**Transformed: A Survey of the Book of Acts**

**Week 9 (March 6, 2019)**

**Acts 13:1-52 (For context, please read Acts 12 & 13 prior to teaching time)**

**Helpful Background**

1. Luke’s history of how the Church began and how it grew changes direction in the start of chapter 13. Luke described how the gospel came to the Gentiles, those who were not Jewish, and how the Church would grow throughout the Roman Empire. Paul and Barnabas are chosen by the Holy Spirit, sent out by a group of believers who do not live in Jerusalem, and take the good news about Jesus Christ to many people who hadn’t yet heard the gospel.

2. The group of believers in the city of Antioch had become a strong Church, and became the “sending” Church for the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas. Barnabas and Saul were probably the best leaders and teachers in Antioch initially, (11:26) but God soon worked through their leadership and strong teaching to raise up other teachers and leaders in the church.

3. Antioch was an international trading center, and was home to many people from many cultures and backgrounds. The diverse makeup of the Church leaders reflected the diverse population of Antioch in the first century. Barnabas is listed first, as he was the leader of the leaders, having probably the most mature faith and the most experience being a Christian. Simeon (called “the black man”) was probably also a long-time leader and teacher, and his nickname was probably indicative of his dark skin color. Lucius was from North Africa, and probably was part of a group of merchants from Cyrene working in Antioch. Manaen was part of the Jerusalem elite, having long-time connections with the royal family and King Herod Antipas, and may have fled Jerusalem after his conversion to Christianity. Along with Saul, this diverse group of men led the Church at Antioch.

4. The Greek word translated as “set apart” [APHORIZO] is a very specific term that meant “identified, called,” or “dedicated.” It indicated that God had already given His blessing and would provide direction, as this mission was entirely God’s idea. God had called them to this work, and would guide and provide every step of the way. The laying on of hands and prayer by the other believers was a public and visible affirmation of God’s call, and served as a powerful encouragement to both those “sent out” and those who God worked through to commission and support those who had been set apart.

5. Saul and Barnabas were sent out by the Holy Spirit. God chose to work through the church at Antioch, but clearly, the Spirit led and provided for the mission to take the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles living in Asia Minor (Modern-day Cyprus and Turkey.) They set off on this journey that would become known as the “First Missionary Journey,” with a group of fellow travelers, one of whom was John Mark, a cousin of Barnabas. They went where both the Holy Spirit led and to population and cultural centers. They first went to the home country of Barnabas, where he may have had family connections that helped to open doors of access.

6. The island of Cyprus had a large Jewish population. In order to establish a synagogue, there needed to be at least ten men representing ten Jewish families. The town of Salamis may have had several synagogues, as the plural is used in the Greek. Salamis was the main city on Cyprus, the center of both commerce and government, and was located on the east coast of the island. Barnabas and Saul set the pattern that they used throughout their missionary travels, going always first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles. This priority on the Jews does not indicate favoritism, but rather spiritual wisdom and logic. The Jews were most likely to believe, having studied and known the Old Testament for all of their lives. The Gentiles did not have a background or preparation, but may have listened with more openness.

7. John Mark accompanied Barnabas and Paul on this first mission trip. He served as an assistant, but the word used to describe his role, [HUPERETEN] indicated that he not only took care of practical and physical needs of the team, but may have instructed new believers as well. His premature departure from the team would become a source of friction between Paul and Barnabas years later (Acts 15:37-38).

8. John Mark was a young man in the early church in Jerusalem. According to Church history, the “Last Supper” that Jesus had with His disciples was held in the home of John Mark and Mary his mother. He was the cousin of Barnabas, who had a close ministry partnership with the apostle Paul. John Mark was chosen by Paul and Barnabas to accompany them on the First Missionary journey, but apparently abandoned the team and went home midway (Acts 13:13). Paul did not appreciate this decision, and later refused to take Mark on the Second Missionary Journey. Barnabas and Paul disagreed sharply about John Mark, and decided to end their missionary partnership (Acts 15:36). Paul went off in a new direction, while Barnabas continued to do ministry with John Mark. But God changed John Mark, and grew him into a trustworthy, Godly man. Years later he worked closely with the apostle Peter, serving as translator, ministry assistant, and secretary (1 Peter 5:13). Assisted by Peter, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, Mark wrote the gospel that shares his name. To show that it’s never too late and also that God has a GREAT sense of humor, Mark became a “help” to the ministry of Paul in the apostle’s last days in Rome (2 Tim. 4).

9. The missionary team traveled the island of Cyprus, from east to west, about 100 miles. They arrived at Paphos, a regional center of government. There they met Bar-Jesus, (Elymas in Greek) a false prophet and magician, who had “attached himself” (like a harmful parasite,) to the governor Sergius Paulus. This Roman official conducted an investigation, as he had heard of some reactions to the teachings of this team of followers of Jesus Christ. He wanted to keep the peace, but he also wanted to know more about what all of the responses were about.

10. 13:9 is a significant verse, because the Hebrew of Hebrews, Saul, not only had become a follower of Jesus, but in this passage clearly became the lead missionary to the non-Jewish Gentile world. Saul needed to be able to relate to Greeks, so his Greek name became more closely associated with him, Paul. From this point on in the book of Acts, Luke refers to Saul as Paul, to indicate that the gospel is going first to the Jews, but then to the Gentiles through the apostle Paul.

11. Barnabas modeled Christ-like humility throughout his life and ministry as narrated in the book of Acts. He had been the first to speak up and vouch for Saul to the Jerusalem Church, stood with Saul and defended him when no one else would do so, and most likely continued to mentor and encourage the spiritual growth of Saul while in Jerusalem and Antioch. Barnabas most likely recognized the great potential of Saul, encouraged him to yield to the Holy Spirit and follow Jesus, and encouraged him to walk by faith. Barnabas had been “set apart” by the Holy Spirit, and sent out as the lead missionary on the team to Cyprus, his home country. But in 13:9 and beyond, especially 13:13-14, we read the shift in focus and leadership. No longer does Luke list the team as “Barnabas and Saul,” but lists the team as “Paul and his companions,” (13:13) and “Paul and Barnabas” (13:14). While this seems like a minor and insignificant change in language, it indicates a major shift in priority and in leadership. It most likely was a massive shift for the team involved. Barnabas demonstrated great love, humility, and security in Christ, by stepping back into a secondary role so that Paul could shine for the sake of sharing the gospel and spreading the good news.

12. Paul and his companions left Cyprus and traveled to Pamphylia, another Roman province that today is modern-day Turkey. Antioch of Pisidia was an important city in southern Galatia (Though easily confused with Antioch of Syria, the home city of the Church that commissioned and sent Paul and Barnabas on this missionary journey.) Antioch of Pisidia was a center of commerce and trade, was a Roman colony city, and had a diverse population of Romans, Greeks, Asians, and many Jews. Paul and Barnabas strategically chose locations that would have the greatest potential for the gospel to be carried outward by those who believed after they heard the good news.

13. As was the new pattern, Paul and Barnabas went first to the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia, and initially found a receptive audience as Paul taught how Jesus had fulfilled the Old Testament promises and prophecies about the Messiah. As Paul demonstrated his great knowledge of the Old Testament and the history of the Jews, he was able to convince some who heard him to consider seriously that Jesus was the Messiah. Paul supported his statement about Jesus being the Messiah by quoting from three Old Testament scriptures commonly understood by most Jews to be referring to the Messiah (Ps. 2:7, Isa. 55:3, and Ps. 16:10). In these verses, Psalm 2 portrays God the Father speaking to God the Son, which had happened during the life and ministry of Jesus (Lk. 3:22, 9:35.) These scriptures also reminded Paul’s audience that the Messiah would not remain in the grave, unlike King David, and would reign eternally as a descendant of King David. All of these scriptures were fulfilled in Jesus, as Paul authoritatively proved to the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia.

14. As Paul and Barnabas left the synagogue, many continued to be hungry for more information and teaching about Jesus. After a week had passed and the next Sabbath had come, almost the entire population of the city showed up to hear Paul’s words about Jesus. But, this response caused jealousy and concern among the Jewish leaders, so they fought back by slandering Paul and argued against him.

15. Declaring courageously the simple truth of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the forgiveness that is possible only through Him, Paul and Barnabas drew huge crowds one week later. Though the crowd contained jealous Jewish leaders, they were unable to prevent many Gentiles from also coming to faith through Jesus. This result further enraged the Jewish leaders, who eventually were able to gather a mob to drive Paul and Barnabas out of the city. The events in Antioch of Pisidia serve as a foreshadowing of a pattern that happens over and over during the ministry of the apostle Paul.

**Review Questions**

16. (13:1) Who were among the teachers and prophets at Antioch? Why is this list given, and what point is made by including the details? Why is Barnabas listed first and Saul listed last?

17. (13:2-3) What happened? What is meant by the word “appoint?” What did the men do immediately? Then what did they do? What is signified by the laying on of hands?

18. (13:4-5) Who “sent out” Barnabas and Saul? Where did they go? Why Cyprus? Where did they go first? Why? Who was there assistant?

19. (13:6-7) Where did they travel? Why did they end up in Paphos? Who was Bar-Jesus/Elymas? What role did he play in the life of the governor? Why did the governor want to hear from Barnabas and Saul? How did Eylmas interfere and why?

20. (13:9-10) What’s significant about the first phrase of 13:9? What does it mean? How did Paul address Elymas? What did Paul say, and what did it mean?

21. (13:11-12) What punishment did Paul call down on Elymas? Why? What happened? What impact did this event have on the governor? Why could this have been such a powerful sign to the governor?

22. (13:13-14) How did Luke change the focus of his narrative in 13:13? Why is this significant? What did it indicate? Where did the team travel next? Who left the team, and why? Where did they go next?

23. (13:15-23) How did Paul address the synagogue audience? Why did he share the history of the Jews from escaping slavery in Egypt to King David? Why did he then skip the centuries of history from King David to Jesus? What powerful statement did Paul make about Jesus in 13:23?

24. (13:24-31) Why does Paul mention John the Baptist? What did John say about Jesus? How did the ministry of Jesus and the response of the Jewish people and their leaders fulfill scripture? What did God do after the death of Jesus? Who are witnesses to His resurrection?

25. (13:32-41) What scriptures does Paul quote and why those specific ones? Where is forgiveness ONLY found? What is possible through Jesus that wasn’t possible through obeying the law of Moses? What warning does Paul quote and why conclude with that scripture?

26. (13:42-43) What was the response to Paul’s teaching in the synagogue? How did the people indicate a favorable response? What happened as Paul and Barnabas were leaving? What did they urge those who were interested to do?

27. (13:44-45) What happened a week later? Who turned out to hear Paul and Barnabas preach the Word of the Lord again? How did some of the Jewish leaders respond? What did they do?

28. (13:46-49) How did Paul and Barnabas respond to the harassment from the Jewish leaders? Why was this a radical and startling declaration? To whom did they refer to provide authority to back them up? How did the Gentiles respond?

29. (13:50-52) What action did the Jews take to try to stop the growing ministry and conversions to Christianity happening through the preaching of Paul and Barnabas? To whom did they turn to help? What happened? How did Paul and Barnabas respond? Where did they go next? What was the end result?

**So What?**

30. What can we learn from the example/conduct of Barnabas? What character traits did he demonstrate? How was Barnabas able to conduct himself in this way? How can we follow the example of both Jesus and Barnabas, choosing to trust the Spirit to help us act/live with love, humility, and grace?

31. What can we learn from the teaching of Paul in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia? What empowered his sharing? What conclusion is still true today? (Acts 13:38-39)

32. Despite their best efforts, and great success, and having done nothing wrong; Paul and Barnabas were forced to leave the city of Antioch of Pisidia. What can we learn from their response to this rejection? How does this demonstrate trust in God and in the security that comes from knowing your purpose? How can we model this trait as well?