

The Birth of Mission – Acts 13:1-12

1. Matthew 28:18-20 – The Mission of the church

- The Author of Mission – Christ has all authority and we must obey.
- The Aim of Mission - to make disciples by going, baptizing and teaching.
- The Scope of Mission – all nations and people groups.
- The Success of Mission – he will be with us to the end of the age.

2. They were Convinced of their Call

- This was a defining point in history.
 - ⇒ Acts 1-12 - Peter is central and the church is re-active in mission.
 - ⇒ Acts 13-28 - Paul is central and the church is pro-active in mission.
- Mission grew out of the church at Antioch with its cosmopolitan leadership and passion to know God's will (13:1-3).
 - ⇒ *They were called by God* – God the Holy Spirit called (13:2) them and sent them (13:4). When things got tough it was important that they knew this.
 - ⇒ *They were sent by the church* – God's direction comes through the church (13:2). Laying on hands shows that the church identifies with them (13:3). God's hand is gloved with human instruments. What is your part in world mission?

3. They were Clear in their Strategy

- ***How?*** They work as a team (13:4-5). Jesus expected that it would take a team to build his church.
- ***Where?*** They were not “plan-less”. They focused on cities where there were large concentrations of people. Salamis and Paphos are the two key cities on Cyprus (13:4-6). They also went to their neighbours and reached them first.
- ***Who?*** They were broad in their appeal – reaching out to everyone who would listen (13:5, 42-44, 49). However they were also ready for God to direct them to specific individuals – like Sergius Paulus – who God had been preparing (13:7).

4. They were Confident in their Method

- ***The Word was proclaimed*** – the first missionaries follow the common pattern in Acts – they proclaim the message of salvation (13:5). They are ambassadors who preach the death and resurrection of Christ.
- ***The Word was resisted*** – Elymas is a magician and false prophet. He was probably the court astrologer. His other name – Bar Jesus – means “son of salvation” (13:6,8). He offers a false hope to the pagan consul. He is a tool in Satan's hand to pervert the gospel and prevent the consul from hearing the word (13:8).
 - ⇒ Satan's purpose is to separate us from God
 - ⇒ Satan's method is to undermine our confidence in God's word. This was his purpose and method from the beginning (Genesis 3).
- ***The Word was triumphant*** – Paul confronts Elymas and the blinding of his physical eyes is symbolic of the blindness of his spiritual understanding (13:10-11). The result is that Sergius Paulus is convinced that the words of the missionaries are from the true God and he listens to them. He is amazed not at the miracle, but at the message (13:12).