

**Sunday morning September 17<sup>th</sup> 2017 at CBC**  
**Sermon outline: Acts 13:1-12**

In Acts 13:1-12 we find these two people who leave a church to go on a mission.

We are going to look at the church they left, the people themselves, and their mission.

**[1] THE CHURCH**

Putting together the information we have there with what we are told in Acts 13, we can see three things about this church, things which can challenge us about the church here.

**[a] the church was led by the word of God**

At the start of chapter 13 our attention is drawn to five men. These were (so the narrative surely implies) the leaders of the church and as such they brought the word of God to the church, either as prophets or teachers. In other words, the church was led by the word of God.

**[b] the church was centred on the son of God**

The second thing we notice emerges back in chapter 11, hence our reading. Antioch was the first place, the first Christian community, where the word 'Christian' was used.

**[c] the church was open to the Spirit of God**

The third thing we find is that the church was clearly open to the Spirit of God. We do not know how the process unfolded by which the Spirit of God spoke, though it obviously happened within the context of worship and seeking the Lord. But what we do know is that the Spirit of God communicated his will and He

was heard and obeyed because the leaders (at least) were listening out for him and were consciously seeking Him.

## **[2] THE PEOPLE**

They were of course Barnabas and Saul and we will note two significant things about them:

### **[a] they were two, not one**

In the sending out of these two Christians, we find a principle that is visible throughout the book of Acts, namely that a Christian mission initiative should normally involve more than just one person.

### **[b] they were experienced, not novices**

The sending out of Paul and Barnabas is often seen as a model for how churches might send out missionaries and Christian workers. It is in fact the only description we really have in Acts of a church doing this. It is not always easy to work out what is an historically unique event and what is meant to provide a pattern. But if there is a pattern to follow here, then we should certainly note that neither Paul nor Barnabas were remotely novices in what they were going to do.

## **[3] THE MISSION**

What were they going to do and how were they going to do it? Interestingly, that was not stated, at least if it was we are not told.

Could it be that Paul and Barnabas had had this mission in their minds for a while and the Lord had now confirmed it?

### **[a] they would build on the foundation laid by others**

If you read Acts 13 on its own, you would assume that the visit to Cyprus was breaking new ground, in other words there had been no gospel work there before. But that is not the case! See Acts 11:19-21

### **[b] they would take advantage of open doors**

More often than not, gospel work advances through natural opportunities. For Paul and Barnabas, the natural opportunity for the gospel existed in the Jewish synagogues. They were both Jewish and they could gain acceptance, at least for a hearing of their message, in the towns where synagogues existed. So that is what they did. It was Paul's regular strategy. It was a natural opening.

### **[c] they would find a man prepared by the Lord**

The verses we are looking at focus on just one incident and one person. Luke says nothing about what happened in the Jewish synagogues. It does not mean nothing happened, (and he will have more to say about Jewish synagogues in later chapters) but it does mean he wishes to focus attention on what happened in Paphos.

You have to say that the Lord had prepared this man. And when we say that, remind ourselves that this whole mission was started not by the initiative of Paul and Barnabas, even if they had been thinking about it, but by the spirit of God. The Spirit speaks in verse 2 and sends them on their way in verse 4 and fills Saul with words to say in verse 9.

The reference to Sergius Paulus being an intelligent man is not, surely, meant to imply that the gospel is only for intelligent people – although does it sound right if we go to say that it is

also for stupid people? Can we not say that a true mark of intelligence is to want to hear the word of God?

### **[d] they would face a spiritual battle**

Saul confronts Elymas with a display of God's power. Notice that the reality of the existence of Satan is taken for granted and that there is nothing whatsoever good about the Satan and his works – *'enemy of everything that is right ... full of all kinds of deceit and trickery ... perverting the right ways of the Lord ... the hand of the Lord is against you ...'*

Saul is empowered to bring a judgement against the sorcerer which acts as a confirmation of the power of God to Sergius Paulus, who is amazed at the real power of God demonstrated before his very eyes, and he comes to faith as a result.

### **CONCLUSION**

We have looked at the church, the people and their mission.

Is CBC a church governed by the word of God, centred on the son of God, open to the Spirit of God?

Are we ready to hear the Lord, should he direct us to set people aside for mission? Would they be willing to go, would be willing to let them go?

And are we confident that where our gospel work is led by the Lord, doors will be opened, people will come to the Lord in spite of opposition, and the work that others have done before us, may indeed bear fruit before our eyes?