

=THE BOOK OF ACTS=  
Lesson 13  
The First Missionary Journey - Acts 13

AIM: to teach my pupils the events relating to the beginning of the first missionary endeavor by the Apostle Paul.

POINT OF CONTACT: Give a little written test to the pupils. Bring enough paper and pencils so everyone can take the test. Ask them to write down the numbers of the chapters studied thus far and the outstanding thing about each chapter. A small prize could be given to the winner. This should not take over five minutes at the most.

INTRODUCTION: We are turning our attention gradually away from the church at Jerusalem and toward the church at Antioch. Only one time after chapter 12 do we find the church at Jerusalem mentioned, and that is in the settling of a doctrinal dispute that had arisen. You will recall that Acts 1:8 said to begin at Jerusalem and then to go into the uttermost parts of the earth. The church at Jerusalem was important, but we are now launching into the uttermost parts of the earth. Our attention consequently turns to the church at Antioch, which was probably the greatest church in the New Testament. You will recall that we studied this church two weeks ago in our lesson. In Acts 13, three things stand out regarding the first missionary journey: (1) the journey itself; (2) the people involved; and (3) the methods used by the missionaries.

- I. THE JOURNEY ITSELF. Have the pupils turn to plate 10 in the maps at the back of their Scofield Bibles. If they do not have a Scofield Bible, they may turn to any map which pertains to the journeys of Paul. The first journey should be traced for the pupils. Draw a map on the chalkboard (or use one which you may have) to show them the trip that Paul took on the first journey. The places that I want them to memorize are Cyprus, Pamphylia, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Derbe and Lystra. These are the main places. We want them to know something that happened in each location. For the lesson today we will want them to know that Cyprus was the first stop in the missionary journey, Pamphylia was the place where John Mark turned back, and Antioch in Pisidia was the place where they shook the dust off their feet.
  
- II. THE PEOPLE INVOLVED. Let us look at the people involved in the first missionary journey:
  1. Paul. Teach the pupils a few things about Paul. Every person should know these facts about Paul:
    - 1) He was from Tarsus.
    - 2) He was educated in Jerusalem.
    - 3) He was a member of the Sanhedrin.
    - 4) He was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians.
    - 5) He was gloriously saved on the Damascus road.
    - 6) He was the leader of the first missionary journey. He was sent out from the church at Antioch.
    - 7) He was the Apostle to the uncircumcision (the Gentiles).
    - 8) His name is changed in this chapter from Saul to Paul. The word "Paul" means "little." However, there are many implications to this word "Paul." It seemed to mean "little, as a diamond or jewel is little." It even carried with it the idea of being little but wonderful, and in fact, "wonderful helper" or "wonderful counselor" seemed to be involved. So Paul was a little fellow, a little package that was a wonderful one and a potent one in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  2. Barnabas. We want the pupils to know these things about Barnabas:
    - 1) He was wealthy.
    - 2) He was very generous. He sold his possessions in Cyprus and gave to the work of God.
    - 3) He was the one who befriended Paul. Paul had been converted and had returned to Jerusalem. No one would have anything to do with him. They all were afraid of Paul and suspicioned his motives. Barnabas took him into his house when no one else would do so.
    - 4) He was one of the pastors at the church at Antioch.
    - 5) He took a trip to Tarsus to get Paul to come and help him in the church at Antioch. This means he was a very unselfish man.
    - 6) He is a man who is later going to have a falling out with Paul. They are going to part company.

3. John Mark. John Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the first part of their missionary journey. In Pamphylia, John Mark became frightened (at least we think perhaps this is the reason) and returned to Jerusalem. John Mark was a fine young man from a very fine Christian home. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas simply as a servant, a valet, a helper, etc. It is tragic that he turned back. (Talk a while here about the importance of our not turning back. When we have started something, let us finish it. When we have launched into something for God, let us continue in it.)
4. The people at home. Just as it is important to have missionaries, it is as important to have people at home supporting the missionaries. Notice in verse 1 the listing of the teachers and prophets who were at Antioch. There are several things that we should do for our missionaries:
  - 1) We should support them with our money.
  - 2) We should pray for them by name.
  - 3) We should help them in any special need.
  - 4) We should acquaint ourselves with them and their lives.
  - 5) We should teach our people about our missionaries. We should constantly keep them alerted and informed concerning the work the missionaries are doing. The people at home are certainly important!

### III. THE WORK OF THE MISSIONARIES.

1. The way they were sent. You will notice the calling and the sending of the missionaries as described in Acts 13:1-4.
  - 1) It was done by the local church.
  - 2) The Holy Spirit directed in all of it.
  - 3) They were called by the Holy Spirit and then also led by the Holy Spirit.
  - 4) All of this was possible because of the words in verse 2, "they ministered to the Lord." The word translated "ministered" is a most suggestive word, being that from which we derive our word "liturgy." The Greek word was first employed concerning civil service in the Athenian law. It came to be used in religion as describing praise to God and the complete work of a New Testament church. In other words, this was a healthy church that was praising God constantly. From this kind of church there go out young people to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. (Pause here to tell about one of our missionary families. Give the names of the children. Tell something about their work, and acquaint them with at least one missionary family. Especially tell them about Dan Johnson, who was reared in our church and has served the Lord in Brazil for many years. You could tell about Dave Carter, who is in Japan. These are two of our own boys who are now on the mission field.)
2. The power in which they were sent. You will notice in verse 9 that immediately upon the trip Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit, Who is our power! No work can be done successfully for God without the anointing of the Holy Spirit.
3. Opposition came immediately. When someone is doing something for God, he can expect opposition. This opposition came in three forms:
  - 1) In verses 6 through 13, we have satanic opposition when Paul was doing soul winning. When people do soul winning, they can expect satanic opposition.
  - 2) When the crowds came, opposition came. See Acts 13:44, 45.
  - 3) When souls were saved, opposition came. See Acts 13:49, 50. (Have the class tell some ways that they have had opposition to the Gospel. Do not elaborate. Simply have the class members briefly tell how they have been opposed some way in their stand for Christ.)
4. Notice, preaching occupies a great part of this first missionary journey. We find Paul's sermon starting in verse 16 and going for many verses. One can hardly read this first recorded sermon of Paul's without thinking of Stephen's sermon to the Sanhedrin. Paul had certainly been affected by Stephen. Stephen's death turned Paul to thinking about Christ and his need of the Gospel. Paul also heard Stephen's sermon; and if you will read both of them, you will find they are so similar. We, too, influence people. Some people are influenced by us. Let us be careful that we influence them for the right.
5. This kind of result came even though the field was hard. For example, Paphos on Cyprus was a center of false worship and idolatrous worship. Antioch in Pisidia was a city of Greek origin

founded by colonists from Magnesia. It was a city under Roman government, a part of the great Roman empire. It was a city, however, having a Hebrew synagogue in which Paul's address was given. In this city, the three great world powers and forces dominant at the time were represented—the fundamental Greek culture; the Roman Empire, which governed politically; and the Hebrew synagogue, which was the center of religious influence. It was no easy place to which Paul and Barnabas were going. The job was hard. Let us remember that our success is not determined by the hardness of the field but by the power of the Gospel.

6. Notice the methods they used:

- 1) They preached in the synagogue. (Acts 13:14) Explain to the class how this was done.
- 2) They sought great crowds. (Acts 13:44) They worked for great crowds, and almost the whole city came. We, too, should work for crowds and do our best to bring everyone we can under the influence of the Gospel.
- 3) They spread the Word throughout all the region. (Acts 13:49) They just went everywhere witnessing, soul winning, telling people about the Gospel, getting folks to come to church. This is certainly God's plan.
- 4) There was joy among the saints. (Acts 13:52) Even though opposition came, the work brought joy. Many were saved, and the blessings of God rested upon them.