



Chapter 13: First Missionary Journey, Part 1

“Sent Out by the Holy Spirit”

Acts 13–14: Paul & Barnabas’ First Missionary Journey, ca. 47-48 AD



Acts 13 is a pivotal chapter in the Acts narrative

- Narrates the beginning of the first multi-city missionary journey
- Luke here begins using the name Paul instead of Saul
- Records first miracle performed by Paul
- Marks shift in focus toward the activities of Paul

Paul & Barnabas Commissioned by the Church at Antioch (verses 1-4)

Notice how multiethnic and multicultural the church was so early:

- Hebraic and Hellenistic Jews at Jerusalem (Acts 6)
- Samaritans (Acts 8) and Gentiles (Acts 10)
- Leaders at Antioch:
 - Barnabas and Saul
 - Simeon, called Niger
 - Lucius, the Cyrenian
 - Manaen, an associate of Herod (Antipas) the tetrarch
- *“Here [in the faith] there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.”* (Col. 3:11)

The Holy Spirit’s role in commissioning Barnabas and Saul

- The Holy Spirit *called* (vs. 2) and sent (vs. 4) Barnabas and Saul to evangelistic work
- These acts of *calling* and *sending* (especially with respect to stewardship of the Gospel) are specific and time-bound movements of the Spirit
- Prayer and fasting – not to be taken lightly
- Usually our attention goes to the fruit – conversions, miracles – but there is no fruit without the *living water* (John 7:38)

The Missionary Journey Begins in Cyprus (verses 4-12)

They began to proclaim the word of God in the Jewish synagogues (vs. 5)

- John (called Mark) is with them
- Notice Cyprus is where Barnabas is from (Acts. 4:36)
- They started their missionary work in familiar places with familiar kinds of people

The magician Bar-Jesus (also called Elymas)

- Tries to turn the proconsul away from Paul and Barnabas’ teaching – why?
 - Saul (also called Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit, confronts the magician (vs. 9)
 - “Will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? (vs. 10)
 - Allusion to Isa. 40:3-5, which Luke quoted in reference to John the Baptist:
“⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” (Luke 3:4-6)
 - Opposition to God’s work, rather than preparation for it
- Elymas is struck blind, and the proconsul believed! (vs. 11-12)
- The Holy Spirit has the authority to give life and health, as well as to take it

From Cyprus to Pisidian Antioch (verses 13-14)

Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos..." (vs. 13)

- Luke here noticeably shifts his focus to Paul
- Prior to the confrontation the Elymas, Luke refers to them as "Barnabas and Saul"
- From this point forward, he uses the name Paul
- And Paul is the more prominent: "Paul and his companions" (vs. 13)

"And John (Mark) left them and returned to Jerusalem" (vs. 13)

- Later (Acts 15:38) we will learn that Paul felt abandoned by John Mark
- We don't know why John Mark left
- We should expect in ministry, and especially in missionary work, people can become overwhelmed and 'tap out'
- This is not necessarily a fatal character flaw. Sometimes it just gets too hard

Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue in Antioch (in Pisidia) where they were *invited* by the synagogue rulers to speak (vs. 14-15)

Paul's Address to the Synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (verses 16-41)

"Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen:" (vs. 16)

- Paul knows his audience and leans into their Jewish heritage as a starting point
- He will use a different tactic when addressing a mostly pagan audience in Ch. 14

Paul's address is in four parts:

1. "The God of this people Israel chose our fathers..." (vs. 17-25)

- First Paul briefly traces Israel's history from Egypt through the conquest of Canaan, the judges, the prophet Samuel, king Saul, and then to David
- David was a man after God's own heart, who would do God's will (Ps. 89:20; 1 Sam. 13:14)
- Paul then leaps forward through history to Jesus, connecting him with his ancestor David, as a fulfillment of God's promises
- Paul explains that John proclaimed a baptism for repentance. He was not the Savior, but pointed to one coming after him

2. "Brothers, ...to us has been sent the message of salvation." (vs. 26-31)

- Again, Paul identifies with his listeners: "*Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God...*"
- Paul explains that the Jewish rulers in Jerusalem did not recognize Jesus as Savior or understand the prophecies fulfilled by condemning him and having him executed

- When all was completed that had been written, he was buried in a tomb, but God raised him from the dead and he appeared to his disciples who are now his witnesses
- Had these listeners in Cyprus ever heard these things?

3. “And we bring you the good news...” (vs. 32-39)

- Here is Paul’s first recorded proclamation of the Gospel!
- He deftly connects Jesus back to his ancestor David:
 - Quoting Psalm 2: “*you are my Son, today I have begotten you.*”
 - Note that Psalm 2 is a royal psalm strong Messianic overtones
 - Regarding Jesus’ resurrection, he quotes Isa. 55:3: “*I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.*”
 - Then quotes Psa. 16:10: “*You will not let your Holy One see corruption.*”
- Yet David later died and then saw corruption. But Jesus whom God raised up did not see corruption
- Paul then proclaims that through this ‘Incorruptible One’ there is forgiveness of sins and justification from all that the Mosaic law could not justify them

4. “Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about” (vs. 40-41)

- Paul concludes with a warning, quoting from Hab. 1:5
- The invitation to believe comes with a warning about unbelief

Somewhat surprisingly, the people in the Synagogue invited them to come back the following week. They wanted to hear more!

Next: *Paul and Barnabas at Pisidian Antioch, Part 2 and Acts Chapter 14*