

ACTS 24 – **The People God Uses - Acts 13:1-14**

**Who** are the people that God **uses**?

If you are a **Follower** of Jesus Christ - a **Disciple**  
God wants to **use you** - He has a **plan**, & a **place** for **YOU**

Whatever your **Personality** is, whatever your **Experiences** have been,

If you have truly **Surrendered** your life to **Jesus Christ**  
**God wants** to **use you** in His overall plan

**Acts** revolves around ALL different **KINDS of People**  
It's been called the **Acts of the Apostles** - Or **Holy Spirit**

but this book - in a **LARGE WAY** - is about God using **PEOPLE** -  
**Different kinds** of people - to **accomplish** His purpose

& I **really want** us to see that today  
Because **we are part** of the **Continuing Saga** of Acts

& God is still uses **ALL different KINDS** of people today  
to **accomplish** His purposes

**OUR** Job - is to **JOIN Him** - in the **part of the plan**  
that He has - **FOR US !!** . . . *Amen?*

**Let's Pray**

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We have a **Major Change** in direction today in Acts  
& it's a **great opportunity** to **PAUSE** & Look

at All the **Types Of People** God **uses**

God uses a Kaleidoscope of people

He uses Quiet & Loud, Strong & Weak,  
Young & Old, Aggressive & Passive

He uses a Kaleidoscope of ALL KINDS of people  
& God wants to USE US - EVERY ONE of us

& He's made us each with Strengths & Weaknesses  
& OUR STRENGTHS are made to carry OTHERS WEAKNESSES  
& THEIR STRENGTHS are made to carry OUR WEAKNESSES

So as we look at just a few of the Different Personalities today  
let's ASK OURSELVES

is THAT like me? . . . is THAT me??  
Am I like THAT? . . . is THAT my Gift?

& let's NOT stop asking - until we have SOME idea where we FIT -  
& a commitment to start FUNCTIONING in that ROLE

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Let's start with a few Personality types  
that have kind of led us up to this point in Acts

God used Stephen to get the church looking "Outside the Box"  
of Jerusalem - so let's start with him

Stephen (Acts 6 & 7) - One of the first 7 Deacons of the church,  
& the Church's First MARTYR

Acts 6:8 says: Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.

&, it seems, he was a **skillful debater** - in fact, it **seems** even **Saul of Tarsus** may've been **out-debated** by Stephen

& **because** of this - Stephen was **murdered** by the **Jewish High Court** with **Saul** leading the way

But **Stephen** had a **Life-Changing Impact** on Saul  
**AND** - his death would **drive** the believers **OUT** of Jerusalem

& so - **Stephen's** primary role - was to **provide the fuel** - in his **blood** to **launch** the church out of **Jerusalem**

& **maybe God** has a Role "**Some What**" like **Stephen's** - For you **Total Sacrifice** - to **Launch** a New Work

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& then there was **Philip (Acts 8)** - was also **1** of the first 7 **Deacons**

& when **Stephen** was Martyred  
**Philip** decided he'd be "***An Evangelist on the MOVE***"

& so he first **RAN** to **Samaria**  
& God used him there to **start a huge revival**

He **could've easily** had the first **MEGA-CHURCH**

but God called him **AWAY** - to share the gospel with **One Man**  
An **Ethiopian Eunuch** - an **Official** of the Queen

Because **God needed** to get something started down in **Ethiopia**  
& He called **Philip** to start it

& here's a **COOL** Thing about Philip -  
In **BOTH** these events, Philip Ministered to **OUTCASTS**

**First** - it was the **Half-Breed Samaritans**

& then it was a **Castrated Ethiopian**  
who would've been barred from the **Jewish Community**

Philip pushed the **Social Boundaries** of the Jews  
bringing the **Gospel** to the outcasts

& maybe, like **Philip** - God wants to use **YOU**  
to reach those on the **edge of society** - those others WON'T reach

& then Philip **GOT TO** go up the coast to **Caesarea**  
& raise four **Prophesying Daughters** in Obscurity - (P.T.L.)

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& then - we've **GOT** to consider  
the **Personality of Personalities** - **PETER**

**Peter** - is generally considered to be the **Most Prominent**  
of the Original 12, & the **Most Out-Spoken**

He was a **simple fisherman** - often **too quick to speak**  
& sometimes **a bit slow to learn**

& he became the **Pioneering Apostle** of the Book of Acts  
the **First (& very strong) leader** of the Jerusalem Church

He was **married**, and **1Cor 9** says he **took his wife** with him  
on his **missionary journeys**.

He was **FIRST** to be called by Jesus  
**FIRST** to be Named as an Apostle  
**FIRST** to **FORMALLY** First bring the Gospel to a Gentile House

Peter was A **PIONEER** of the church

& maybe God has crafted YOU to be a Strong Pioneer  
FIRST out of the Gate, even tho you may stumble - like Peter

If you are like Peter, I'm sorry . . . & If you are MARRIED to someone  
like Peter - Then I am doubly sorry

But God does need (& use) Strong, Outspoken, Pioneers

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So - these 3 - Stephen, Philip, Peter  
were ALL kind of Strong, Pioneer, Personality Types

Because THAT'S what God needed - to get things rolling

But even in those early days - the SUPPORT people were in place

There were 120 in the Upper Room praying  
when the Holy Spirit was Poured out

that may have been the house of MARY (Barnabas's Aunt)  
whose large House was a KEY gathering place for the believers

She & her Wealthy household were meeting a HUGE NEED

& the GIVERS were in action Big Time - - In CH 4 they were selling  
what they had & bringing the money to the Apostles to distribute

& after the 3,000 were added that day - Acts 2:44-45 says . . . ***all  
who believed were together and had all things in common. And  
they were selling their possessions and belongings and  
distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.***

THAT was no small task - & it took a LOT of people  
serving behind the scenes to make that happen

**Maybe you're** more like these many **unnamed servants**  
keeping **the wheels** of the church rolling

Which led to the **DEACON** Ministry - both **Men & Women**  
who met the **physical needs** of the church - day to day

**Often** - the Bible focuses on those "**Out Front**"

But there were **literally HUNDREDS** of believers  
**Working Faithfully** in the background to "**BE**" the church

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& so **now** (mostly for time's sake)  
Let's **skip ahead** to Antioch - & **Acts Ch 13**

I **feel bad** I wasn't able to **finish** all **our Vs's** last msg  
cause it was a **pretty cool ending**

After **Peter's** miraculous **escape** from Prison  
& then Peter "**Departing for another place**" in **Acts 12:17**

If we would've **kept reading** we would've seen - **Herod** had all the  
prison guards **killed** - & then **he went** up to **Caesarea**

& there, **because** he received **worship** from the people, instead of  
giving it to God - God had him **eaten by worms** - Literally

**& then we get to Acts 12:24 (esv)**  
***24 But the word of God increased and multiplied.***

This is one of Luke's "**Summary Statements**"  
& it **Signals The End** of another **SECTION** of Acts

& then we have a “Set-Up” verse - in V.25  
setting the Stage for what’s to come

**Acts 12:25 (esv)**

***25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark.***

Back in Acts 11:29 - the Gentile believers had sent MONEY  
to the church in Jerusalem because of the Prophesied Famine

& they sent Barnabas & Saul to carry the money to Jerusalem  
& now - they had returned to Antioch with - John-Mark

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& now - beginning in Ch 13 - a New Section, a New Focus,  
a New Season of the Church - BEGINS

The focus from here on out - is Primarily on the Gentile Church  
as we head into - the “Missionary Journey” phase of Acts

**Acts 13:1 (esv)**

***1 Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.***

Now - let’s HOLD UP a minute - & look at these  
“Prophets & Teachers” in the Antioch Church

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**First** listed is Barnabas - The “son of encouragement”  
He was Drawn to people he could encourage

A Levite, from a wealthy family

He sold his land on Cyprus & went into the ministry

He took up the cause for Saul, and Led him into approval

When the church started in Antioch, Jerusalem sent Barnabas,  
when he saw the people in Antioch needed more . . .

he went & got Paul & brought him back, not for his own good,  
for the people's good

He & Paul Co-Pastored the church at Antioch for a year  
& then Paul replaced Barnabas as the Leader of their group

Which is just how Barnabas would've wanted it

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& then there is Simeon who was called Niger

Niger is Latin for Black - & because he's listed with Lucius of Cyrene

some believe this MAY actually be the Simon of Cyrene  
who carried the Cross of Christ (*but we don't know*)

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Next is Lucius of Cyrene - Another North African believer

We know there were men from Cyrene at the Day of Pentecost  
& we may be seeing where some of those men ended up

& there are some who believe these men are the "Unnamed Evangelists" who actually started the church (**Acts 11:20**)

We don't know too much more about these two  
PROPHETS and/or TEACHERS

But we know they made up a VERY DIVERSE leadership team

Some Jews - Some Gentiles

Some from Canaan - Some from Africa

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& maybe the strangest member of them all

MANAEN, *a member of the court of Herod the tetarch*

The wording implies MANAEN was a Childhood friend of Herod

& possibly grew up in the same house as the Herod  
that ruled Galilee during the early life of Jesus !!

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& then - for good measure

Let's mix in a Radical Pharisee named SAUL

Saul - to become Paul - What can we say about PAUL ?

He's almost bigger than life

almost too big to try to paint a picture of

Alexander Whyte in his biographies on the Greatest Bible Characters  
gives Stephen, Philip, & Barnabas 5 to 6 pages each

But he gives the Apostle Paul 89 pages That's FIFTEEN TIMES more  
than the other great men of Acts

Paul came from the furthest - as a Pharisee of the Pharisee's

& he was brought by God to the closest - writing 2/3 of the NT

He was a **Spiritual Giant** - we'd have to do a **THREE-WEEK** Series **JUST** to do his **biography**

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So - in the **FOUNDATION GENTILE CHURCH** - the church that would **LAUNCH** the first World Missions - **WE HAVE . . . :**

**Barnabas** - A Levite. **Encourager**, Giver & Supporter

Two basically **Unknown Guys** from North Africa

A **Guy** who **GREW UP** with **Herod** in a Royal household

& a "***Larger than Life***" **Ex-Pharisee** - Saul

Now guys - from a **Church Leadership** Standpoint

**THAT** - is quite a **PARTY** !!

**I PROMISE YOU** - there was a **WHOLE BUNCH** of Issues that THIS Group **DID NOT** see Eye to Eye on

They **COULDN'T** have - their backgrounds were **FAR too DIVERSE** !!

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**But ONE THING** they did see Eye to Eye on was - they:

**Worshipped**

**Prayed**

**Fasted**

**Listened** to the Holy Spirit - **TOGETHER**

& as this **VERY DIVERSE** group did **THAT** the Holy Spirit **Directed** the Church

**Acts 13:2 (esv) → →**

### **Acts 13:2 (esv)**

***2 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.”***

The word “**THEY**” could easily mean the **ENTIRE CHURCH** as in “***While THE CHURCH***” was worshipping & fasting

Which gives us **VERY CLEAR** Direction on **THE ENVIRONMENT** in which the Holy Spirit **SPEAKS** - & Gives us **DIRECTION**

The Holy Spirit is **DIRECTING**, & **GUIDING** while the **Church** is **Worshipping & Fasting** (*interesting*)

Also not **explained** here is just **HOW** the Holy Spirit spoke but most probably **THRU** the prophets we just listed

& as they were **Worshipping & Fasting** the **Holy Spirit spoke** to them - about **Barnabas & Saul**

To set them **APART** - for an “**Unspecified Work**”

& so . . . **What** did the church **DO** . . . ?

They **Prayed & Fasted** SOME MORE, **before** doing anything else

### **Acts 13:3 (esv)**

***3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.***

This **second round** would've been a **time of Verification** Just “**Makin Sure**” they had heard from the Lord

This is **SUCH** a Great Picture of how the **Holy Spirit Directs** the Church

**First** - He **puts** the church together  
with a Whole Bunch of **DIVERSE PERSONALITIES**

& **THEN** He binds them together thru **Worship & Prayer & Fasting**  
& **THEN** He does what **ONLY** He can do

He **LEADS & GUIDES** in a way that no **one person** can take credit

& Notice - this Next **HUGE STEP** for the church  
is Kicked off - with **FASTING**

Fasting is a **wonderful & a powerful tool** in the hands of the church -  
but notice - Fasting is Always connected with Something

Fasting is never an **END IN ITSELF** - Except for Pharisee's

Fasting is a **NEGATIVE** discipline - where you **DENY** your flesh  
of what it wants - It's the **NO** side of "Meeting God"

But it **sould always go** with the **YES** side of "Meeting God"  
Fasting should always go with a **POSITIVE** discipline

Notice in V.2 - **FASTING** goes with **WORSHIPPING**

**FASTING** is saying **NO** to the **FLESH**  
**WORSHIPPING** is saying **YES** to **GOD**

& in V.3 - **FASTING** goes with **PRAYING**

**FASTING** is saying **NO** to the **FLESH**  
**PRAYING** is saying **YES** to **GOD**

& in **THIS WAY** - the Holy Spirit **Leads & Guides** the Church (cool!)

& **notice** here also - The **Holy Spirit takes** what we would **consider**  
**"The Best"** - & **SENDS** them out

The leadership is **NOT** saying - ***“You know, Barnabas & Saul are getting on our nerves. Let’s send them on a “Missionary Journey”***

No - these are the **TOP TWO GUYS** - the **Big Guns**  
& when the Holy Spirit says - **GO** - Everyone supported it

& Notice **FINALLY** - it is the **Holy Spirit** that does the **SENDING**

The church is **WORSHIPPING**, **PRAYING**, **FASTING**, & **LISTENING**  
& the Holy Spirit is Calling the **SHOTS** & Making the **Decisions**

### **Acts 13:4 (esv)**

***4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.***

### **Selucia was the PORT of Antioch**

& they **jumped a boat** there - & went straight to **CYPRUS**  
an **Island** off the coast - where **Barnabas was from**

So they **headed 1st** - to **familiar ground** (*good idea*)

### **Acts 13:5 (esv)**

***5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John (John-Mark) to assist them.***

**Salamis** is where the boat would have landed - - so they Got There:

**Stepped** off the **Boat**  
**Walked** into the **Synagogue** - &  
**Started** telling the **Jews** about Jesus

& we’ll **see** - this is the **basic approach**  
for all their **INITIAL** Missionary stops

& we'll see next week - Barnabas & Paul had **TOO MUCH** success at their first Synagogue stop - & it got them "**Run out of Town**"

& notice also - **John-Mark** was with them - as their **Assistant**  
It seems like he was kind of an **INTERN** - **Helping, & Learning**

& so they **just began walking** across the Island (90 Miles)  
speaking to **Jews** & **Gentiles** alike

### **Acts 13:6:7 (esv)**

***6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, (other end) they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus.***

***7 He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.***

The **PROCONSUL** is the **Roman Governor** over the Island

& it was **common** for these rulers to have "**Spiritual Counselors**" to **help** make **decisions** - & it was a great gig, if you could get it

But this **Governor** sincerely wanted to hear the **Word of God**  
& **if** he were to **put his faith** in Jesus Christ  
that **COULD** put a crimp in this **magicians** Life-Style

### **Acts 13:8 (esv)**

***8 But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.***

& now - their First **Spiritual Battle** - Is **ON** !!

This is the **REAL DEAL** - the **Power of Heaven** on one side  
the **Power of Hell** on the other side !!

## **Acts 13:9-10 (esv)**

**9 But Saul, who was also called Paul (FIRST time), *filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him*  
**10 and said, “You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?”****

Paul - “**Filled with the Spirit**” - Now takes up the Role we’ve seen in **Peter** & the in other Apostles

Speaking in **DISCERNMENT** - Speaking very **DIRECTLY**  
About the true **Spiritual Warfare** going on here

& he calls this “**Spiritual Advisor**” - ***You son of the devil !!***  
Now that’s **not very Christian** is it ??

One of the **Devils** Biggest **successes** in the Christian Church is the **LIE** that we have to Accept & Embrace **EVERY** person

**Guys** - there are **people** - & **people** in **churches** today who are **purely & completely WORKING** for the Devil

& we’ve got to **open our eyes** & understand this is a **Life or Death** Spiritual Battle

& there **comes a time**  
When you got to **CALL** ‘em like they **ARE**

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So Paul **NAILS** - **WHO** this guy’s **really working for**

**& then - in Acts 13:11 he cont’s (esv)**

***11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time.” Immediately***

***mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand.***

Alright - I guess that **pretty much** takes **care** of that problem  
**MAN** - *I really need to pray for THAT gift !!*

But what's **way more important** is  
the **Roman Governor** gets **SAVED**

### **Acts 13:12 (esv)**

***12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.***

& it's **very cool** that there's solid **archeological finds** on Cyprus  
that **document** this Proconsul **becoming a Christian**

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So that's an **important** "**Spiritual Warfare**" **INSERT**  
into our lesson on the **TYPE of People** that God Uses

But **now** - we have to **WRAP UP** - with that famous "**Bail-Out**"  
of young **John-Mark** - from his first **Ministry Assignment**

### **Acts 13:13 (esv)**

***13 Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem,***

Really - it's just **ONE VERSE** - In fact, it's ONLY **HALF a VERSE**  
*Ohh . . . but **there's plenty** "Between the Lines"*

**John-Mark** was from a **wealthy family** in Jerusalem - & **young**  
& This **Journey** with "**Cousin Encouragement**" looked like **FUN**

**John-Mark** had **seen God** do great things  
& he **wanted** to see **MORE**

**PLUS** - Cyprus is called the **Hawaii**, or the **Bahamas** of the  
Mediterranean - it was kind of a "**Fantasy Island**"

But then - **Quickly** - **Missionary life** hit young John-Mark **HARD**

**No Porters**, **No 4-star Hotels**, sometimes **No Food**  
Mostly **Difficulty** & **Rejection** by the people

**Hmmmm** . . . maybe I'm **not cut out** to be a **MISSIONARY** - -  
You know - - **The Glamour** Fades **FAST**

**Maybe** Mark was **Homesick**  
**missing** his large **home** with the **servants** in Jerusalem

**Maybe** he became **resentful of Paul**  
Who **took** on the **Leadership role** from Cousin **Barnabas**

He was **Devoutly Jewish** - & maybe *inside*  
he **Disagreed** with all this **GENTILE** Conversion ?

Or **maybe** it was because - **When they landed** in Pamphylia  
they **set their sites** on a city **100 miles** from the coast

that **required** a grueling **hike**  
over a **serious & dangerous mountain** range

We don't know **WHY** John-Mark "Bailed Out" - But he did  
& so - **Paul & Barnabas** went on without him

## **Acts 13:14 (esv)**

**14 but they** (Paul & Barnabas) **went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia** (different Antioch). **And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down** (like they always did).

**John-Mark** caught the **next boat** home  
clearly **causing some difficulty** on this missionary journey

**AND** setting up an **EXTREME CONFLICT** down the road  
between **Paul** & **Barnabas**

**The story** of **John-Mark** is a **GREAT** story - - he **FINISHED WELL**  
He **travelled** with Peter - - **WROTE** the **Gospel** of Mark (for Peter)  
& was **Eventually Reunited** with Paul . . . He **finished well**

But we'll **have to save** the **rest** of his **story**, for another day

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But **for today** - let's close by "**Putting Ourselves**" in the **Book of Acts**

**Listen**, Please - If you are a **FOLLOWER** - a **DISCIPLE** of Christ -  
God has a **Specific Role** & a **Specific Plan** for **YOU**

**Our Culture** implies - the **PRIMARY ROLE** of most Christians  
is to be **SPECTATORS** - But that's **NOT true**, & it's **NOT Biblical**

**If we** are part of the **Body of Christ** - then we have been **created**  
for a very specific **FUNCTION** *within* the Body

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It may be **UPFRONT** - It may be **BEHIND** the Scenes  
It may be at **CHURCH** - It may be at **HOME**  
It may be **LOCAL** - It may be **FAR AWAY**

But **WHATEVER** it is - & **WHEREVER** it is  
God has **FASHIONED** us specifically for our **ROLE**

& the **Body of Christ** can only **FUNCTION** completely  
**when** each of us begin to **ASK** God **WHAT** our **ROLE** is  
& **then**, begin to **FUNCTION** in that **ROLE**

### **God uses ALL TYPES of people**

He uses **Quiet**, behind the scene **Servants**  
& He uses **Loud**, upfront **Proclaimers**

God uses **One at a time Encouragers**  
& **Big Picture Movers & Shakers**

God uses those who **Give & Provide**  
& those who **Go & Risk All**

**PLEASE** - **FIND** your place  
in the **Continuing SAGA** of the Church of Acts

**ASK US** what we **mean** - We'll **HELP** you  
**BE PART** of the continuing **WORK** of God

**Let's Pray**