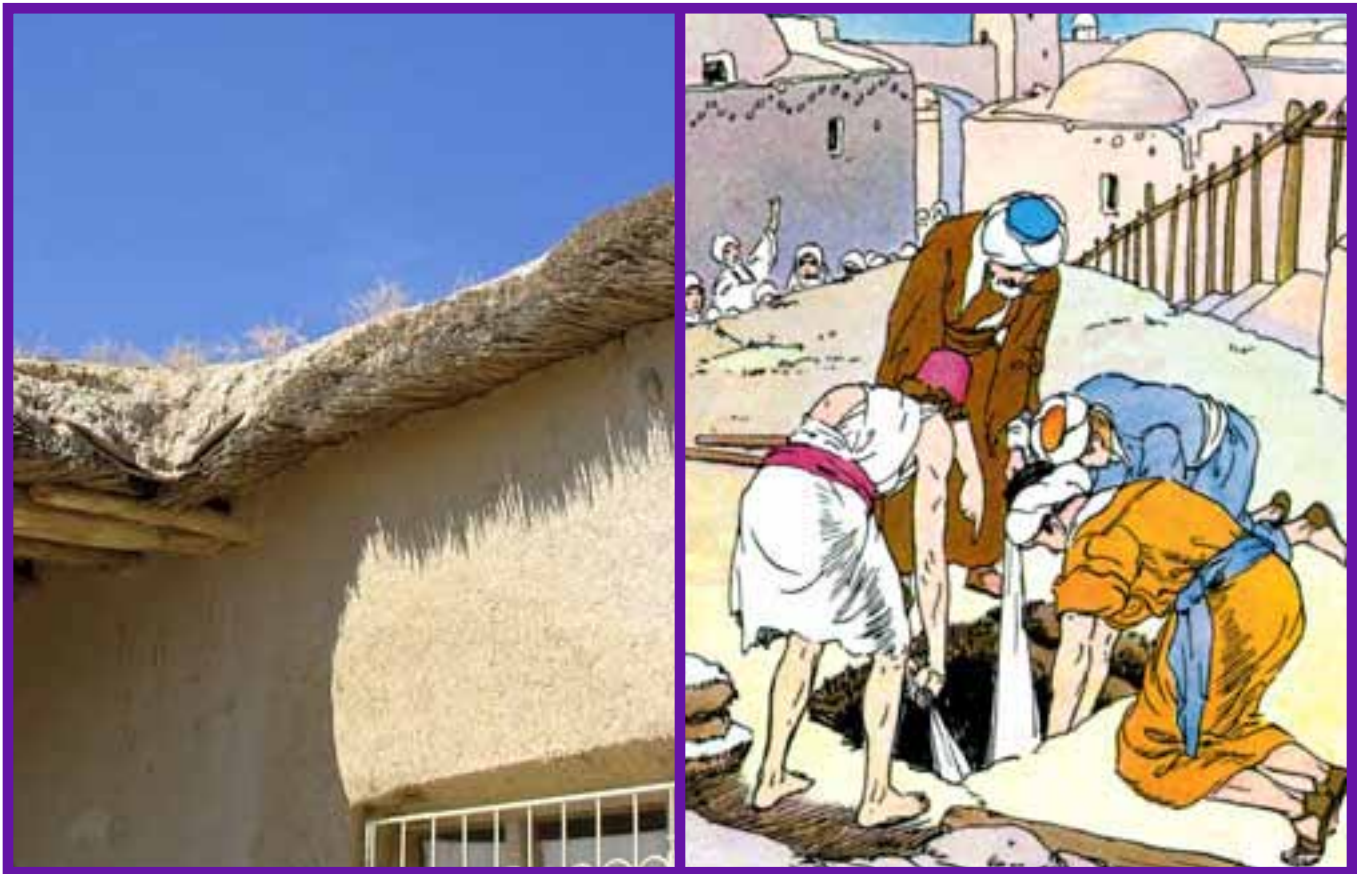


# Tour of the Holy Lands - Derbe



As we near Derbe (der'bee), we enter another little town. We can't help but wonder if we've gone back in time! From the looks of it, this town hasn't changed much since Bible days. The people still live the same way as they did then. Can you imagine Paul and Barnabas walking into a town like this, meeting the townspeople, preaching and teaching, and looking out at the same village scene that we're seeing today? Let's get off the bus and explore!

Check out these houses! The walls are made of mud bricks with a topcoat of mud that sometimes falls off to reveal the bricks underneath. We learn that this has been a way of building in this area for more than nine thousand years.



The next thing to notice are the roofs. Many of them have wooden poles reaching from one side of the house to the other. On top of the poles is grass or hay held together by mud. We saw a roof like this in Capernaum, Israel. Remember the paralyzed man whose four friends carried him on a stretcher to see Jesus? When they couldn't get in the front door, they carried him upstairs to the roof. They dug through the mud and branches, and let him down between the poles. There, they laid him at the feet of Jesus, and Jesus healed him. From this story and from what we're seeing here in this little town, we know that many of the houses in Israel and Asia Minor looked alike in Bible times.





Now, let's go walking! Look! Behind the stone walls, we see farm animals: chickens, sheep, goats and cows.





Aside from animals, we also see ovens in the backyards. Like the houses, the ovens are also made of mud bricks and a mud topcoat. This is where the family does its daily baking.





See those ladies waving to us? They're washing and drying the wool they have sheared off their sheep. They will sell it. The buyers will dye it many different colors. Girls will weave the colored wool into carpets with beautiful designs. People from all over the world will come to the shop where the girls are weaving, choose a carpet they like, and take it home for their living room floor.





What's that strange thing on top of the tallest building in town? We have to use our binoculars to see it. It's a very large nest with two very large birds in it. They're storks. It would be cool if we could see their babies! Do you ever see storks in your hometown? They're mentioned in the Bible. (Ps 104:17)





Just outside of town is a hill, or tell, very much like Lystra. The sign tells us it's the town of Derbe. We will have to use our imagination again. What did the town look like? Was it like the village we just left?

Why don't we play archeologist? We'll climb the hill and keep on the look-out for shards. Remember, shards are pieces of broken pottery. We can collect as many as we can in our pockets to show each other at the top of the tell.





Now, let's spread the shards on the ground. Wow, look at what we've found - thin pieces, thick pieces, and handles, some plain and some painted. If we were archeologists, we could read this pottery. We could tell what kind of clay the people of Derbe used, and where they got it. We could tell if the pieces were from cooking pots or jugs for wine. From the decorations, we could tell if the pottery was made by artists and even which artists. From what was stored in the pottery, we could tell if the people were farmers. For instance, we might find evidence of grain, or even a pit from an olive or date. Think of how old that pit would be! It would be fun to be an archeologist and share our discoveries with the world.





While we're here on top of the tell, looking over the fields of vegetables and grain, let's see what the Bible says about Derbe. In Acts 16:1 and Acts 20:4, it isn't clear whether Timothy lived in Lystra or Derbe. Today, the tells in both towns look just about the same. Wouldn't it be fun if diggers at Lystra or Derbe found a shard with the name Timothy on it? We couldn't be certain that it was the Timothy we're looking for. But, then again, it *might* be. That's what makes Bible study and archeology so interesting!



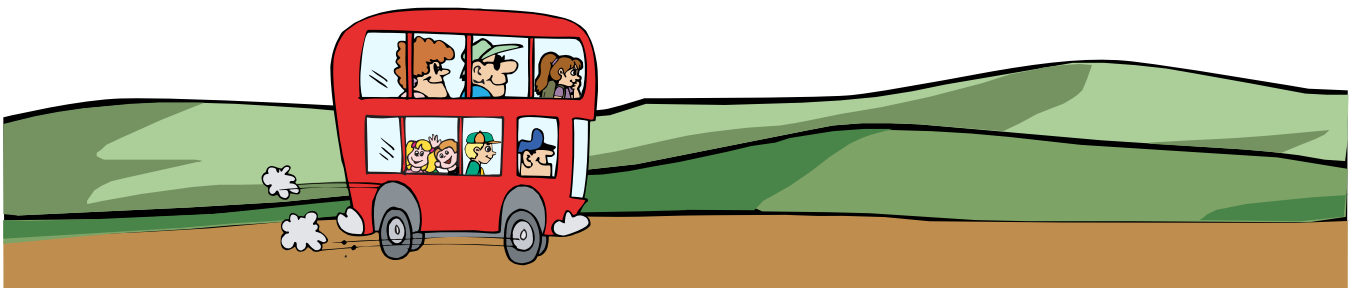


Although the Bible isn't clear about Timothy, it does tell us what Paul and Barnabas did in Derbe. "They preached the gospel to that city, and taught many." (Acts 14:21) It was a very successful stop for the two missionaries. Christianity grew here without any persecution. And when Paul returned about five years later, he must have found a large Christian congregation here.



Before we leave the tell, let's pick up the shards and then we can toss them back into the tall grass as we go down the hill. The next group of people will have fun discovering them.

Hey, everyone, come over here! Look what we found in the thistles. Look very closely. He's trying to hide. Yes, it's a turtle. It's a Turkey turtle. Just like the town, these turtles date back to ancient days! Okay, it's time to go. Everyone back on the bus!





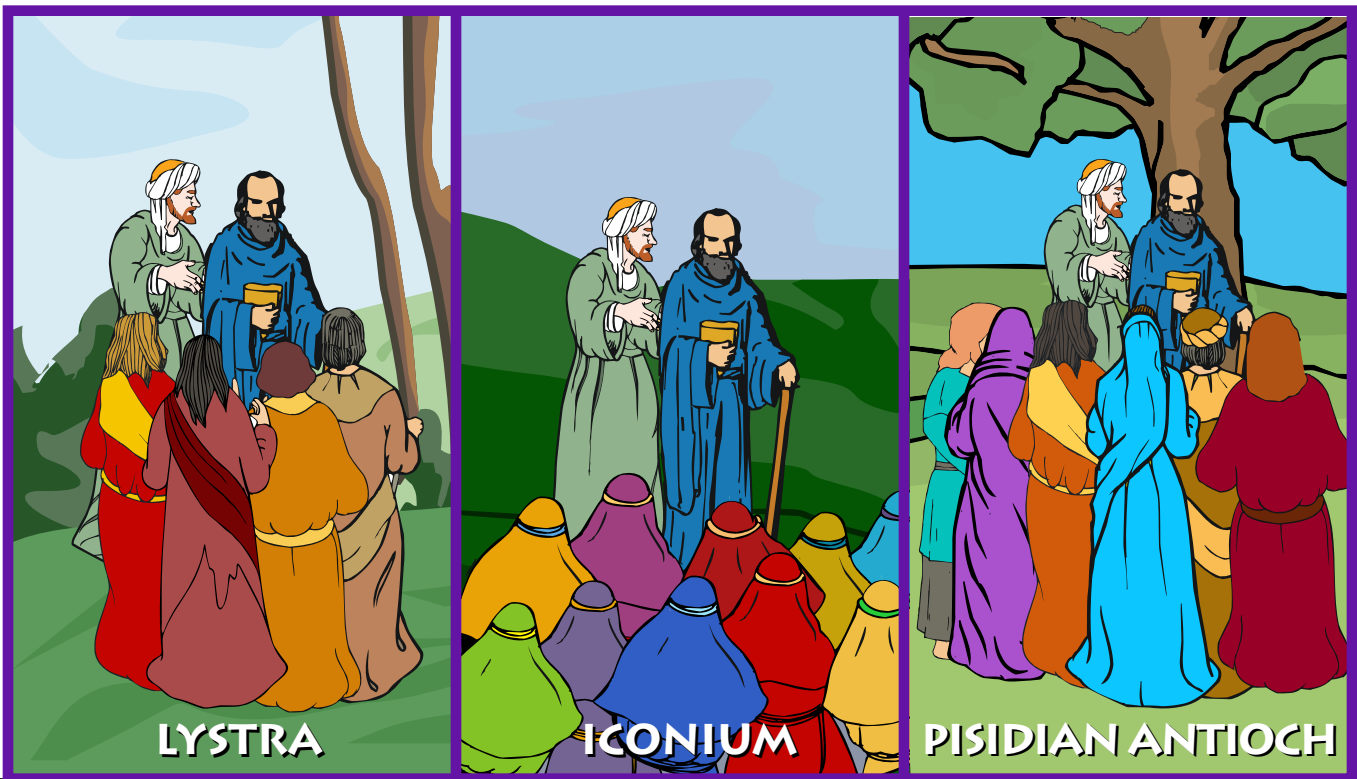


As we drive away from the tell, we see something unusual out the window. It's a man all by himself in his field on his knees with his forehead in the grass as if he is bowing in great humility. Now look at your watches. It's time for people in this land to pray no matter where they might be. What would your prayer be right now? One thing we could all do is offer a prayer of thanks to God for a wonderful trip! And, we can thank our bus driver, too. Remember how to say "thank you" in Turkish? "Teh'shek-ur-eh'deh-rem."





Now that we're back in the little town, let's take one more look around. See the Turkish potter over there? It's fascinating to watch the pot emerge from the block of clay as the potter's hands shape and mold it on the wheel. This process hasn't changed much since Bible times, either. This area sure has been fun to visit!

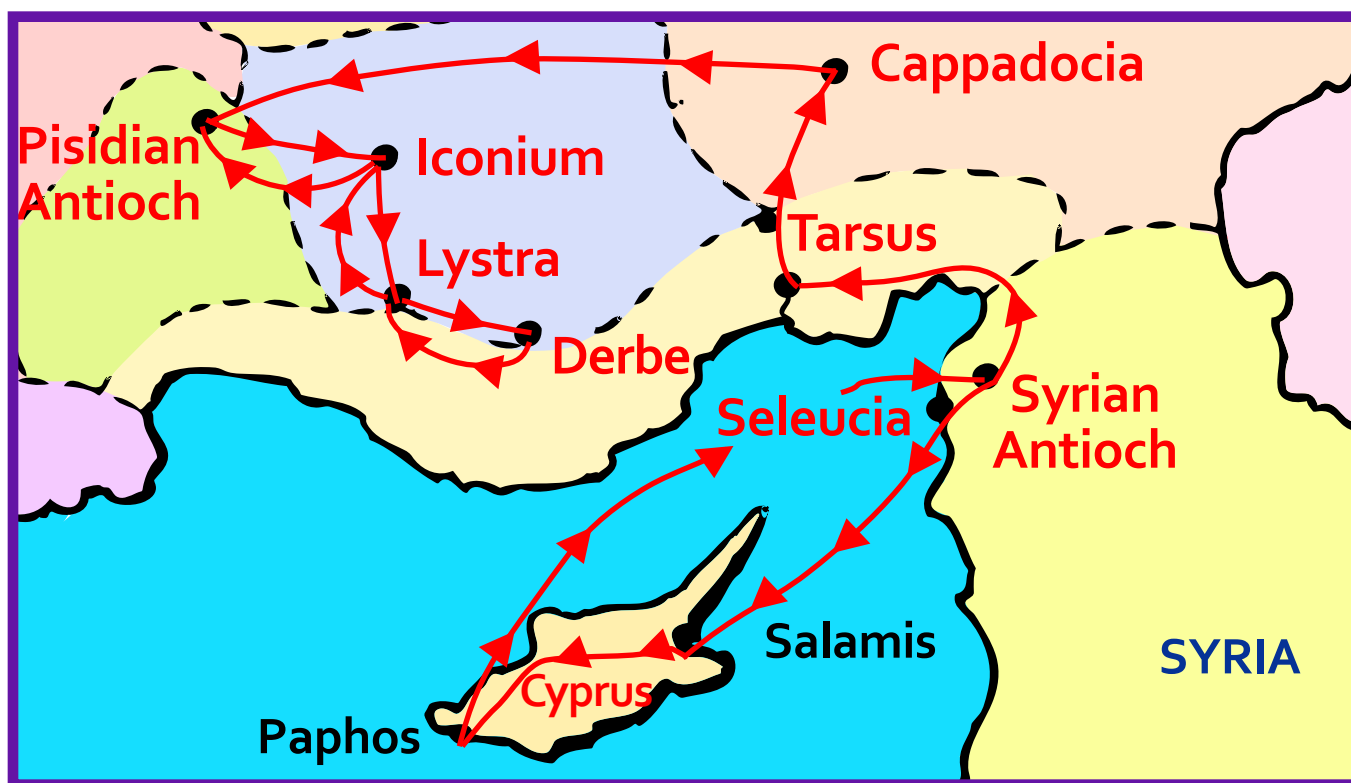


We've had a peaceful stay here, and so did the missionaries. It would have been simple for them to keep going east until they got home to Syrian Antioch, but they had other ideas.

They had helped establish three churches along the way. These early churches didn't have church buildings. Christians met wherever they could -- in homes or by rivers. Not until 240 AD do we hear about church buildings.

The missionaries wanted to check on these churches or Christian congregations, to answer their questions, encourage them, and help them choose leaders. They also wanted to tell the church members to stick with it and never-ever give up, no matter what problems or difficult times they might face. So, that's what they did. They turned around and retraced their steps. What good missionaries they were! What love they showed!





As we pull away from this area, we all agree that the townspeople were wise to keep the village just like it was thousands of years ago. It's as if time stood still to let us feel what it was really like to live in Bible times.

Well, the summer is over for us. We've traveled to many of the same places Paul and Barnabas traveled, imagining life as they would have experienced it. Just think how far these two devoted disciples walked in order to spread the word about Christianity! And, believe it or not, Paul and Barnabas have not finished visiting new towns and villages. But that's another journey, so let's plan to meet again next summer to follow more of their adventures!

