



Men's Bible Fellowship

ONE MAN. ONE MISSION. NO ONE LEFT BEHIND.

Colton, CA

ACTS

"THE GOSPEL GOES OUT"

LESSON 12

One of the physical laws of the universe is Newton's First Law of Motion that states: An object tends to stay on its same course unless acted upon by another force. An object's resistance to redirection is called inertia. Many Christians suffer from a great deal of inertia, meaning they are very resistant to change. For proof of this premise get to church early before service and watch people arrive and sit in the exact same location week after week. Ushers tell us they have had some nasty altercations when a newcomer accidentally sat in someone's special spot. Many of us grouse and complain when our worship team tries to teach us a new chorus rather than sing a familiar song. This chapter helps us identify some of the peripherals that need to change in order to be relevant and meaningful in our culture. But more significantly this passage shows us essentials which are immutable and foundational to our faith and should not be tampered with.

For the ten years following Pentecost (Acts 1–12) the church was centered in Judea and almost entirely Jewish in membership. Peter was the leading spokesperson for the early church. All of this changes in Acts 13. The epicenter for the spread of the gospel is no longer Jerusalem, but Syrian Antioch. As the numbers of believers literally explodes, the church quickly fills with Gentiles. Peter largely disappears from the book of Acts as leadership swings to Paul. Other changes in this interesting chapter include a transition from Barnabas to Paul as leader of the missionary effort. Saul (Hebrew for inquired of God) changed his name to Paul (Latin for small or little). The motive appears that in taking a Roman name he would bridge the gap between Jews and Gentiles. Paul would later write, "I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22). A possible reason Saul picked Paul for his new name was the first recorded conversion under Paul's ministry, Sergius Paulus, the governor of Cypress.

Are we at a similar crossroads in the church in America today? Does the church need to change to stay relevant to potential new groups of believers? According to statistics from a Pew Forum study the answer is yes, "Fully one-in-four members of the Millennial generation—so called because they were born after 1980 and began to come of age around the year 2000—are unaffiliated with any particular faith. Indeed, Millennials are significantly more unaffiliated than members of Generation X (those born

between 1965 and 1980) were at a comparable point in their life cycle (20% un-churched in the late 1990s) and twice as unaffiliated as Baby Boomers were as young adults (only 13% un-churched in the late 1970s).”¹ If the church is unwilling to change to stay relevant and connect with our culture we are in danger of losing most of a generation (those under 30) to unbelief.

Examining Acts 13 is critical to discerning what can and should change, and what absolutely cannot be compromised. While the leadership changed, the strategy for missions changed, and the audience changed, the gospel message didn’t change. When we closely examine Paul’s presentation of the gospel given in Acts 13, we will quickly see that it is almost identical in content and emphasis to the powerful messages given by Peter in the weeks following

Pentecost ten years earlier. All of these explanations included these elements: Jesus fulfilled the messianic prophecies from the Old Testament; Jesus was of the lineage or son of David; Jesus gave proof He was the Messiah; He was unjustly persecuted and executed by authorities; His resurrection was witnessed by many; Only through belief in Jesus could man be cleansed of his sin. After their sermons, both Peter and Paul issued an invitation to which many responded. I have a friend who competes as a professional bass fisherman. My friend tells me that if you aren’t pulling fish into the boat you can’t wait for the fish to come and jump in, so you need to change either your lure, your location, or both. We may not be pro bass fishermen, but we have all been called to be fishers of men, and my friend’s message should ring clear to us as well. We need to embrace those changes in worship and missions which will lead the unsaved to Christ, but never compromise on the central truth of the gospel of Jesus as resurrected Lord and the only way to heaven for an unsaved world.

¹ <http://www.pewforum.org/2010/02/17/religion-among-the-millennials/>

Luke records twelve speeches of Paul. Paul’s explanation of the gospel in this lesson is his longest recorded sermon. This chart gives their audience, immediate location, geographic location, and scriptural reference for all of Paul’s speeches.²

SPEECH	SCRIPTURE	AUDIENCE	PLACE	LOCATION
1	Acts 13:6-11	Jew: Bar - Jesus	Governor’s praetorium	Paphos (Cyprus)
2	Acts 13:16-41	Jews, God-fearers	Synagogue	Antioch (Pisidia)
3	Acts 14:15-18	Gentiles, polytheists	Before Temple of Zeus	Lystra (Galatia)
4	Acts 17:22-31	Gentiles, aristocrats	Areopagus	Athens (Achaia)
5	Acts 20:17-38	Christians; elders	Church meeting place	Miletus (Asia)
6	Acts 22:1-21	Jews	Outer court of temple	Jerusalem
7	Acts 23:1-6	Jews, aristocrats	Sanhedrin	Jerusalem

SPEECH	SCRIPTURE	AUDIENCE	PLACE	LOCATION
8	Acts 24:10-21	Gentiles, Governor Felix	Governor's praetorium	Caesarea (Judea)
9	Acts 25:8-11	Gentiles, Governor Felix	Governor's praetorium	Caesarea (Judea)
10	Acts 26:1-23	Festus, Agrippa	Governor's praetorium	Caesarea (Judea)
11	Acts 28:17-20	Jews, Jewish leaders	Prison	Rome
12	Acts 28:25-28	Jews, Jewish leaders	Prison	Rome

²Modified from Schnabel, Eckhard. *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 552. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

Memory Verse– Fill in the Blanks

“For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’” Acts 13:47 NKJV

Day 1 - The Start of the First Missionary Journey – Acts 13:1–5

If you type ‘Long Beach’ into the website Intellicast to get a forecast, you find five different cities of the same name around the United States. In a similar fashion there were five cities named Antioch scattered throughout the Roman Empire. We will visit two of those cities in Acts 13. Syrian Antioch was the third largest city in the Empire with a population of over a half-million people during Paul’s day. It had the largest Jewish population outside of Judea. Unger’s Bible Dictionary tells us it was a wealthy, highly-cultured city with a social life best described as “debased, sensual and shocking.”³

1. Acts 13:1 gives us a quick look at two of the leadership roles in a vital and thriving church.

a. Teachers are mentioned only here in the Book of Acts. What job or position in our church today would be most similar to a teacher in the Antioch church?

b. We have already met the prophet Agabus in Acts 11:26–27. What was the function of a prophet in the early church?

2. The word for ministering (worshipping in the NIV) in verse 2 originally meant to serve the public.

a. The service of those mentioned in verse 1 was not to the congregation, but to whom?

b. How could that same focus improve our work ethic (see Ephesians 6:7)?

3. We read of two practices—fasting and the laying on of hands, which are infrequent in many modern churches.

a. While scripture never commands us to fast, it does condemn those that practice fasting for the approval of men (see Matthew 6:16). Fasting seems to be almost always paired with prayer (for example, see Daniel 9:3 and Nehemiah 1:4). What do you feel is the importance of the practice of fasting in the life of a 21st century believer?

b. What is the purpose or meaning of the laying on of hands in verse 3?

³Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 82. Chicago: Moody Press, 1988

Memory Verse – Fill in the Blanks

“For so the _____ has commanded us: ‘I _____ set you as a _____ to the Gentiles, that _____ should be for _____ to the ends of the _____.’”

Acts 13:47 NKJV

Day 2 - Preaching in Cyprus – Acts 13:6–13

The first stop on their missionary journey was the island of Cyprus located about 60 miles off the Syrian coast. Barnabas was originally from Cyprus (see Acts 4:36). It has been said when God’s people rise and build, that the followers of Satan rally to oppose as we will see in these verses. In verse 9 we are introduced to Saul’s new name. From this time on he is called Paul in Acts. Another subtle change has also occurred between verses 3 and 13 as leadership for the mission shifts (see also verse 43).

1. What do we know about the individual opposing Barnabas and Paul? (Note the word for sorcerer or magician is not necessarily evil, as the same word also described the three magi or kings in Matthew 2:1.)

2. What do you feel is the importance of Saul's name change?

3. How does Saul respond to the attack by the minion of Satan? What is the final blessed result of their ministry?

4. When the external attack fails, an internal attack begins which will later split the missionary team of Paul and Barnabas (see Acts 15:38). Describe what happened in verse 13 and share what you know about John, also known as Mark.

Memory Verse– Fill in the Blanks

“For _____ the _____ has commanded _____: ‘I _____ set you _____ a _____ to the _____, that _____ should _____ for _____ to the _____ of the _____.’” Acts 13:47 NKJV

Day 3 - Preaching in Pisidia Part 1 – Acts 13:14–26

After leaving Cyprus they sailed about 200 miles to Perga, and traveled 100 miles inland to another city named Antioch, located on a plateau around 3,600 above sea level. Following a familiar pattern, Paul and Barnabas first went to the synagogue to preach (see verses 5 and 14).

1. How did Paul seek to build a bridge in his opening remarks to the people in the synagogue?

2. Examine verses 17 through 24 and list the events of Israel's history that Paul highlights in his speech.

3. Viewing history as merely a series of random events driven by chance, appeals to those who don't know God. But to the Jews and the God-fearers listening, history was orchestrated and purposeful and led to their Messiah. Paul concluded the first portion of his sermon by alluding to John the Baptist. Significantly the last book of the Old Testament refers to John and his role in the plan of salvation. Reading Malachi 3:1 and referencing Paul's remarks, what was John's purpose?

<p>Memory Verse- Fill in the Blanks “For _____ the _____ has _____: ‘I _____ _____ you _____ a _____ the _____, that _____ should _____ for _____ the _____ the _____.’” Acts 13:47 NKJV</p>

Day 4 - Preaching in Pisidia Part 2 – Acts 13:27–41

At the midpoint in his address to those in the Synagogue, Paul reboots his audience by using the same phrase “Men and brethren” (literally those of the same womb as I), as he did to open his sermon.

1. Next Paul answers a question in the minds of Jews even to this day, “If Jesus was the Messiah, why did the leaders reject Him?” What is Paul's answer to this question (Stephen gave the same answer in Acts 7)? _____

2. The second question in the minds of the audience would have been, “Does their rejection of the Messiah nullify God's plan?” A close reading of verse 29 will provide the answer to this question.

3. Just as Peter did in all of his evangelistic messages, Paul cites the importance and evidence for the resurrection. Describe both of these.

4. He concludes in verses 38–39 with a statement that would be especially good news to the Jews listening. What did Paul share with them?

Memory Verse – Fill in the Blanks

“For _____ has _____: ‘I _____
_____ a _____, that _____ for _____
_____ the _____.’” Acts 13:47 NKJV

Day 5 - Blessing and Conflicts – Acts 13:42–52

1. It has been said that the same sun that melts ice also hardens clay and accordingly, we see two very different responses to the gospel.

a. What was the reaction of the Gentiles to Paul’s words of salvation?

b. David, mentioned in Paul’s sermon, had a similar passion for God and His Word. What does David write in Psalm 42:1?

2. It wasn’t because of a disagreement over theology that led the Jews to reject Paul’s message. What was the motivation behind the Jewish opposition?

3. How did the rejection by many Jews of Jesus, as their Messiah, fit into God’s plan (see Romans 11:25–26a)?

4. Has the Holy Spirit revealed any additional observations or insights in this week's passage that we haven't addressed in our study? If so please bless the members of your group by sharing it now.

Memory Verse

“

” Acts 13:47 NKJV

Day 6 - Take Away / Summary

To avoid walking in circles when lost in the wilderness, survival instructors teach their students to pick out the most prominent point in the distant landscape and walk toward it. In a similar sense we need to pick out the single most important truth in this week's study, and apply it in our life as we walk toward Jesus and out of the wilderness. Please share with your group what that truth is for you and how will you apply it this week:

Key Words/Phrases

Write out the definition of these key words. You can use a regular dictionary or go to one of the Greek sources listed in the Tool Box at the end of the study. You may also use a concordance to see where else and how the word is used in the Bible. *How would these phrases instruct or encourage us today?*

Fasted and Prayed (Acts 13:3)

Baptism of Repentance (Acts 13:24)

Tool Box—An Overview of Paul’s Missionary Work

Most maps, translations, and commentaries organize Paul’s work in terms of three missionary journeys. However, closer analysis shows Paul’s missionary efforts were not limited to these journeys. Here is a list compiled from Acts, Paul’s letters and Apocrypha (writings not included in canon of scripture).

MISSIONARY JOURNEY	STAGE	LOCATION(S)	SCRIPTURAL SOURCE	DATE(S) AD
0	1	Damascus	Acts 9:19-25; Gal 1:17	32/33
0	2	Arabia/Nabatea	Gal 1:17; 2 Cor 11:32	32/33
0	3	Jerusalem	Acts 9:26-29; Rom 1:16	33/34
0	4	Syria/Cilicia, Tarsus	Acts 9:30, 11:25-26, Gal 1:21	34-42
0	5	Syria/ Antioch	Acts 11:26-30, 13:1	42-44
1	6	Cyprus (Salamis, Paphos)	Acts 13:4-12	45
1	7	Galatia (Pisidian, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe) Pamphylia (Perge)	Acts 13:14-14:23;14:24-26	45-47
2	8	Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea)	Acts 16:6-17:15	49-50
2	9	Achaia (Athens, Corinth)	Acts 17:16-18:28	50-51
3	10	Asia (Ephesus)	Acts 19:1-41	52-55
Likely 3	11	Illyricum	Rom 15:19	56
0	12	Judea (Caesarea)	Acts 21:27-26:32	57-59
0	13	Rome	Acts 28:17-28	60-62
0	14	Spain	1 Clement 5:5-7	63-64
0	15	Crete	Titus 1:5	64-65

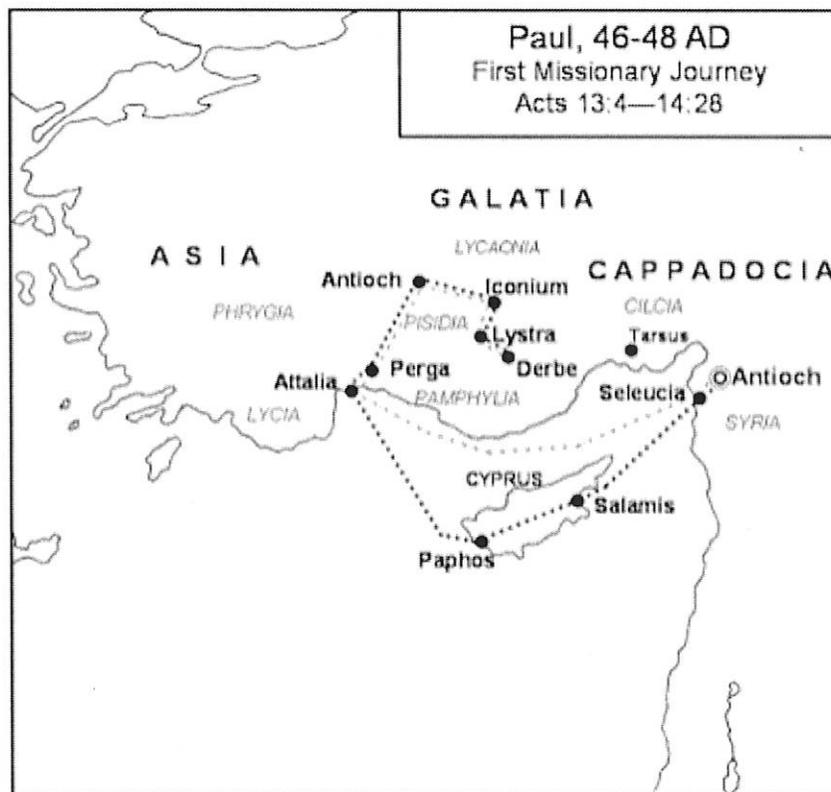
Modified from Schnabel, Eckhard. Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 549. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

Step 1: The Bible. Read the passage in a couple of different versions. If you are having trouble understanding a passage, choose a more dynamic version such as *New Living Translation* or *The Message*). To focus in on the exact meaning of a verse, choose a more literal translation such as *New American Standard Bible* or *New King James Version*.

Step 2: Study Tools. Use these to help you dig deeper. Background Information: 1) Unger's Bible Dictionary 2) Bible Dictionaries online at biblestudytools.com and blueletterbible.com. Word Studies: 1) Zodhiates' *The Complete Word Study New Testament* 2) Vine's *Complete Expository Dictionary* 3) Strong's *Dictionary of Bible Words*.

Step 3: Commentaries. Commentaries should not be used in place of studying God's Word directly, but they can give you additional insights. Some good commentaries include: J. Vernon McGee, *The Expositors Commentary*, NIV Application Commentary, H.A. Ironside, William Barclay (great for background and culture but be careful of his spiritual applications).

Step 4: Online Assistance. Should you have a specific question about the study please email your inquiry to: markn.valor@gmail.com



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OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

	↑	Jesus Ascension
		Pentecost --- Baptism of Spirit 3,000 saved
		Peter Heals Beggar 5,000 saved
		Peter and John Before Sanhedrin
		Ananias and Sapphira
		Peter and John Before Sanhedrin Again
		Seven Chosen for Ministry
		Stephen's Speech and Martyrdom
		Philip Ministry in Samaria
		Saul's Conversion
		Peter's Ministry Along Coast
		'Christian' Church in Antioch
		Herod's Persecution of Church
This Week →		Paul's First Missionary Journey
		Jerusalem Conference
		Paul's Second Missionary Journey
		Paul's Third Missionary Journey
		Paul's Arrest and Jerusalem Imprisonment
		Paul's Trials in Caesarea
		Paul's Voyage to Rome
	↓	Paul's Roman House Arrest

