

VBS

JULY
12-16



KNOW the GOSPEL!

BELIEVE the GOSPEL!

SPREAD the GOSPEL!

1ST - 5TH GRADE

Day 4: World Missions

World Missions

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the students that Jesus didn't just call His disciples to share the Gospel with friends and family, but with the whole world!

Key Verses

Acts 13:1-12—Main Teaching Passage

Mark 16:15 (Matthew 28:19-20)

Acts 1:8

Romans 10:13-15

Ephesians 6:15

Isaiah 6:8

Memory Verse - Mark 16:15

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

Hook

Review yesterday's memory verse, Matthew 5:16.

Ask the class, "What is a missionary?" Have them explain. Then ask them if they know any missionaries (who they are, where do they live, what they do, etc.)

Today we will see that we are not just called by God to share the gospel with those who live close to us, but with the whole world! Let's see how God has been sending people out into the world since the Church began.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

At the church in Antioch, while Saul (Paul), Barnabas, and other believers were worshipping and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke to them, calling Paul and Barnabas out from among the other believers in the church to go share the Gospel in new places. The church prayed for them, then sent them to spread the Gospel in obedience to the Holy Spirit's calling. A man named John Mark also traveled with them as an assistant.

As they traveled, they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They sailed to an island called Cyprus and traveled to a city called Paphos, where they met an evil magician. His name was Bar-Jesus (also called Elymas). He was a Jew and a false prophet, who worked closely with the Roman governor (proconsul) of that city. The governor's name was Sergius Paulus, and he was a man of understanding.

Governor Sergius asked Paul and Barnabas to come to him, desiring to hear the Word of God, but the magician tried to stop them because he did not want Sergius to become a follower of God.

The Holy Spirit filled Paul and he told the magician, "You are wicked and evil. An enemy of everything that is right. You cheat and trick people. Won't you ever stop twisting the right ways of the Lord? The Lord will blind you. You won't be able to see light for a time."

When Paul finished speaking, the magician's eyes could not see. Governor Sergius saw what happened and believed in God! He was amazed as he listened to Paul share the gospel and teach God's Word.

LOOK

In today's passage of Scripture we see that the gospel is for everyone, not just a certain group of people or a certain country. "For God so loved *the world* that He gave His one and only Son" (John 3:16). The good news of Jesus was not meant to stay in one place, but go into to the whole world! Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told His disciples to wait to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, then "you shall be witness to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). This would be similar to Jesus saying to us "you must tell others the good news of Jesus in Philadelphia, the tri-state area, and beyond!" The gospel was first shared locally, closest to where Jesus had died and risen, then the news spread to the surrounding area, and eventually to the whole world.

This is what followers of Jesus call "the Great Commission." It is a mission that Jesus gave to His disciples after He took the punishment for our sins and rose from the dead. Now that Jesus had done what He came to do, it was time to share the good news to all people. He promised to give His disciples power (through the Holy Spirit) to be His witnesses and to be with them, even to the end of the earth.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

These were important promises, and we see them at work in today's lesson. The Holy Spirit chose who He would send into the world and gave power to those He sent to be His witnesses. God was with Paul and Barnabas, and "if God is for us, who can be against us?" When confronted with someone who didn't want them to share the Gospel, God showed Paul what to do, and because Paul shared God's good news with the Roman governor, he believed and became a part of God's family!

God wants to do the same thing with you today. He may not send your family to another country (but what if He did?), but we can support God's work in the world just like the believers at Antioch did. They sent and prayed for Paul and Barnabas. Do you pray for any missionaries? Do you know what's happening in other countries around the world? God wants us to know that He is working all over the world through people just like you and me, who are filled with the Holy Spirit, and willing to obey Him every day.

Even though you may not be able to go to another country, you should still pray along with the prophet Isaiah, "Lord, send me!" (Isaiah 6:1). We are to have on our feet the shoes of the Gospel of peace, so that everywhere we go (at home, at the store, at school, on vacation, etc.), we can bring the good news of the Gospel to those who have not heard. And who knows, maybe one day God will call you to do the same thing in another country!

TOOK

As a class, memorize Mark 16:15.

Review the lesson by asking the kids, "What is a missionary?" and, "What can we do to help spread the Gospel to the whole world?"

As a class, take some time to have the kids pray for some of our missionaries. You will be provided with missionary prayer cards in your classroom.

Pray: Thank God that the Gospel isn't just for one people group, or some countries, but for the whole world! Pray for missionaries who are out preaching the Gospel to the whole world.

Parent Question: How can we help spread the Gospel to the whole world?

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Acts 13:1-12 by David Guzik

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY BEGINS

A. Barnabas and Saul are called and sent by the Holy Spirit.

1. ([Act 13:1](#)) The people at the church in Antioch.

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.

a. **Now in the church that was at Antioch:** In [Acts 12:25](#), we learn Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark were all at the church in Antioch, having returned from delivering a gift of support to the church in Jerusalem ([Acts 11:27-30](#)). Saul and Barnabas were among the teachers and prophets there, as were **Simeon, Lucius,** and **Manaen**.

b. **Simeon who was called Niger:** Since **Niger** means *black*, he was presumably a black African among the congregation at Antioch, and possibly the same **Simeon** who carried Jesus' cross ([Luke 23:26](#)).

c. **Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch:** This **Manaen** mentioned here grew up with **Herod the tetrarch**. This was the same Herod who beheaded John the Baptist and presided over one of Jesus' trials ([Luke 23:7-12](#)).

i. Herod and Manaen grew up together, but went very different ways. One killed John the Baptist and presided over one of the trials of Jesus before His crucifixion. The other became a Christian, and a leader in the dynamic congregation at Antioch.

2. ([Act 13:2](#)) The Holy Spirit calls Barnabas and Saul.

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."

a. **As they ministered to the Lord:** This was part of what happened at the congregation in Antioch. Barnabas and others certainly ministered to the congregation, and the congregation also ministered one to another. Yet they also **ministered to the Lord**.

i. This is the first job of any servant of God, to minister unto the Lord. In doing this, they did the service of priests under the new covenant, offering their bodies as living sacrifices ([Romans 12:1](#)). Ministering to the Lord means doing what pleases Him and honors Him – worship, praise, prayer, listening to, honoring God.

ii. "The word translated *worshipping* [*ministered*, NKJV] is that usually employed in the LXX for the service of priests and Levites in the temple." (Williams)

b. **They ministered to the Lord and fasted:** As part of their service to the Lord, they also **fasted**. Presumably, they fasted because they sensed a need to seek God in a special way.

i. Judging from the calling described in the text, it is possible that they sought God about the need to spread the gospel to all the earth.

ii. If we assume they fasted and prayed about the need of the world for Jesus, we can see how God answered their prayer – by using them. This is often how God moves, by sending the people who have it on their hearts to pray.

iii. Many want to be “back seat drivers” in God’s work. They hope to say, “I’ll have the burden and you do the work.” But God’s typical way of working is to send the people who have the burden to do the work.

c. **The Holy Spirit said:** As they ministered unto the Lord, God spoke to them. This was a word of *calling* that would guide **Barnabas and Saul** into a specific work.

d. **The Holy Spirit said:** Presumably, the call came through the ministry of prophets in the church at Antioch, though it could have come simply through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

i. “I do not for a moment imagine that the assembly heard a voice. That is the mistake we too often make. We try to force ourselves into ecstasies in order to hear the voice, then we imagine we hear it!” (Morgan)

e. **Separate to Me:** Before Barnabas and Saul could do anything significant for God, they first had to be separated to Him. If you will separate **to** God, it means you must separate from some other things.

i. You can’t really say “yes” to God’s call on your life until you can say “no” to things that will keep you from that call.

f. **Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work:** It is significant that the two men called to missionary service were – as far as we know – the two most gifted and able men in the congregation.

g. **For the work to which I have called them:** God had a specific **work** He had appointed to Barnabas and Saul to do. Paul would later write in [Ephesians 2:10](#): *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.* Here, God called Barnabas and Saul to those kind of good works.

i. The calling God had for the life of Paul had already been stated in [Acts 9:15-16](#): *He is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.* This was not a touchy-feely “feel good” call – it was a serious call to a serious ministry.

h. **Now separate to Me:** God gave a timetable – **now**. Before, God had told Paul through Ananias what his calling was, but not that it was **now**. **Now** meant there was to be no delay.

3. ([Act 13:3](#)) The sending of Barnabas and Saul.

Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

a. **Having fasted and prayed:** They were sent with fasting and prayer. This whole work required a substantial dependence on God, and fasting and prayer demonstrated that dependence.

b. **And laid hands on them:** The laying on of hands was a formal commissioning to this work. Certainly Barnabas and Saul were “ordained” before this, but now they entered a different sphere of ministry.

c. **They sent them away:** Notice that the church in Antioch *sent* Barnabas and Saul out. They were supported and sent by a specific congregation. As far as we know, this had never happened before in the history of the

church. Many went out as “accidental missionaries” (as in [Acts 8:4](#) and [11:19](#)) but there was never a concerted and organized effort to win people to Jesus like this.

i. Being intentionally **sent** by the church in Antioch, many regard this as the first real known *missionary* effort of the church. “The word ‘missionary’ has to do with sending. The Latin word *mitto, mittere*, means ‘to send’; ‘mission’ and ‘missionary’ come from the forms *missi* and *missum*.” (Boice)

ii. They seem to have done this without a committee report, without a demographic analysis, without a marketing survey, without what is sometimes called “spiritual mapping.” Barnabas and Saul went out without any of these things, only with the call and power of the Holy Spirit.

B. Ministry in the cities of Seleucia, Salamis and Paphos.

1. ([Act 13:4](#)) First stop: **Seleucia**.

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

a. **So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit:** The Christians of the church at Antioch sent Barnabas and Saul; but more importantly, the **Holy Spirit** sent them. Any group of Christians can send someone, but if the **Spirit** doesn’t send them, it won’t amount to eternally effective ministry.

b. **Went down to Seleucia:** We aren’t told of any specific work that took place in **Seleucia**, a city near Antioch. Saul and Barnabas may have gone there merely because it was the port city near Antioch, but it is hard to imagine them not doing *any* ministry there.

i. Since **Seleucia** wasn’t far from Antioch, where there was a thriving church, it isn’t difficult to assume there was already a group of Christians there in that city.

2. ([Act 13:5](#)) On the island of Cyprus: The city of **Salamis**, on the east coast.

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.

a. **When they arrived in Salamis:** We are not told *why* they went to Cyprus first, but we do know Barnabas grew up on that island ([Acts 4:36](#)).

b. **They preached the word of God in the synagogues:** This custom of the open synagogue gave Barnabas and Saul many opportunities to preach. This tradition invited any learned man to speak to the people of the synagogue at the Sabbath meeting.

c. **They also had John as their assistant:** This man, also known as *John Mark*, was mentioned previously in [Acts 12:25](#). He traveled with Barnabas and Saul on this trip and was the same Mark who later wrote the Gospel that bears his name.

i. Mark was a valuable companion for Barnabas and Saul. He grew up in Jerusalem, and was an eyewitness of many of the events in the life of Jesus and could relate them with special power to Barnabas and Saul, and to others whom they preached to.

3. ([Act 13:6-7](#)) Meeting the Roman proconsul in **Paphos**.

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, 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.

a. **Paphos:** This city on the west coast of Cyprus was known for its immorality. Here Barnabas and Saul faced a combination of immorality and spiritual darkness that was common across the pagan world of the Roman Empire.

i. "Paphos was infamous for its worship of Venus, the goddess of [sexual] love" (Barclay). "Athanasius styled its religion 'the deification of lust.' Neither men nor women could resort to the shrine of Venus without being defiled in mind and depraved in character." (Spurgeon)

b. **The proconsul, Sergius Paulus:** This was an important man. A Roman **proconsul** was responsible for an entire province and answered to the Roman Senate.

i. "All Roman provinces were divided into two classes, those that required troops and those that did not. The latter were administered by the Senate and ruled by proconsuls; the former were under the administration of the emperor." (Williams)

ii. "Sir William Ramsay reports that inscriptions bearing Sergius Paulus' name have been found on Cyprus confirming that he was a Christian and that his entire family became Christians." (Hughes)

c. **This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God:** While ministering in Paphos (presumably after the same fashion – going into the synagogues and presenting Jesus), an unexpected door opened – the proconsul wanted **to hear the word of God.**

4. ([Act 13:8-12](#)) The resistance of Elymas the sorcerer.

But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 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? "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. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

a. **Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated):** Paul was opposed by a man named **Elymas**. His real name was *Bar-Jesus* ([Acts 13:6](#)) which means "son of Jesus," and Luke couldn't bear to call him that. This **Elymas** (who was some kind of advisor to the proconsul) attempted to frustrate the missionary efforts of Barnabas and Saul.

i. We should not be surprised or shaken by opposition. "Wherever there is likely to be great success, the open door and the opposing adversaries will both be found. If there are no adversaries, you may fear that there will be no success. A boy cannot get his kite up without wind, nor without a wind which drives *against* his kite." (Spurgeon)

b. **Saul, who also is called Paul:** It was common for people in that day to have names that were similar yet different according to the language or culture they were in. Certainly, Saul's given name was **Saul**, a Jewish name after the first king of Israel. But his Roman name was **Paul** – which meant "Little" and sounded similar to "Saul."

i. "Saul's father gave the child a Roman and a Latin name because he was a Roman citizen with all the rights in the Roman Empire this implied. The child had both names from infancy. When his father called him he shouted, 'Saul, Saul!' but when the Greek boys with whom he played called him they shouted, 'Paul, Paul!'" (Lenski)

c. **Filled with the Holy Spirit...Said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud":** Paul, using spiritual discernment and operating in the gift of faith, rebuked and pronounced the judgment of God upon Elymas (**you shall be**

blind).

i. As Elymas was struck with blindness, we can't help but think Paul would remember his own experience with God. Paul was struck blind at his conversion on the road to Damascus ([Acts 9:9](#)). Certainly, those who resist God are blind spiritually, so God just gave Elymas a physical blindness that matched his spiritual blindness. Sadly, we never hear of Elymas repenting, as Paul did.

d. **Then the proconsul believed:** Paul was harsh in his confrontation against Elymas because the eternal destiny of the proconsul was at stake.

i. If one wants to commit spiritual suicide, that's one thing. But it is never right to bring others down also. If you want to give up on the things of God and grow bitter in your heart against Him, that's your choice. But it is a heavy sin to draw anyone else away with you, either with your words or your example.

ii. "The severest words of the Bible, Old and New Testaments, are reserved for those who stand between men and truth, for those who stand between men and God...It must be the heart that loves Sergius Paulus that speaks in anger to Elymas the sorcerer." (Morgan)

e. **When he saw what had been done:** Among other things, we can say that the proconsul saw something in Paul and something in Elymas.

i. He saw the *courage* of Paul. Here was a man of conviction, bold in his belief, and willing to make a stand for what he believed.

ii. He saw the *just result* of Elymas' sin, physical blindness corresponding to his spiritual blindness. When we see the trouble sin brings people into, it helps us pursue God more earnestly.

f. **Being astonished at the teaching of the Lord:** As amazing as the miracle of Elymas' sudden blindness was, the good news the proconsul heard from Paul was even more amazing. His astonishment is said to be at the **teaching of the Lord** (presumably, the doctrines of God's gracious gift to man in Jesus, through the cross) not the miraculous work before his eyes.