

Explore the Bible: September 1

Sent • Acts 13:1-12

By Becky Brown



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Acts 1: Jesus goes up.

Acts 2: Holy Spirit comes down.

Acts 3-28: People go out!

Our lesson title "Sent" fits all three points. God SENT Jesus.

Jesus came miraculously, lived sinlessly, died sacrificially and rose from the grave victoriously. As He departed for the throne room of His Father, Jesus promised the SENDING of the Holy Spirit. Jesus would then SEND believers accompanied by the Holy Spirit who would dwell inside them, providing the power they needed to share the gospel.

So far in Acts, you have seen: the ascension of Jesus; the beginning of the church in Jerusalem; the selection of Matthias to replace Judas; the infilling of the Holy Spirit; Peter's first sermon; three thousand new baptized believers; healing of a lame man; five thousand more believers; Peter and John arrested for their faith in Jesus; the encouragement ministry of Mister Barnabas; death of the first two real estate agents, Ananias and Sapphira; and the selection of the first deacons.

The death of Stephen the deacon by stoning introduced us to the "Coat Hanger," Mister Saul of Tarsus. Persecution of the early believers had begun in earnest. Mister Saul was one of the most dedicated persecutors of The Way. A sorcerer named Simon in Samaria was saved. A eunuch from Ethiopia was saved. Saul was saved while on the road to Damascus to destroy more believers. Barnabas, the son of encouragement befriended Saul.

The Holy Spirit directs Peter to meet with Cornelius in Caesarea beside the Med Sea. Peter learns that ALL men need the gospel, not only the Jews. The definition of "unclean" now takes on a new meaning. The gospel goes global! The Holy Spirit is poured out among the Gentiles. God loves everyone! Barnabas brings Saul to the church family at Antioch. They work for a year together there.

The first disciple to be martyred for faith in Jesus is James the brother of John. Peter is arrested UH-gin. He never needed a bail bondsman. God set him free. Saul and Barnabas took an offering to the church in Jerusalem from the church in Antioch. While there, they picked up a relative of Barnabas

named John Mark and returned to Antioch. At the end of Acts 12, the stage is being set for the next SENDING...

In Acts 13, there is a sending out service at Antioch. Men who were being disciplined and trained were serving in the church. People in the church witnessed their growth, sensing spiritually that God was preparing them to launch like an arrow. They knew the gospel in Jerusalem and Antioch needed to spread worldwide. Jesus had modeled the gospel with His life. He gave them a strategic outreach "map" on the day of His ascension forty days after the resurrection. Concentrically with intentionality, they were to begin in Jerusalem, move through Judea, saturate Samaria, and literally bleed all the way to the ends of the Earth.

Barnabas and Saul, who were already being faithful at home (read that phrase again), were chosen to represent Jesus to the world. We are ALL called to serve. Others experienced a life call from the Lord. Those were the ones that were selected to be sent out. I well remember the Lord calling me into a full time ministry of Bible teaching. My church family in New Orleans who knew my heart, affirmed that call of God on my life by praying for me, laying hands on my shoulders, and sending me out through a commissioning service in November 1999.

The Antioch folks were doing their part daily ministering to the Lord, praying, and fasting to know His will so they could do it. Our willing, immediate obedience surely makes God smile. When we stay in touch with Him, we know what He want us to do. Acts 13:4 reveals the true "sender" was the Holy Spirit. We win victories when we follow the call of God.

They took John Mark with them. Cyprus was their first stop, the home of Barnabas. Their first convert was a Roman officer named Sergius Paulus. A magician was interfering. By the power of God, Saul Paul rendered the magician blind. Paul was rendered blind immediately after his salvation experience.

Could Paul have possibly thought, "...well, now that he is blind, could he truly begin to see!?!"

God does the calling and the sending. Will we follow?

Brown leads LittleBrownLight Ministries.