

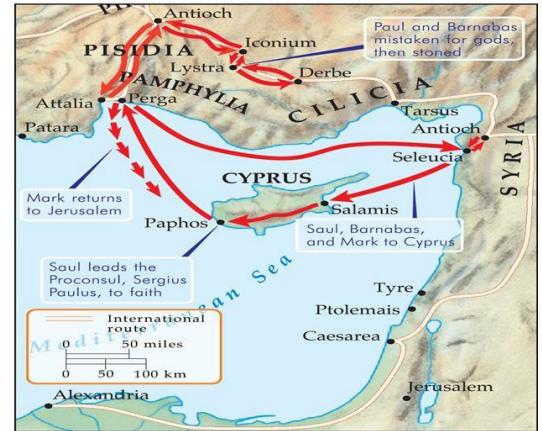
# Acts

## Part 33 – “The Power of God for Salvation”

### Acts 13:1-12

#### The role of the church in the advancement of the Gospel

1. Who led the church in Antioch?
  - a. Prophets and teachers (v. 1)
    - i. Teachers – those who taught the Scriptures
    - ii. Prophets – those who spoke the words of God
  - b. Barnabas – was from Cyprus
  - c. Simeon (Niger) – most likely from North Africa
  - d. Lucius of Cyrene – was from Cyrene in Libya
  - e. Manaen – grew up in Roman-occupied Palestine, childhood friend of Herod the Tetrarch
  - f. Saul – was from Tarsus, educated in Jerusalem
2. What did the church do?
  - a. Worshiped together (v. 2)
  - b. Fasted (vv. 2, 3) – Abstaining from eating food for a period of time to help remind us of our neediness and dependence on God
    - i. Fasting in Scripture is also used for:
      1. Strengthening prayer (Neh. 1:4)
      2. Expressing grief (1 Sam. 31:13)
      3. Seeking divine protection (2 Chron. 20:3-4)
      4. Expressing repentance (Jonah 3:5-8)
      5. Expressing heartfelt worship (Luke 2:37)
    - ii. Jesus expects us to fast. (Matt. 6:16-18)
    - iii. “Whenever men are to pray to God concerning any great matter, it would be expedient to appoint fasting along with prayer...For since this is a holy exercise both for the humbling of men and for their confession of humility, why should we use it less than the ancients did in similar need?” – J. Calvin
  - c. Prayed (v. 3)
    - i. Praying acknowledges us as needy and God as the one who is in control.
    - ii. “We will never see great advances in the cause of the Gospel without first seeing the church on her knees in prayer before the Lord. Likewise, before the Lord begins to do a great work, He sets His people praying.” – Derek Thomas
  - d. Commissioned Barnabas and Saul (v. 3)
    - i. The Spirit commanded them to set apart Barnabas and Saul for a special work.
    - ii. They laid their hands on them and commissioned them for this work.
      1. This was not an ordination to the office (they had already been called to the office) but rather an identifying with them in their calling and an entrusting them to the Lord as they send them off.
  - e. Changed the course of history
    - i. This missionary journey began the rapid spread of the Gospel into the world of the Gentiles, even to the heart of the Roman Empire, the city of Rome.
    - ii. From a little group of believers in Antioch sending out two men, the world was transformed with the power of the Gospel.



## The effectiveness of the Spirit in the advancement of the Gospel

1. He directed their path. (v. 4)
  - a. In Acts 9, during Saul's conversion, he is commissioned as one who will bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. What God began years before is now being brought to fruition.
  - b. He sends Paul and Barnabas 200 miles from Antioch to convert Sergius Paulus.
    - i. What God intends to happen, happens.
2. He demonstrated the power of the Gospel over syncretistic religion. (vv.6-11)
  - a. Syncretism is the merging together of different religions, cultures, and worldviews.
  - b. Bar-Jesus (Elymas) – an antichrist figure trying to distract and confuse things, working against the Spirit (vv.6-8)
    - i. Magician – one who through rituals claimed to be able to evoke the dead, including the spirits of one's ancestors; most likely claimed to be able to tell the future
    - ii. He was alongside the proconsul – most likely for advice and guidance.
    - iii. Saul (Paul) accuses him of working against the Spirit. (v. 10)
      1. Son of the devil
        - a. Bar-Jesus/Bar-Satan – The play on words depicts the spiritual battle that is taking place.
        - b. Jesus/Joshua – Yahweh is salvation/Yahweh saves.
      2. Enemy of all righteousness – actively working against the truth that makes us right with God
      3. Full of all deceit and villainy – usually refers to someone who wants to profit through dishonesty and tricks; a con artist
      4. Making crooked the straight paths of the Lord – perverting truth and working against the plans of the Lord (Luke 3:4; Is. 40:3)
    - c. The result of the confrontation was blindness. (v. 11)
      - i. Physical blindness brought upon by the Spirit was a sign of judgment to Elymas demonstrating his spiritual blindness in opposing God.
      - ii. The irony and beauty of having Paul be the one who confronts him and hands down the judgment (the similarities of their stories)
        1. Both opposed God.
        2. Both were struck blind for a time.
        3. Needed to be led by hand afterward
  3. He worked faith in the proconsul through the ministry of the Word of God. (vv. 7, 12)
    - a. The proconsul
      - i. Sergius Paulus – politically the most powerful figure in Cyprus
        1. A Roman magistrate who oversaw a senatorial province
        2. Described as “an intelligent man” – most likely described this way because he had the foresight to summon Barnabas and Saul
      - ii. A symbolic conversion – the Gospel redirects allegiances to the true Authority and puts under His submission all other authorities.
    - b. The proconsul's belief
      - i. The Spirit was already working in the proconsul before Barnabas and Saul arrived.
        1. He sought Barnabas and Saul to hear the word of God.
      - ii. He saw the miracle but was convinced of his belief by the teaching of the Lord.
    - c. The establishment of the Gospel with the Gentiles
      - i. A Roman Gentile responds to the Gospel and believes while a Jew (Elymas) rejects it.
      - ii. God is working all circumstances so that the Gentile world will believe.