

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter Thirteen God's Call To Service

Focus Verse: **Acts 13:2**

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

I. Study Introduction

- A. Have you ever wondered how God intended twelve unlearned fishermen to reach this world with the Gospel of Christ?
- B. Have you ever wondered how God calls a person to serve Him, or how they come to know God's plan for their life - which He has for us all!
- C. Chapter 13 is a big transition, from Jerusalem, to Antioch - from the emphasis on Jew, to the Gentile, from ministering to the Christian, to reaching the lost!

II. Chapter Review

- One **The Church Commissioned** - The Ascension of Jesus
 Two **The Church Empowered** - The Day of Pentecost
 Three **Christianity Meets The Need** - The Invalid Man Healed
 Four **How To Stand-Up For Christ** - Handling Persecution
 Five **Staying True!** In Spite of Sin in Christian's Lives
 Six **Delegating the Work** - Choosing Deacons
 Seven **Learning the Lessons of History** - Stephen's Attack on Religion
 Eight **The Church Expanding** - Saul Begins His Persecution
 Nine **The Conversion of Saul** - Saul on the Road to Damascus
 Ten **Cornelius Meets Christ** - Peter Tells Cornelius About Christ
 Eleven **The First Christians** - The Birth of the Church at Antioch
 Twelve **The Church Learns to Pray** - Peter escapes death due to prayer

I. Study Outline - God's Call to Service (Acts 13)

A. The Call (Acts 13:1,2)

1. Who is called?
 - a. Not _____ - he is being bypassed.
 - 1) Only heard from once more in Acts 15:7
 - 2) 800 million people put the emphasis on Peter, yet outside of Jesus, the emphasis in the N.T. is on the Paul!
 - 3) Peter wrote two books - Paul wrote 14!
 - b. Note two important names:
 - 1) _____ (starts off always first), and _____ (always last)
 - 2) Slowly this ordering changes: from Barnabas and Saul, to: Saul and Barnabas, and ultimately, just Paul!
 - 3) Principle: to be used of God, be willing to be last in order to be made first!
2. What does it take to be "called" for use by God? Elected, chosen
 - a. Be part of a N.T. Bible believing local church - be involved
 - 1) In preaching - presenting the Gospel anyway you can!
 - 2) In teaching - discipling, and Sunday School
 - b. Be a minister *unto the* _____ - whole purpose of being saved
 - 1) Minister to God's needs, desires, wants ahead of all!
 - 2) Most churches today are SOCIAL gatherings, catering to the self-esteem of all its members, instead of to God!
 - c. Spend time _____
 - 1) Both an O.T. and N.T. practice (Matt 6:16)
 - 2) Jesus expects us to fast until He returns (Mt 9:15)
 - 3) Demonstrates that you mean business with God - serious
 - 4) Not dealing with "dieting" but sacrificing the normal attention that we give to our bodies, and give it all to the Lord as a time of prayer and searching God's heart.

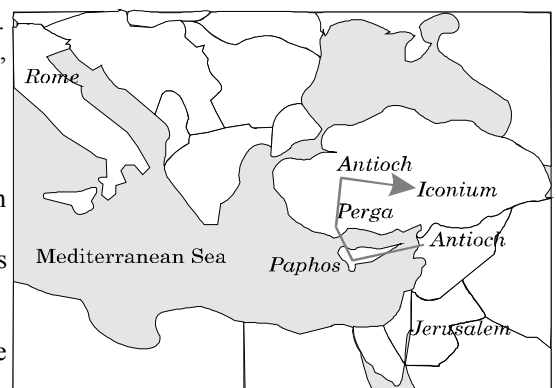
- d. Spend time _____ to the “still small voice” of the Holy Spirit - Get “in-tune” (spiritual discernment) - be available!
 - 1) Humans are like a TV, just on the wrong channel
 - 2) Practice letting the Lord speak to your heart when you pray - let Him “impress” you in your decisions, instead of peer-pressure
- 3. Who does the calling?
 - a. Not man-called: self-motivated, or Mammy-directed
 - b. Only the Holy Spirit calls (directs) the Christian
 - c. How does the Holy Spirit work?
 - 1) Makes His will clear to the whole church - unity - God does not usually work with “Lone Rangers”
 - 2) By simply giving an order: Send out Barnabas and Saul to do what I want them to do! Expects us to obey

B. The Commissioning (Acts 13:3)

- 1. Notice the church’s response to God’s will:
 - a. They fasted again, and prayed more - _____ the spirits as commanded in 1 John 4:1. Satan can impress Christians to do things (2 Cor 11:13,14). Wanted to fully understand what God wanted them to do - all of this was new to them!
 - b. They laid _____ on Barnabas and Saul
 - 1) Recognition of God’s will - agreement with God - unity
 - 2) Transfer of _____ and responsibility to them - they will operate as representatives of Christ (2 Cor 5:18-20), as well as of that church.
 - 3) Commitment to financially support and back them as they go - not just sending them away on their own - this is a unified effort - they were part of the church at Antioch - the entire church was responsible for helping them do this extension of its work - as a body reaching out. Called Missions (1 Cor 9:1-11) - making the Gospel free costs - how does a church do this?
 - a) By building a **strong church** here that is financially sound - this is not just a fellowship! It is a base of operations to fulfill God’s command of reaching the lost, region by region!
 - b) By **soul-winning** here - in our Jerusalem
 - c) By reaching out throughout Ireland with the Gospel
 - d) By supporting families that are going to other lands
 - e) By sending out God called families of our own to the farthest regions
 - c. Sent them away - Didn’t linger, or hold on to them. Time to get busy for God (Rom 12:11; Eph 5:16)!
- 2. Notice what’s missing in all this:
 - a. No authorisation from Jerusalem - they were self-sufficient
 - b. No disagreements among the church members
 - c. No sending them off to Bible colleges and Seminaries - because they were being fully trained at Antioch - a local church ought to be geared to training, not to fellowship

C. The Commencement (Acts 13:4-52) - The “First Missionary Journey”

- 1. *Their direction*- from East to West! From Antioch, to Cyprus.
- 2. *Their calling* - to _____ (13:5)! Not sing, heal the sick, send humanitarian aid, etc. Secondary.
- 3. *Their first confrontation* - with two men (13:6-12):
 - a. **Bar-jesus** shows up first - the devil is always up early
 - 1) A sorcerer - into drugs, witchcraft - demon possessed
 - 2) A Jew - the Jews will plague Saul for the rest of his life
 - 3) A false prophet - fortune teller, astrologer
 - 4) Had a stage name - known as Elymas - the “wise one”
 - 5) He works hard to hinder people from getting saved
 - b. **Sergius Paulus**
 - 1) A _____ man - careful, thoughtful, wise
 - 2) An educated man - a man of position in the government
 - 3) A _____ man - followed Bar-jesus (like intelligent people following Scientology, horoscopes, etc)



Paul’s First Missionary Journey (Acts 13)

- 4) A seeking man - wanted to hear what Barnabas and Saul had to say - evidently heard about these street-preachers
- c. Elymas withstood them - hindered their ability to deal directly with Sergius by disagreeing, and interrupting.
 - 1) Common practice of the devil's crowd (2 Tim 4:15; 3:8; 1 Thes 2:14-16; Matt 23:13)
 - 2) Same with the cults - can't handle true _____
 - 3) Elymas attempts to change God's grace into works
- d. Saul (Jewish) here becomes _____ (Latin, meaning 'little one') - something happens to Saul - no longer held back by his past - he is now dealing with Gentiles, and able to just simply preach Christ as a nobody!
- e. Provides evidence of apostolic authority to speak about God
 - 1) He rebukes Bar-jesus (Cf John 8:44), and **blinds** him. Paul dealt with the "source" of Sergius' blindness - a religious faker that was of the devil! Did not side-step identifying false religions!
 - 2) Is filled with the Spirit to _____ - not speak in tongues, but rebuke, reprove, correct and instruct (2 Tim 4:2)!
- f. But the confrontation has taken its toll - _____ goes home (Acts 13:13). Spiritual battles can wear people out emotionally, and physically - must wear the whole armour of God (Eph 6:10-18). John Mark will recover soon though. He will go on and be used to God to pen the _____!
4. The starting of churches in _____ (13:13-52)
 - a. Started with _____ - start with those that have a background with the Bible - people need clear understanding of the Law and sin to get them to understand Grace and salvation.
 - b. Began to just PREACH - there is no other way to start!
 - 1) A 700 word sermon - of exhortation, an urging.
 - 2) Paul uses _____ method of preaching - Stephen had been Saul's first preacher (Cf Acts 7:58; 8:1)!
 - a) A review of history (13:16-25)
 - (i) Start back with Egypt - we were in bondage to sin
 - (ii) Reminds them that _____ delivered us - salvation
 - (iii) God's patience in the wilderness - growth
 - (iv) The defeat of our enemies - our _____ warfare
 - (v) The Promised Land - Victorious Life over enemies
 - (vi) The Judges - wishy-washy in commitment to God
 - (vii) The Kings - God provided leadership for us
 - (viii) David - God _____ a man only hungering for God
 - (ix) From David (not anyone else) did God promise to bring a Saviour, a Messiah, **Jesus!**
 - (x) John the Baptist proved Jesus was the Messiah
 - b) Directed the Gospel to the Jews first (13:26-38)
 - (i) The Jews in Jerusalem did not know their Bible
 - (ii) Yet they fulfilled the prophecies to the letter
 - (iii) They condemned and murdered the Messiah!
 - (iv) But God raised Christ back to life - as promised
 - (v) We are His witnesses that He is alive, and wants to save sinners - glad tidings - the Gospel
 - (vi) What you need are the sure mercies of David - eternal life - the forgiveness of sins, that can not be obtained by keeping the Law
 - c) Gives an invitation (13:39-41) - invites people to repent, and make a public declaration of their commitment to Christ - not just "give your life to Jesus"
 - (i) **Believe!** Turn to Christ, and cling only to Him!
 - (ii) Or **beware!** The Saviour will be your Judge!
 - c. _____ breaks out (13:42-44) - the whole city comes out!
 - d. Resistance also broke-out (13:45) - resistance is from ENVY
 - 1) Made a killer out of Cain (Gen 4:2-8)
 - 2) Turned Lucifer into Satan (Isa 14:12-14)
 - 3) Caused the Jews to crucify Christ (Mt 27:16-18)
 - e. Paul rebukes the unbelieving Jews, and heads out by faith deeper into the Gentiles - will end up doing this three times.
 - f. Onto the next city - with joy (13:51,52) - there is a whole lot more ground to cover (Mark 16:15)!

II. Conclusion