

## Acts 13:1-13

## Paul's First Missionary Journey Begins

**As we open Chapter 13, what city was Paul/Saul living in (v. 1)?** Antioch

**What do we know about Antioch?** The believers in Antioch were the first to be called Christians (11:26). The church at Antioch became the base of operation for Paul's missionary journeys even though Jerusalem was still the mother church.

**What was unique about the church in Antioch?** Instead of having one man designated as the senior pastor, this church was apparently led by at least five prophets and teachers of diverse backgrounds.

**What guidance did the Holy Spirit give to the church leaders (v. 2)?** Set apart Barnabas and Saul for a special work the Lord is calling them to. This verse is of great practical importance in emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit in the guidance of the early church and..... showing the sensitivity of the disciples to His leading.<sup>1</sup>

**What role did prayer and fasting play in this send off?** Prayer and fasting preceded the call to commission and send Barnabas and Saul off (vv. 2-3). **How does prayer and fasting fit in our church life today?**

**What was the purpose of laying hands on them (v. 3)?** It was similar to a commissioning ceremony. Setting the two of them apart for their upcoming mission. Asking God for His special blessing on them and their mission. It was a show of solidarity and support from their home church in this special commission to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

**Up until this point, who else in the Bible has gone on a missionary journey?** No one. This was a totally new concept for the Jews -- taking the Gospel to people and places they didn't know anything about.

**Application:** What about your missionary journey? Where has God sent you? What does God want you to do there?

**How did Paul and Barnabas know where to start on their journey (v. 4)?** They were led by the Holy Spirit.

**When they arrived at their destination of Salamis, what did they do (v. 5)?** Proclaimed the Word of God in the Jewish synagogue.

**Why did Paul, the designated apostle to the Gentiles, go first to the Jewish synagogue?** Paul had a heart that was burdened for his fellow unsaved Jews (Romans 9:2-3). In going to the synagogue first, Barnabas and Paul were fulfilling God's directive that the gospel should go to the Jew first, then to the Gentiles (Romans 1:16).<sup>2</sup> **Who is your heart burdened for?**

**Who accompanied Barnabas and Paul (v. 5)?** John Mark, a cousin of Barnabas.

**Who did Paul encounter at their next stop in Paphos (v. 6)?** The proconsul Sergius Paulus and his attendant, a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet, named Bar-Jesus.

**Why did the proconsul send for Paul and Barnabas (v. 7)?** He wanted to hear the Word of God. Their reputation had preceded them. How important it is to be a man of character and integrity especially when moving from place to place.

**How did the sorcerer respond (v. 8)?** He opposed the missionaries because they brought the true message of God. Elymas may have felt that if Sergius Paulus believed the gospel, his relationship to the proconsul would suffer.

**What happened to Paul here (v. 9)?** From this point on in the book of Acts, Paul went by his Roman name of Paul instead of his Hebrew name of Saul.

**Why the name change?** Paul was designated to be the Apostle to the Gentiles (Peter was designated as the Apostle to the Jews - Galatians 2:7). If he was going to minister to Gentiles, it would make sense that he not show up with a Jewish name.

**How did Paul respond to this attack by Elymas (vv. 9-11)?** He confronted and condemned Elymas as a child of the devil and in judgment he inflicted a temporary blindness on Elymas. This is the first of Paul's recorded miracles.<sup>3</sup> Note that he did this in the power of the Holy Spirit. He also attributed his miracle to the hand of the Lord.

**How did the proconsul respond (v. 12)?** He believed. He saw what happened and was amazed at Paul's teaching about the Lord. Note that he was a Gentile. He became a true believer in the Lord Jesus, the first trophy of grace on the first missionary journey.<sup>4</sup> Notice again that belief is all that was necessary for his salvation (14:1; 17:34; 19:18).

**When they next stopped in Perga, what did John Mark do (v. 13)?** He left them and returned to Jerusalem. Why he left is uncertain, but Paul held it against him to the point where he refused to take Mark along on his second missionary journey. Which, in turn, caused such a divide between Paul and Barnabas to the point where they parted ways on future missionary journeys (15:36-39). Mark and Paul were later reconciled (2 Timothy 4:11).

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<sup>1</sup> William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1619.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1620.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.