**Sent Out by the Holy Spirit**

**Introduction:**

The Lord had commissioned His apostles to take the gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1-7 describe how this was fulfilled in Jerusalem while Acts 8-12 describe the fulfillment in Judea and Samaria. The remainder of the Book of Acts focuses on the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul as the gospel is taken to the “end of the earth.” Our text is concerned with the beginning of his first missionary journey.

**Text:** Acts 13:1-12

**Body:**

1. **Barnabas and Saul Are Set Apart** Acts 13:1-3 “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” NKJV
* The church in Antioch in Syria was started by men from Cyprus and Cyrene. (Acts 11:19-21) “Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.” NKJV The church in Antioch contained several prophets and teachers. [Prophets were inspired by the Holy Spirit.] Barnabas was a Levite from the island of Cyprus. Simeon was called Niger, which means black or dark. Lucius was from Cyrene, which was in North Africa. Manaen was one who grew up with Herod the tetrarch [Herod Antipas]. Note how different these two boys turned out. Herod had John the Baptist beheaded while Manaen became a faithful Christian. The last mentioned is Saul. Notice how diverse the church at Antioch was.

(Galatians 3:26-28) “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” NKJV

* “Worshiping the Lord and fasting” Acts 13:2 Fasting was not regulated but was a voluntary act. Jesus taught His disciples how to fast. (Matthew 6:16-18) “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face. So that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” NKJV
* “Set apart for the work” Acts 13:2 Saul and Barnabas were set apart for spreading the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. (Acts 9:15) “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.” (Romans 1:1) “Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God “ NKJV
* “Laid their hands on them” Acts 13:3 This was a solemn way of impressing upon the church that these men were being sent upon a very important task. The Antioch church was being identified with these workers. (Acts 14:26) “From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.” NKJV
1. **The Journey Begins** Acts 13:4-12 “So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant. 6 Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, 7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, ‘O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? 11 And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.’ And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.” NKJV
* The Holy Spirit is the one behind their mission. Seleucia was a seaport near Antioch, about sixteen miles away. From there they sailed to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean about 130 miles away. Cyprus was the birthplace of Barnabas. Acts 13 :4
* Salamis was the largest city on the island. They started preaching in the synagogues, a place where people already believed in Jehovah. See Acts 17:1-3. “Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.’ ” NKJV The John was John Mark.
* They crossed the entire island to Paphos, on the western end. [This was about 100 mile trip.] They met Bar-Jesus, a Jewish magician. He combined Judaism with pagan practices. Acts 13:6
* This false prophet had attached himself to Sergius Paulus, a local Roman official. His intelligence was seen in that he wanted to hear the Word of God from Barnabas and Saul. Acts 13:7
* Elymas is a translation of the word “magician” or “sorcerer”. He must have felt Barnabas and Saul were a threat to his influence so he tried to stop the proconsul from hearing the gospel, the faith. Acts 13:8 (Acts 6:7) “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” NKJV
* “Saul also called Paul” Acts 13:9-10 This is what he will be called from now on. Paul was speaking by inspiration. (II Peter 1:20-21) “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.” NKJV

Paul looked straight at Elymas and labeled him a fake. He was doing the will of the devil and was opposed to all that was right and good. He was continually trying to pervert and twist the truth, the right ways of God. (II Timothy 4:3-4) “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.” NKJV

* “The hand of the Lord” Acts 13:11 God’s judgment came against Elymas. This blindness was only temporary. God wants all men to come to repentance. (II Peter 3:9) “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” NKJV
* Sergius Paulus believed when he saw a true miracle and was amazed at the teaching of the Lord. Acts 13:12 (Hebrews 2:3-4) “how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?” NKJV

**Conclusion:**

There was a great beginning to this missionary journey which was started by the Spirit of God. This is when the gospel starts to be preached to the ends of the earth.

Bobby Stafford December 13, 2015 [Evening] Acts: Lesson 29 Acts 13:1-12