



Acts 13-28

The Church Alive

Sample Lesson #1
and
Leader's Guide Answers

Read—Acts 13–14; other references as given.

The first twelve chapters of Acts record the expansion of the church throughout Judea and Samaria. Acts 13–28 records the expansion of the gospel from Antioch (a city located in what is now northern Lebanon) to Rome, the capital of the Gentile world.

In this first lesson the Holy Spirit separated Paul and Barnabas, two leaders from the church at Antioch, for missionary work (Acts 13:1–3). The two missionaries invited Barnabas's cousin John Mark to join them as they ministered on the island of Cyprus and throughout southern Turkey before returning to the church at Antioch. The missionaries faced intense persecution, but they also saw success from their ministry efforts.

Now ask God to help you understand the truths you'll be learning and conform you into the image of His Son.

1. **As they** (the church) **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”** (Acts 13:2). What spiritual qualities were present in the lives of these two men *before* God called them into missionary work (Acts 13:1–2; 4:36–37; 11:22–26)?

2. Wherever the Word of God is faithfully proclaimed through dedicated servants, Satan will attack the work and the workers. Barnabas and Paul landed at the city of Salamis on the eastern end of Cyprus and traveled westward toward Paphos, the seat of government (Acts 13:6–12). In Paphos, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus (Aramaic for “son of Joshua”) hindered their ministry (Acts 13:8). As an apostle, Paul pronounced divine judgment upon Bar-Jesus because he did not **cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord** (Acts 13:10–11). Previously, Stephen had prayed for God's mercy for those who were stoning him (Acts 7:60). *Do you think* believers should pray for God's judgment or mercy upon those who oppose God's work? Why?

3. The three missionaries left the island of Cyprus and sailed to Perga in Pamphylia (south-central Turkey) where John Mark deserted them (Acts 13:13; 15:38). Next Paul and Barnabas traveled to Pisidian Antioch where Paul was invited to give a word of exhortation to those attending the synagogue (Acts 13:15). He recounted the history of Israel (Acts 13:17–23) and said Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise to King David that one of his offspring would be the Messiah (Acts 13:23).
 - a. Paul mentioned three specific spiritual errors that the Jewish people had committed during Jesus' life on earth. What were they (Acts 13:26–29)?

 - b. What warning did Paul give to the Jews at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:40)?

4.
 - a. Barnabas and Paul were dedicated Christian leaders who had been chosen by the Holy Spirit to spread the gospel to the Gentile world. How did the people respond to Paul's message (Acts 13:42–45, 50)?

 - b. Sometimes Christians become discouraged when others don't respond positively to their witness for Christ. How do you normally respond when someone rejects your attempts to witness to them about Jesus?

5. When the Jews contradicted Paul's preaching, He said, **It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles** (Acts 13:46). How do we know that Paul's turning to the Gentiles was God's will for his life and not simply a spiteful reaction to the Jews' opposition (Acts 9:11–15)?

6. The phrase, **as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed** (Acts 13:48), strongly supports a “divine election” view of salvation. In the next chapter, however, the Bible says that Paul and Barnabas **so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and the Greeks believed** (Acts 14:1). This latter statement seems to indicate either the speaking ability or the content of their message was instrumental in the people coming to salvation in Jesus Christ (Acts 14:1).
 - a. What must be the content of a Christian’s message to the unsaved if they are going to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46–48; Romans 10:17)?
 - b. What should be absent from a Christian’s speech when he or she shares the truth with others (1 Corinthians 2:1–5; Acts 13:10; Titus 1:10–11)?
 - c. If you are a Christian, what do you do to rely on the Holy Spirit when you share God’s Word with those who are not saved?
7. Barnabas and Paul spent a long time in Iconium **speaking boldly in the Lord** (Acts 14:3). One would expect great results to occur as a result of the ministry of these two dedicated Christian servants.
 - a. What were some of the reactions to their ministry (Acts 14:2, 4–5)?
 - b. How did the missionaries respond to their mistreatment (Acts 14:6–7)?
8. Some Christians rarely witness for Christ. Perhaps they have never learned to trust Christ to overcome their fear, or they have tried to witness and think they failed. Rather than trusting Christ to help them learn to be an effective witness for Him, they’ve convinced themselves that they can never become a vital witness for Jesus Christ. If you would like to learn how to share your faith, go to www.discipleUSA.org for additional help.
 - a. What did Jesus say to the disciples when He originally called them into His service (Mark 1:17)?
 - b. List two important truths about personal evangelism that are taught in Mark 1:17.
9. Barnabas and Paul left Iconium and traveled south to Lystra, where Paul healed a man who had been lame since birth (Acts 14:8–10). The healing of the lame man caused the people of Lystra to believe that Paul and Barnabas were the physical manifestation of the Greek mythological gods, Zeus and Hermes (Acts 14:12).
 - a. What did Barnabas and Paul say to the people of Lystra to convince them not to worship man (Acts 14:14–18)?
 - b. Barnabas and Paul told the idolaters of Lystra that God left Himself a witness (Acts 14:17). What was this witness that he left (Acts 14:17)?
10. Some Christians become cynical when they see how fickle people can be. Rather than looking to Jesus for strength, they focus on human weaknesses of men for whom Christ died. As faithful servants of God, Barnabas and Paul responded to the severe treatment they had received from the people of Lystra by simply continuing the work God called them to do (Acts 14:20–22). The two missionaries returned to Antioch, strengthening the believers as they went (Acts 14:21–26). What did they do when they finally returned to the church (Acts 14:27–28)?

1: The First Missionary Journey

1.
 1. Barnabas was a generous man who was willing to use his material possessions for the advancement of the gospel (Acts 4:37).
 2. Barnabas was a man who had the ability to encourage others in the Lord (Acts 4:36).
 3. Barnabas was a good man who was full of the Holy Spirit and faith (Acts 11:22, 24).
 4. Barnabas was a wise leader who realized the need to involve others in the teaching ministry of the believers at Antioch (Acts 11:25).
 5. Barnabas and Paul had demonstrated effective spiritual leadership in the church at Antioch prior to their call (Acts 11:26).
 6. Barnabas and Paul were also busy serving in the church from which the Holy Spirit called them (Acts 13:2).

2. The believer should pray for God's mercy. Although there are examples in the Bible of God's people asking Him to bring judgment upon their spiritual enemies, the Christian should not use these examples as a pattern to follow. Sometimes the Old Testament writer of the Psalms asked God to exact judgment on their enemies (Note: these psalms are commonly known as the imprecatory psalms). Under the OT Mosaic covenant, God obligated Himself to defend His people against their enemies if His people would obey the stipulations of the covenant (Deuteronomy 28). However, in the New Testament, Jesus Christ taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) that God's people are to bless those who curse and persecute them (Matthew 5:10–12). The apostles (Acts 4:8 ff.), Stephen (Acts 8:60), and Paul (1 Corinthians 4:12–13) all followed Christ's teaching and manifested an attitude of spiritual non-retaliation. However, a notable exception was when the apostle Paul said he delivered a man to Satan who was living in an immoral situation and unwilling to repent (1 Corinthians 5:4–5). Regarding the incident with Bar-Jesus, it is likely that Paul was acting as God's apostolic representative when he pronounced judgment upon Bar-Jesus. This is hardly a position that an ordinary believer should assume.

3.
 - a.
 1. The Jewish leaders did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah (Acts 13:27).
 2. The Jewish leaders did not understand the words of the prophets (Acts 13:27).
 3. The Jewish leaders killed Jesus just as the prophets had predicted (Acts 13:28–29).
 - b. Paul warned the people of Pisidian Antioch to be careful so that God's judgment would not come upon them.

4.
 - a.
 1. Many of the Jews begged Barnabas and Paul to tell them the same things the next Sabbath (Acts 13:42).
 2. The people followed them (Acts 13:43).
 3. All the people of the city gathered together to hear them (Acts 13:44).
 4. Some of the Jews (probably the Jewish leaders) were filled with jealousy and were blaspheming (Acts 13:45).
 5. These Jewish leaders stirred up the prominent women and the leading men of the city and instigated a persecution which drove Barnabas and Paul out of the city (Acts 13:50).
 - b. Answers will vary.

5. Paul and Barnabas interpreted the Jews' rejection of the gospel as God's will to turn their spiritual attention to the Gentiles. They believed Isaiah's prophecy (Acts 13:47; Isaiah 42:6) applied to them directly (**the Lord has commanded us**).

6.
 - a. A believer should speak boldly or confidently with reliance upon the Lord. This means that he should not trust in his own ability to speak or persuade men but he should rely upon the Holy Spirit to guide him as he speaks. He should also trust Jesus Christ to work in the hearts of those who hear the message of salvation, trusting God to convict and convince of sin and the need for salvation.
 - b.
 1. There should be not any use of human wisdom that contradicts the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 2:1).
 2. There should not be any use of deceit or mental manipulation (Acts 13:10).
 3. There should not be any religious pandering, which is religious teaching motivated by a desire to exploit others for the personal financial advantage of the teacher (Titus 1:10–11).
 - c. Answers will vary.

7.
 - a.
 1. The Jews who did not accept the message of salvation stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against those who had been saved (Acts 14:2).
 2. Some of the people believed the missionaries, and others did not (Acts 14:4).
 3. Some of the Jews and the Gentiles who did not believe the gospel tried to mistreat Barnabas and Paul and even attempted to stone them (Acts 14:5).
 - b. They fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra, Derbe, and the surrounding region where they continued to preach the gospel.
8.
 - a. "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men."
 - b.
 1. A Christian must learn to follow Christ first of all.
 2. A Christian does not automatically know how to be an effective fisher of men—it is something the believer must learn to do as he follows Christ.
 3. Like a fisherman, an effective witness for Christ must use wisdom and learn how to create an interest in those he hopes to catch for Christ.
9.
 - a. **"We also are men of the same nature as you, and preach to you the gospel that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them."**
 - b. God had given them rains from heaven and fruitful seasons. He had also satisfied them with food and given them gladness.
10. They gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them. They told the church how God had opened the door for effective ministry. They stayed an unspecified time with the church at Antioch.