

FIRST MISSIONARIES

Acts 13:1-12

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Barnabas and Saul (Paul)

Key-location: Antioch of Syria, Island of Cyprus

Key-repetitions:

- Five church leaders named: (Ac 13:1).
- Barnabas and Saul traveled: Antioch church leaders sent them away (Ac 13:3); they sailed for Cyprus (Ac 13:4); they traveled to Paphos (Ac 13:6).
- Acts done for God: Antioch church leaders worshiped, fasted, and prayed (Ac 13:2-3); Barnabas and Saul proclaimed God's word in synagogues (Ac 13:5); Saul confronted the Jewish astrologer (Ac 13:9-11).
- Holy Spirit: set apart Barnabas and Saul (Ac 13:2); sent them on their task (Ac 13:4); Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit (Ac 13:9).

Key-attitudes:

- Church leaders' reverence to God.
- Barnabas and Saul's determination to proclaim God's word.
- Astrologer's narcissistic arrogance.
- Saul's sternness when he confronted the astrologer.

Initial-situation:

After his resurrection, Jesus promised his apostles that the Holy Spirit would come and they would be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the Earth. Then Jesus ascended into heaven. After Pentecost, the Jerusalem church grew with converted Jews. After the death of Stephen, the church was persecuted and scattered.

Some Jewish believers who scattered because of the persecution went to Antioch of Syria, and they proclaimed the Good News to non-Jews. Many believed. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas sought out Saul to help him. Together, they taught many people in Antioch.

Initial-problem:

The prophets and teachers were worshiping the Lord and fasting. The Holy Spirit said to them, "I want Barnabas and Saul set apart for the special work to which I have called them."

Final-situation:

Saul and Barnabas took a ship from the island of Cyprus to Perga. John Mark deserted them and returned to Jerusalem (Ac 13:13).

BIBLE STORY

The following were prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch: Barnabas, Simeon (called the Black), Lucius (from the city of Cyrene), Manaen (who grew up a close friend with King Herod), and Saul. The prophets and teachers were worshiping the Lord and fasting. The Holy Spirit said to them, "I want Barnabas and Saul set apart for the special work to which I have called them." The prophets and teachers fasted and prayed, placed their hands on Barnabas and Saul, and sent them away from Antioch (Ac 13:1-3).

Barnabas and Saul were sent on their task by the Holy Spirit (Ac 13:4).

Barnabas and Saul sailed to Cyprus (*the island where Barnabas came from*). They proclaimed God's word in Jewish synagogues. John Mark was their helper (Ac 13:4-5). Barnabas and Saul traveled across the Island of Cyprus until they came to Paphos, the capital of Cyprus. In Paphos, they met a Jewish man who was an astrologer. He predicted the future by the positions of the planets, stars, sun, and moon. He claimed to be a prophet. The governor of the island of Cyprus wanted to hear the word of God and sent for Barnabas and Saul. The astrologer opposed Barnabas and Saul and distorted the meaning of the faith, so the governor wouldn't believe. Saul is also called Paul. (*Saul was his Hebrew name and Paul was his Roman name.*) Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit. Saul looked at the astrologer and said, "You son of the devil! You're an enemy of everything that is right! You're full of evil tricks and lies. You hate what God approves. Stop distorting the truth about the way the Lord wants people to live. Now the Lord is against you. You're going to be blind for a time."

Immediately, the astrologer couldn't see a thing. He tried to find someone to lead him by the hand. The governor saw what had happened and believed, because he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord (Ac 13:6-12).

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GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was happening in Antioch when the Holy Spirit spoke to the church leaders?
2. What were Barnabas and Saul (Paul) doing in Antioch before the Holy Spirit selected them to do a special work?
3. How would your church react if God led 40% of its church leaders to leave at the same time?

4. Cyprus was Barnabas' home (Ac 4:6). What is significant about Barnabas beginning his missionary work by returning home?
5. Why did the astrologer try to turn the governor from faith in Jesus?
6. When have people tried to turn you from faith in Jesus?
7. How did Paul deal with the astrologer who tried to turn the governor from faith?
8. How have you dealt with the pressure from others to turn you from your faith in Jesus?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **God may give people who are faithfully serving him in one location, a new responsibility in another location.** Barnabas and Saul (Paul) were serving God in Antioch when God separated them for missionary work (Ac 13:1-2).
2. **God desires that church members who are called for missionary work be faithful and capable.** Barnabas and Saul (*Paul*) were capable teachers and leaders in the church in Antioch when they were called to do missionary work. (Ac 11:26; 13:1-2).
3. **Those who are chosen by God are sent and guided by the Holy Spirit.** Barnabas and Saul (*Paul*) were chosen by God and sent by the Holy Spirit (Ac 13:2, 4).
4. **Missions begin at home.** Barnabas began the first missionary journey by returning to the island of Cyrus where he was born (Ac 4:36; 13:4).
5. **The most bitter enemies of God's truths are often those who have cast aside their early faith.** In Paphos, Barnabas and Saul (*Paul*) met a Jewish man who had cast aside his Jewish faith to become an astrologer. The astrologer pretended to use the sun, moon, and stars to predict the future. The astrologer treated Barnabas and Saul (*Paul*) as enemies. He opposed them and distorted the gospel (Ac 13:6-10).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Chant:

Words in **bold and underlined** are stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

ALL

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile" (Romans 1:16 NIV).

GROUP 1	GROUP 2
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