



# PAUL

THE APOSTLE

THE FIRST JOURNEY

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Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch.

Acts 11:25


The year was 46 A.D., 13 years after Paul's encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus. Paul was about 40 years old.



Barnabas was an attractive and imposing man - once mistaken for Zeus, king of the Greek gods.

Born on Cyprus, he was unusually well-traveled. Well-off, he sold property to fund the founding of the church in Jerusalem.

When the apostle Peter was miraculously released from prison in Jerusalem, he fled to the home of Barnabas's cousin, Mary, mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12).



At the request of the Apostles, Barnabas moved to Antioch to nurture the city's growing church.

Most importantly, Barnabas mentored Saul and John Mark, who authored the first gospel based on the eye-witness account of his mother's friend, the apostle Peter.



Roads in the first century were remarkably good due to the Romans extraordinary engineering skills.

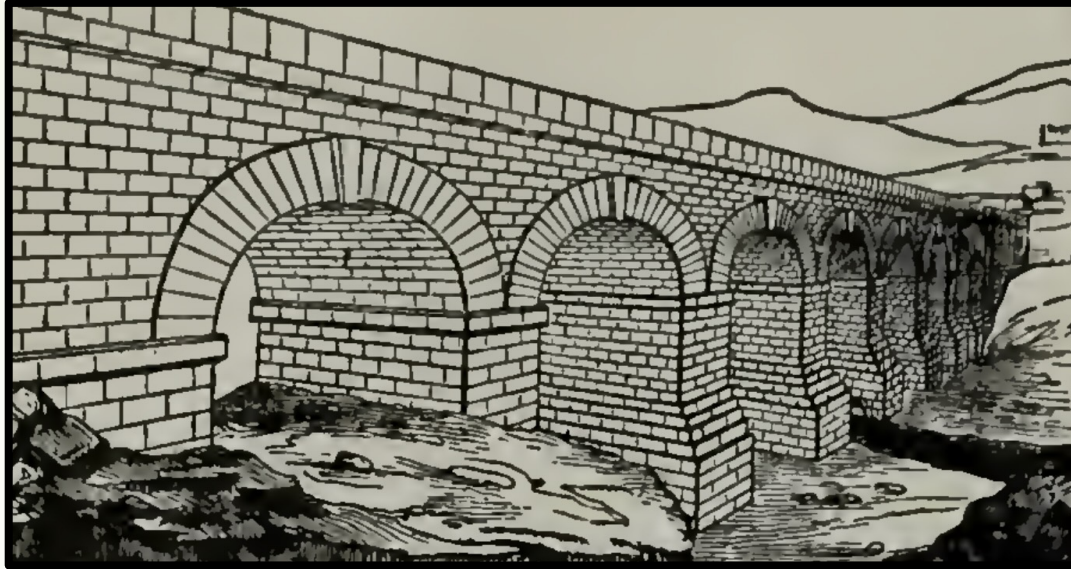
Ancient trade routes wended around nature's barriers. Roman-built roads were swift and efficient for military use.

“No natural obstacles were permitted to change the course of the roads. The grade was always easy, hills were cut through.”

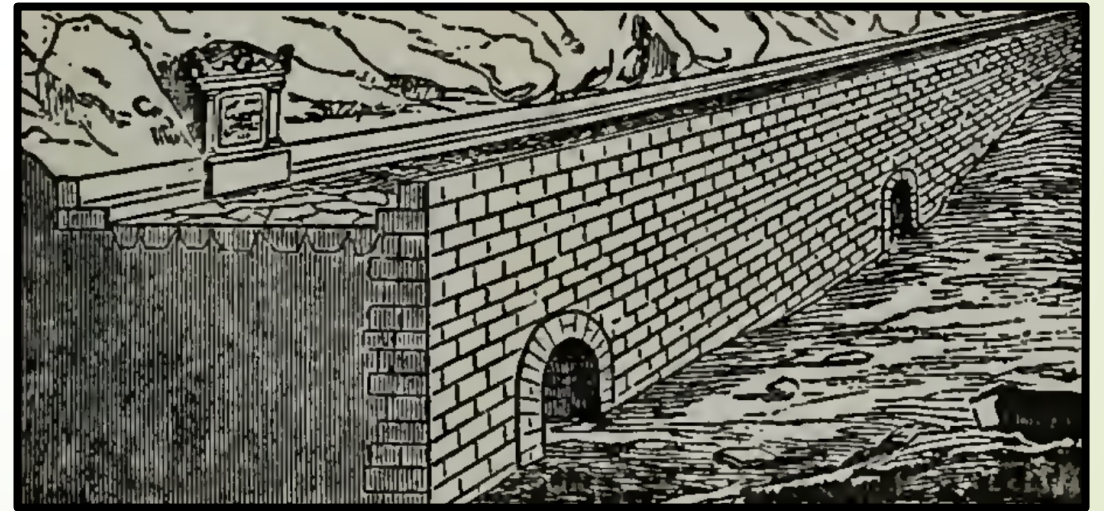
*The Private Life of the Roman*



“Gorges and rivers were crossed  
by arches of solid stone.”



“Valleys and marshes were spanned  
by viaducts of the same material.”



*The Private Life of the Roman*



Remnants of Roman-built gates, bridges and roads still survive. The examples above are all in Tarsus.

Roman roads made it possible for Saul and Barnabas to move around the Empire with relative ease.

Antioch, a gateway to China and near other trade routes, was a natural center for commerce in silk and spices.

Sixteen miles inland, the city was set on a fertile plain, and connected to the Mediterranean Sea by the Orantes River.

A welter of cultures and languages converged in Antioch. The Empire's third largest city, after Rome and Alexandria, Antioch was the capital of Syria in Paul's time.

Famed for its racetrack and loose ways, Antioch was the trendy place to live in the first century. A clever hipster in Antioch dubbed early believers, "Christians."

Antioch was the unlikely sturdy and stable cradle of the early church.





Paul's aggressive persecution of believers in Jerusalem drove many to flee to Cyprus, Lebanon and Antioch.

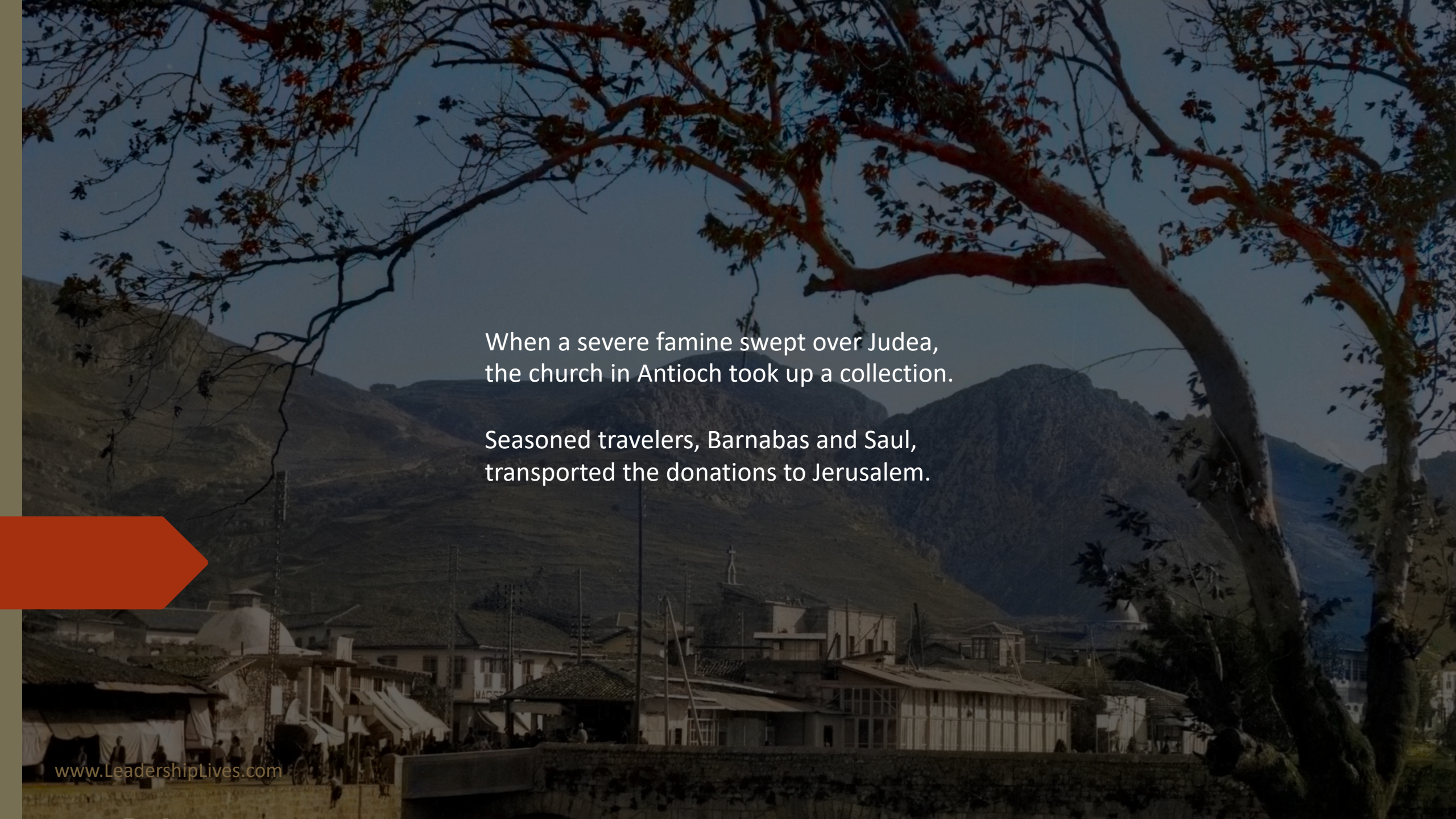
Now, in a remarkable turn-around, the chief persecutor of Christ's followers was coming to Antioch to preach the gospel.

God's chosen messenger fully understood the mindset of the Pharisees and the power of the gospel.

After finding Saul, Barnabas brought him back to Antioch. Barnabas and Saul met with the church in Antioch for a whole year and taught a large group of people. The disciples were called Christians for the first time in the city of Antioch.

Acts 11:26





When a severe famine swept over Judea,  
the church in Antioch took up a collection.

Seasoned travelers, Barnabas and Saul,  
transported the donations to Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem, Saul and Barnabas met with James, Peter and John, the apostles who had witnessed Christ's transfiguration.

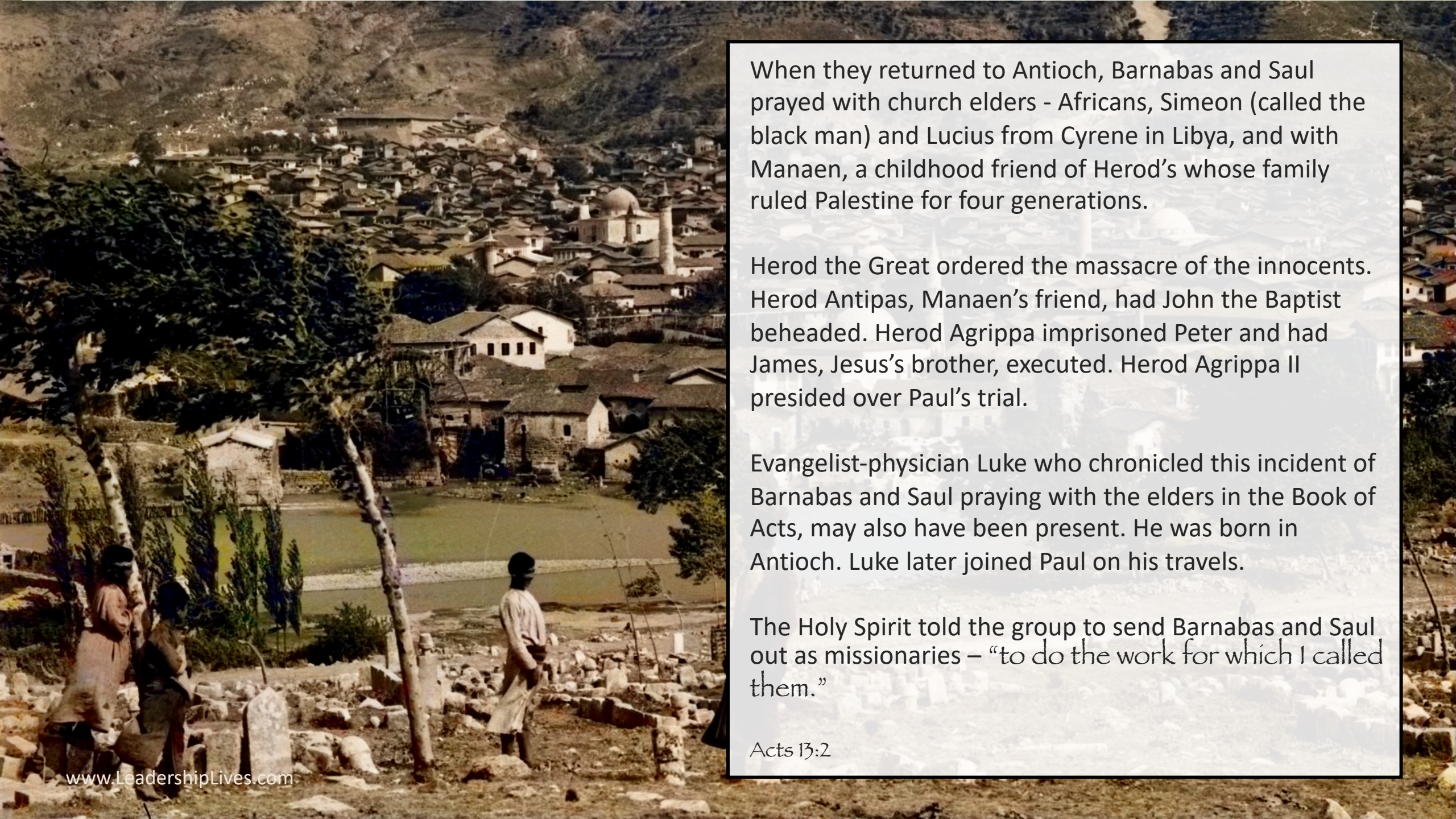
The apostles recognized and acknowledged Saul's gift of preaching to the Gentiles – an enormous mission.

So, they shook hands with Barnabas and me, agreeing to be our partners. It was understood that we would work among the people who are not Jewish, and they would work among Jewish people. The only thing they asked us to do was to remember the poor, the very thing which I was eager to do.

Galatians 2: 9-10

Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch and brought John Mark with them.





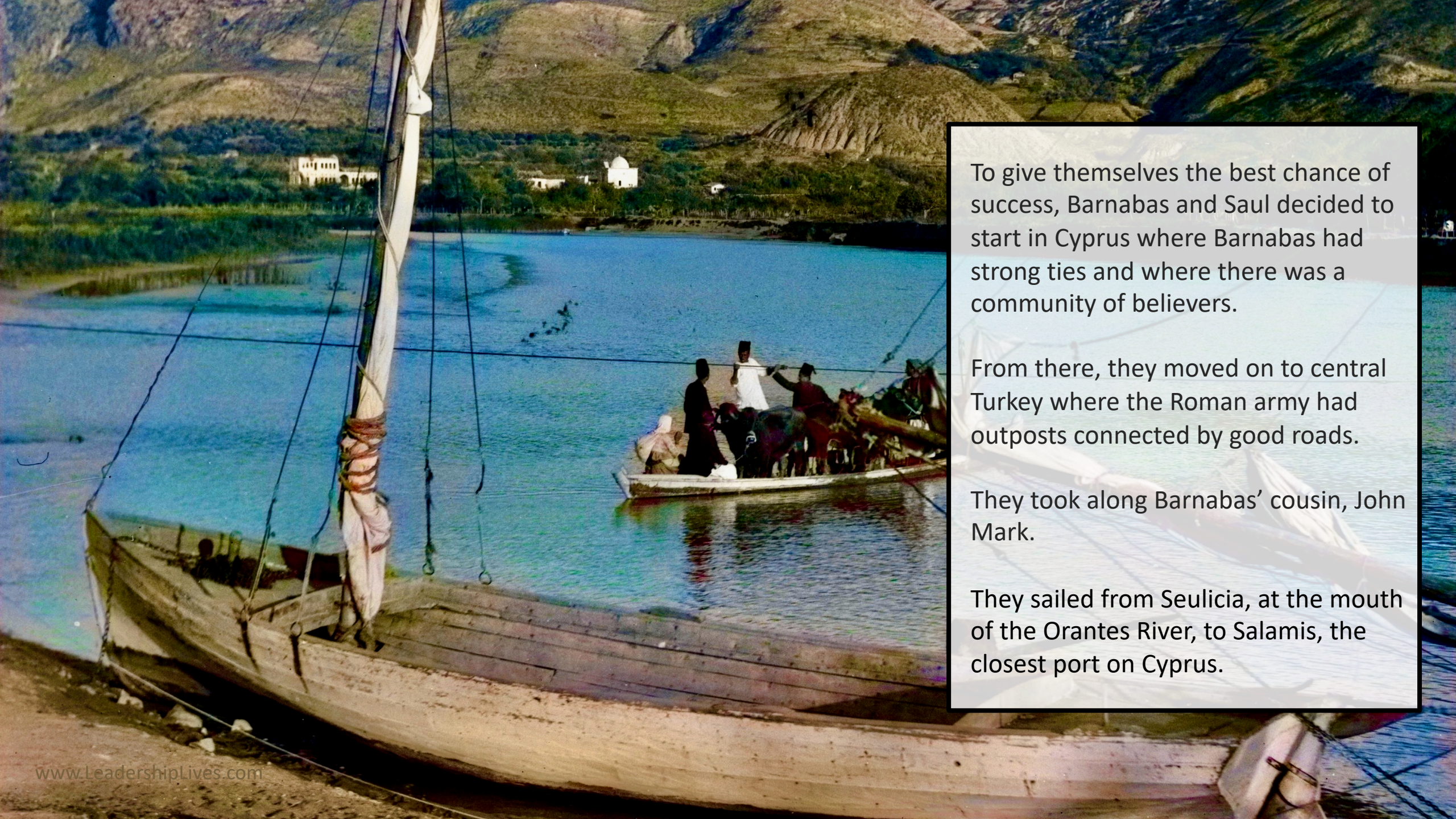
When they returned to Antioch, Barnabas and Saul prayed with church elders - Africans, Simeon (called the black man) and Lucius from Cyrene in Libya, and with Manaen, a childhood friend of Herod's whose family ruled Palestine for four generations.

Herod the Great ordered the massacre of the innocents. Herod Antipas, Manaen's friend, had John the Baptist beheaded. Herod Agrippa imprisoned Peter and had James, Jesus's brother, executed. Herod Agrippa II presided over Paul's trial.

Evangelist-physician Luke who chronicled this incident of Barnabas and Saul praying with the elders in the Book of Acts, may also have been present. He was born in Antioch. Luke later joined Paul on his travels.

The Holy Spirit told the group to send Barnabas and Saul out as missionaries – “to do the work for which I called them.”

Acts 13:2



To give themselves the best chance of success, Barnabas and Saul decided to start in Cyprus where Barnabas had strong ties and where there was a community of believers.

From there, they moved on to central Turkey where the Roman army had outposts connected by good roads.

They took along Barnabas' cousin, John Mark.

They sailed from Seulicia, at the mouth of the Orantes River, to Salamis, the closest port on Cyprus.

PAUL'S 1ST MISSION JOURNEY  
AD 47 – 48  
1400 MILES

OUTWARD-BOUND JOURNEY

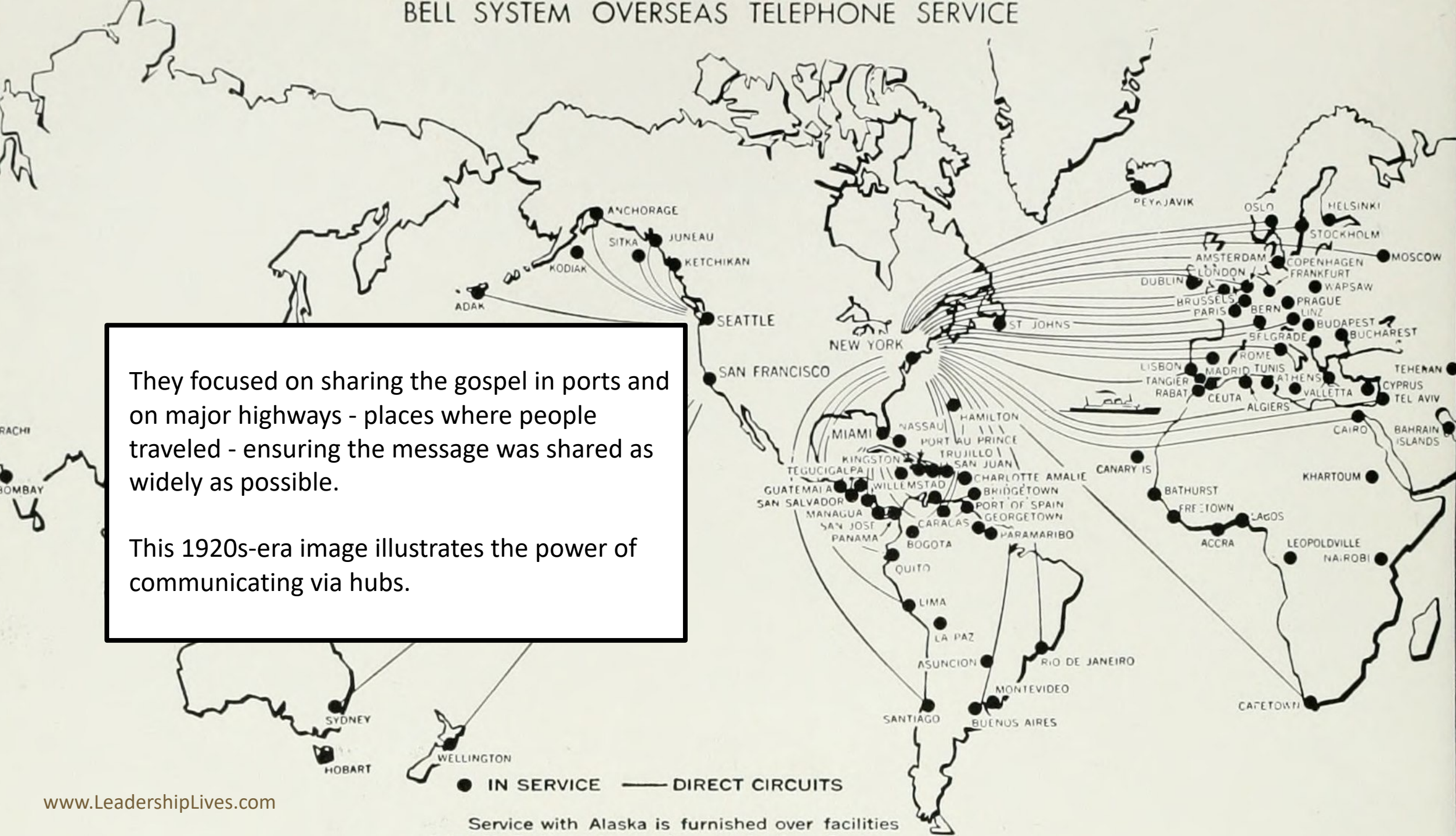
Antioch  
Seulicia (port)  
Salamis, Cyprus  
Various stops on Cyprus  
Paphos, Cyprus  
Perga (port)  
Antioch in Pisidia  
Iconium  
Lystra  
Derbe

RETURN JOURNEY

Derbe  
Lystra  
Iconium  
Antioch in Pisidia  
Perga (port)  
Seulicia (port)  
Antioch



# BELL SYSTEM OVERSEAS TELEPHONE SERVICE



They focused on sharing the gospel in ports and on major highways - places where people traveled - ensuring the message was shared as widely as possible.

This 1920s-era image illustrates the power of communicating via hubs.



Like Antioch, Cyprus was a major center of trade and commerce.

In Salamis, Saul established a pattern of going first to the Jewish synagogues to share the gospel.

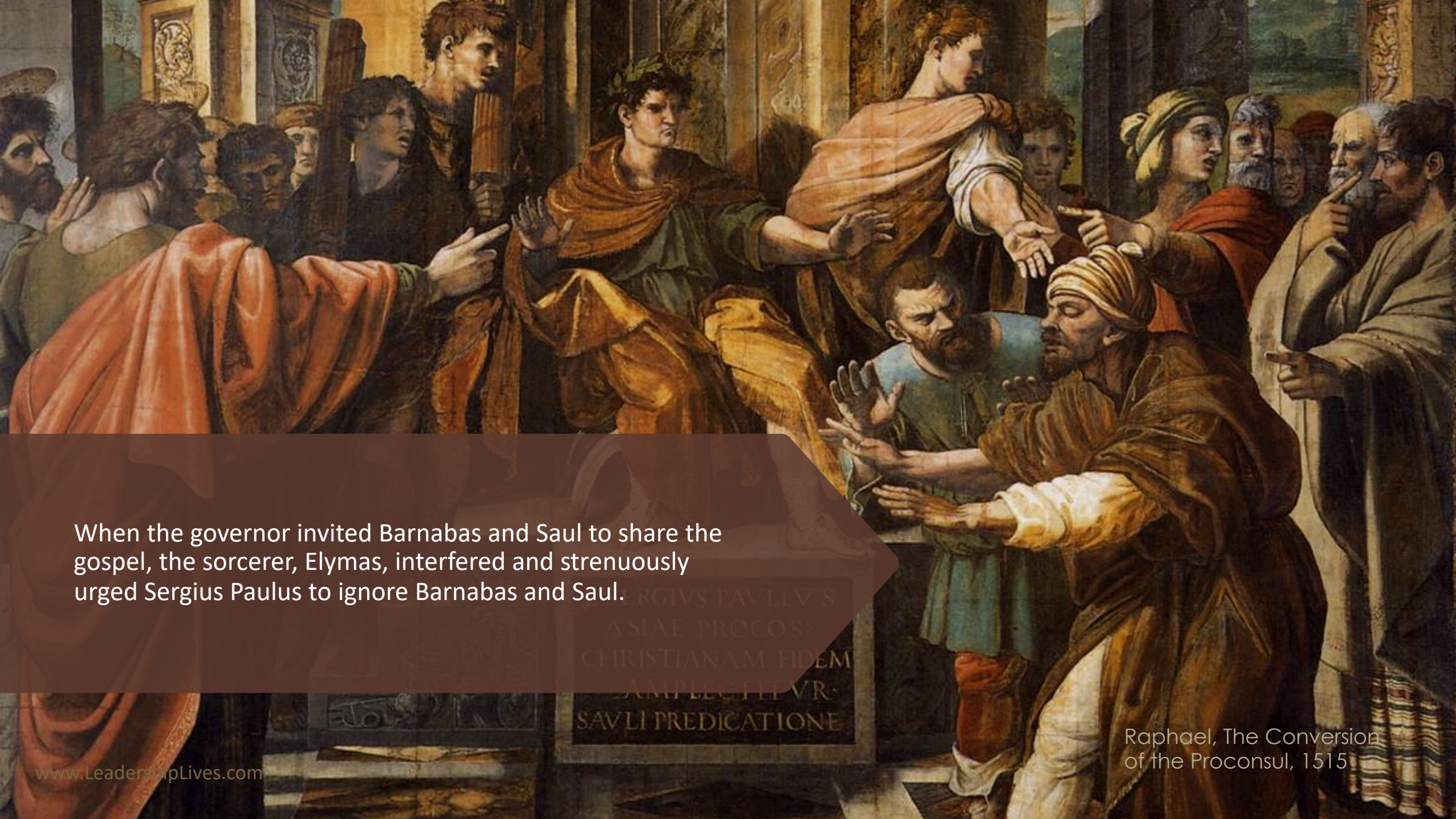




Paul, Barnabas and John Mark traveled from town to town across the island - 136 miles from Salamis to Paphos – sharing the Gospel.

In Paphos, they met a Jewish sorcerer who had attached himself to the Roman governor of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, an unusually intelligent and perceptive man.





When the governor invited Barnabas and Saul to share the gospel, the sorcerer, Elymas, interfered and strenuously urged Sergius Paulus to ignore Barnabas and Saul.

...RGIVS PAVLVS  
ASIAE PROCOS  
CHRISTIANAM FIDEM  
AMPLECTITVR  
SAVLI PREDICATIONE

Raphael, The Conversion  
of the Proconsul, 1515

Saul, filled with the Holy Spirit, exclaimed,

“You son of the devil, full of every sort of deceit and fraud, and enemy of all that is good! Will you never stop perverting the true ways of the Lord?”

Watch now, for the Lord has laid his hand of punishment upon you, and you will be struck blind. You will not see the sunlight for some time.”

Acts 13:10-11.

Elymas was struck blind. Astounded by what he witnessed and what he heard about the Lord, Sergius Paulus became a believer – the first recorded conversion of an influential Gentile.

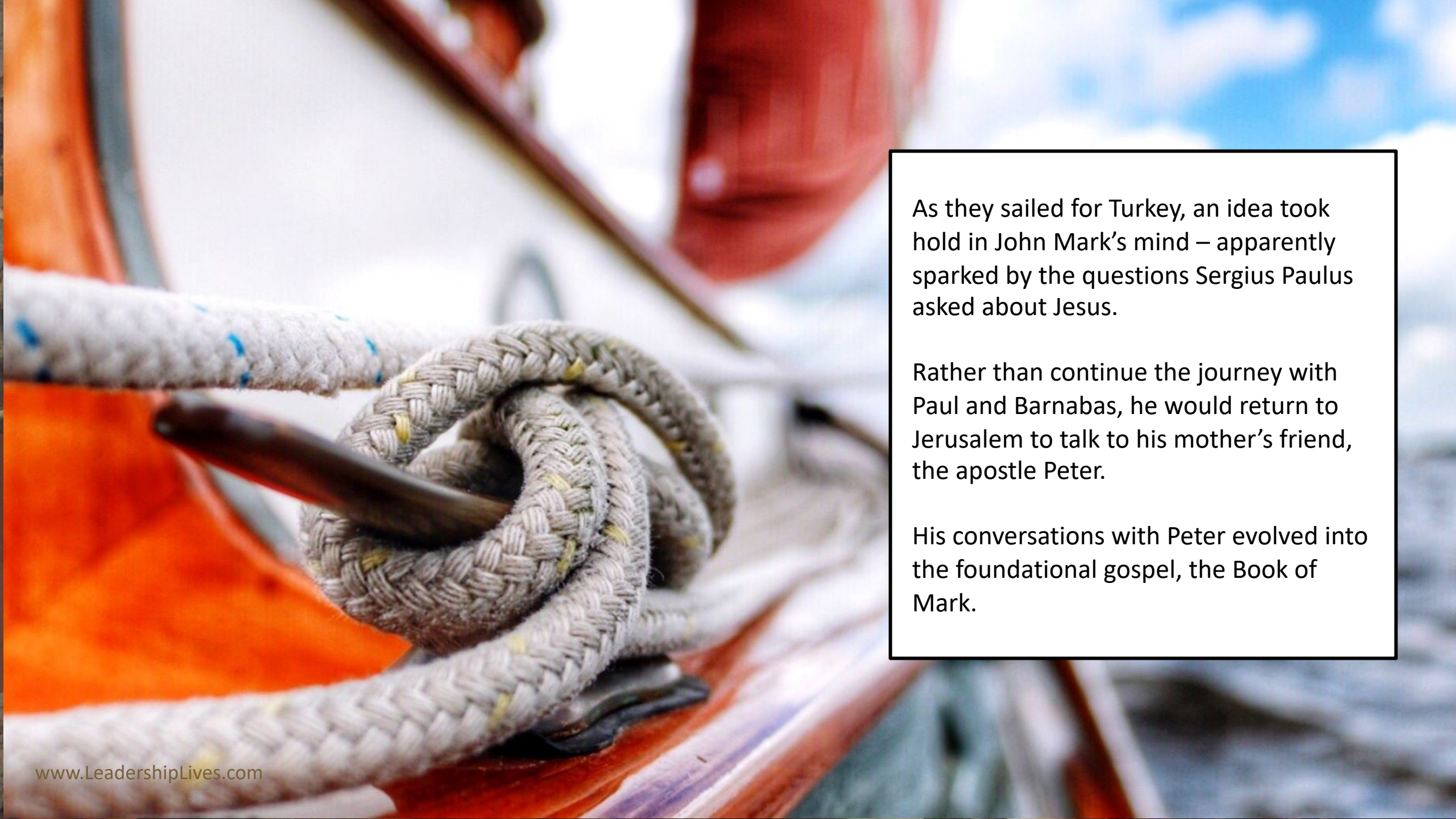
From this point on, Saul is referred to as Paul and switches positions with Barnabas.

Paul is now the leader.

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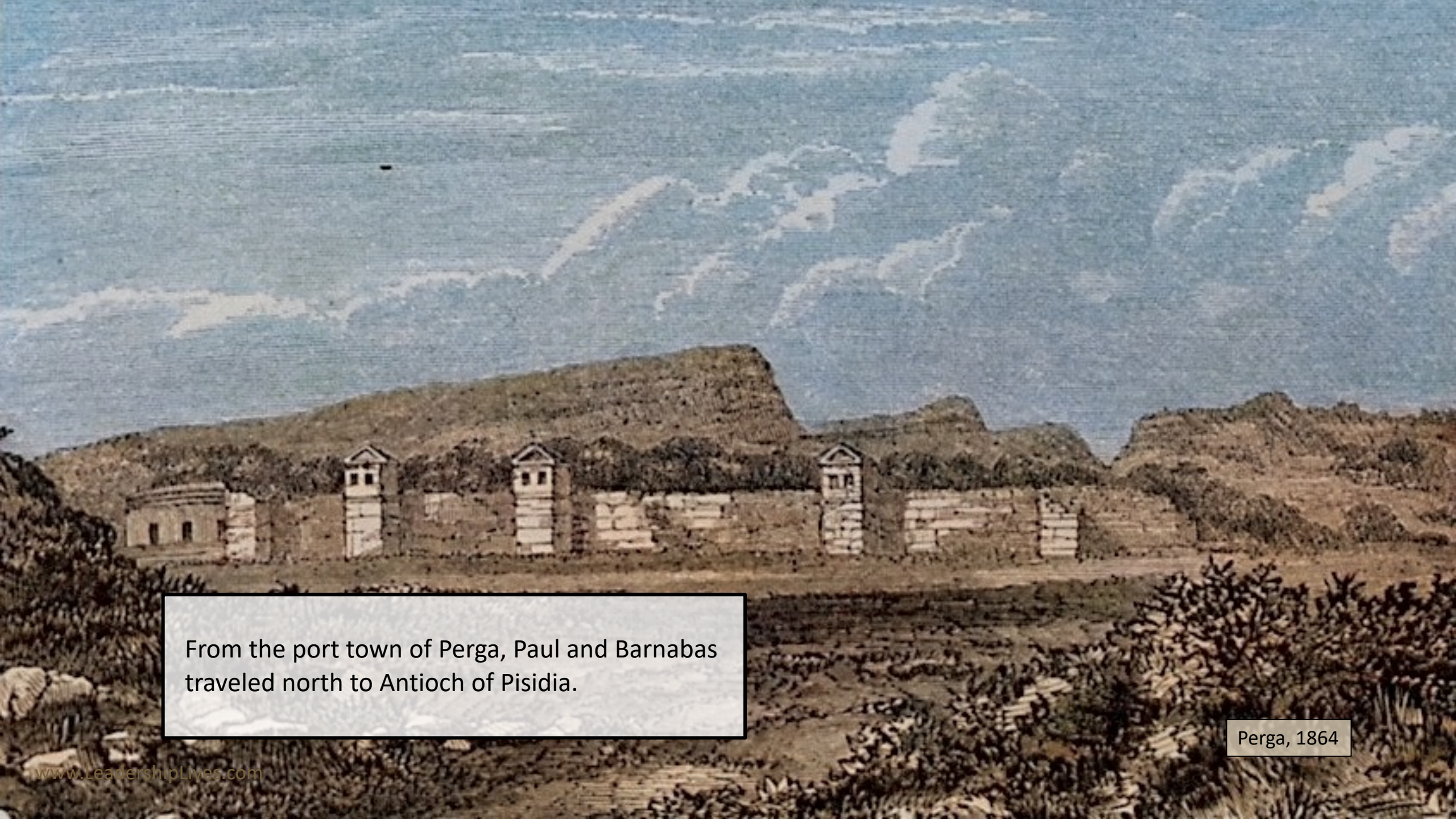
Elymas Struck Blind  
Raphael, 1519



As they sailed for Turkey, an idea took hold in John Mark's mind – apparently sparked by the questions Sergius Paulus asked about Jesus.

Rather than continue the journey with Paul and Barnabas, he would return to Jerusalem to talk to his mother's friend, the apostle Peter.

His conversations with Peter evolved into the foundational gospel, the Book of Mark.



From the port town of Perga, Paul and Barnabas traveled north to Antioch of Pisidia.

Perga, 1864



Antioch in Pisidia

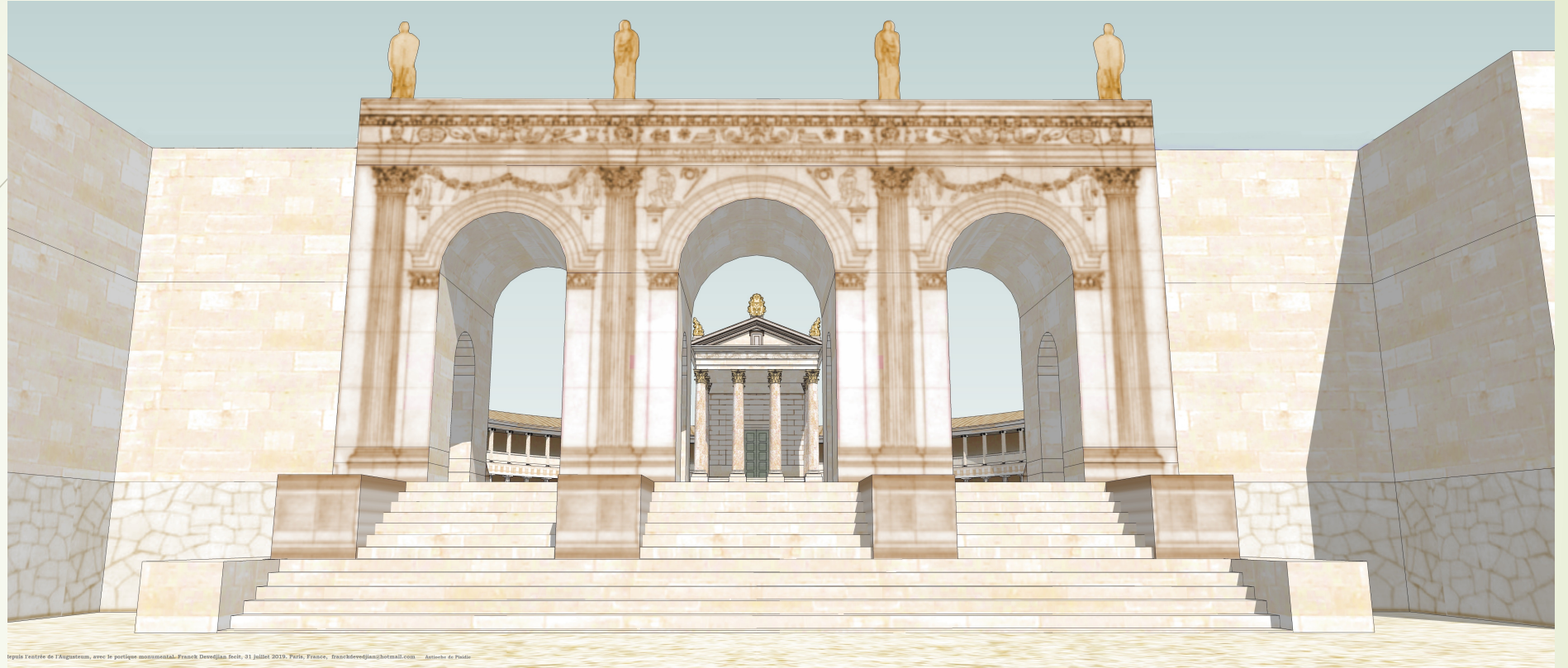
Iconium

Lystra

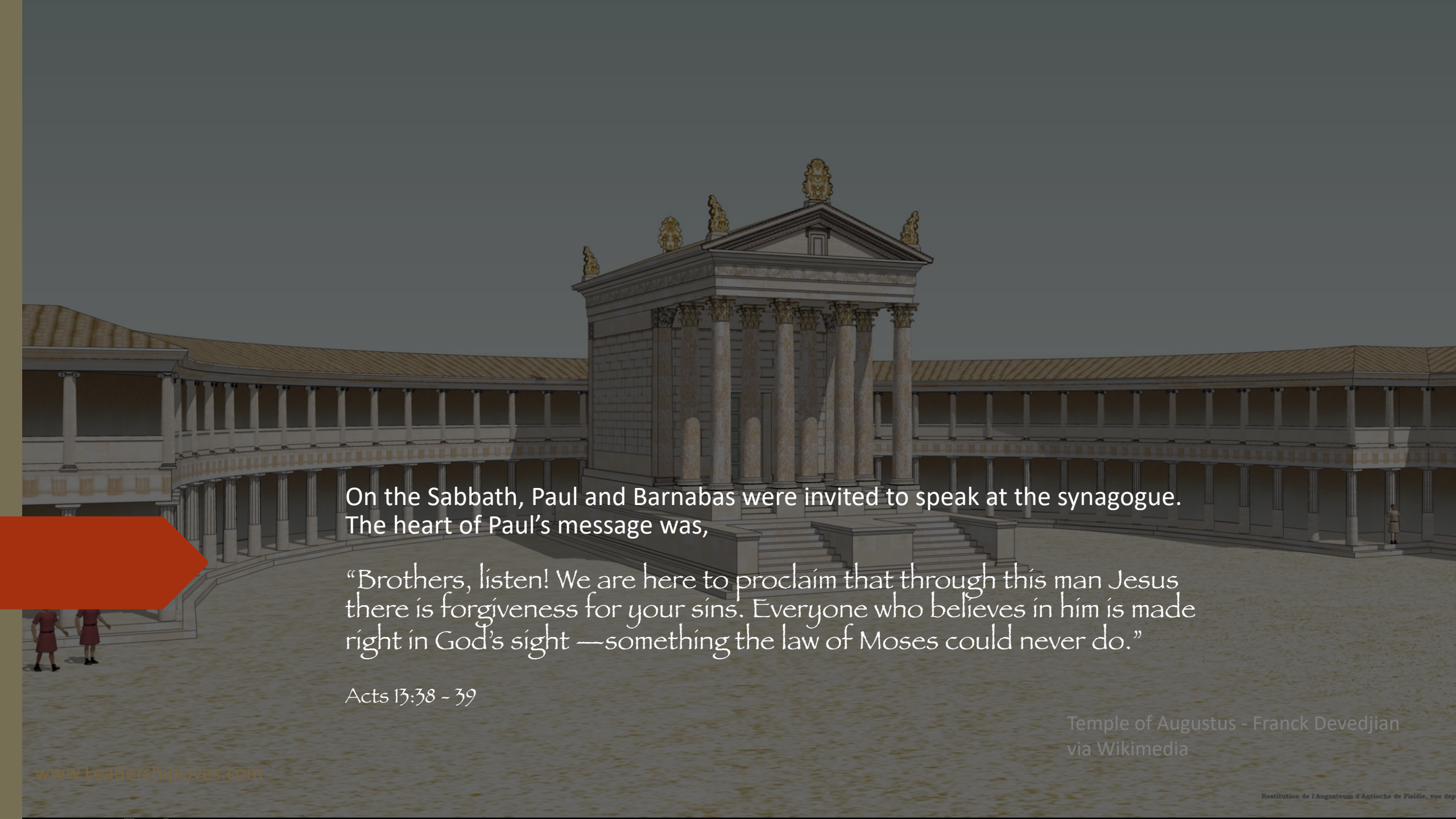
Derbe

Perga

They were headed to southern Galatia – the province on the eastern edge of the Roman Empire.



The capital city of southern Galatia, Antioch in Pisidia, was a center of Roman military and civil administration. From there, Roman-built roads radiated out to forestall invaders and protect valuable trade routes. When the trade routes shifted, the city was abandoned. Antioch in Pisidia was home to the impressive temple of Augustus.

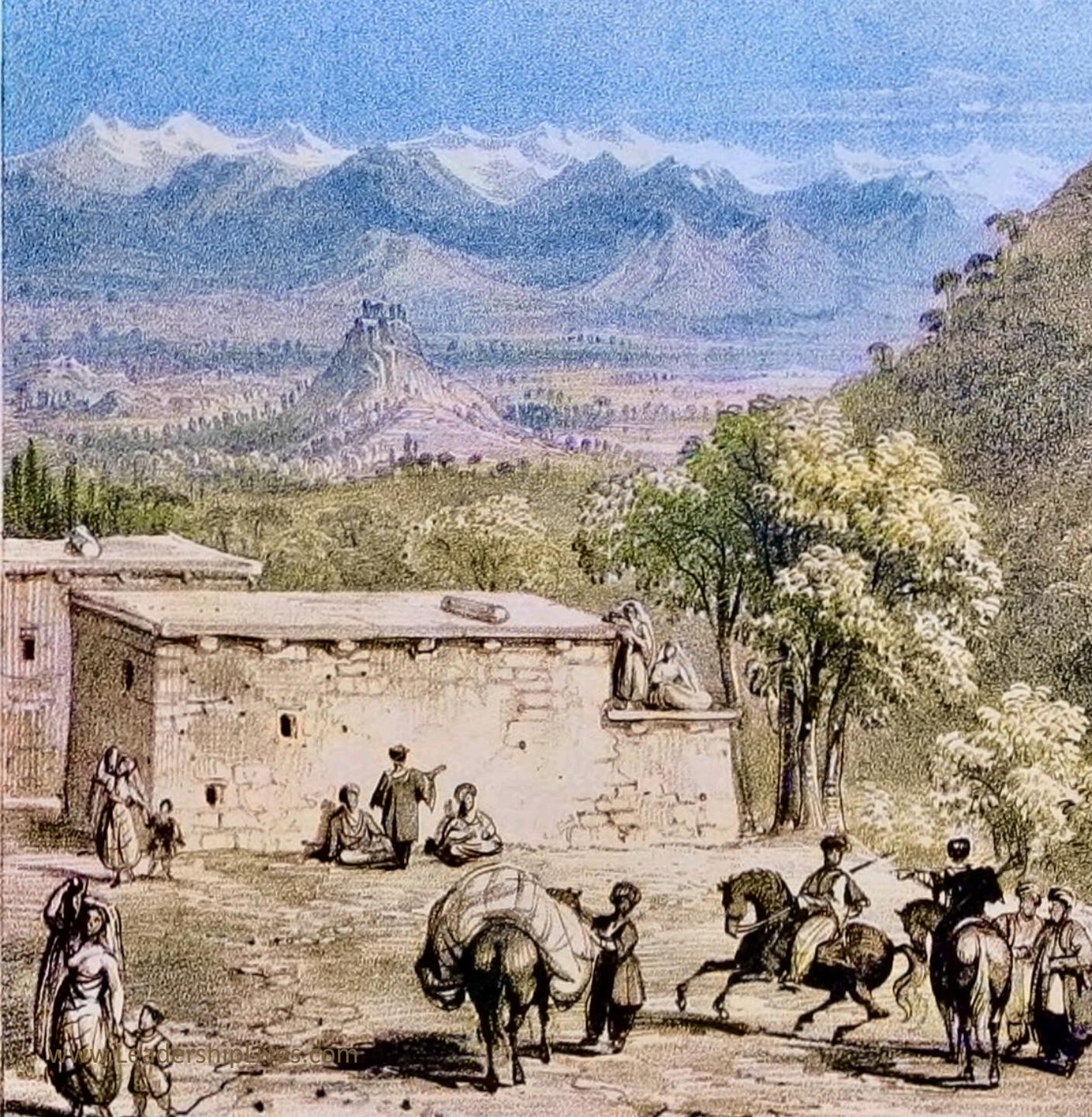


On the Sabbath, Paul and Barnabas were invited to speak at the synagogue.  
The heart of Paul's message was,

“Brothers, listen! We are here to proclaim that through this man Jesus there is forgiveness for your sins. Everyone who believes in him is made right in God's sight —something the law of Moses could never do.”

Acts 13:38 - 39

Temple of Augustus - Franck Devedjian  
via Wikimedia



The following week almost the entire city turned out to hear Paul and Barnabas preach.

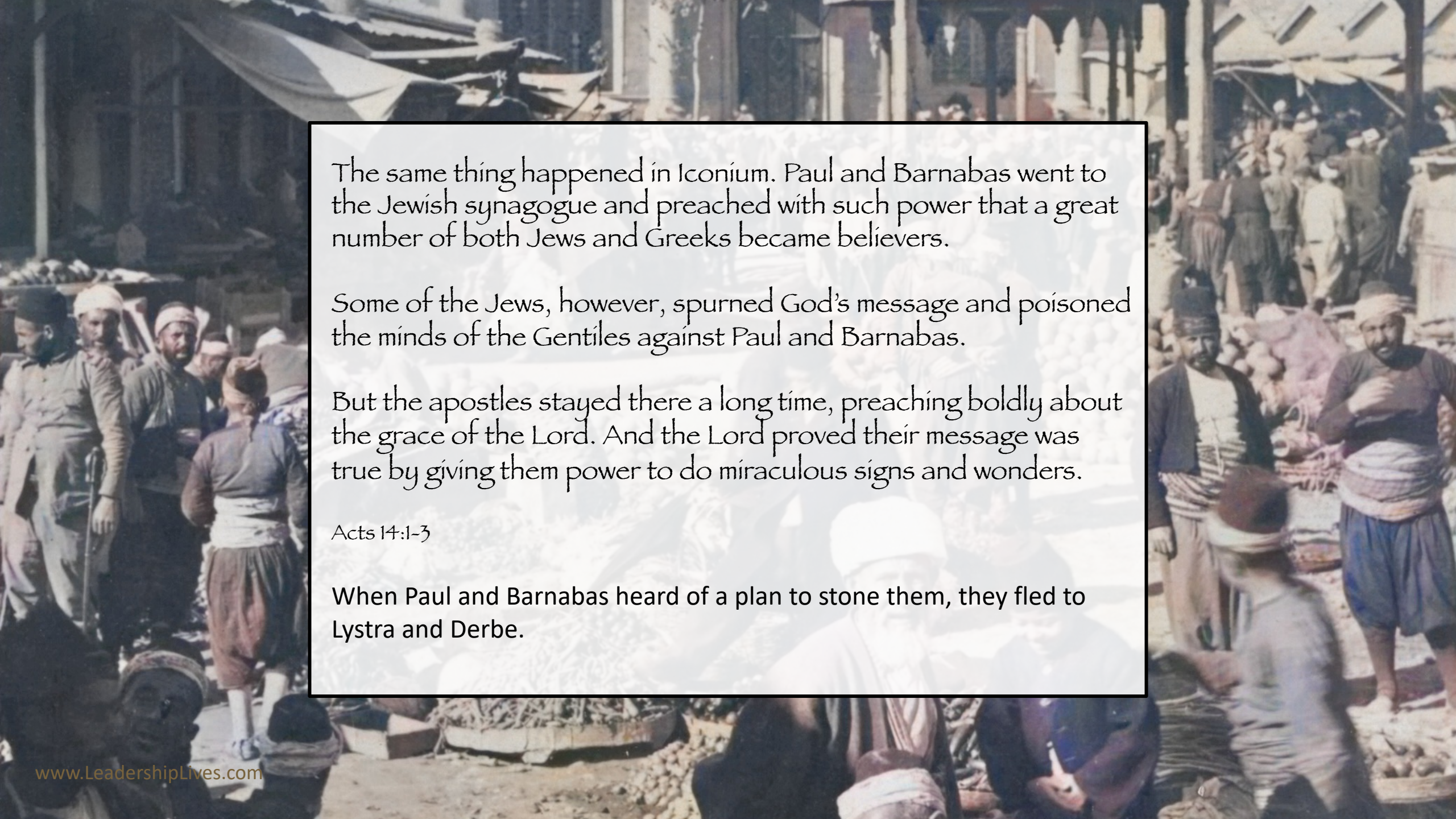
But when some of the Jews saw the crowds, they were jealous; so, they slandered Paul and argued against whatever he said.

Then Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and declared, “It was necessary that we first preach the word of God to you Jews. But since you have rejected it and judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we will offer it to the Gentiles.

For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 13:45-47 – quoting Isaiah 49:6





The same thing happened in Iconium. Paul and Barnabas went to the Jewish synagogue and preached with such power that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers.

Some of the Jews, however, spurned God's message and poisoned the minds of the Gentiles against Paul and Barnabas.

But the apostles stayed there a long time, preaching boldly about the grace of the Lord. And the Lord proved their message was true by giving them power to do miraculous signs and wonders.

Acts 14:1-3

When Paul and Barnabas heard of a plan to stone them, they fled to Lystra and Derbe.

While they were at Lystra, Paul and Barnabas came upon a man with crippled feet. He had been that way from birth, so he had never walked. He was sitting and listening as Paul preached.

Looking straight at him, Paul realized he had faith to be healed. So, Paul called to him in a loud voice, "Stand up!" And the man jumped to his feet and started walking.

Acts 14:8-10



When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in their local dialect, “These men are gods in human form!” They decided that Barnabas was the Greek god Zeus, and that Paul was Hermes, since he was the chief speaker.

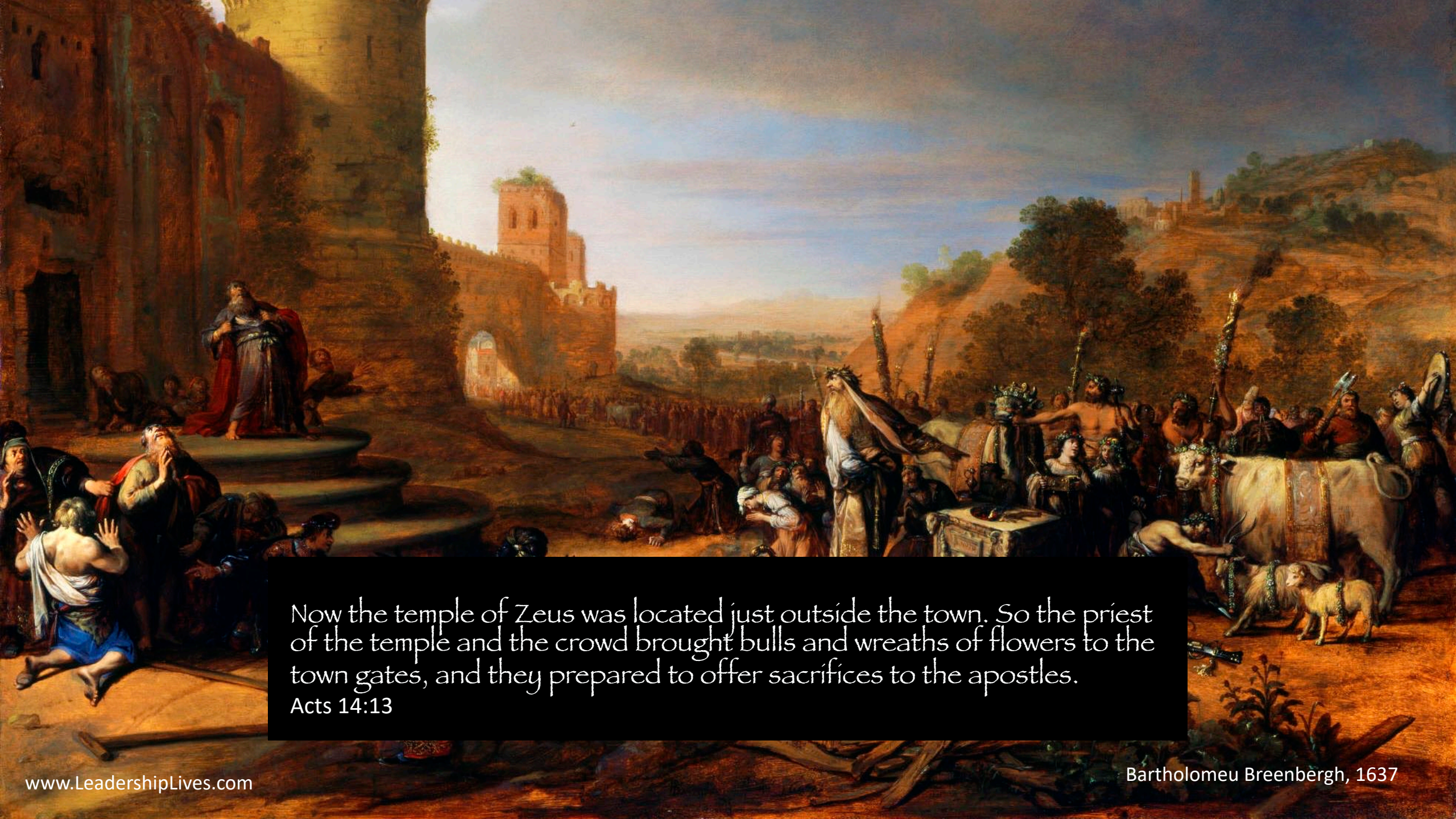
Acts 14:11-12

The people of Lystra mistook the handsome Barnabas for Zeus, the king of the gods.



Since Paul was always busy and extraordinarily eloquent, they decided he must be Hermes, the Greek god of commerce, travelers, communication and always in motion.





Now the temple of Zeus was located just outside the town. So the priest of the temple and the crowd brought bulls and wreaths of flowers to the town gates, and they prepared to offer sacrifices to the apostles.  
Acts 14:13



When Paul and Barnabas heard what was happening, they were horrified and shouted to the crowd,

“Friends, why are you doing this? We are merely human beings—just like you! We have come to bring you the Good News that you should turn from these worthless things and turn to the living God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them.

Acts 14:15

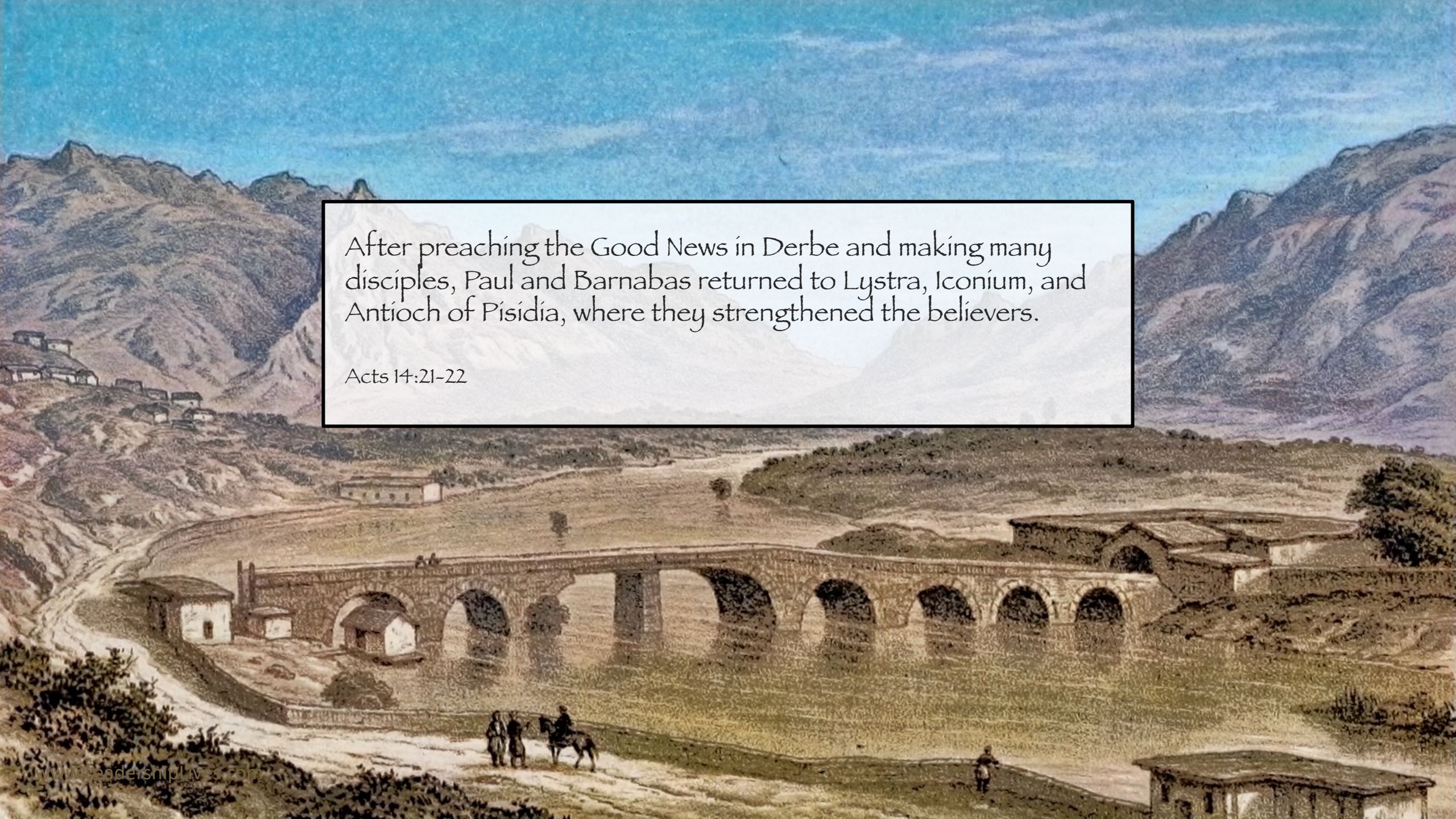
Then some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowds to their side. They stoned Paul and dragged him out of town, thinking he was dead.

But as the believers gathered around him, he got up and went back into the town. The next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe.

Acts 14:19 – 20

The hallmark of Paul's story are the remarkable turnarounds – in this instance, the one who approved of the stoning of Stephen has now become the stoned.

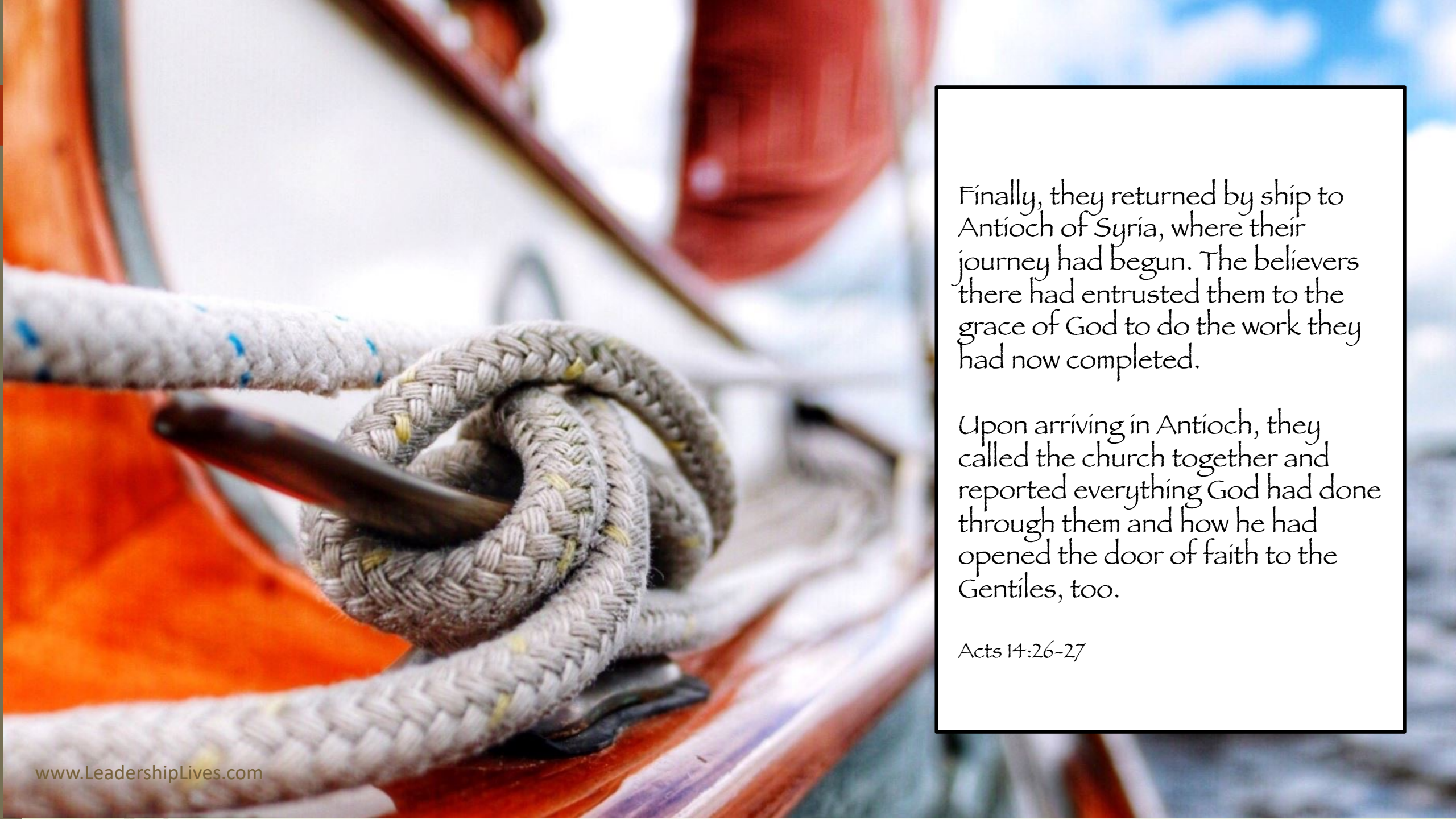




After preaching the Good News in Derbe and making many disciples, Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, where they strengthened the believers.

Acts 14:21-22





Finally, they returned by ship to Antioch of Syria, where their journey had begun. The believers there had entrusted them to the grace of God to do the work they had now completed.

Upon arriving in Antioch, they called the church together and reported everything God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, too.

Acts 14:26-27

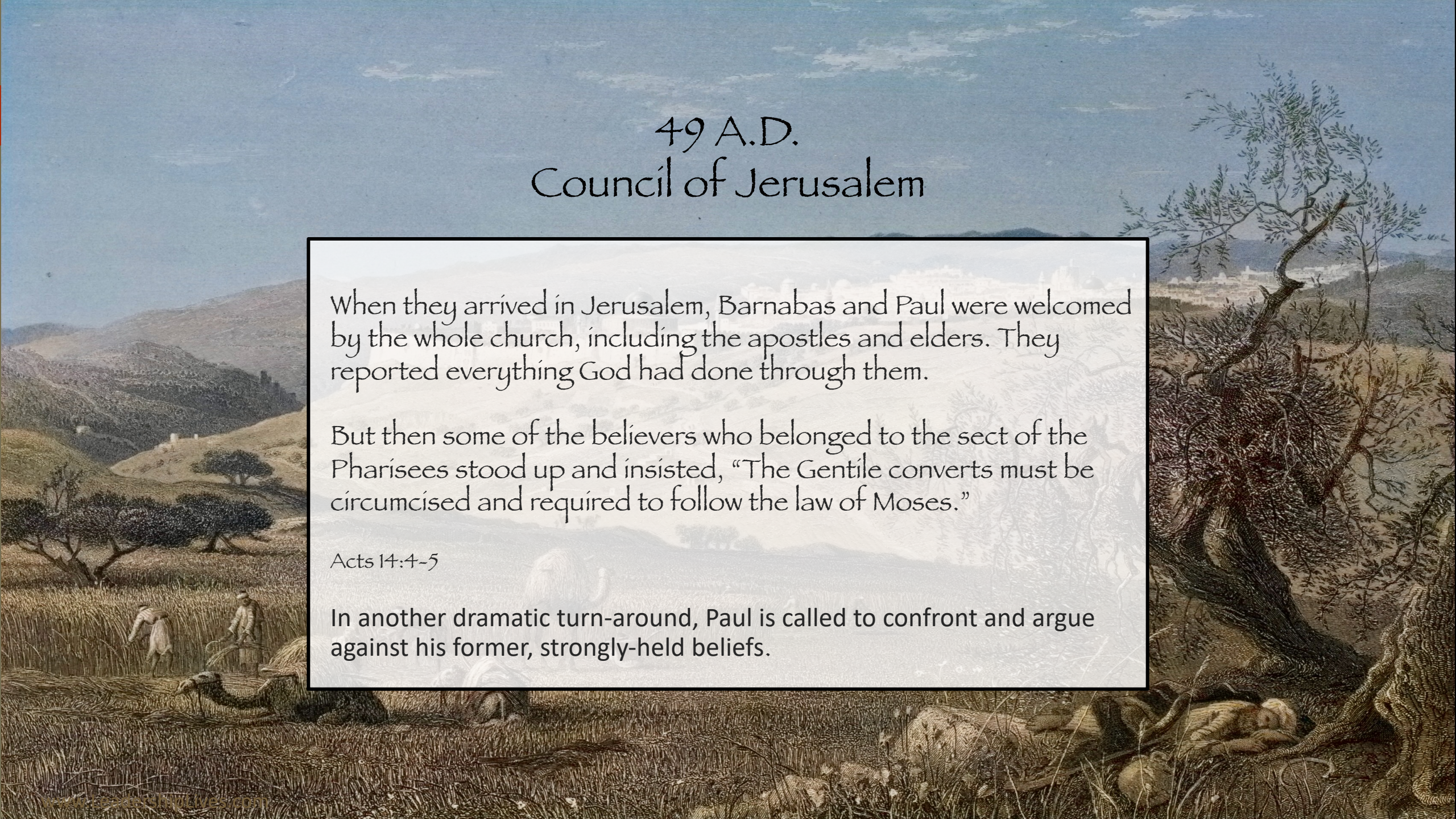
While Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch, preachers arrived from Judea teaching that believers had to follow Mosaic Law to be saved.

Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently.

Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question.

Acts 14:2





## 49 A.D. Council of Jerusalem

When they arrived in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the whole church, including the apostles and elders. They reported everything God had done through them.

But then some of the believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and insisted, “The Gentile converts must be circumcised and required to follow the law of Moses.”

Acts 14:4-5

In another dramatic turn-around, Paul is called to confront and argue against his former, strongly-held beliefs.



After returning to Antioch from Jerusalem, Paul heard reports that the people who had come to faith in Galatia were now listening to false prophets.

Deeply concerned, Paul wrote to the churches in Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

“I am surprised at you! In no time at all you are deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are accepting another gospel.”

Gal. 1:6

Paul’s core message in his letter to the Galatians is that we all are made free of sin through faith in Christ.

Il Guercino 17th c. Saint Paul

Yet we know that a person is put right with God only through faith in Jesus Christ, never by doing what the Law requires.

Letter to Galatians 2:16

Paul decided to revisit the Galatians.

TO BE CONTINUED