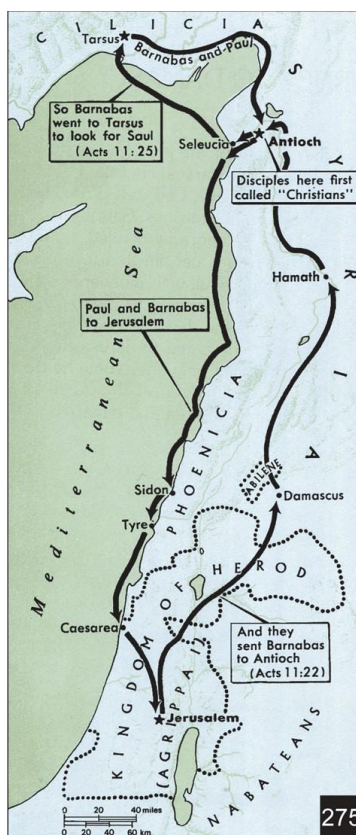


Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 5

The Gospel Preached in Antioch

We pick up the ongoing story of **Sha'ul** in Acts 11:19. If you are familiar with the **Book of Acts**, we have seen **Cornelius** (a Gentile Centurion) and his friends come to faith. Here we see a people movement among **Gentiles** in a large city, **Antioch**.



Map courtesy of The Carta Bible Atlas

¹⁹ Now, those who had been scattered because of the persecution which had arisen over Stephen went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch; they spoke God's word, but only to Jews.

Cyprus was a natural place to begin their mission. Barnabas was a native of the island (Acts 4:36), and some of the Hellenist Christians had already begun work there (Acts 11:19).

John B. Polhill

²⁰ However, some of these men from Cyprus and Cyrene, when they arrived at Antioch, began speaking to the Greeks too, proclaiming the Good News of the Lord Yeshua. ²¹ The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number of people trusted and turned to the Lord.

Bar-Nabba & Sha'ul Head to Antioch

²² News of this reached the ears of the Messianic community in Yerushalayim, and they sent Bar-Nabba to Antioch. ²³ On arriving and seeing for himself the grace of God at work, he was glad; and he encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with their whole hearts; ²⁴ for he was a good man, full of the Ruach HaKodesh and trust.

²⁵ Then Bar-Nabba went off to Tarsus to look for Sha'ul; ²⁶ and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. They met with the congregation there for a whole year and taught a sizeable crowd. Also, it was in Antioch that the talmidim, for the first time, were called "Messianic."

Famine Predicted and Bar-Nabba & Sha'ul Return to Yerushalayim

²⁷ During this time, some prophets came down from Yerushalayim to Antioch; ²⁸ and one of them, named Agav, stood up and, through the Spirit, predicted that there was going to be a severe famine throughout the Roman Empire. (It took place while Claudius was Emperor.) ²⁹ So the talmidim decided to provide relief to the brothers living in Y'hudah, each according to his means; ³⁰ and they did it, sending their contribution to the elders in the care of Bar-Nabba and Sha'ul. ¹

Prophets among the **Believers** are mentioned here, and in Acts 13:1, 15:32, and 21:9–10, as well as in 1 Corinthians 12:28–29, 14:29–37; Ephesians 4:11, and possibly 2 Kefa 3:2. **Non-Messianic Jews** maintained then and maintain still that prophecy ceased in **Isra'el** soon after the **Return from Babylon**. But according to the **Brit Hadashah**, prophecy recommenced with Yochanan the Immerser (Mt 11:9). The title, "**Prophet**," is applied frequently to **Yeshua** (Acts 3:22–23, 7:37; Mattityahu 21:11; Luke 24:19; Yochanan 7:40, 9:17). In the **Messianic Community** prophets ranked after **Emissaries** (1 Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 4:11). Since **Yeshua** promised His **talmidim** that the Ruach HaKodesh "*will ... announce to you the events of the future*" (Yochanan 16:13), all **Believers** are urged to seek the **Gift of Prophecy** (1 Corinthians 14:39), which is promised to everyone (Acts 2:17–18, fulfilling Joel 3:1–2(2:28–29)). **Prophecy** may mean either prediction of things to come, as in this passage, or, more often, clearly, and boldly speaking forth the word **God** wants to be spoken (see 1 Corinthians 12:8–10).

It took place while Claudius was still Emperor, that is, quickly. **Claudius** ruled the **Roman Empire** from 41 to 54 CE. ²

In our next post, **Sha'ul and Bar-Nabba Head Out on their First Missionary Journey** beginning in Acts 13.

¹ Acts 11:19–30.

² Jewish New Testament Commentary.