

## ACTS CHAPTER THIRTEEN

*This chapter records events that happened in approximately 46 A.D. It has now been about 15 years since Pentecost. This chapter shows us the beginning of foreign missions (missionaries deliberately sent out by a local church to share the gospel in another location.)*

Read vs. 1-5

1. *In what city was the church located? (vs. 1)*

*This is the city that was mentioned in chapter 11. Many people had been saved and the church in Jerusalem had sent Barnabas there to help them. Barnabas had then gone and looked for Paul and brought him back to Antioch. These two men had worked tirelessly to teach and to disciple the new believers. The church had grown numerically and matured spiritually.*

*Antioch is located in Syria. Look closely at verse 1. The church was amply supplied with prophets and teachers, but no organized effort had been made to spread the gospel. They were fasting and praying....perhaps because they had a burden about this very thing. Notice the list of men involved:*

*Barnabas – a Jew from Cyprus (Acts 4:36)*

*Simeon – probably a black Jew. He could be the same man who carried the cross of Jesus. (Mark 15:21)*

*Lucius – from north Africa*

*Manean – raised as a companion of Herod Antipas*

*Saul - a converted Pharisee. From this point on, Saul will be called Paul.*

2. *Who did the Holy Spirit call for a special assignment? (vs. 2)*

*Both of these men were listed in the group that was praying. These two men were also the founding fathers of the church. Now they were being called to a new mission. They would never return to the church to pastor them. From now on they will be missionaries and will travel extensively all over the Roman Empire. They will periodically return to Antioch just as our missionaries today come back to their home churches to share about their joys and sorrows and about the successes and discouragements.*

3. *Who else accompanied them? (vs. 5)*

*John Mark was a nephew of Barnabas – see Col. 4:10 He traveled with them like an assistant or apprentice.*

4. *What did the church do before they sent out their missionaries? (vs. 3)*

*This is similar to what churches do today in a commissioning service. The laying on of hands was simply a way of showing unity, support and approval for the new ministry that the men were embarking on. No doubt the church was going to support them financially, too. They didn't have to go on months of deputation and fund raising. God had called them and the church recognized this call and was fully behind them. What other similarities or differences can you see between this church's mission's program and the ones we have today?*

5. *Where did they find an audience in Salamis? (vs. 5)*

*Salamis was a city on the island of Cyprus, which was also the home of Barnabas (Acts 4:36). It was only about a 2 day trip from Antioch and it was familiar territory to Barnabas. He would have known that Cyprus had a large Jewish population, too. The synagogue would be a logical place to begin. It is the place where the people come to hear....a crowd is already there.....the most spiritually-minded people are there.....it also gives opportunity for the Jews to hear the message first. Verse six says that they traveled through the whole island. Cyprus is about 100 miles long and 60 miles wide. Only the results in Paphos are recorded for us.*

*Paphos was an evil place. It was the center of the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of fertility. Annually, in the spring, there was a festival held in Paphos to honor Aphrodite. People came from all over the island to participate in immoral and lewd "worship" of this false goddess.*

Read vs. 6-13

6. *List 4 things you can learn about Bar-Jesus from vs. 6-8*

*"Bar-jesus" means son of Jesus. Jesus was a common name in those days. In verse 10 Paul calls him a child of the devil. He was probably demon-possessed. That would be how he received the power to do his "magic". It would also explain his great opposition towards Barnabas and Saul and the message they were presenting.*

7. *What good characteristics does vs. 7 give about Sergius Paulus?*

*Sergius Paulus was the Roman governor of the region. He had a responsibility to know what was being taught in his province and how it might be received by the Roman government. He was also interested in understanding more about the Jewish religion since many of the people he governed were Jewish and part of his responsibility was to keep the peace between the various people groups in the area.*

8. *Paul described Bar-Jesus as a child of the \_\_\_\_\_ and an enemy of\_\_\_\_\_.* (vs. 10)

*Notice the wording of the end of verse 10. He was "perverting the right ways of the Lord." This is a good description of a false prophet. He represented himself as a righteous*

*prophet, but he was distorting the true teaching and making it more difficult for people to come to the Lord. Such people will be held responsible for their actions in the final judgment. Compare Matt. 18:7.*

9. *How long was Bar-Jesus to be blind? (vs. 11)*

*This is an undefined amount of time, but we know that it wasn't going to be permanent. How gracious of God! Bar-Jesus had blinded people about spiritual things; now he was going to be blinded physically. At the same time, Sergius Paulus is going to have his spiritual blindness removed. God used this miracle to get his attention, but notice in verse 12 that it was the teaching about the Lord that amazed him. He became a believer.*

10. *When the missionaries arrived in Perga, John \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 13)*

*While we don't know the details of why John left them, Paul considered it a fault. See Acts 15:36-38. We do know that this area was low country and full of malaria. It is the same area as mentioned in Galatians 4:13, where Paul was sick. John Mark may have been intimidated by this knowledge. After this they headed into the "wild country". This also could have been a turn-off to John Mark. He may have feared being attacked by bands of robbers that roamed this part of the wild country. At any rate, he left to return to home.*

Read vs. 14-43

11. *What sort of reception did Paul and Barnabas receive in the Pisidian Antioch synagogue? (vs. 15, 42, and 43)*

*He had their respect because he was an educated Jew; maybe he told them his credentials before church started.....it would be like having John MacArthur show up in church and asking to speak! The church leaders would have known about Gamaliel. To be educated under Gamaliel was an impressive credential and one that Paul could take pride in. And so he and Barnabas are invited to come to the front of the synagogue and to share anything that they wanted to share.....they were guest speakers that day.*

*Paul was always ready to preach and to share the good news with anyone who was willing to listen. To be able to share with his fellow Jews was a special privilege. He begins his sermon with a history lesson of the Jewish nation. His plan was to show that Jesus was the Messiah, the one that the nation had long anticipated.*

*More and more often in today's world, the Christian leaders are presenting the gospel by beginning with the creation. The idea is that if people can see the logical progression of God's plan for humanity from the beginning, then it is a natural transition into the coming of Christ as God's promised redeemer. Paul had a similar plan. He rehearsed for the congregation a history of God's sovereign dealings with their nation from the very first.*

12. *Paul highlights the history of Israel:*

God brought the Jews out of \_\_\_\_\_. (vs. 17)

God gave them the land of \_\_\_\_\_. (vs. 19)

For 450 years they were governed by \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 20)

\_\_\_\_\_ ended the time of the judges. (vs. 20)

Their first two kings were \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 21 & 22)

13. David was an important man in their history because from his descendants would come the \_\_\_\_\_ . (vs. 23)

*God had always had a plan for Israel. He had always been in control. Everyone knew the history of David and the promises about the Messiah being a descendant of David. Now Paul is going to proclaim to them that the promises had been fulfilled and that he is there to show them that Christ was their Messiah.*

14. Paul was offering the Gospel to the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ . (vs. 26)

15. In vs. 27 Paul accuses the rulers in Jerusalem of reading the prophets every week, but still \_\_\_\_\_

*It would have been a natural question in the minds of the congregation that day that if Jesus was the Messiah, why didn't the rulers recognize Him? How could it be that the Messiah had been crucified right in Jerusalem? Paul makes the point in verse 27 that because they didn't understand the prophets, they were destined to fulfill the prophecies, which they did. They had "carried out all that was written about him" (vs. 29) BUT, that wasn't the end of the story. It was the rest of the story that Paul was there to share with them!*

16. How had God fulfilled His O.T. promises during Paul's life- time? (vs. 33-37)

*There is little mention in the Old Testament about the resurrection, except in Psalm 16:10. Paul explains that that passage didn't refer to David because he did see corruption. (His body decayed after death.) But it does apply to Jesus, because His body was raised to life before any decay could begin.*

17. Because of the resurrection, Paul was able to preach to them about the \_\_\_\_\_ . (vs. 38)

*Everything hinged on the resurrection. Why?*

- 1. It proved that He wasn't a false prophet (because Jesus had prophesied his own resurrection).*
- 2. It showed that He had power over death.*
- 3. It showed that He was accepted by God.*
- 4. It showed that the payment for the sins of the world, that Jesus had taken on Himself at the cross, had been paid for in full.*

*The resurrection could not have occurred if any of those 4 things were not true.*

18. *They couldn't be justified by following the law of Moses, but now they could be justified from \_\_\_\_\_.(vs. 39).*

*This was a major news bulletin for them. Paul is saying that they can't be justified by keeping the law of Moses! Most Jews counted on their good works, or keeping the law, to gain them acceptance before God. There were true believers among the Old Testament Jews just as there are Jewish believers today. God gives righteousness and salvation to those of any generation that realize they cannot achieve it on their own. Believers have always been saved by faith. For further study, read Romans chapters 3 & 4 and Galatians chapters 3, 4 & 5. The Jews respected and revered Abraham more than any other person and yet it is Abraham himself that God uses as example to explain salvation by faith alone. Abraham's obedience to God demonstrated his faith, but his acts did not save him.*

19. *In vs. 41 Paul quotes Hab.1:5 where God says the people won't \_\_\_\_\_.*

*He warns them in verse 40 not to be one of those who fulfill this prophecy. We see in verse 43 that after church was over, many of the people followed Paul and Barnabas right out of the synagogue. They were excited about this message and wanted to hear more. Paul and Barnabas probably had many more conversations with those who were interested during the following week. They shared their excitement with friends and neighbors.*

Read vs. 44-52

20. *Who came to hear Paul preach the next week? (vs. 44)*

*It must have been the main subject of every discussion all week – nobody wanted to miss it! What would happen in church today???? Now everyone wanted to hear what Paul and Barnabas would say and they were curious to see how the church leaders would receive this message! The synagogue was packed!*

21. *How did the Jews react to the response? (vs. 45)*

*The leaders didn't reason things out or compare what Paul said with scripture. They were just motivated by envy of all the attention he was getting. We are going to see this pattern of response over and over again as Paul travels from city to city preaching the gospel. There are always some who believe and are saved, but seldom will we see the leaders*

*accepting the message.*

22. *Because of the Jewish response, Paul said he would preach to the \_\_\_\_\_  
(vs. 46 & 47)*

*This continued to be his plan. He would always seek out the Jews first. He longed for his own people to be saved. He continued to evangelize in this way for the next 25 years until God finally closes the door in AD 70. See Acts 28:26-31*

23. *The Gentiles were glad and \_\_\_\_\_(vs. 48)*

*Look back to verse 16. When Paul spoke in the synagogue the first time, he addressed the “men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship god”. There were already Gentiles in the congregation that had converted to Judaism because they believed in the one true God. Perhaps it was easier for them to accept this further truth that Paul was sharing now about Christ. At any rate, it seems that more Gentiles than Jews became believers.*

24. *Shortly thereafter, Paul and Barnabas were thrown out of town. Of what significance is their shaking the dust off of their feet? (cp. vs. 51 with Luke 9:5 and Luke 10:11)*

25. *Were Paul and Barnabas depressed over the situation? (vs. 52)*

*Paul and Barnabas are a good example for us as we share our faith with others.*

*1. They realized that not everyone would respond favorably. It is God’s work to draw people to Himself. It wasn’t a reflection on the abilities of Paul and Barnabas. John 6:44*

*2. Some did become believers as God opened their understanding and gave them the gift of faith. Acts 16:14, Eph. 2:8 & 9. Ro. 5:17, Ro. 6:23*

*3. They weren’t depressed over those who rejected; they just rejoiced over those who accepted. Phil. 4:1, I Thes. 2:19*