

# The First Church Mission

Acts 13:1-12

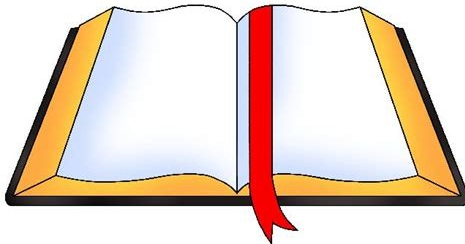


Previously we have seen individuals sharing the faith— cf Philip. Peter.  
Now we see the Church engaged in the great commission.

## Acts 13:1-12

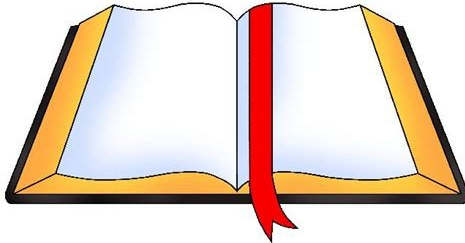
In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers.. Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.



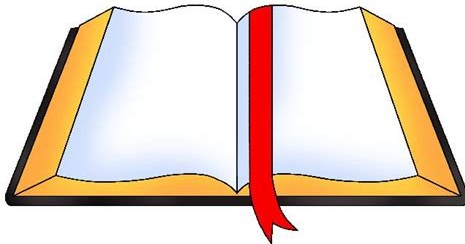
## Acts 13:1-12

They travelled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.



## Acts 13:1-12

Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.



## Acts 13:1

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers..



The church was blessed with gifted 'ministers'.

What is the difference between a prophet and a teacher?

What do we have to help/build up each other?

Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.



They come from a very mixed list of backgrounds. Their names are Jewish, but they come from Cyprus, Africa, North Africa, the aristocracy, a Roman Asian colony

They are in a church that recognised God's gifts of different people and abilities.



## Acts 13:2

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting,  
the Holy Spirit said, ...



Who are worshipping?

What is worship?

Why were they fasting?

How did the Holy Spirit speak?

Why did he speak at that time?

"Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul  
for the work to which I have called them."



God calls them to action –  
and the church recognises  
the call and supports them.

This was a confirmation for  
Barnabas and Saul to this  
mission.

Note Barnabas is mentioned  
first as senior in the pair at  
this point.



## Acts 13:3

So after they had fasted and prayed,  
they placed their hands on them and sent them off.



Some time later ?

They must have sensed this was something special and so they fast and pray to seek God's blessing and direction.

This was an official appointment – for the mission

Sent them off with a blessing and prayer. This would have continued during their time away.

## Acts 13:4

The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit,  
went down to Seleucia



Ultimately, the group were  
sent by the Holy Spirit.

Where were they to go?  
Where the people are.

They go down to the  
Mediterranean port.

The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.



This was Barnabus's home territory.  
Start where may be some contacts?

## Acts 13:5

When they arrived at Salamis,  
they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues.



First stop – the synagogues.  
There was a large number of  
Jews in this city.

Why are they called ‘Jewish’ ?

It was a natural place to start  
and a gospel priority for Paul.

We have no report of results.



John was with them as their helper.



John Mark was their apprentice.

How did he help?

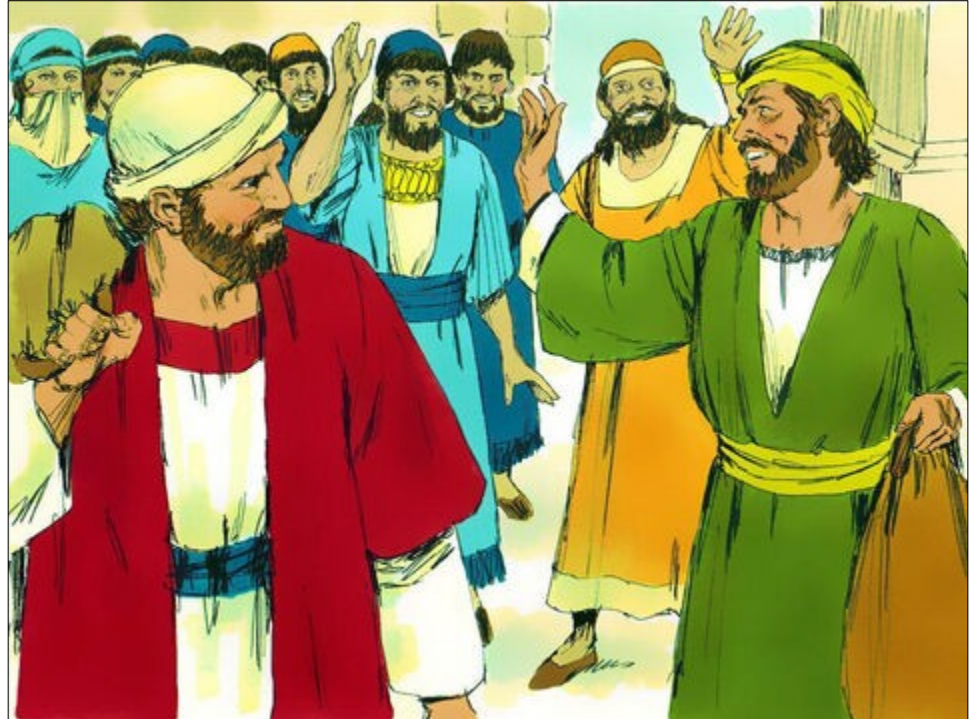
He grew up in Jerusalem and had seen Jesus. This would have been a very useful testimony.

How can we be helpers in mission?

## Acts 13:6

They travelled through the whole island

This wasn't a holiday but they could share as they travelled the 90 miles from east to west.

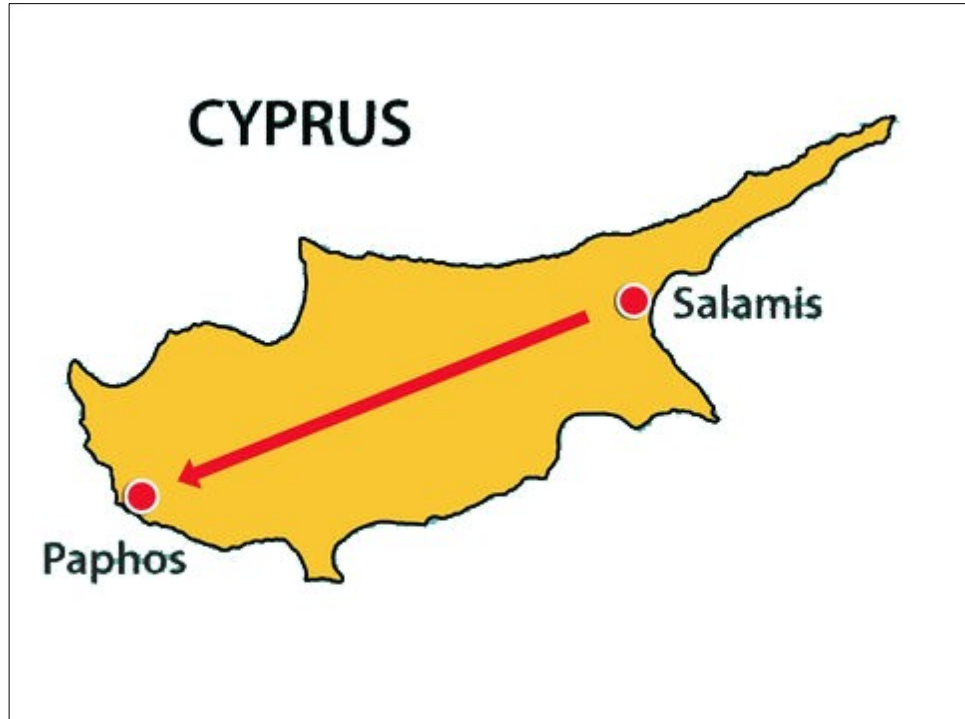




They travelled through the whole island until they came to Paphos.

They went west to the capital of the island.

The area was widely known as a 'sin city' on Cyprus with a focus on the worship of the 'love goddess', Aphrodite.



## Acts 13:6

There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet

### Expect opposition

A tragic mix! – Jewish and a sorcerer and from what we learn about him, he had real power.

He was involved in the occult which was prohibited in the Torah (Law of Moses)  
Eg Deuteronomy 18:10

He wanted power and influence



## Acts 13:6

There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus.



His name is Jewish with the Aramaic ‘Bar’ (son of) and ‘Jesus’ – (salvation)

This also shows that the name ‘Jesus’ – Yeshua was a fairly common name.

But having said it, Luke doesn’t use it any more. It gives the wrong message.

He was close to the Roman authority on the island- the Proconsul – This was an influential position for him to be in.

## Acts 13:7

Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.



Discerning and intelligent

*– You don't have to be stupid to believe in God! Wise men came to Jesus and they still do!*

How did he get to hear about them?  
It was God's appointment.

If someone wants to hear the word of God – they are in for a blessing.

**Luke is reporting real, historical events!**  
He uses the correct term for that time – ‘Proconsul’.



Inscriptions bearing Sergius Paulus' name have been found on Cyprus



## Acts 13:8

But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.



Elymas is an Arabic word for ‘wise’ – it was used to describe a ‘magus’ (sorcerer).  
cf. the English term ‘wizard’ from ‘wise’.

He was opposed to Barnabus and Paul and wanted to prevent the proconsul from hearing the truth and believing.

It is the devil’s trade mark. Stop the message and keep people in the dark.



## Acts 13:9

Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas



This was the other (Roman) name for Saul – in the Greek context.

Paul sensed the Holy Spirit prompting him, giving him boldness and focus.

This wasn't Paul reacting out of anger or frustration.

## Acts 13:10

and *Paul* said, "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?"



These aren't just Paul's ideas, but revelation by the Holy Spirit. A message of knowledge.

- God sees his heart and exposes it to those present and convicts Elymas.
- What would he think about God's verdict on him?

## Acts 13:11

Now the hand of the Lord is against you.  
You are going to be blind,  
and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun."



This was a temporary judgement to show him his state before God. (Similar to Saul's experience? Time to think –and repent.)

They saw a demonstration of the Lord's power being obviously greater than the devil's. And Paul's authority under Jesus.

Immediately mist and darkness came over him,  
and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand.



God acts immediately.  
Mist and darkness suggests  
a progressive blindness  
came over him.

And it showed Elymas's  
helplessness.

Did he repent?



## Acts 13:12

When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed,  
for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.



Wow!

He believed the truth and  
power of God's word.

Jesus really is LORD.

# Mission

This passage shows us that it involves:-

- Sharing God's word
- Confronting darkness
- Delivering people from sin

And God wants you to be involved in it in some way.



Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations