

ACTS

THE MOVEMENT BEGINS

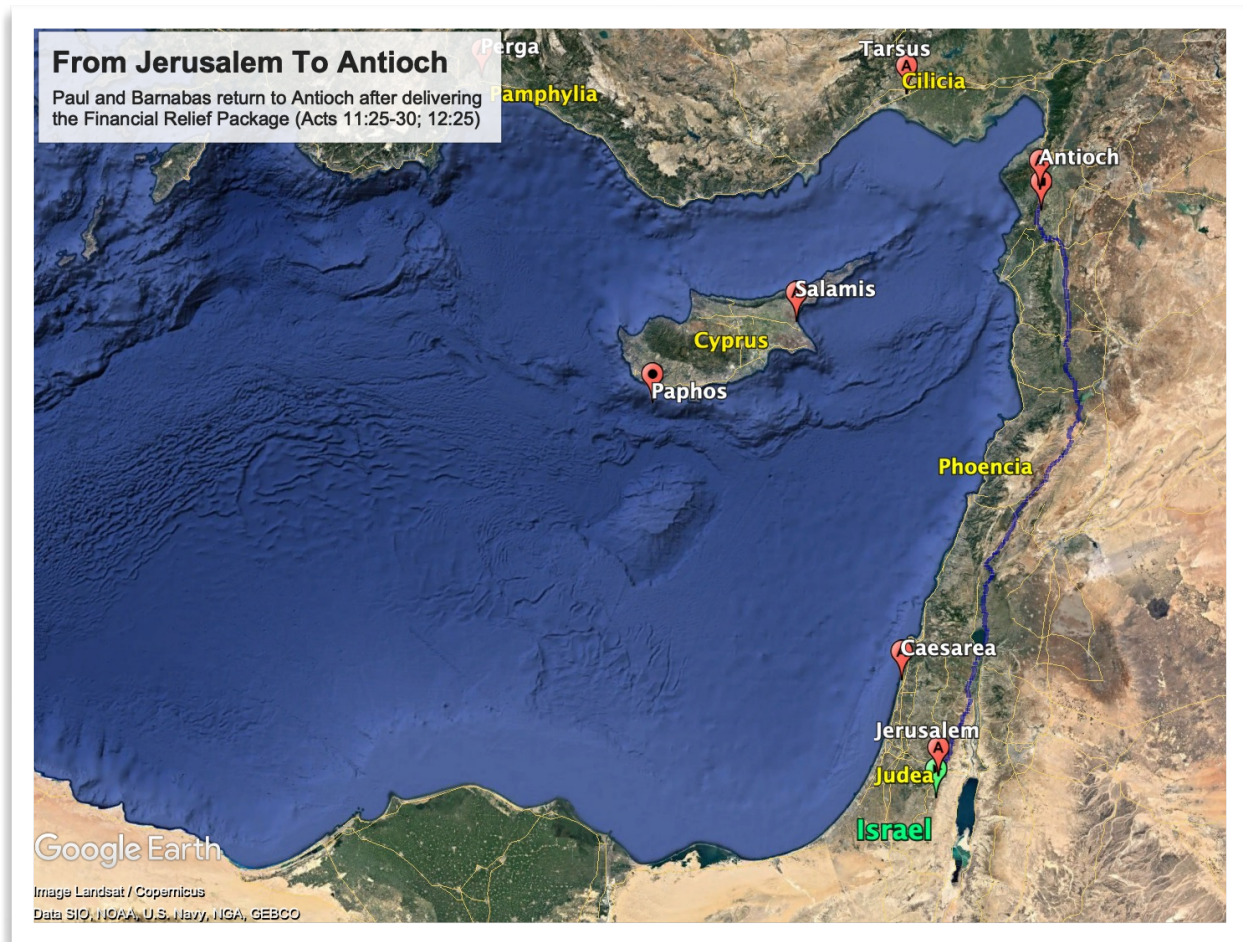
Acts 13:1-3 | "Spirit-Led Missions"

INTRO: Outline of the Book of Acts = **Acts 1:8**

Acts 1-7 = Jerusalem

Acts 8-12 = Judea & Samaria

Acts 13-28 = Uttermost Parts of the Earth



The church in Antioch has been planted (**Acts 11:19-30**), and now will become the Center for World Missions! The Church had its headquarters in Jerusalem, but that has now shifted to Antioch. The gospel will go throughout the Roman Empire as the Apostle Paul goes out to plant churches throughout the known world from his new home church in Antioch.

KEY: The Book of Acts shows us GOD'S MODEL FOR THE CHURCH, and the church at Antioch as a great **MODEL FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH!**

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Acts 13:1-3 | "Spirit-Led Missions"

I. CALLED BY THE SPIRIT. (v. 1-3)

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH WAS A TEACHING MINISTRY (v. 1a)

A. (v. 1)

1. "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers;..."

a. "prophets and teachers"

1) "prophets"

- a) There were men that were gifted by God to stand before God's people bring the Word of the Lord.

2) "teachers"

- a) This was a fellowship that had a strong TEACHING MINISTRY!

- i. Saul was brought to Antioch to teach the believers, which he did for *a whole year* (11:25-26).

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH HAD SOLID, DIVERSE LEADERSHIP (v. 1b)

2. "...as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."

a. "Barnabas"

1) Cf. Acts 4:36-37

- a) He was a Jewish, Messianic believer from the Tribe of Levi, and he was from the island of Cypress.
- b) His nickname was "*the son of consolation*" because he was such an ENCOURAGER!
 - i. He was a guy that you just liked to be around!

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b. "Simeon that was called Niger"

1) "Niger" - Gr. "Black"

a) Probably from the area of modern-day Niger located¹ in West Africa.

2) Some have conjectured that this is "Simon the Cyrenian" that carried Jesus' cross (Luke 23:26).

a) The names *Simon* and *Simeon* are the same.

b) *Simon the Cyrenian* was probably black, being from North Africa.

c) However, Luke wrote both *the Gospel of Luke* (vol. 1) and *the Book of Acts* (vol. 2), so if he wanted to show them as the same man, he probably wouldn't have changed the name. Also, Luke distinguishes *Lucius* as being "the Cyrenian," but not *Simeon*.



c. "Lucius of Cyrene"

1) "Lucius" - Gr. "Luke"

a) Not the author or the Gospel of Luke and Acts.

b) May be mentioned in the book of Romans (Rom. 16:21).

2) "of Cyrene"

a) Lucius was probably one of the founders of the congregation in Antioch because some of the believers from Cyrene (Acts 11:20) helped establish the church there.

b) Cyrene was an ancient Roman city located² near modern-day Shahhat, Lybia.

¹ DMS 16° 0' 0" N, 8° 0' 0" E

Decimal 16, 8

² DMS 32° 49' 30" N, 21° 51' 29" E

Decimal 32.825, 21.858056

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- d. "Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch"
 - 1) "Manaen" - Heb. *Menahem* - "Consoler; Comforter"
 - a) He had a Hebrew name, thus a Jew.
 - 2) "Herod the tetrarch" = Herod Antipas
 - 3) "brought up with" - Gr. "nourished up with; foster brother with"
 - a) *Manaen* was a Jew that was raised in the royal court with Herod Antipas, and he is now part of the leadership team in Antioch.
 - b) **NOTE:** *Manaen* may have seen the ministry of John the Baptist and/or Jesus with his own eyes if he had visited with his foster-brother Herod Antipas.

- e. "Saul"
 - 1) Was an orthodox Jew who grew up in Tarsus and trained in Jerusalem.
 - 2) Was brought to Antioch by *Barnabas* that he might *teach* them the Word of God ([Acts 11:25-26](#)).

- f. **NOTE:** There was such a diversity in these men - different backgrounds, different personalities, different expressions of their gifts, etc.
 - 1) God wants to use YOU with *your* personality, *your* background, and *your* unique giftedness that He has given to you.

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH WAS A WORSHIPPING CHURCH (v. 2a)

B. (v. 2)

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1. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted,..."

- a. "ministered" - Gr. *leitourgeó* - "public religious service"; we get our English word "liturgy" from this word.
 - 1) In the LXX, used of the "ministrations" of the priests and Levites (Ex 28:35; Num 8:26, etc.)
- b. **NOTE:** Too often, there is an emphasis on ministering "for" the Lord, instead of ministering "to" the Lord.
 - 1) Cf. Colossians 3:23-24 - "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, **as to the Lord**, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."
- c. **KEY:** The Church in Antioch was a WORSHIPPING Church and a PRAYING Church, operating in the gifts of the Spirit.
 - 1) They were operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit (v. 1-2).
 - 2) They were taking time to pray together and seek the Lord (v. 3).

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH WAS A SPIRIT-LED CHURCH (v. 2b)

2. "...the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

- a. "the Holy Spirit said"
 - 1) **Q** = How did the Holy Spirit say this?... We don't really know, but here are some possibilities:
 - a) They may have heard a booming audible voice in the room, though not likely.
 - b) Maybe one of the prophets gave a prophecy (a word from the Lord).
 - c) Maybe there was just a collective sense that this is what the Spirit wanted to do.

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- i. Maybe Saul and Barnabas had an impression on their heart, and they said, "Hey guys, we've been having a great desire to travel around and preach the gospel," and the others said, "That's been on our hearts for you guys too!"
 - ii. Cf. **Acts 15:28** - "*For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us,...*"
 - d) Maybe in the prayer meeting, someone said, "I really feel like the Lord wants us to reach out to other parts of the Roman Empire," and another said, "I think Barnabas and Saul would be great for that!"
 - e) **NOTE:** So often, God speaks in that still, small voice. He puts something in your heart, and you just share it, and God is speaking in such a natural, though supernatural, way.
 - i. **Illust.** - My friend Holland Davis spoke a word of prophecy to me (without realizing it) that I needed to plant this church here in Escondido. He said, "Escondido is the land of anointing.. Don't analyze it to death. Just take a step of faith." And that was the word from the Lord that I needed to sense that call of the Spirit.
- 2) **KEY:** The SECRET to the success of the church in Antioch was that they were SPIRIT-FILLED and SPIRIT-LED!
- a) Too many ministries are seeking to build the church with their schemes and methods.
 - b) However, Jesus said, "*I will build My Church*" (**Matt. 16:18**), and He does it through the leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. Cf. **Zechariah 4:6** - "*Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by*

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might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."

- b. "Separate" - Gr. "divide; set apart"

- c. "Me"
 - 1) Different Translations:
 - a) "to Me" (NKJV)
 - b) "for Me" (NIV, ESV, NASB)

 - 2) They were NOT separated:
 - a) Unto the ministry.
 - b) To the mission field.

 - 3) They were separated UNTO THE HOLY SPIRIT HIMSELF.

- d. "Barnabas and Saul"
 - 1) At this point, Barnabas' name is mentioned first because he had preeminence (Acts 11:30; 12:25; 13:2, 7; 14:14; 15:12, 25), but later on, Paul would become the main leader (Acts 13:43, 46, 50; 15:2, 22, 35).

- e. "work" - Gr. "labor; employment; task; action; accomplishment"
 - 1) When the Holy Spirit calls someone to a specific ministry, it is a "work" He has called us to.
 - a) Too many people look at the ministry as a cush job, but it is work!

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- b) Paul, in his 1st letter to Timothy, said, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good **work**." (1 Tim 3:1)
- f. "called" - Gr. *proskaleó* - "summoned; invited"
- 1) Lit. "to call toward oneself"
 - a) **KEY:** They were *not* called by the Church, but were called by the Holy Spirit! ("I have called them")
 - 2) I believe that the Holy Spirit still *calls* people today to a specific ministry or task.
 - 3) **NOTE:** Many today think of the "call" of God as something old fashioned, and they see no need for it in today's modern world. However, I believe that the *call* to pastoral ministry or the mission field is by far the single most important matter to the pastor or missionary!
 - a) Men do not choose to be a pastor or missionary, they are *called* to be a pastor or missionary!
 - i. Cf. **Exodus 3-4** - Moses was called at the burning bush, where he talked with the Lord.
 - ii. Cf. **1 Samuel 3:1-9** - Samuel was called while laying in bed as a young boy.
 - iii. Cf. **Jeremiah 1:4-8** - Jeremiah was called as a very young man.
 - iv. Cf. **Acts 9** - Paul was called while persecuting the church of God.
 - v. Cf. **Acts 13** - Paul and Barnabas were called by the Holy Spirit to go on a specific mission.
 - vi. Cf. **1 Timothy 1:18, 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6** - Timothy was called by the Lord through a prophetic word while the elders laid hands on him.

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- b) **KEY:** The Bible always places great emphasis upon the special *call* and presents this as the basis for the ministry that follows.
- i. **Q** = What does that mean to be *called*?...
 - a. **Definition:** God's call is an inner conviction given by the Holy Spirit and confirmed by the Word of God and the body of Christ.
 - i. In other words, you sense that the Holy Spirit is putting that *desire* in your heart, and it will be confirmed by the qualifications here in 1 Timothy 3, and those in the church will see the evidence of God's call in your life.
- c) **Q** = Why is the *desire*, and the sense of calling, so important?...
- i. James wrote in his epistle, "*My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*" (James 3:1)
 - ii. Also, no man would choose the *work* without a sense of call once he realizes what the ministry is really all about.
- 4) **NOTE:** God may *call* YOU to be a missionary in a foreign land.
- a) At some point, you may sense that God wants you to go to another country to bring the gospel to those people.
 - i. **Q** = Are you open to the *call* of God?...

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- 5) **Q** = What do I do if I don't get the "dramatic" call of God?...
- a) As a Christian, you are a "missionary" wherever you are geographically.
 - i. "missionary" = lit. "sent one"
 - b) If God has not given you the "dramatic" to go to a foreign land for a specific mission, then just be faithful right where you are.
 - c) We are on the mission field right here in Escondido and North County San Diego.
 - i. You don't have to go to another country to be a missionary used by God. He can start using you right here.
 - ii. There are so many people right here all around us that are lost and need to hear the hope of the gospel.
 - d) I have found that people think that once they go somewhere else, then they will do the work of sharing the gospel and be involved in ministry, but they won't do it where they are.
 - e) **KEY:** Throughout the Bible and Church History, God has chosen and called normal, ordinary people to specific works. Be open if He wants to *call* you! He may be *inviting* you into a specific work!

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH WAS A MISSIONARY CHURCH (v. 3)

C. (v. 3)

1. "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."
 - a. "sent" - Gr. *apoluó* - "released; let go; set free; dismissed"
 - 1) Sometimes it's hard to let go of good leaders.

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- a) They are such a blessing.
 - b) They are so helpful.
 - c) So many people are being blessed by their ministry.
- 2) However, if the Holy Spirit is calling them to go somewhere else, we don't want to get in the way of what God wants to do in/through their life!
- a) That's why I always say to those serving with me, "We're so blessed to have you serve with us - whether for a short season or a long season." I want to have open hands so that the Spirit can move as He wills.
- 3) **KEY:** The Church in Antioch was a SPIRIT-LED Church, and the result was that it was a MISSIONARY Church!
- a) The Holy Spirit still speaks to believers today and directs us to different works of service for Him.
 - b) I always want to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. **Illust.** - Andy and Tracie Dominguez were a vital part in our starting this local church here in Escondido, and that is because they are so sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- b. *"laid their hands on them"*
- 1) In the Bible, the idea of laying hands on someone was to BLESS them and IDENTIFY with them!
 - a) Cf. **Genesis 48:14-20; Leviticus 8:14, 18, 22; Numbers 8:10; 27:18, 23; Deuteronomy 34:9; Mark 6:5; 16:18; Luke 4:40; 13:13; Acts 6:6; 8:17-19; 9:17; 13:3; 19:6; 1 Timothy 4:14; 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6; Hebrews 6:2**

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- 2) **NOTE:** The Church in Antioch *released* Paul and Barnabas to go out as missionaries, and their ministry was considered an EXTENSION of the work of the church.
 - a) **NOTE:** Our missionaries are an EXTENSION of our church.
 - i. We do not generally send financial support to missions organizations, but we support those that we have a personal relationship and connection with.
 - ii. We want to financially support those that are an extension of our church, and as the Spirit leads, there will be some in our church that will be sent out from us.

THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (13:4—14:28)

