



**How God Operates Today
Hint: Nothing Has Changed
Acts 13:1-15**

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Acts 1:8

“but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, **and as far as the remotest part of the earth.**” (NASB 2020)

As we can tell from outline in verse 8, we are now in the last section of the book of Acts.



Now we are to follow the progress of the gospel to the rest of the planet. We will be introduced to the first of millions who the Lord will use and continues to use today to spread His word around the world.

Here in the book of Acts, we are now shifting from the church in Judea to the outreach of the church to the rest of the world.

This is a change and yet not a change. The outreach now will be going predominately to those who have no idea at all about the one true God but are busy worshipping the various gods of the nations.

This is God showing He is serious about reclaiming the world from what happened in Genesis 3, 6 and 11. That is the scattering of the nations by God from Babel to the entire planet when God created 70 new language groups. Paul will use this event as a basis for his calling to reach the world. Paul's worldview is in Deuteronomy 32.

Deuteronomy 32:8–9

“When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. But the LORD’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage.” (ESV)

Paul will quite clearly, in his message to the people in Athens in Acts 17:26-27, allude “to the situation with the nations produced by God’s judgment at Babel, the Deuteronomy 32:8–9 worldview. God had disinherited the nations as his people and made a new people for himself, Israel, his own “portion” (Deut 32:9). Immediately after the judgment at Babel (Gen 11:1–9), God called Abraham for that purpose, initiating a covenant relationship with Abraham and his yet unborn descendants. That covenant relationship included the idea Paul refers to in Acts 17:27, the drawing of the disinherited Gentile nations (Gen 12:3). Paul’s rationale for his own ministry to the Gentiles was that it was God’s intention to reclaim the nations to restore the original Edenic vision. Every person in every nation was given the opportunity to repent and believe in the risen Christ (Acts 17:30–31). Salvation was not only for the physical children of Abraham, but for anyone who would believe (Gal 3:26–29).” (Heiser 2015, 120)

Acts 17:26–27

“and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might feel around for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;” (NASB 2020)

We will discover that one reason Paul was intent on going the places he would go to, is that he believed it was God’s intent to reclaim the nations that were scattered at Babel. God still intends to live with His people in an Edenic environment, that is part of what is behind the Kingdom of God in Revelation 20 as well as the eternal state.

Paul will indeed try to go to all the nations he could so that every person would be given the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:28–29

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” (ESV)

How does the Lord kick off this new ministry? During a time where the church leadership is fasting and praying. When the church comes together to seek the Lord, He is indeed there as promised, and He indeed moves and leads.



Acts 13:1–3

“Now there were prophets and teachers at Antioch, in the church that was there: **Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.** While they were serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set Barnabas and Saul apart for Me for the work to which I have called them.” Then, when they had fasted, prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” (NASB 2020)

We are back in the rather cosmopolitan Roman town of Antioch there in what is today Southern Turkey. Notice the leadership list. Four are not from Antioch, perhaps all five are not from there.

What this reflects is that Antioch is becoming a large melting pot of multiple cultures from many other places. “All are from either Asia or Africa (by ancient definitions), none are natives of Antioch, and together they cover at least Cyrene, Cyprus, Galilee, Tarsus, and Jerusalem (though perhaps many or all have lived in Jerusalem at one point). (Keener 2012-2013, 1984)

We already know Barnabas is not from there as well as Saul

We meet Simeon who has a nickname, Niger. Simeon is such a common Jewish name, thus the nickname. If that is the case, then he is Simeon the Dark, reflecting his complexion and the fact he is most likely from North Africa, but it could also mean he comes from a heavily Romanized part of North Africa as Niger, if not a nickname but the name given to him at birth, is a Roman name.

Then we meet Lucius of Cyrene. Another common Roman name. This is not the Luke who is the author of Luke and Acts. Odds are, “Lucius was one of the leading Cyrenian Jewish founders of the Antioch church movement (Acts 11:20).” He may have been one of the Hellenistic Jews forced to leave Jerusalem in the first persecution. (Keener 2012-2013, 1987)

Then we meet someone who is in the leadership there in Antioch who also happens to have some political connections.

Acts 13:1

“Now there were prophets and teachers at Antioch, in the church that was there: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, **Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.**” (NASB 2020)

He has a connection with Herod Antipas. “He may have been connected with Chuza, Herod’s steward, whose wife, Joanna, was part of Jesus’ team in Luke 8:3.” (Osborne 2019, 235)

This is a rather diverse group, not a whole lot different than what you would see in any other church around today. We are not told who is a prophet and who is a teacher. We are told they are together seriously seeking the Lord for guidance and direction in the fellowship.

This is no different than us here at Calvary. We too seek the Lord for His guidance and direction. Prayer is an essential requirement for the church then and it is never ceased to be as it remains so today as well.

While praying, fasting and worshiping, the Holy Spirit spoke.

Acts 13:2

“While they were serving the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said, “Set Barnabas and Saul apart for Me for the work to which I have called them.”**” (NASB 2020)



I have always wondered how that took place. A voice suddenly speaking out while praying? Most likely not. Remember, some who were there were known to be prophets, to include Saul and Barnabas. Do not think of this gift of prophecy or the office of prophet in the New Testament as the same as in the Old Testament, they are not the same.

Joel 2:28

““And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; **your sons and your daughters shall prophesy**, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.” (ESV)

For those who have the gift of prophecy, what is being said is from divine revelation. It is a word from the Lord.

When I am teaching the word, just like right now, the Lord will show me something or impress something on my mind which I then begin to verbalize. It isn't me going weird or anything like that, but many times it is not something I planned to say either. I hear that from my bride every so often since she gets to hear the first run through.

As I am speaking, the Holy Spirit impress on me His word or His thoughts on a matter. I agree with Pastor Chuck Smith. “I continue in my normal tone, but I know it is prophecy because the things I am saying are new to me. I haven't studied them, they are not a part of my notes or something I have prepared to say. Rather, they are thoughts and inspirations coming to me at that very moment from the Spirit.” (Smith 2001, 167)

As the Spirit leads, we speak. For the leadership in Antioch, as they are praying, ministering to the lord and being ministered to by Him as well, one of them receives and relays a message from the Holy Spirit, or perhaps all the prophets received the same message, and they confirmed what was said (1 Corinthians 14:32). All we are told is the content of the message.

Acts 13:2b

“Set Barnabas and Saul apart for Me for the work to which I have called them.” (NASB 2020)

The Holy Spirit revealed: Separate me Barnabas and Saul. The Holy Spirit said that Barnabas and Saul must be separated from the others because these two men would have a special mission. Barnabas must be separated from being a prophet in the church, and Saul must be separated from those who were the teachers in the church. They were to be separated and set apart for a special mission: the first missionary journey. (Fruchtenbaum 1983, 6)

Prior to the mission beginning, notice the name order, Barnabas and Saul, but by the end of that first missionary venture, the order changes because Paul takes over the leadership.

How did the church react? In typical Jewish fashion. The leadership of this Gentile church in Antioch were all Jewish. After praying, they lay hands on Barnabas and Saul, that would be considered them being “ordained for the new outreach ministry. This is no mere formality; in Jewish tradition it is considered one of the highest callings. The Greek idea of apostolos (“sent”) is one sent out as a messenger. The original Jewish term “shaliach” has a much deeper connotation as reflected in the Talmud: “A shaliach is the same as the one who sends him” (Tractate Berakhot 34). The Jewish leaders understood that these representatives were being sent out not just as messengers but as direct spokesmen of Yeshua himself. This is also why modern Messianic Jews receive the later writings of Sha’ul and the first apostles as the inspired word of God, as they are called shl’chim in this technical Jewish sense (Rom. 1:1; 1 Kefa 1:1). (Kasdan 2022, 98-99)



We still do this today by laying hands and praying for people prior to sending them to a new work, whether in the church locally, or all the way across the globe.

Once commissioned, ordained to this new task, they were sent away to get started. What is this really all about and why the hurry up and go? Simple, because everyday there are those who are dying who do not know about Jesus. This was a first for the church. And once God calls, why waste time?

And here is the thing we must remember, God has chosen to do this through His church.

The Holy Spirit is doing as He has now done for two thousand years, raising up those to be sent forth to accomplish His purposes. He does this in His time and in His way. God still raises up men and women today and gifts them to do His work. What we see here is true of all who are called of the Lord to His work.

1. Called of God, not of man or education or training.
2. Recognized by the Church as gifted by God and called to the work.
3. Separated to the work of the gospel.
4. Filled with and led by the Holy Spirit.
5. Preach and teach the word faithfully.
6. Spiritual warfare is real, and Satan will oppose, disappoint and frustrate.
7. The work is not in vain as He ensures triumph in Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:57

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (NKJV)

Yes, we are indeed always just one generation away from the gospel disappearing, but God continues to raise up those to do the work. What is the next step of faith that He has for you and me? What work is He lining up right now that if we knew it was coming, it would scare us to death, but when He shows us, just like Paul and Barnabas, we are ready to go.

Acts 13:4–5

"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." (NASB 2020)

That is an easy place to start in since Barnabas is from there and most likely had family there. He knew the lay of the land and was familiar with the culture of those who live there. They start at one end of Cyprus and then off southwesterly across the island.

And yes, John Mark is with them as a helper as they go about proclaiming Christ to all who would listen.

John Mark was not commissioned for this trip, and we do not know what his function was. But as the journey begins, he is there with them.

As we study the life of Paul, we discover his general strategy of hitting the cities and going to the synagogues first. We clearly see this strategy in the early stages here in Acts 13. The gospel of Jesus is first offered to the Jews and as we read here in verse five, there are many of them there in Cyprus.

This custom of the open synagogue gave Barnabas and Saul many opportunities to preach. This tradition invited any learned man to speak to the people of the synagogue at the Sabbath meeting. (Guzik 2013, Ac 13:5)



So, starting there on the east coast, the team begins the work and uses that strategy all the way across. Arriving at Paphos, it appears that the work they were doing had preceded them. The Roman proconsul for Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, asked them to come and see him.

Acts 13:6–7

“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.” (NASB 2020)

There is something in this relationship that we need to take note of. It will pop up several times in the ministry of Paul and it will indeed pop up as you and I minister to and talk to others about the Lord. The question it brings up is this; what do you do about the unsaved and vocal naysayer who appears to have the ear of the one you are talking to.

It doesn't matter if it is family, friends, people at work. For some reason, Satan always seems to have his person right there ready to poke holes in whatever it is the Holy Spirit leads you to say. Let the Holy Spirit guide you and direct you as you share, Paul gives us an example of this. We also begin to learn a bit about who Paul is and what his personality is like post salvation

In this case, Bar-Jesus, or the Son of Joshua, is a Jewish apostate magician of some sort. Consider him the spiritual advisor for the proconsul. For him, it is all about the source of revenue and he sees what is being taught by Barnabas and Paul as a threat to his income.

It is also time for us to be introduced to the meek and mild Paul when filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke in v. 7 evaluates Sergius Paulus as a proconsul (ἀνθυπατος) with συνέτος (intelligence), presumably because he had the wisdom to summon Barnabas and Paul, wishing to listen to their proclamation and believe at least some of what they said. To a person such as the proconsul, Paul and Barnabas would have appeared to be traveling philosophers or rhetors, because they offered public teaching. (Witherington III 1998, 400)

Unfortunately, he also has an apostate Jew as an advisor.

Acts 13:8–11

“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, stared at 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 stop making 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.” (NASB 2020)

The name for this character is not a translation of Bar-Jesus. “Elymas” is not intended to be a translation of ὁ μάγος which needs no translation but of the man's name “Barjesus,” a patronymic with “bar” to be understood in the sense of “son.” The process starts by regarding “Elymas” as a Greek term to which the Aramaic “Barjesus” is then fitted. The result is that “Elymas,” a corruption of Etoemus (Etimas), is really paratus = “the Expert”; and “Barjesus,” when this is derived from the Hebrew shavah which in the piel means “to smooth,” “to finish” (omitting bar = “son”), is something of an equivalent of “the Expert.” (Lenski 1961, 501)



Once again, an apostate, Jewish, self-proclaimed “expert,” is working to derail the efforts of Paul and Barnabas to see this man come to Christ. And we all know that an expert is nothing more than a former drip under pressure so why pay attention.

This may seem like the beginning of a new pattern, but the reality is, Satan has always had his person there to try and lead those in leadership and authority astray. We continue to see this today, Satan has his expert there trying hard to divert the proconsul from the truth.

But there is a truth showing up here. Satan wants to prevent those in authority from either coming to Christ or serving Him as leaders and being effective for Him. This means that whenever you or I step out in faith on behalf of the King, we have, at that moment, placed a big red x on our backs. Satan knows if he can destroy leaders in the church, and it doesn't matter to him what level they are at, then he has succeeded, and the ministry of the church is impaired.

Now we learn something about Paul, he will only suffer fools for a short time. This is the same personality that led him, pre-Christ, on a tirade through the church. Now he is a believer and under the control of the Holy Spirit and notice how the Spirit uses Paul's personality to the advantage of the Kingdom. This will not be the last time we see Paul taking a swipe at the foolish. That is a Biblical definition from Proverbs, the foolish is unsaved.

Proverbs 1:7

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.” (NASB 2020)

Being unsaved is one thing, and Paul tends to give a bit more grace to those who are pagans versus those who have a Jewish background or assert they are followers of Jesus Christ. But there is a point where he believes it is time to fish or cut bait.

And for the so-called religious advisor such as Bar Jesus, all Paul sees is a hypocrite. Remember, Jesus had nothing good to say about any hypocrite.

Acts 13:9–11

“But Saul, who was also known as **Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, stared at 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 stop making 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.” (NASB 2020)

Yes, there are indeed those times where to protect the flock or to protect the work we have been called to, we must call out those who are opposed to the work.

You are in a meeting with the proconsul and are incredibly tired of the continuing line of pseudo-religiosity coming from this “Expert.” While Barnabas talks, Paul stares. I used to work as a consultant and have been in too many meetings with members of the C-suite in corporations who have advisors, let's call them what they really are, sycophants, who babble on and on and on. And I too would, like Paul stare in incredulity at what I was hearing.

Paul though continues to stare, and stare, and stare.

At some point, I am sure Bar-Jesus picks up on it and perhaps chooses to ignore Paul staring at him.



This man is someone who should know better and most likely is relating his so-called expert opinion from a Jewish perspective and in front of the former Pharisee, Paul. How long it went on we are not told, but when Paul had enough of the hypocrisy and gas lighting, he laid into the man. Yes, there is indeed a time to call out those who are twisting the truth and call their hand by speaking forcefully, the truth of what they are doing and who exactly it is they are working for. And it is not the Lord no matter how much some may protest.

And notice this, Paul is totally in control of what he says. He has not been carried away with his indignation.

The first thing Paul does under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is he lays out the true motivation of the "Expert." He really is a former drip under pressure.

He is all about the lie, he is all about gas lighting and Paul says so. He was using deceit and fraud, that is narcissistic gas lighting, to gain the approval of and ear of his patron, the proconsul. He is pulling the wool over his eyes and doing so because he is working for Satan and is the enemy of all that is righteousness.

I remember someone who came to church every week and then would engage folks outside the auditorium gas lighting the teaching, the pastor, and me; intentionally casting aspersions on anyone who disagreed with him.

Usually, if he did not like what you said, you were accused of being backwards, ignorant, not in tune with the true meaning of the scriptures. The person saying that had not been a believer for all that long, less than two years in this case, and were totally and completely indoctrinated into a form of extreme Calvinism, so much so that all they knew how to do was offend just about everyone. Most of his arguments would conclude with about how ignorant and close minded I was for not even agreeing to look at his viewpoint and understand that I was trained incorrectly and have wasted over 40 years of my life on a lie.

Hey, apostasy is apostasy no matter how much make up you put on it. The big problem was the church I was serving in was putting up with this guy and giving him grace. They refused to remove him in order to protect the flock.

Here at Calvary Chapel, we do not give false teachers, false doctrines, false theologies grace at all. That is the appropriate Biblical response. Paul shows us the way for how to handle those who get in the way of the truth. Jude discusses how we are to deal with it in the church and unfortunately, to expect it in these last days.

Jude 16–21

"These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage. But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they were saying to you, **"In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."** **These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.** But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life." (NASB 2020)

Jesus desires His church, and it is indeed His, to be pure. All you must do is look at His attitude towards the false teaching Nicolaitans in Pergamum. His call then, to churches leaving the reservation, has not changed now either.



The Nicolaitans and those who were teaching Balaam's error would be destroyed, along with their followers, from the congregation at Pergamum. Jesus desires purity among His people, and we have a responsibility to remove false teachers from the church. (Got Questions Ministries 2014-2021)

Revelation 2:14–16

"But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. **So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.**" (ESV)

This is not a situation of envy or jealousy; this is a situation of false teaching taking place and those in the church leadership "giving grace" to those who are doing so. They are allowing in the books, the teachings, and so on.

The New Testament repeatedly instructs believers both to beware of false teaching that denies the nature and work of Christ and to remove false teachers from the congregation (not, I might add, deceived followers). Those things are truly against Christ. Scripture does not, however, encourage the sort of envy-born criticism that characterizes far too much of our Christian culture. (Enlow Jr. 2019, 77)

And when the perpetrators of the false teaching rely on innuendo, a new "understanding" of the scriptures, a redefinition of what constitutes false teaching and gas lighting; they must go. From Paul.

Acts 13:10

"and said, **"You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not stop making crooked the straight ways of the Lord?"** (NASB 2020)

What do you really think Paul? Paul, where's the love? It is actually on full display. Remember, he is filled with the Holy Spirit, what he says, is at the leading of the Spirit. This is not Paul being grumpy, this is Paul speaking on behalf of the Lord.

Acts 13:11–12

"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." (NASB 2020)

This blindness for a time is a judicial penalty; it is by no means all that he deserved, but in his grace God moderated it by not cutting off the opportunity for repentance. It was a preliminary judgment like so many that God inflicts on wilful sinners in order by such severe means possibly to turn them from their evil ways. (Lenski 1961, 506)

With Bar-Jesus out of the way, and rather forcefully, what is the response of the proconsul to the gospel? He believes.

Sometimes evangelism will require such confrontation with one who is preventing another from hearing the message. (Bock 2007, 447)

Paul is showing us here that even in the process of evangelism, there are indeed those times where you are called upon to protect those you are sharing the word to.



For Paul and Barnabas, time to continue their mission. And notice the order of the names that Luke now uses. The situation there at the proconsul's office appears to have changed things a bit.

Acts 13:13–15

“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 word to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.”” (NASB 2020)

They board a ship and move north to Asia Minor, landing in Perga. Once landing in Perga, notice who decides to leave, John Mark goes home.

We are not told why here, but a heads up for you, this will become a point of contention between Paul and Barnabas later down the road and then we will learn the why.

We will learn later that John Mark actually deserted (Acts 15:38). He showed a yellow streak and ran home to mommy. Remember that his mother was a prominent member of the church in Jerusalem and that her home was the place of meeting for the church there. When he reached Perga and got a look into the interior of Asia Minor—the paganism and the physical dangers and hardships that were there—he decided that he hadn't been called as a missionary. He heads in another direction, and that direction is home. (McGee 1997, 567)

Paul would later, when Barnabas wanted to show grace to John Mark and bring him back onboard, say no (Acts 15:37-40). The disagreement would send both of them on two different paths, which was what the Lord wanted. Later Paul would indeed forgive John Mark (2 Timothy 4:11) but that would be a bit further down the road.

But here in Acts 13, John Mark has failed and heads home.

Let me be clear, ministry for the Lord is not for wimps. It is for the called. At this point, John Mark was still working to discover if he was called or not.

We have all been there at one time or another. God shows up and tells us what our next step is, and we take one look and go, whoa.

There is nothing wrong with that.

2 Peter 1:10–11

“Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (ESV)

Peter is directly addressing the family, his brothers and sisters in the Lord. Peter is not talking to unbelievers here with this statement, just family. Leading into this, he provided a discipleship checklist in 2 Peter 1. Literally, part of the self check. Is this part of your reality in Christ as you look at what it is He wants you to do next? Am I called?

Discipleship Check List (Qualities)

1. Faith
2. Moral excellence
3. Knowledge



4. Self-control
5. Perseverance
6. Godliness
7. Brotherly kindness
8. Agape love

We are commanded to make certain, to confirm our calling and choice of us. John Mark is now there. I have been there and many of us have or are currently there. But why this command to be sure of our calling?

“Because Christ’s faithfulness and sufficiency is increasingly realized in and by us. He is the one who perfectly lived all of these qualities in our place, bearing our guilt and penalty for living the very opposite of these qualities in sin. As we come to and live in him, Jesus forgives our sin, cleanses us, and gives us all we need to grow in each of these qualities. The diligent pursuit of growth in the fruits of faith anticipates a glorious future.” (VanDoodewaard 2017, 145-146) In other words, the check list is real in our life.

The person who says they are a believer, yet do not see these virtues, these fruits becoming part of their life, are still living like pagans. The question we would have, looking on and seeing no fruit is, “was this person truly born again?”

Since that person does not see that the knowledge of Christ received in conversion must lead to virtuous living, he or she seems to be still in pagan ignorance and appears to have forgotten that clean break with his or her pagan past which the forgiveness of sins in baptism entails. (Bauckham 1983, 193)

The really neat promise here though is if we are fully in, and pursuing life with Christ, if we are in the practice of these virtues, implying we are Spirit filled and led, “you will never stumble.”

This is THE SECRET SAUCE enabling us to live a life that is pure. All we must do is be in the Spirit; Spirit filled, Spirit led, and practice as a lifestyle, walking with Christ. Taking a step back to be sure is due diligence for the believer. John Mark probably should have done this prior to saying yes and getting caught up in the emotion of a missionary trip.

Paul will learn from this as will Barnabas. But John Mark will be the one who will know, that he is truly called.

Again, this is for the family, followers of Jesus, if you don’t know Jesus, then there is no calling to check.

Romans 3:21–24

“But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins.” (NLT)

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)



ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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