

Serving IN THE
Power
OF THE Spirit

Acts 13—20

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Dedication

To Pat Carapelle and Gladys Dillon. We served God together at Regular Baptist Press for four decades. These women have been my faithful friends and supporters since we first met in 1968.

SERVING IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

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Preface

Missionary biographies make some of the most exciting and challenging reading you'll ever do. Consider the biographies (and autobiographies) of early missionary giants: David Livingstone, William Carey, Hudson Taylor, Adoniram Judson, and David Brainerd. A few decades after those men come John Paton, Mary Slessor, Amy Carmichael, Gladys Aylward, Ida Scudder, and many others. The biographies of missionary martyrs include *We Two Alone*, the story of Irene Farrel (and survivor Ruth Hege), *Through Gates of Splendor*, which chronicles the martyrdom of five young missionary men in Ecuador, and *The Triumph of John and Betty Stam*, missionary martyrs in China. Books like *Peace Child* tell of taking the gospel to headhunters in what is now Papua New Guinea.

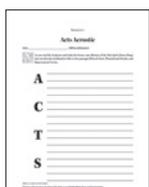
But before any of these books, the Holy Spirit led Dr. Luke to write the inspired account of the church's first missionary, the apostle Paul. Acts 13–20 contains the record of three momentous journeys in which Paul took the gospel message across (what is now) Turkey and into Europe. Traveling overland on foot and horseback and by sea, Paul covered thousands of miles and was gone from his home church in Antioch of Syria for years at a time. He labored to support himself when necessary; he gathered a team of helpers; he established churches. *And* he endured persecution and hardship all along the way.

Serving in the Power of the Spirit is Paul's story. But it is also instruction and encouragement for us. As you study these chapters with the aid of the questions in this book, you will better understand how a New Testament church is structured; you will thrill to the truth that God chose you for Himself; you will learn how to settle a difference with a friend or coworker; and you will be amazed at all that Paul accomplished without the aid of the "things" we think are necessary

for ministry today. Study Paul's biography with an open heart and mind. Ask God to help you serve Him more fervently and faithfully *in the Power of the Spirit*.

Resources for Your Study

A number of extra resources will enhance your study of Acts 13—20. Go to www.RBPstore.org/downloads. Locate the downloads for this study, *Serving in the Power of the Spirit*. The folder contains eight documents. For individual study, you will need to print *twelve* copies of resource 1 and one copy of the remaining seven resources.



Resource 1: The Acts Acrostic will help you focus your Bible reading and study. I suggest you read the entire Scripture passage for each lesson at one sitting. As you read, look in the text for Actions of the Holy Spirit, Church Facts, Transitional Details, and Supernatural Events. Jot down your findings on the acrostic for that lesson. Your acrostic may be slightly different from someone else's; that's okay. Some overlap between the letters is to be expected. And not every lesson will have every item. After you have read the entire Biblical text and filled in the acrostic, go back and read the separate sections of verses and answer the questions.



In each lesson you will find this designation, alerting you to specific things to record on your acrostic if you have not already done so.



Resource 2: You will use “Paul’s Journey Journal” to record important facts of each missionary journey. When you complete the third journey, you will have a handy overview of the three journeys.



Resource 3: Use the map of the first missionary journey in lessons 1–3.



Resource 4: In lesson 3 you will encounter the use of the terms *elders*, *bishops*, and *pastors*. This resource will help you understand the meaning of these terms and how they all relate to the same position in the church.



Resource 5: Use the map of the second missionary journey in lessons 5–9.



Resource 6: Paul was able to use the Old Testament Scripture to teach about the life of Christ. In lesson 7 discover what passages Paul could possibly have used in teaching about Christ.



Resource 7: Paul was not the first person in Scripture to hear God’s “fear not.” Use this resource in lesson 9 to discover other Biblical characters to whom God said, “Fear not.”



Resource 8: Use the map of the third missionary journey in lessons 10–12.

God's Plan of Salvation

As you study the Scriptures—alone or with a group of women—you may realize that you have never entered into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We use a number of different terms to designate this relationship:

- being born again (John 3:3, 7);
- accepting the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23);
- being saved (Acts 4:12);
- receiving Christ as Savior (John 1:12);
- becoming God's child (John 1:12).

These descriptive terms are synonymous. Sometimes it is easier to understand one concept more than another, but all of them are true of a person who “believeth in him”—that is, God's Son (John 3:16, 18, 36).

A person who wants to enter this personal relationship with Jesus Christ must acknowledge and believe five basic truths.

(1) *I am a sinner.* The Bible says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” and “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:23, 10). Until a person recognizes that she is a sinner in God's eyes, she will not be able to admit she needs a Savior.

(2) *God loves me.* The Bible says, “But God commendeth [showed] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Jesus said that God loved the world of sinners so much that He sent His Son into this world (John 3:16, 17).

(3) *Jesus died for me.* The Bible says, “Who [Jesus] his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree” and, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 2:24; 1:18, 19). Jesus loved *you* enough to die for *you*.

(4) *I receive Him.* The Bible says, “For the wages of sin is death; but

the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23). It also says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9). The basis of our salvation is what Jesus has done for us; not what we can do for Him.

(5) *I am God's child.* The Bible says, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12). When you receive Christ by faith, God makes you His child. He is now your Heavenly Father, and this is a forever relationship! The Bible says no one or no thing can ever take you out of God's hand (John 10:28, 29) and nothing at all can ever separate you from God's love (Romans 8:38, 39).

If you are ready to make this life-changing decision, you may want to express your desire to God in prayer. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). As soon as possible, tell someone else about your decision.

Welcome to God's family!

Chosen to Go

Acts 13:1–43

“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:2).

Family trips are an important segment of my growing-up memories. My father was a pastor, and we moved to the Midwest while all our relatives were on the East Coast. My dad and mom would put their still-asleep daughters (three of us) in the car around two or three in the morning, and we were off. No air-conditioned cars in those days, and no interstate highway system (though we did have the Pennsylvania Turnpike part of the way). But oh the memories of those trips! Singing, Bible games, the alphabet game (with billboards), lunches in roadside parks, and a carsick sister were all part of the trip.

Perhaps as I have shared my memories, some of your own have come to mind. Did you travel with your family? Where did you go? What was your means of transportation? What did you do along the way?

As we begin this study of Acts 13–20, we will set sail with Saul on his first missionary journey. Actually, the remainder of the book of Acts is a report of four journeys: three missionary ones and one to Rome. We have much to learn as we journey along with the great missionary Paul and observe him and his companions *Serving in the Power of the Spirit*.

If you studied chapters 1–12 with the study guide *Living in the Power of the Spirit*, you know that chapter 12 concludes with Barnabas and Saul returning to Antioch from their ministry in Jerusalem. With them was a young man named John Mark. (If it has been some

time since you read or studied Acts 1–12, I suggest that you read those chapters before continuing this study.)

Study the Scripture

The Missionary Call (Acts 12:25–13:3)

Read Acts 12:25–13:3.

1. List the five men who are identified as “prophets and teachers” in the church in Antioch.

2. What do you remember about Barnabas? (See Acts 4:36, 37; 9:27; 11:22–26.)

Verse 1 gives us brief insight into the other three men. Simeon was also called Niger. *Niger* means “black,” so it is possible this man was from Africa. We don’t have any evidence to associate him with Simon who carried Jesus’ cross.

Lucius was from Cyrene. *Lucius* is a Latin name. He came from North Africa.

Manaen was a companion of Herod Antipas, the Herod who beheaded John the Baptist. We don’t know exactly how the two men knew each other, but they may have attended the royal school together. If so, it is interesting to note that one man became a disciple of Christ and the other one destroyed the things of Christ.

The fifth teacher is Saul, whose conversion is recorded in Acts 9.

The men were from varied backgrounds, training, and homelands. But they were united in serving the church at Antioch and in serving in the power of the Spirit.

These men are identified as “prophets and teachers.”

3. Read Ephesians 4:11 and Romans 12:6. How do these passages identify prophecy and teaching?

Prophecy was often associated with new revelation as well as the giving forth of truth. . Once the New Testament Scriptures were complete, the gift of prophecy was no longer needed. First Corinthians 13:8 indicates that prophecies, tongues, and knowledge were temporary gifts.



Record a Transitional Detail on your Acts Acrostic: the presence of prophets in the early church.

Notice that the men were busy in the Antioch church. They were actively using their gifts. In the course of their ministry, the Holy Spirit chose Barnabas and Saul for special ministry. The words “whereunto I have called them” in Acts 13:2 indicate a past act. It seems that Barnabas and Saul knew about this “call” before the church did.

4. The Scriptures indicate three different times Paul (Saul) was set apart. To what was Paul “set apart” (or “separated”) in each of these passages?

Galatians 1:15

Romans 1:1

Acts 13:2

As the Antioch church fasted and prayed, the Spirit led the group to identify these two men—Barnabas and Saul—for special service.

5. How did the church at Antioch indicate their “approval” of the new missionaries?



Add an Action of the Holy Spirit, His choosing of Barnabas and Saul, to your acrostic. A Church Fact to record is the church's commissioning of Barnabas and Saul for missionary service.

THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

The Ministry in Cyprus (Acts 13:4–12)

Read Acts 13:4 and 5.

Use resources 2 (Paul's Journey Journal) and 3 (map of the first missionary journey) as you continue your study of Acts 13.

On the Journey Journal, record these facts about the first journey:

Scripture: Acts 13:4—14:28

Date: AD 46–47—about 18 months

Sending church: (find the answer in Acts 13:1)

Saul's companions: (find the answer in Acts 13:2 and 13)

Miles: approximately 1,330—630 by ship and 700 by foot

Barnabas was from Cyprus, so this first journey was almost a home missions trip for him.

Cyprus had a large Jewish population. We know this fact from verse 5, which refers to synagogues. A certain number of Jews were required to have a synagogue in a location, so the mention of multiple synagogues indicates a large Jewish population.

We will note a recurring pattern in Paul's ministry: he went first to the synagogue if a city had one. Paul was always concerned for the spiritual welfare of his own countrymen.

Read Acts 13:6–12.

6. Whom did Saul and his companions meet in Paphos? What details about him are included in verse 6?

7. Who wanted to hear the Word of God from Barnabas and Saul? What details about him are included in verse 7?

8. How did Elymas (Bar-jesus) attempt to interfere?
9. How did Saul respond?
10. What led the ruler to trust Christ?

Note two changes in this passage. First, Saul was called Paul (v. 9). He had probably had both names since childhood. *Saul* was appropriate when his ministry was primarily to the Jews; *Paul* gave him greater entrée to the Gentiles. Second, this passage is the last mention of “Barnabas and Saul” (v. 7). From this point on, Paul was the leader of the team and was named first (except in 14:14 and 15:25).



Add Elymas’s blindness to your acrostic as a Supernatural Event.

Paul’s Message in Antioch (Acts 13:13–41)

Read Acts 13:13–15.

Use resource 3 to follow Paul’s travels.

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark left the island of Cyprus and went by ship to the coast of Asia Minor, which we now know as Turkey. When the team landed at Perga, John Mark decided to return to Jerusalem.

11. What are some possible reasons for John Mark’s decision?

The Bible does not record the exact reasons, but we know that John Mark’s leaving would eventually become an issue between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36–39). But verse 13 is not the end of John Mark’s story. We will find out that eventually he was restored.

Paul and Barnabas traveled on to Antioch. Note on the map that

this is Pisidian Antioch—not Antioch of Syria, which was the home of the missionaries’ sending church.

12. What was the first thing the missionaries did in Antioch?

In a typical synagogue service, the scrolls would be read, and then any teacher, or rabbi, could comment.

13. Look at Luke 4:16–20. What are the similarities between the Luke passage and Acts 13:15 and 16?

Read Acts 13:16–41.

These verses give us the longest of Paul’s recorded messages, and this message illustrates for us how Paul preached to an audience that was familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. The message can be divided into five parts.

Part 1: Verses 16–21

14. With what event does this section start and with what person does it end?

Part 2: Verses 22 and 23

15. Who is the subject of these verses?

Part 3: Verses 24 and 25

16. Who is the subject of these verses?

Part 4: Verses 26–37

Paul next moved to the ministry of Christ. He conceded that the Jews did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, nor did they recognize the Messianic prophecies concerning Him. In fact, Paul said, the Jews actually helped fulfill those promises by crucifying Christ. Perhaps Paul was thinking of the prophecies of Isaiah 53 as he spoke these words.

Paul declared the death and then the resurrection of Christ. You

may want to write 1 Corinthians 15:5–7 in the margin of your Bible by verse 31. That passage lists the people who saw the risen Christ.

Paul let the people know he was declaring “glad tidings” to them (v. 32). The Greek word for *glad tidings* is a form of *euangelizō*. You can easily see that we get our English word *evangelize* (and related forms of the word) from this Greek word. When we share the glad tidings of the gospel with people, we are involved in the ministry of evangelism.

Paul quoted from three Old Testament passages to help his Jewish listeners “connect the dots” between the promised Messiah in the Old Testament and the Jesus Whom they had crucified, but Who rose from the dead.

Part 5: Acts 13:38–41

Paul concluded his message by urging his audience to accept the forgiveness available in Christ. Believing the message of “glad tidings” leads to a person’s justification (v. 39). “Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous in Jesus Christ.”¹ It is a term of position; it describes the believer’s standing before God. Justification is the theme of Paul’s epistle, or letter, to the Galatians, which he wrote at the conclusion of the first missionary journey.

Read Acts 13:42 and 43.

17. What were the results of Paul’s message?

18. What do you think it means to “continue in the grace of God” (v. 43)? Titus 2:11–13 may provide a clue. List three things grace teaches us.
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If Paul were to preach at your church, he would undoubtedly encourage people to accept God’s forgiveness of sin, and he would urge

believers to “continue in the grace of God” by heeding the things grace teaches us.

Apply the Scripture

- The church in Antioch included leaders with different backgrounds, training, and homelands. Does your church leadership display variety? What are some advantages of having leaders with varied backgrounds, training, and homelands?
- Acts 13:2 cites a specific call to ministry. Does the Spirit still work this way today? How do you support your answer?
- The early verses of Acts 13 illustrate an important truth: God calls busy people. How can we encourage young people to be busy in the ministry of the church as they seek to find God’s will for their lives?
- Give a specific way that you can apply each of the three things that grace teaches us.

Note

1. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Daring* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1988), 14.