

~ANTIOCH 1 (239)

(An'ti-och)

.. Biblical Connections And Later History

- The city of **Antioch** in Syria was founded by Seleucus I or Nicator, shortly after he and Generals Cassander and Lysimachus won the decisive battle of Ipsus in Phrygia, Asia Minor, in **301 B.C.E.** He selected the site because of its military advantages and named it after his father **Antiochus**.
- At the location of what today is called **Antakya** in Turkey, **Antioch** was founded on the South side of the navigable Orontes River at a bend some 32 kilometers (20 miles) from the Mediterranean Sea. It was so situated geographically that it could easily dominate the trade of all Northwest Syria that traversed the routes between the Euphrates River and the Mediterranean Sea.
- It soon became a commercial center, and its manufacture of luxury goods brought prosperity and wealth to the cosmopolitan city. As a seaport for **Antioch**, Seleucus also founded the coastal city of Seleucia, named after himself.
- Before he was assassinated in **281 B.C.E.**, he transferred his seat of government from Babylon to his new Syrian capital, **Antioch**, where the Seleucid dynasty of kings continued in power until **64 B.C.E.**, when Roman General Pompey made Syria a Roman province.
- Not only was **Antioch** made the capital of the Roman province of Syria but it also became the third-largest city in the empire, after Rome and Alexandria.
- The physical structure of the city had been laid out according to the plan of Alexandria, with great colonnaded streets that intersected, lending impressive beauty to the splendor of the surrounding buildings. It was called **The Queen of the East, Antioch the Beautiful, The Third Metropolis of the Roman Empire**, and was unique in possessing a regular system of street lighting.
- Despite this outward show of beauty and industriousness, it gained a reputation for being morally corrupt because of the defiling practice of orgiastic rites in the name of religion. Juvenal said that the Orontes River had flowed into the Tiber River flooding Rome with the

superstition and immorality of the East. [Juvenal and Persius, Satire III, 62-65]

· Biblical Connections And Later History

- Josephus records that the Seleucids encouraged Jews to settle in **Antioch** and gave them full citizenship rights, thus establishing a sizable Jewish population. The first mention of **Antioch** in the Bible is in connection with Nicolaus from **Antioch**, who became a Christian after becoming a proselyte to the Jewish religion.
- And the thing spoken was pleasing to the whole multitude, and they selected Stephen, a man full of faith and Holy Spirit, and Philip and Prochorus and Nicanor and Timon and Parmenas and **Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch**. (Acts of Apostles 6:5)
- Direct Christian activity began there when **some of the disciples were scattered as far as Antioch** by the tribulation that arose following Stephens death.
- Consequently those who had been scattered by the tribulation that arose over Stephen went through as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and **Antioch**, **but speaking the word to no one except to Jews only**. (Acts of Apostles 11:19)
- However, out of them there were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene that came to **Antioch** and **began talking to the Greek-speaking people, declaring the Good News of the Lord Jesus**. (Acts of Apostles 11:20)
- When the congregation at Jerusalem heard that many Greek-speaking people were becoming believers, **they dispatched Barnabas as far as Antioch**, and when he observed the thriving interest manifested there, **he brought Paul in from Tarsus to help**.
- Furthermore, the hand of Yehowah was with them, and a great number that became believers turned to the Lord. (Acts of Apostles 11:21)
- The account about them got to the ears of the congregation that was in Jerusalem, **and they sent out Barnabas as far as Antioch**. (Acts of Apostles 11:22)
- When he arrived and saw the undeserved kindness of God, he

- rejoiced and began to encourage them all to continue in the Lord with hearty purpose. (**Acts of Apostles 11:23**)
- For he was a good man and full of Holy Spirit and of faith. And a considerable crowd was added to the Lord. (**Acts of Apostles 11:24**)
 - So he went off to Tarsus to make a thorough search for Saul (**Acts of Apostles 11:25**)
 - And, after he found him, **he brought him to Antioch**. It thus came about that for a whole year they gathered together with them in the congregation **and taught quite a crowd, and it was first in Antioch that the disciples were by divine providence called Christians**. (**Acts of Apostles 11:26**)
 - They both dwelt there for a year teaching the people, and Paul thereafter used **Antioch** as a home base for his missionary tours. It was in **Antioch** that, by divine providence, the disciples were first called Christians.
 - The generosity of the congregation was expressed when they sent a relief ministration.
 - So those of the disciples determined, each of them according as anyone could afford it, to send a relief ministration to the brothers dwelling in Judea. (**Acts of Apostles 11:29**)
 - By the hands of Paul and Barnabas to the older men in Jerusalem about **46 C.E.** This coincided with a great famine occurring in the time of Claudius, as prophesied by Agabus.
 - Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to **Antioch**. (**Acts of Apostles 11:27**)
 - One of them named Agabus rose and proceeded to indicate through the spirit that a great famine was about to come upon the entire inhabited earth, which, for that matter, did take place in the time of Claudius. (**Acts of Apostles 11:28**)
 - After they returned to **Antioch**, the Holy Spirit directed that Paul and Barnabas be set aside for special work, so they were sent on Paul's first missionary tour, about **47-48 C.E.**

- Before he started on his second missionary tour and while he was in **Antioch**, the matter of circumcision for Gentiles arose in about **49 C.E.**, and the decree of the older men at Jerusalem was delivered by Paul and Barnabas to the congregation at **Antioch**.
- After they quit speaking, James answered, saying; Men, brothers, hear me. (**Acts of Apostles 15:13**)
- Symeon has related thoroughly how God for the first time turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name. (**Acts of Apostles 15:14**)
- And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written. (**Acts of Apostles 15:15**)
- After these things I shall return and rebuild the booth of David that is fallen down, and I shall rebuild its ruins and erect it again. (**Acts of Apostles 15:16**)
- In order, that those who remain of the men may earnestly seek Yehowah, together with people of all the nations, people who are called by my name, says Yehowah, who is doing these things. (**Acts of Apostles 15:17**)
- Known from of old. (**Acts of Apostles 15:18**)
- Hence my decision is not to trouble those from the nations who are turning to God. (**Acts of Apostles 15:19**)
- But to write them to abstain from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. (**Acts of Apostles 15:20**)
- For from ancient times Moses has had in city after city those who preach him, because he is read aloud in the synagogues on every Sabbath. (**Acts of Apostles 15:21**)
- Then the apostles and the older men together with the whole congregation **avored sending chosen men from among them to Antioch along with Paul and Barnabas**, namely, Judas who was called Barsabbas and Silas, leading men among the brothers. (**Acts of Apostles 15:22**)
- And by their hand they wrote. The apostles and the older men,

brothers, to those brothers in **Antioch** and Syria and Cilicia who are from the nations. Greetings! (**Acts of Apostles 15:23**)

- Since we have heard that some from among us have caused you trouble with speeches, trying to subvert your souls, although we did not give them any instructions. (**Acts of Apostles 15:24**)
- We have come to a unanimous accord and have favored choosing men to send to you together with our loved ones, Barnabas and Paul. (**Acts of Apostles 15:25**)
- Men that have delivered up their souls for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (**Acts of Apostles 15:26**)
- We are therefore dispatching Judas and Silas, that they also may report the same things by word. (**Acts of Apostles 15:27**)
- For the Holy Spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things. (**Acts of Apostles 15:28**)
- To keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you! (**Acts of Apostles 15:29**)
- Accordingly, when these men were let go, they went down to **Antioch**, and they gathered the multitude together and handed them the letter. (**Acts of Apostles 15:30**)
- After reading it, they rejoiced over the encouragement. (**Acts of Apostles 15:31**)
- And Judas and Silas, since they themselves were also prophets, encouraged the brothers with many a discourse and strengthened them. (**Acts of Apostles 15:32**)
- So, when they had passed some time, they were let go in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them out. (**Acts of Apostles 15:33**)
- However, Paul and Barnabas continued spending time in **Antioch** teaching and declaring, with many others also, the Good News of the word of Yehowah. (**Acts of Apostles 15:35**)

- Paul's second missionary journey, about 49-52 C.E, likewise began and ended at Antioch, and here also was where Paul corrected Peter's compromising action of discriminating between Jews and Gentiles.
- However, when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him face to face, because he stood condemned. (Galatians 2:11)
- For before the arrival of certain men from James, he used to eat with people of the nations, but when they arrived, he went withdrawing and separating himself, in fear of those of the circumcised class. (Galatians 2:12)