

Antioch—Origin of N.T. Missions

Acts 13:1-5

The concept of missions is found throughout the Bible. The Bible is not a book of theology, but rather, **a record of theology in mission**—God working to provide a way for man to be saved (2 Pet. 3:9). **Missions starts with God!**

The pattern for New Testament missions began at the Church at Antioch Acts 13. Until now, Jerusalem had been the center of ministry. But from this point on, Antioch would become the new center.

I. **The MEN of missions** (13:1-4).

➡ "Now there were *in the church...*"—God operates through the agency of the local church!

A. **SERVING** men (vs. 1-2). Men who were already actively engaged in ministry.

1. Ministry is **TO** the Lord (v. 2), not to men.

- Notice it does not say they ministered *for* the Lord, but "*they ministered **to** the Lord.*" A person can work **FOR** an employer, but not necessarily **TO** their employer.
- The most important ministry is not ministering *for* Jesus, but ministering *to* Him (Ezek. 44:10, 11, 15, 16; cf. 40:46).

2. Ministry included preaching; teaching the Bible; fasting; prayer; and ordaining workers.

B. **SEPARATED** men (vs. 1-2). Separation is "from," and "*unto*."

➡ God's call was preceded by service and fasting (v. 2). Perhaps if the church practiced fasting more often, we would see more servants called to ministry.

1. God's **call**— The call was to a specific work. They were already working (v. 1). But this was a specific work.

2. God's **choice**—Five different men are mentioned who ministered in the church: Only two were set apart for this specific

work. Some had to remain in Antioch to carry on the work there. God separated only Barnabas and Saul from among...

a) Simeon/Niger [black]. Perhaps the same Simon who carried Christ's cross (cf. Luke 23:26).

b) Lucius. How did Lucius get saved? Perhaps Simon, who bore Christ's cross, went back to Cyrene, and won his friend Lucius to Christ.

c) Manaen (foster brother of Herod who executed John the Baptist). Two men brought up together with different destinies.

➡ While every Christian is called to serve the Lord, not every Christian is called to the same field of service. Not everyone is called to be a pastor... S.S. teacher... or evangelist, etc.

C. SENT men (vs. 3-4). Missionaries must be SENT (Cf. Romans 10:13-15).

1. The **support** of the church (v. 3). How we need to pray and fast for our missionaries on the field. Laying on of hands was an expression of the church's support of Barnabas and Saul.
2. The **step** of faith (v. 4).
 - When Barnabas and Saul answered God's call, they were sure of only one thing—God called them to do a WORK. There is no indication they knew in advance exactly where that work would be. They had to step out in faith.
 - Cyprus was nearby—unevangelized— he homeland of Barnabas. From Cyprus the next logical step was the mainland of Asia Minor. Then they travel to Paul's own province of Cilicia. Finally they returning to Antioch to report.
 - The point is—First, a person surrenders to the call of missions, *then* God directs their steps. The order is: (1) Surrender to the work. (2) God directs you to the place. Too often, a person want to know where God is calling them before they surrender to answer the call.

II. The **MINISTRY of missions** (13:5-12).

- A. The WORD (vs. 5-7). The first priority of a missionary is to preach the word of God
 - 1. Sergius Paulus "*DESIRED to hear the word of God*" (v. 7).
 - 2. God will lead us to people hungry for the Word of God if we are surrendered to His guidance (v. 7 cf. v. 44 where a whole city came out hear the word of God).
- B. The WARFARE—Satan's opposition to missions (v. 8). Satan's main tactic/objective is to keep people from getting saved (Luke 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 4:14-15). Damn souls to hell!
 - Verse 10 — Not everyone is a child of God.

III. The MESSAGE of missions (13:23-24).

➡ Paul gives a bit of O.T. history leading up to the coming of Christ. There are three points:

- A. The PERSON of the message is Christ (vs. 23, 38).
- B. The PREACHING is the message of the Gospel (vs. 28-30)
- C. The PROMISE of the message is salvation and forgiveness (vs. 26, 38-39).

SUMMATION: Someone said,

- If you want to enrich your days—plant flowers.
- If you want to enrich your years—plant trees.
- If you want to enrich Eternity—plant the Gospel in the hearts of people.