

Small Group Questions | February 24, 2019

The Great Explorers — Paul Part 2

Acts 13:1–3; 19:21–20:1

Context: Acts Chapters 13–28

Other Passages Referenced: Acts 13:49; 14:22; 1 Cor 1:23–24

Sermon Recap: With a wealth of leadership, the Church at Antioch had the makings of a megachurch. However, the members realized they needed to share the gospel with outsiders rather than simply enjoy it among themselves. Paul gave his all to bear witness, openly and tirelessly, to the kingdom of God and the lordship of Jesus. Paul's **mission** was to reveal what it means that the kingdom of God has shown up in Jesus the Messiah. Paul's normal **method** was to go to the Jews first and then also to the Gentiles. Paul's **motive** was to see others enter the Kingdom and worship the King.

Background Helps

- Barnabas – We meet Barnabas for the first time in Acts 4:36–37: “³⁶Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, ³⁷ sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.” We see that his given name was Joseph, but the apostles nicknamed him Barnabas, presumably because he was a great encourager. In this case, Barnabas had sold a piece of land and was generously giving the proceeds to the apostles to meet the needs of others in the fledgling church. We next find Barnabas in Acts 9:26–28, where he comes alongside the newly converted Saul/Paul. Barnabas advocates for Saul in front of the apostles because they did not trust that Saul was really a disciple of Jesus. Later in Acts 11, Barnabas goes to the city of Tarsus to invite Saul to join him in ministry with a new church back in Antioch. This is the Barnabas we find in this week's focal passage in Acts 13:1–3.
- Simeon – This Simeon is only mentioned in Acts 13:1 and 15:14. Simeon appears to have been nicknamed *Niger*, which is the Latin word for “black” or “dark.” Simeon was most likely dark-skinned.
- Lucius of Cyrene – Cyrene was a city in Northern Africa, in what is today Libya. This Lucius is mentioned here and in Rom 16:21 where he is noted among others with Paul who send greetings to the Roman Christians.
- Manaen – The ESV says Manaen was a lifelong friend of Herod the Tetrarch, the regional puppet king of Caesar in Jerusalem. Some other versions say, “reared with Herod.” The literal Greek translation is “suckled by the same nursemaid.” Manaen grew up in a position of influence and in the house of the half-Jewish king.
- Antioch – There were 16 different cities named “Antioch” named in honor of the Seleucid King Antiochus. We should note that there are two different cities named Antioch in Acts 13. The first, Syrian Antioch, is where the church in Antioch sent out Saul and Barnabas. The Church at Antioch is the first church mentioned in a Gentile city and also the first church to intentionally send out missionaries to the Gentiles. What was Syrian Antioch is now part of southeastern Turkey. The second Antioch mentioned later in Acts 13:13–52 is known as Pisidian Antioch. It was a Roman military and administrative capital in what was then Asia Minor and is now part of western Turkey.
- Iconium – “At Iconium, Paul and Barnabas encountered a cultural amalgam—native Phrygians whose ancestors had occupied the area from ancient times, Greeks and Jews who dated back to the Seleucid period (312–65 B.C.), and Roman colonists whose presence dated from more recent times. Geographically it was the most ideal place for human settlement in an otherwise desolate area, and there is evidence for a town there from ancient times right down to the present.”¹

Hook: *Pick a Question to Help Ignite Conversation*

¹ John B. Polhill, [Acts](#), vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 310.

If you've ever been on a mission trip, where did you go and what did you do? If you've never been on a mission trip, where might you like to go and what might you like to do?

Is there something you do where you put your all into it (you give tirelessly)?

Look:

READ ACTS 13:1–3 – Sending of a Mission Team from the Church in Antioch

1. Manaen is mentioned only this one time in the Bible. Simeon and Lucius are mentioned a couple of times as companions of Paul. Discuss why Luke may have made sure their names were included in Acts 13:1.
2. What is the significance of the two mentions of fasting in these verses? Does anyone have something to share about a personal experience with fasting for God's direction and/or empowerment?

READ ACTS 14:1–7 – The Mission Team Experience at Iconium

3. What was the response to the preaching of Paul and Barnabas at the synagogue in Iconium?
4. How do Paul and Barnabas respond to the polarization between those interested in hearing the message and those who vehemently opposed it?

Illustrations:

Illustrations and quotes can be found on the "Sermon Slides" link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org

Took: *Applying the message to our lives.*

Practical Applications

1. We are sometimes encouraged to share the gospel so that people can be saved and go to heaven—a human-focused motive. John Piper gives a different perspective that is more God-focused when he says, "Mission exists because worship doesn't." What motivates you to tell non-Christians about the Kingdom of God and the lordship of Jesus?
2. Do you have a method or pattern you use in sharing the message of salvation?
3. Would you pray for the opportunity to share the good news about Jesus with a specific person in the coming weeks? If you already have a name in mind, share the name with other group members so that the group can mutually support one another in prayer for the names of those who have not yet embraced the gospel.
4. Would the group be open to fasting as needs for direction and God's power as situations come up? If fasting from food is a health concern, consider fasting from something else like television, telephone, sugar, etc.

Prayer: Please spend time praying for one another and for the names of those members hope to see receive the gospel and King Jesus.