

**Episode:** Acts Series No. 9

**Narrators:** Barnabas, Paul

**Primary Scriptures:** Acts 13-14

**Story Summary:** The First Missionary Journey

**Location:** Roman Empire; Antioch, Cyprus, Galatia

**Time:** 30 AD                      Death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Pentecost.

33 AD (?)                      Paul becomes a Christian

46 AD                      Barnabas and Paul's "famine" visit to Jerusalem, start of First Missionary Journey

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** Acts 13:3, 9, 36, 46, 48; 14:22-23, 27

It was about fifteen years after the resurrection of Jesus before the Christians made a determined, organized effort to take the Gospel to the ethnic groups other than the Jews, an undertaking often called the First Missionary Journey. This was possibly the first major effort by any religion to find followers among different ethnic groups and cultures in the Roman Empire.

After Barnabas and Paul took a relief offering from the church in Antioch to the church in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch. They brought John Mark, a relative of Barnabas, with them from Jerusalem.

The Holy Spirit led the church at Antioch to set apart Barnabas and Paul for a special work. The church did so, and placed hands on them after prayer and fasting. They probably didn't know where the church was sending them, only that they were to be sent.

Soon, Barnabas, Paul and John Mark were on their way to Cyprus, the first stop on the First Missionary Journey. Barnabas was probably quite familiar with the island since he was from there.

They set a pattern they would follow for many years: share the Gospel with the Jews first, then the Gentiles. This pattern also allowed them to address the God-fearers, people who knew God from staying around the synagogues, but who were unwilling to convert to Judaism.

After traversing the island of Cyprus, the three men sailed north to modern-day Turkey, where John Mark chose to abandon the other two and go back to Jerusalem. This would prove to be an important event.

Paul and Barnabas continued into the mainland of Turkey where they shared the Gospel in many places and established many churches. Their success showed that God blessed their efforts to share the Gospel to non-Jewish people. With this good news, they returned to Antioch to find out what the Holy Spirit wanted them to do next.

### Discussion Questions:

1. How long after Jesus' resurrection was the first of Paul's missionary journeys? Does that have any impact on how you think of the timing of the Church's development?
  2. How did Paul and Barnabas travel across Cyprus? What did many of the cities visited by Paul and Barnabas have in common?
  3. Who left Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey? How might this have influenced the relationship of Paul and Barnabas?
  4. What is the difference between Pisidian Antioch and Syrian Antioch?
  5. Who were the God-fearers, and why were they critical to Paul's evangelism strategy?
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1. About 15 years. 2. On a Roman road. Located on major Roman roads. 3. John Mark. strained it, Paul took over leadership from Barnabas about this time. 4. Syrian Antioch is where Paul left on the first missionary journey and was the place of an early major church; Pisidian Antioch is the location of one of the first cities visited on the first missionary journey. 5. Non-Jews who believed in God, but did not convert to Judaism. They often stayed near the synagogues and followed many of the teachings of the Jews about God, but did not become converts to Judaism.

### Application Questions:

1. The Christians in Antioch were able to hear the leading of Holy Spirit. What could you do to hear Holy Spirit better?
2. Paul's strategy was to share the Gospel with the Jews first, then the Gentiles. Try to design a strategy to share the Gospel with your friends and family.
3. Paul didn't know if he would ever be back to see the people he evangelized. If you thought you were only going to get one chance to share the Gospel with someone, how would you try to get them to talk to you? What story in your life would you use to get them to know you better. How would you share the Gospel?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. We are not told whether John Mark embarked on the Missionary Journey on his own or was instructed to go by his mother. Which way do you perceive it happened? Do you think that had an impact on his decision to quit in the middle of his task?
2. Have you ever committed to doing something without understanding all of the costs involved? What did you do when you found out it was more costly than you expected?
3. The First Missionary Journey was filled with all kinds of hardships. What kinds of hardships have you endured for the sake of following Jesus? What are you willing to endure?
4. Almost everybody probably has a memory of quitting a project that they committed to do. Have you quit a project early? How does that make you feel? Did your decision affect other people involved?