



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The First Mission Team is Led by the Holy Spirit

MAY 18-20, 2016

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Acts 12:25-13:5 *“But Barnabas and Saul returned out of Jerusalem, having completed their administration, taking with them John who was called Mark. 1) Now there were at Antioch, from among the happening church, prophets and teachers—especially Barnabas and Symeon being called Niger and Lucius the Cyrenian and especially Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch and Saul. 2) So as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said: ‘Ye Separate then to Me Barnabas and Saul into the work which I have called them.’ 3) Then having fasted and prayed, they—laying their hands on them—released them. 4) Therefore then, they themselves, being sent away by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and from thence especially sailed away to Cyprus. 5) And being in Salamis, they proclaimed the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews, and they also were having John as attendant.”*

Lord? Has the Holy Spirit spoken prior to this event? Why did they go to the island of Cyprus first? Did they initially only preach to the Jews in the synagogues of Cyprus?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- MAY 25-27: ACTS 13:6-12 SAUL'S NAME CHANGE-THE FIRST KING TO BELIEVE
- JUNE 1-3: ACTS 13:13-19 THE THIRD CAPITOL-PAUL'S FIRST RECORDED MESSAGE

It was the godly men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who had fled from the hand of Saul in the persecution following the death of Stephen, that had proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles in Antioch (Acts 11:19-20). That first mixed church of Jews and largely Gentiles was blessed so much by the coming of Barnabas from the Jerusalem church that *“a great many people were added to the Lord”* (24). In response, Barnabas left Antioch to find Saul for help. When Barnabas and Saul arrived, they provided a year of intensive teaching for the church so that they were the first to boldly bear the name *“Christian.”* Other prophets came from Jerusalem, including Agabus, who *“stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world”* (28). These bold Christians then demonstrated their care for their mother church by sacrificially giving as much as they possibly could and sending their gift by the hand of their two dynamic pastors, Barnabas and Saul.

“IF THE SON SETS YOU FREE, YOU WILL BE FREE INDEED’ (JOHN 8:36). THE SPREAD OF THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL TO THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD WAS TO BE THE GREATEST ADVANCE FOR TRUE FREEDOM IN THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE. THIS IS NO OVERSTATEMENT, BECAUSE, IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, CHRISTIAN FREEDOM IS THE ONLY REAL FREEDOM IN THE WORLD. ALL ELSE IS A SPECIES OF BONDAGE, A VARIATION ON THE THEME OF SPIRITUAL DEATH.” GORDON KEDDIE

“ANTIOCH IS A CHURCH FULL OF TEACHERS AND PROPHETS WHO SENSE THE DIRECTION OF THE SPIRIT TO ENGAGE IN ORGANIZED MISSION. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN LUKE’S ACCOUNT A CHURCH OTHER THAN THE ONE IN JERUSALEM IS THE CENTER FOR A MAJOR DIVINE INITIATIVE. LUKE SEES THE ACT AS IMPORTANT AND SYMBOLIC.” DARRELL BOCK

How had Barnabas and Saul initially represented their church in Antioch? Does John Mark present a model for internship in ministry? Is the cosmopolitan world represented in the leadership of this church? How were they *“ministering to the*

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 & 12:00 NOON – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 13900 NOBLEWOOD PLAZA
THURSDAY @ 7:00AM – BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY’S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)
FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM – BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

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I. THE SPIRIT'S WORK COMPLETED ACTS 12:25

While the Antioch church is still saving, Herod kills James and incarcerates Peter, intending to kill him also. Peter's miraculous escape in answer to intense prayer was so embarrassing to Herod that he forsook his desire to please the Jews and moved to Caesarea, the Roman Capital. Within a few short months, Herod's anger against Tyre and Sidon brought their leaders to Caesarea to reconcile with him. It seems that Barnabas and Saul are in Jerusalem, delivering the gift from Antioch, when Herod Agrippa receives praise as if he is God, is struck with worms and dies. History dates Herod's death in AD 44. So it seems that Barnabas and Saul bring the generous gift, the first in the history of the world from a mixed group of Gentiles to Jews, a year before the famine predicted by the Holy Spirit. Sir William Ramsey dates the famine at AD 45 (St Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen, p. 68). Thus, the gift must have been provided a year early, so that the church could most profitably spend the money in time of plenty to stock up for the famine.

"BUT WHOEVER HAS THIS WORLD'S GOODS, AND BEHOLDS HIS BROTHER IN NEED AND CLOSES HIS HEART AGAINST HIM, HOW DOES THE LOVE OF GOD ABIDE IN HIM?"

1 JOHN 3:17

II. THE SPIRIT'S WORD OBEYED ACTS 13:1-3

This incredibly generous church is led by men from all over the world. The fact that they were prophets points to their proclamation of the Word of God and also they were teachers such that they systematically taught the truth of Scripture. The original language gives emphasis to Barnabas, who was the first leader of the church, and Manaen would have been considered a prince in that he seems to be a descendent of Herod the Great and was the foster brother of Herod Antipas who ruled in Galilee and killed John the Baptist and mocked Christ. Simeon is called "*Niger*" which means "black" in Latin, so he may

be from Africa like Lucius from Cyrene. Saul would have been recognized and remembered for his fierce persecution of the church, including the very founders of this church. Thus, though forgiven, he is listed last among the leaders. This variety and plurality of godly men as leaders "*were ministering to the Lord and fasting.*" The word "*ministering*" initially spoke of fulfilling a public office, and then serving in such an office at one's own cost. The Old Testament use was of a priest in his sacrifices and intercession to God. The combination points to full time pastors giving themselves to "*prayer and the ministry of the Word*" (6:4) in their oversight of God's flock. The Spirit speaks only here with a mission for Barnabas and Saul. With fasting and prayer by the entire church, they laid their hands on them and released their most gifted pastors to obey what the Spirit required.

"PRAYER IS VIEWED HERE AS A SERVICE WE DO FOR GOD."
AJITH FERNANDO

III. THE SPIRIT'S WITNESS BEGUN ACTS 13:4-5

Notice that they are "*sent away by the Holy Spirit.*" Their goal was to witness as Peter to Cornelius, Jonah to Nineveh, and the church to "*the end of the earth.*" The Spirit leads them to the nearest seaport, "*Seleucia,*" where they sail to the third largest and most strategic island in the Mediterranean, "*Cyprus,*" where Barnabas is from. The closest seaport and the largest city of the island is "*Salamis*" where "*they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews,*" as they went to the "*Jew first.*"

"THE FIRST PLACE IN CYPRUS WHERE THEY PREACHED WAS SALAMIS, A GREEK CITY ON THE EAST COAST OF THE ISLAND AND THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT OF EASTERN CYPRUS." F. F. BRUCE

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are their believers in need whom you have the opportunity and means to help?
- 2) Do you obey the Spirit of God because you obey the Word of God in your decisions and habits of life?
- 3) Are you a leader who is filled with the Spirit so that both your words and your life are a strategic witness for Christ?