

**1180 Paul's first missionary journey, and their expulsion - Acts(13)1-52
(by Whirlwind)**

First, we see that Paul's first missionary journey was undertaken with Barnabas, specifically appointed by the Holy Spirit. Second, we discuss Bar-Jesus a magician in Paphos, Cyprus, and how the proconsul Sergius Paulus, after witnessing miracles, believed in the Lord, demonstrating God's mercy and grace in the event. Third, we examined the instructive opening segment of Paul's preaching, tracing from the patriarchs to David. This becomes clear through the text and relevant Old Testament passages, and we also touched on the issue of the order arrangements of names. Fourth, we addressed the middle section of Paul's preaching, from John the Baptist to Jesus Christ. Fifth, we covered the concluding part of Paul's teaching on justification by faith. Sixth, we discussed Paul and Barnabas's declaration to turn to the Gentiles as their light. Finally, we examined Paul and Barnabas's expulsion and their consolation through being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Please note: This article is based on the Sunday (2/22/26) topicwise Bible study. Unless otherwise specified, verses refer to those in NASB95. Past articles referenced can be found on our website, '<https://a-christian-voice.com/>', under 'On spiritual understanding about life.'

1. Paul's first missionary journey was undertaken with Barnabas

"Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."(Acts 13:1-3)

We see that God's work transcends ethnicity, "For there is no partiality with God."(Romans 2:11). The church in Antioch included prophets and teachers from diverse backgrounds, even Menaen, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Paul, then still called Saul. We observe that the first missionary endeavor was initiated by the Holy Spirit, specifically appointed by Him and bearing God's blessing. "Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."(Acts 13:3)

2. The Paphos' magician Bar-Jesus and conversion of proconsul Sergius Paulus in Cyprus

"So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. When they reached Salamis, they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they also had John as their helper. When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the magician

(for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? Now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord."(Acts 13:4-12)

The scripture clearly describes their journey to Paphos, where they encountered Bar-Jesus, a magician. God worked a miracle through Saul (now called Paul) upon him, causing him to be blinded temporarily so that he could not see the light of day. "Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord."(Acts 13:12) Here we also see that God is a God of mercy and grace, for even though Bar-Jesus is a magician who opposed the apostles, God only caused him to be temporarily blinded, not permanently.

3. The opening portion of Paul's first ministry: From the Patriarchs to David

"Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; but John left them and returned to Jerusalem. But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it." Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance—all of which took about four hundred and fifty years. After these things He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.'"(Acts 13:13-22)

We observe that the synagogue's Sabbath service procedure involved Scripture reading followed by preaching, as the text states: "After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.""(Acts 13:15) This mirrors Jesus' practice: "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read."(Luke 4:16)

In Scripture, this is the first time Paul's name appears before his companion Barnabas, because Paul began to speak on their behalf. Before this, Barnabas always came first, for God's will was that Paul would take the lead in their future preaching. To see this point, in

Paul's second missionary journey, the scripture says, "Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord."(Acts 15:37-40)

Though both Paul and Barnabas were filled with the Holy Spirit, they clearly had different callings. God sent Paul on a second missionary journey, while Barnabas, Son of Encouragement, involved taking Mark to Cyprus—likely related to Mark's return. Mark did indeed return, as Paul states in the text: "...bring Mark with you when you come, for he is useful to me for ministry." (2 Timothy 4:11) We observe the order of Paul and Barnabas, which often reflects their relative importance and roles. We will discuss this further later; for now, we will not elaborate.

The passage then recounts events in Antioch of Pisidia—Paul's first sermon during his first missionary journey, serving as a model for evangelistic preaching. Ofcourse, the evangelistic preaching has to be changed depending on individuals' need. We'll divide this preaching into three segments. It begins concisely with Old Testament events from the patriarchs to David. Please review the clear text and relevant Old Testament passages yourselves; we won't elaborate further here.

4. Paul's middle section: From John the Baptist to Jesus Christ

"From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not He. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.' "Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him. And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead; and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people. And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'You are My Son; today I have begotten You.' As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' Therefore He also says in another Psalm, 'You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.' For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay; but He whom God raised did not undergo decay."(Acts 13:23-37)

From the very beginning, it is made clear: "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ."(Galatians 3:16) That is to say, "The LORD said to me (Moses), 'They have spoken well. I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.'"(Deuteronomy 18:17-19) This refers to Jesus Christ, for "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."(John 3:18) It is clear that "It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him."(Deuteronomy 18:19)

Then it speaks of John the Baptist as Jesus' forerunner, preaching a baptism of repentance, and mentions his testimony. Next it speaks of Jesus' coming, His crucifixion and death, and how those who saw Him testified that He rose from the dead. "He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification."(Romans 4:25) In His incarnation, He was fully human, and humans cannot raise themselves from the dead. Therefore, "...the Prince of life (Jesus), the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses."(Acts 3:15) Thus it is evident that "who (Jesus) was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord."(Romans 1:4) "...Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."(Romans 8:34) Of course, "but He whom God raised did not undergo decay."(Acts 13:37) Here, relevant passages from the Psalms are quoted. Please examine these passages and the corresponding Old Testament texts for yourself; we will not elaborate further.

5. The final portion of Paul's doctrine of Justification by Faith

"Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses. Therefore take heed, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon you: 'Behold, you scoffers, and marvel, and perish; For I am accomplishing a work in your days, A work which you will never believe, though someone should describe it to you.'"(Acts 13:38-41)

Now we have entered the New Testament era, the age in which we live. First, it is said that from the beginning, justification comes solely through faith—that is, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."(Romans 5:1) He has opened a wide door to salvation, for "...God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."(1 Timothy 2:4) This seems too simple a matter, no wonder "...A work which you will never believe, though someone should describe it to you."(Acts 13:41) How hardened the human heart can be! We must truly begin with justification by faith, and then we must walk the path of sanctification. Persevere, and do not be like Demas, who was once Paul's fellow worker and a Christian, yet "for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me (Paul) and gone to Thessalonica; ..." (2 Timothy

4:10). For Christians are called to come out of the world. Jesus made this clear: "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."(John 17:14) On the path of sanctification, persevere and do not fall like Demas.

6. Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles as their light

"As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. Now when the meeting of the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God. The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, That You may bring salvation to the end of the earth.'" When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region."(Acts 13:42-49)

This clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of Paul's preaching, as some followed Paul and Barnabas and urged them to return the next Sabbath. It also reveals the Jews' reaction—jealousy, stubborn opposition, and slander. Thus they declared themselves apostles to the Gentiles, who naturally rejoiced: "...as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region."(Acts 13:48-49)

Note that in this passage, "For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, That You may bring salvation to the end of the earth.'"(Acts 13:47) The preceding use of the plural "us" represents the joint declaration of both men, while the subsequent use of the singular "You" refers to Paul alone: "...I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry."(Romans 11:13) Barnabas, however, did not do this, for the text states: "For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy."(Galatians 2:12-13) If Barnabas were the apostle to the Gentiles, he would not have acted this way.

7. Paul and Barnabas were forced out and comforted by filling with the Holy Spirit

"But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."(Acts 13:50-52)

This was their first expulsion due to the Jews' jealousy and slander. Their act of shaking the dust from their feet before the crowd recalls Jesus' words: "Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city."(Matthew 10:14-15) We do not know what judgment awaited the Jews in Pisidian Antioch, but they proceeded to their next destination, Iconium.

It is no wonder they were filled with joy, for similarly, "So they (the apostles) went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name."(Acts 5:41) Paul knew deeply, "for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."(2 Timothy 1:11-12) We also see that the Holy Spirit comforted them by filling them with His Spirit. No wonder Paul declared, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort."(2 Corinthians 1:3)