

### *Acts of the Apostles – Chapter 13*

*13:1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.<sup>2</sup> While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”<sup>3</sup> So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.*

Just as a reminder of who Barnabas was, Acts 4:36 says Barnabas was also called “Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”). This is Paul’s first missionary journey. There was an interesting group of men on staff at the First Baptist Church of Antioch. The NLT Bible says Barnabas, Simeon (called “the black man”), Lucius (from Cyrene), Manaen (the childhood companion of King Herod Antipas, and Saul. Figure 1 shows the route Paul took on his first missionary journey.



<http://www.biblestudy.org/maps/pauls-first-journey-map.html>

The Holy Spirit called Saul and Barnabas for mission work. So the others fasted, laid hands on them, prayed for them and sent them out.

#### *On Cyprus*

*4 The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. 5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.*

Antioch is in Syria and so is Seleucia which was a seaport where they could catch a boat to the island of Cyprus. Salamis is a town on the island. They proclaimed the Word of God. John Mark was with them as a trainee/assistant/helper/apprentice.

*13:6 They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, 7 who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. 9 Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, 10 "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? 11 Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun."*

*Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12 When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.*

When they arrived in Paphos the proconsul (governor) wanted to hear the word of God but a sorcerer with two names, Bar-Jesus (means son of Jesus) and Elymas (means sorcerer) was trying to keep the proconsul from faith or believing the Gospel message. As it says in verse 9, Paul simply had two names. Up to now, Luke has been using his Jewish name which was Saul of Tarsus and from now on he will call him Paul. It is interesting that Paul was struck blind on the road to Damascus and here Paul strikes the sorcerer blind. The proconsul saw and believed what he saw and was taught by Paul and Barnabas.

### *In Pisidian Antioch*

*13:13 From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. 14 From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. 15 After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak."*

They traveled to Pisidian Antioch which is in modern day Turkey. John Mark returns to Jerusalem. These verses merely state that John Mark left for Jerusalem. We find out later that Paul had issues with him and sent him back. I would not expect to find a Jewish synagogue this far from Jerusalem (almost 900 miles). It goes back to the Assyrians conquering the northern tribes of Israel and spreading them all over the area. Paul and Barnabas are asked to preach or speak.

"A first-century synagogue service followed a general order. Opening prayers were offered, and then there was a reading from the Law (the first five books of the Old Testament). Then, a reading from the Prophets. Then, if there was an educated person present, they were invited to speak on subjects related to the readings." (Guzik)

The leaders of the synagogue invited Paul and Barnabas to speak. This was a perfect opportunity for Paul to preach the Gospel message to these Jews. Remember the synagogues were an extension of the Temple and not a replacement.

*13:16 Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! 17 The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; 18 for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; 19 and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. 20 All this took about 450 years.*

*"After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. 21 Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. 22 After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'*

Paul started his sermon explaining how Jewish history leads to Messiah/Christ, who is Jesus. Remember Pastor Brian has told us before that Christ is a title for Jesus and not part of His name. He takes them through the Exodus from Egypt, 40 years in the wilderness, the distribution of the inheritance to the tribes of Israel, the Judges, the Prophet Samuel, King Saul and King David.

"This survey of Israel's history demonstrates that God has a plan for history, and we need to sense a connection to that plan. Jesus is the goal of history, and as we are in Jesus, we are in the flow of God's great plan of redemption." (Guzik)

*13:23 "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. 24 Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. 25 As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'*

*26 "Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. 27 The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. 28 Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. 29 When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb.*

After leading them through the Law and the Prophets to Jesus, Paul uses the examples of John the Baptist and the Jewish leaders to show how people have accepted and rejected Jesus. Paul was making it clear that John the Baptist did the right thing, accepting Jesus. As the one called to bring the Gospel message to the Gentiles, Paul is starting with the Jews. In verse 26, Paul points out that the message of salvation was sent to Jews first. In earlier chapters, we have read about Peter and John attacking the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem for crucifying Jesus. Here Paul is saying THOSE Jews in Jerusalem put Jesus to death.

*13:30 But God raised him from the dead, 31 and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.*

*32 “We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors<sup>33</sup> he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:*

*“You are my son;*

*today I have become your father.’*

*34 God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said,*

*“I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’*

*35 So it is also stated elsewhere:*

*“You will not let your holy one see decay.’*

*36 “Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. 37 But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.*

Paul makes two facts clear (1) Jesus was dead and God raised Him from the dead. There were numerous witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. He uses two Psalms to testify about the promises made to their Jewish ancestors about Jesus. Psalm 2:7 tells them that Jesus is the son of God. Psalm 16:10 tells them that Jesus was holy even in His work on the cross. He made it clear that Jesus’ body did not undergo decay because of the resurrection.

“We should not miss an emphasis on *events* in Paul’s preaching here; it is so evident that it can be missed. He focused on things that actually happened, not on philosophy or even theology.

“Christianity is not just a philosophy or a set of ethics, though it involves these things. Essentially Christianity is a proclamation of facts that concern what God has done.” (Boice)

*13:38 “Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39 Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. 40 Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:*

*41 “Look, you scoffers,*

*wonder and perish,*

*for I am going to do something in your days*

*that you would never believe,*

*even if someone told you.”*

Paul makes it clear regarding forgiveness of sins can only come through Jesus. The Law can’t save you, you can’t save yourself. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.*” Salvation is a gift, it does not come through works.

“Some refuse to embrace the salvation of Jesus in the secret place of their heart, because they want a salvation of their *own* making. They want to be saved the old-fashioned way – they want to *earn* it. (Guzik)

Theologically, the word ‘justified’ means to be made righteous or worthy of salvation. We cannot become righteous on our own. We are given righteousness by God through faith in Jesus. Paul covers this further in Romans 3:21-26, which says, “*21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness is given*

*through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”*

***13:42 As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. 43 When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.***

The Gospel message demands a response. You can accept it and be changed forever or reject it and be lost forever. Many of the Jews and proselytes (Gentile converts to Judaism) accepted the Gospel message and wanted to hear more.

***13:44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him.***

***46 Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. 47 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.”***

***48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.***

***49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region***

Can you imagine a worship service in Alexandria where “nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord.” When we used to have the joint Labor Day services or Funday Sunday, we had less in attendance than a normal ABC Sunday.

The response of the Jews differed from the response of the Gentiles in that the Jews got angry and the Gentiles celebrated. The Jews rejected the Gospel message because they were jealous. Paul is still using the Law and the Prophets to defend bringing the message to the Gentiles. Paul quotes Isaiah 49:6 tells us that “(God)he says: . . . *I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.*” The result of Paul’s ministry here was that the Gospel message spread throughout the region.

***13:50 But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51 So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium.52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.***

The Jewish leaders did what the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem had done, they stirred up persecution of Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas moved on shaking the dust from their feet as a warning. This warning is covered in Matthew 10:11-15 which says, *“11 Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. 12 As you enter the home, give it your greeting. 13 If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. 15 Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.”*

It says that the town will be treated like a God-rejecting town. It will be treated worse than Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of judgment. Paul and Barnabas did not take it personally. It was God’s message that the Jews were rejecting.