



**“The Journey Begins”**

Acts 13:1-12

*Acts: The Unstoppable Gospel*

An Overview of the Three Missionary Journeys of the Apostle Paul.

**The First Journey – Acts 13-14 (46-48 AD)**

- Start/End - Antioch in Syria
- Key Companions of Paul - Barnabas and John Mark
- Countries visited - Cyprus (Salamis, Paphos) and the region of Galatia in Asia Minor (Pisidian, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe).
- Highlights - Paul confronted a sorcerer named Elymas in Paphos; converted Sergius Paulus; faced stoning in Lystra. Returned to Antioch to report to the church.

**The Second Journey – Acts 15:36-18:22 (49-52AD)**

- Start/End - Antioch in Syria
- Key Companions of Paul - Silas and Timothy
- Countries visited - Revisited Galatia, then crossed into Europe (Macedonia and Greece), visiting Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth.
- Highlights - Paul was prevented by the Spirit from entering Asia minor initially; received the “Macedonian vision”, was jailed and freed by an earthquake in Philippi; and spent 18 months ministering in Corinth.

**Third Journey – Acts 18:23-21:16 (53-57AD)**

- Start/End - Antioch in Syria (ended with Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem)
- Key Companions of Paul - Timothy, Titus, and local believers
- Countries visited - Phrygia, Galatia, and Ephesus
- Highlights - Paul spent over two years teaching daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus; caused a major uproar among local silversmiths; traveled through Macedonia and Greece before returning to Jerusalem, where he was arrested.

How “The Journey Begins” (Acts 13:1-12)

The church leaders gathered together and yielded fully to the Holy Spirit. How did they do it?

1. They listened to the Holy Spirit (vv. 1-3)
2. They were guided by the Holy Spirit (vv. 4-8)
3. They were empowered by the Holy Spirit (vv. 9-12)

**1. They listened to the Holy Spirit (vv. 1-3)**

Acts 13:2 – “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.’”

Four ways to know if you’re hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit.

1. Does it align with God’s Word?
2. Is it prompting me to act ‘on mission’ in God’s kingdom?
3. Will acting on it make me more like Jesus?
4. Does the community of believers in Jesus Christ affirm this (vv. 1-3)

**2. They were guided by the Holy Spirit (vv. 4-8)**

Acts 13:4-5 – “So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. <sup>5</sup>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.”

- The church gathers and the Holy Spirit sets apart Saul and Barnabas.
- Another character comes in right here. John.
- The Holy Spirit wants them to go where the Jews are gathered and share there first.
- If they don't respond, because the gospel is for everyone, take it to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:6-8 – “When they had gone through the whole land as far as Paphos, they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>But Elymas the magician (for his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.”

Acts 13:9a – “But Saul, who was also known as Paul”

- This is the turning point in Acts. He will never be called Saul again in Acts.

So why would he go from Saul to Paul at this point?

- Because before now, Paul's ministry has been primarily to the Jews.
- So he was called by His Hebrew name, Saul.

Now as his ministry shifts to the Gentiles, his name shifts from Saul to Paul.

### 3. They were empowered by the Holy Spirit (vv. 9-12)

Acts 13:9-11 – “But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him <sup>10</sup> 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? <sup>11</sup>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.”

Paul writes about the Holy Spirit later in the New Testament.

- Galatians 5:25 – “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”
- Galatians 5:22-23 – “The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”
- Galatians 5:17 – “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.”

Acts 13:12 – “Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.”

What truth do I need to take away from this?

1. The Holy Spirit is at the center of the ‘Kingdom-work’ in the world.
2. The gospel is for everyone, but only some will receive it.
3. When God makes the message of the gospel known, faith is increased.

Our response?

1. Be aware of God's presence, and listen for Him to speak.
2. It's not up to you who will choose to believe, we just share it where we're led.
3. When we hear the Holy Spirit speak, we do what He tells us to do.

#### **FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:**

1. How does your current routine of worship and fasting prepare you to hear God's direction?
2. Why is it important to seek godly counsel before launching into a new ministry?
3. How are you currently remaining faithful in your local church context?
4. When you step out in faith, do you expect opposition, or does it catch you off guard?
5. Are there any ‘influences’ or ‘false prophets’ in your life that try to turn you from the truth?
6. How can you guard against reacting to opposition in anger, and responding through the power and direction of the Holy Spirit?
7. How would your life change if every time the Holy Spirit asked you to do something, you did it?