**A Tale Of Two Antiochs**

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday February 11th, 2018

Text: Acts 11:19; 13:14

### Intro

1. The death of Stephen in Acts 7 (murdered by the Jews), while tragic, set a series of events in motion that would see the church expand and grow exponentially! (Acts 1:8)
   1. Acts 8:1-5: Stephen’s death emboldened Saul (a young man who watched the coats of those who stoned Stephen – Acts 7:58) of Tarsus *(Acts 9:11)* to persecute the church in Jerusalem. He began “ravaging the church.” *(cf. Acts 9:1-2, rest of chapter)*
      1. “Those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.” (Acts 1:8)
      2. Philip went to Samaria, where Acts 8 focuses on his work there. (Acts 1:8)
   2. Acts 9:26-31: Saul, after his conversion, joined the disciples at Jerusalem till a plot by Hellenistic Jews to kill him was discovered, and he was sent to Tarsus.
      1. The church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace! (Acts 1:8)
      2. Peter, after traveling through those regions, went to Lydda and then to Joppa *(9:31-42),* and then to Caesarea to convert the 1st Gentile, Cornelius *(Acts 10)!* (Acts 1:8: The church was spreading beyond Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, “even to the remotest part of the earth”)
   3. Acts 11:19-21: “Those who were scattered because of the persecution that occurred in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews alone” *(cf. Acts 8:1-5)*
      1. Stephen’s death triggered a series of events fulfilling the word of Jesus about the spread of the gospel to the “remotest parts of the earth!” (Acts 1:8)
      2. Men of Cyprus (An island off the coast of Syria, Barnabas’ home) and Cyrene (Roman capital city of Libya) taught the Greeks there and “a large number who believed turned to the Lord!”
      3. This Antioch in Syria will become very important in the following years as far as the spread of the gospel is concerned *(Acts 13:1-4; 15:35-41; 18:22-23)*
2. However, in the book of Acts we read of two Antiochs:
3. Antioch of Syria – Acts 11:19
4. Antioch of Pisidia – Acts 13:14
5. The outcomes of Paul’s preaching in these two cities are very different and each city is remembered differently for their reaction!
6. A tale of two Antiochs!

#### Antioch of Syria

* 1. Acts 11:19-21:
     1. Men of Cyprus and Cyrene taught the Greeks there and “a large number who believed turned to the Lord!”
  2. History of Antioch of Syria:
     1. Antioch of Syria was located on the east bank of the Orontes River, about 300 miles north of Jerusalem, and about 16 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea.
     2. Founded in 300 BC by Seleucus I Nicator, named after his father Antiochus.
     3. Annexed to Rome by Pompey in 64 BC, it was granted considerable privileges, and was made the capital of the Roman province of Syria *(Modern Turkey).*
     4. Already a splendid city under the Seleucids, Antioch was made still more splendid by Roman emperors.
     5. It was called the “Queen of the East,” as it was the third largest city of the Roman Empire (after Rome and Alexandria), and had a population of approx. 500,000 people!
     6. Julius Caesar visited in 47 BC and declared them free (Roman Citizens!).
  3. Acts 11:22-24
     1. Barnabas was sent to Antioch by the church in Jerusalem.
     2. “He rejoiced and began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord.”
     3. Barnabas = Joseph, a Cyprian, called Barnabas by the apostles, which means, “Son of Encouragement” (Acts 4:36-37)
     4. He was a good man, full of faith and full of the Holy Spirit.
     5. One of 3 in the NT called a “good man.” The others are: *Jesus (Jn. 7:12) and Joseph of Arimathea (Lk. 23:50)* – *Two out of three are Josephs!*
     6. He lived up to his new name by encouraging others (Acts 11:23).
     7. He was successful in his preaching (Acts 11:24)
  4. Acts 11:25-26
     1. While in the work, he went to Tarsus to get Saul (cf. Acts 9:30), brought him back to Antioch and they worked together there for a year.
     2. Disciples of Christ were first called Christians in Antioch!
        1. Called = *chrēmatizō [khray-mat-id'-zo] (G5537):* A Divine utterance: - “be called, be admonished (warned) of God, reveal, speak.” (\*Used 9 times in NT as reference as a warning or revealing from God)
        2. Not a term of derision by the Antiochians, or a nickname, but a divinely appointed name for followers of Christ (I Pet. 4:16).
     3. Antioch was often called the “Heathen Queen of the East.”
     4. That makes it more amazing that it became such a central hub for Christianity, and the spread of the gospel!
  5. Paul’s Three Missionary Journeys
     1. Antioch would play an important role in the spread of the gospel (Acts 1:8)!
     2. Acts 13:1-4; 15:35-41; 18:22-23: Antioch became a base of operations (so to speak) for Paul and Barnabas (later Paul alone) as they set out from there on three separate journeys to spread the gospel and then would return to Antioch.
  6. Other Important Info as relates to Christianity:
     1. Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch, was one of the first deacons (Acts 6:5) – Secular writings name him as the father of “the Nicolaitans” (Rev. 2:6, 15).
     2. Antioch saints sent relief to needy saints in Judea when a famine arose (Acts 11:27-30)
     3. It was the church at Antioch, bothered by the words of the Judaizers, that initiated the council at Jerusalem (Acts 14:26-15:35)
     4. It was in Antioch that Paul confronted Peter on his hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-15)
  7. For a large pagan city (over 500,000 people), the people responded well to the gospel and the church there flourished!

#### Antioch of Pisidia

* 1. Acts 13:13-14:

1. When Paul & Barnabas landed in Asia Minor, they traveled inland for about eight miles to the city of Perga in Pamphylia, and it was here that John Mark left the group and went back to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). This would later split up Paul & Barnabas *(Acts 15:35-40).*
2. They traveled from Perga north for about 100 miles to “Antioch of Pisidia” in the central plateau area of Asia Minor (Acts 13:14).
   1. History of Antioch of Pisidia:
3. After the death of Alexander the Great, Seleucus I Nicator, founder of the Seleucid Dynasty, took control of Pisidia (founded about 300/301 BC).
4. Seleucus I Nicator founded nearly 60 cities, and 16 of them were named in honor of his father Antiochus! *(Remember Antioch of Syria!)*
5. In 188 BC, the Romans defeated Antiochus III and declared Antioch of Pisidia a free city. In 25 BC Emperor Augustus made Antioch in Pisidia a Roman colony and gave it the title of Colonia Caesarea Antiochia.
6. The city boasted a population of about 50,000 people!
7. An important first-century commercial center and was inhabited by many Jews.
8. At the highest point of the city, Emperor Augustus built the Augustus Temple that was dedicated to the mother goddess Cybele (Kybele). The front of the temple had a stairway of twelve steps leading up to the porch. This building was used as an “open air church” around 400 AD
9. A fourth century Byzantine church building (dedicated to Paul), stands on the west side of the city and was its largest church building. *(At the time it was built, it was one of the largest church buildings in the world; it is still one of the largest ever discovered in Asia Minor).*
10. Massive remains of a Roman aqueduct (North of city) that brought fresh water from springs in the Sultan Mountains about 6 miles from Antioch. Over 3000 cubic meters of water were distributed every day!
    1. Paul’s Sermon and the Outcome – *Acts 13:15-41*
       1. Like Stephen's defense *(Acts 7:2-53),* Paul's sermon was a summary of Jewish history *(Acts 13:15-41),* the main points being:
          1. God is the God of the people of Israel
          2. God chose the patriarchs for Himself
          3. God redeemed His people from Egypt, leading them through the desert
          4. God gave them the land of Palestine as an inheritance
       2. Acts 13:35-38: Paul’s sermon mirrors Peter’s on Jesus being raised from the dead *(cf. Acts 2:24-27, 38)*
       3. Acts 13:41: Paul ended his sermon with a call to repentance, based on Habakkuk 1:5. He warned the congregation that Habakkuk's words applied to all who reject Jesus as the Messiah.
       4. Acts 13:42: The Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.
       5. Acts 13:45-46: The Jews rejected the very thing they were looking for: “eternal life” (Judged themselves unworthy!)
       6. Acts 13:48-49: The Gentiles rejoiced and “the word of the Lord spread throughout all the whole region.”
       7. Acts 13:50-51: The Jews ran Paul & Barnabas out of the city and they went to Iconium (Followed Paul to Lystra where they stoned him and left him for dead – Acts 14:6-19)
    2. Other Important Info as relates to Christianity:
       1. There is an inscription displayed in the Yalvac museum that clearly shows the whole word of “Paulli” and portions of “Sergii.” The family of Sergii Paulli had large estates in the vicinity of Pisidian Antioch. (On the island of Cyprus, the proconsul, Sergius Paulus [Acts 13:7-12] was converted to Christianity)
       2. *II Tim. 3:10-11:* Paul mentions an unpleasant incident in the city. *(Only Derbe and Lystra mentioned as visited on 2nd Missionary Journey – Acts 16:1)*
    3. A smaller pagan city (50,000) but with a large Jewish community rejected the gospel, further opening the doors to the Gentiles, who rejoiced!

## Conclusion

1. A Tale of Two Antiochs!
   1. Antioch of Pisidia: The Jews are remembered for their persecution and rejection of the gospel, while the Gentiles are remembered for being glad to receive the gospel!
   2. Antioch of Syria: Both Jew and Gentile alike are remembered for their obedience to the gospel and first being called Christians, and being a sound church that spread the gospel!
2. After hearing the word of God, how will ***you*** be remembered?
3. Unworthy of eternal life? Or, Faithful to the word of God and dedicated to sharing the gospel?
4. If you are not a Christian, you need to be. Repent and be baptized into His name!
5. If a Christian in error, don’t wait till it’s eternally too late. Repent and be renewed!
6. Whatever your requests, let them be made known ***NOW*** while we stand & sing!

**Sources:**

**Antioch of Syria:**

<http://www.bible-history.com/isbe/A/ANTIOCH,+IN+SYRIA/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antioch>

*Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, *Antioch of Syria*

**\*Called (A Divine Utterance)**

* Mt. 2:12, 2:22
* Lk. 2:26
* Acts 10:22; 11:26
* Rom. 7:3 (Note on “Adulteress”: God defines morality so this “calling” is from God, cf. Mt. 19:9, 18; Mk. 10:11-12)
* Heb. 8:5; 11:7; 12:25

**Antioch of Pisidia**

<http://www.bible-history.com/isbe/A/ANTIOCH,+OF+PISIDIA/>

<http://www.padfield.com/acrobat/history/pisidian-antioch.pdf>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antioch_of_Pisidia>

*Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, *Antioch of Pisidia*

**Sergius Paulus Inscription**

Dr. Carl Rasmussen, *Holy Land Photos* (Surmises Sergius Paulus may have sent Paul to Antioch Pisidia, an “off the beaten path” city, and may have even sent him with a letter of introduction)