> 1558 Haverfordwest! (A memorial in his honour is on Dark Street, Haverfordwest)

We as Christians may not be burnt literally, but perhaps burnt in relationships, burnt in being accepted, burnt in being misrepresented and misunderstood!