



First Baptist Church Selmer

THE ROAD TO ROMANS •

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY: COMMISSIONED TO PROCLAIM •

ACTS 13:1-3; 26-52 • 1/11/2026

MAIN POINT

Paul was sent out by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We, too, are commissioned to proclaim!

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Are all Christians commanded to share the gospel? Why or why not?

If we're commanded to tell the story of Jesus to others, why do we most often choose to disobey?

What do we learn about God from His desire to be known and for us to make Him known?

When we think about what makes for a truly transformational church, a heart to spread the gospel is essential. If we're going to play an active part in kingdom building, then we must be sensitive to God's leadership and go where He tells us to go. But this isn't possible unless we're listening to Him and seeking His will for our lives. Following Christ means we give up our rights to our plans and ambitions. Instead, we say to Jesus, "Where you send me, I will go."

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 13:1-3.

1 "Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off." (ESV)

What was the scene when the Holy Spirit spoke to the leaders at Antioch? In what way do you think He may have spoken? How does He speak to us today?

What role does the Holy Spirit play in our fulfillment of God's vision for the gospel?

The Spirit clearly designated whom He wanted the church to send out as missionaries. He said, *"Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."* It is God who calls individuals/families to cross geographic and cultural boundaries with the good news of the gospel; we simply surrender. The church at Antioch recognized that the Lord had called these two men for His special work. Recognizing and surrendering to the Lord's call was up to Barnabas and Saul. The church, however, played an important role in commissioning these men whom the Lord had called.

For what specific purpose has God set you apart? In what way is (or can) the church support you in fulfilling your purpose?

At the Spirit's direction and some 12-14 years post-conversion, the Antioch (Syria) church commissioned Barnabas and Paul as missionaries (see 13:1-3). This would now be the start of the first of three missionary journeys outlined in the book of Acts. The 1st Missionary Journey map can be found in **Appendix B**, with details of this journey found in Chapters 13 -14 of Acts.

Saul and Barnabas would travel from place to place following a fairly consistent pattern. They would evangelize first to the Jews at the local synagogues on the Sabbath day and then move their efforts into the streets and local villages to reach the Gentiles. Most often, Saul and Barnabas would encounter a mixed bag of reactions from acceptance to opposition, from hesitancy to attempted murder.

We pick back up in the middle of Saul's sermon, who is now referred to as Paul (Roman equivalent to Saul), where he and Barnabas were ministering and proclaiming the gospel to the people in Antioch (Pisidia). After a thorough historical account of God's sovereign hand throughout Jewish history (Acts 13:13-25), Paul speaks specifically about the man, Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 13:26-43.

26 "Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. 27 For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. 28 And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. 29 And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead, 31 and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. 32 And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, 33 this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you."

34 And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, "I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David."

35 Therefore he says also in another psalm, "You will not let your Holy One see corruption."

36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, 37 but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. 38 Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, 39 and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. 40 Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about:

41 "Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you."

42 As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. 43 And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God." (ESV)

After establishing God's sovereign hand (God mentioned 16x in verses 17-30) over the expanse of Jewish history, Paul zoomed in to define the specific line of the Messiah. The Jews in this synagogue would have picked up on the prophecies of the Messiah. Paul chose to make the connection of Jesus to the Messiah with apparent emphasis on 2 Samuel 7:6-16.

What were the key elements of Paul's gospel presentation in verses 28-37?

In verses 38-39, what does Paul say is the central meaning of the resurrection?

Throughout this section, Paul presents a fourfold Christian confession not unlike that which appears in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5: (1) Jesus was crucified. (2) He was buried in a tomb. (3) God raised Him from the dead. (4) He was seen by many witnesses. God kept His promise; the gospel has come, and the signature of that promise rests in the resurrection. The resurrection, therefore, is the verification that Jesus is the Messiah.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 13:44-52.

44 "The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. 46 And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, 'It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. 50 But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. 51 But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." (ESV)

What feelings and emotions are created by this sermon among the Jews?

How did the Gentiles respond? Which response surprises you the most?

How did Paul persevere in this situation?

Since the Jews rejected the gospel, the missionaries turned to the Gentiles because they were receptive. This answer defined a pattern Paul would follow throughout his missionary work—preaching first to the Jews and, when they rejected his message, preaching to the Gentiles. Unfortunately, those who reject the gospel are rejecting eternal life, for that life is found only in Jesus Christ. Paul and Barnabas had followed the Spirit's leadership into missionary work. Because of their obedience, people who had come to Christ rejoiced in their salvation. Also, a new church was planted. Most importantly for us, we would not be Christians today were it not for the conviction of the early church that the gospel was for the rest of the world.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How can sharing your story and what Christ has done in your life bring glory to God?

If you were to emphasize one central truth about the gospel when sharing your faith, what would it be?

Paul knew that at the end of his life, he would stand before God and give an account of his days. How does this truth and Paul's example impact how you see your personal responsibility to take the gospel to the world?

PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking God for His power at work, transforming us into Jesus' image and working through us to bring more people to Him.

COMMENTARY

| ACTS 13:1-3; 26-52

13:1. Prophets and teachers apparently refer to functions and (possibly) offices within the early church. The teachers continued the apostolic function of transmitting Jesus' message, while prophets conveyed divine revelation via interpreting the OT or giving new insights (11:27). This is the only reference in Acts to teachers, although the function of teacher is described elsewhere in the NT (1 Cor 12:28-29; Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 1:7; 2:7; 3:2; 2 Tim

1:11; 2:24). The group of prophets and teachers was diverse, including people from Africa and Cyrene, and at least one person (Manaen) who was connected to Herod's household.

13:2-3. The routine of the prophets and teachers included ministering to the Lord and fasting. This helps to account for their openness to the Holy Spirit, who directed them to set aside Barnabas and Saul for a work to which the Spirit had called them. Barnabas and Saul were confirmed in their calling after a process of fasting, praying, and laying on of hands. This commissioning marks an important turning point in the history of the church, as Saul and Barnabas were selected to extend the gospel message beyond Judea and the surrounding regions.

13:26-27. Though the prophets were read in synagogues every Sabbath, those in Jerusalem did not recognize that these words were fulfilled in Jesus. They instead condemned Him, their only hope.

13:30-31. The resurrection of Jesus was confirmed by witnesses who had followed Him from Galilee to Jerusalem. Luke frequently emphasizes the role of eyewitnesses (1:3; Lk 1:1-4).

13:33. Jesus' resurrection confirmed that God had fulfilled His promise (citing Ps 2:7).

13:34-35. Others who had been raised from the dead would return to decay, for they were still subject to death. Not Jesus. He destroyed "*the one holding the power of death*" (Heb 2:14).

13:38-39. Through Jesus, forgiveness of sins is offered, something the law of Moses can never accomplish (Rm 3:20).

13:41. Paul cited Hab 1:5 as a fitting conclusion to his speech. This passage from the prophet referred to the work that God was doing and recognized that some people would scoff and refuse to believe what God was doing, even if it was explained to them.

13:42-43. Whether due to the speech's novelty or their genuine spiritual hunger, the people wanted to hear more. It was probably in the "downtime" outside the synagogues, in small groups or individual meetings, that Paul and Barnabas accomplished their most effective teaching.

13:44-45. Keen interest sprang up over the gospel message everywhere Paul and Barnabas went, whether for or against. Jesus foretold the opposition the evangelists

would face (Mk 13:13).

13:46-47. The NT consistently says the gospel message came first to the Jews (e.g., Mk 7:27), though the Gentiles were anticipated as eventual recipients. Acts shows the same pattern. Early in their missions work, Paul and Barnabas recognized that their duty was to bring the good news to the Jews first. But Jewish rejection of this message warranted their taking it to the Gentiles.

13:48. This verse expresses one of the great enigmatic truths of Scripture: all who had been appointed to eternal life believed. This touches both on God's sovereignty ("appointed") and the human responsibility to choose ("believed").

13:49. The whole region was predominantly Gentile. Thus, those who were historically "outside" God's people were coming to overshadow and redefine God's people.

13:50. Seeing that the gospel was gaining wide acceptance, the Jewish leaders incited both men and women of status to reject Barnabas and Paul. This was a familiar tactic (Mt 27:20).

13:51. They shook the dust off their feet, obeying Jesus' command to His disciples (Lk 10:11).

13:52. Joy is the outward expression of the work of the Holy Spirit within a believer.