**Acts 13:1**

\*The aftermath of another persecution of the Jerusalem Baptist Church brought blessings upon Baptists

as *“the word of God”* (13x) grew with *“free course”* (cf. II Thes. 3:1) with the escape of Peter and death of Herod. In the meantime, Barnabas and Saul delivered the offering to the Jerusalem church and returned to Antioch with John Mark (Acts 12:24-25). The Lord blessed JBC with finances and freedom!

\*The Lord shifted the movement of the Great Commission to the second great church, Antioch Baptist Church, loaded with experienced servants (c. AD 46) with the targets of Cyprus and Asia.

\*Apostles, prophets, and teachers (cf. Eph. 4:11) built up the assembly, including Barnabas (Shemite), Simeon Niger (Hamite), Lucius of Cyrene (Hamite), Manaen (Shemite), and Saul (Shemite). They gave seminary level instruction, and did not just teach the doctrine of church planting they were willing to practice it. No empire building here!

**Acts 13:2**

\*These active church ministers purposefully re-located from Jerusalem, Tarsus, Africa, etc., to Antioch for the propagation of Gospel truth around the known world.

\*As they were involved in the church service teaching and fasting, the Holy Ghost *“said”* (probably through a prophet preaching the Great Commission!) *“Separate* (to) *me Barnabas and Saul.”* The Lord selected two men by name for a specific field. The specific will of God is known through the Word in the church service by the Spirit (cf. Acts 9:15-19)!

\*The specific *“work whereunto I have called them”* was the Great Commission of evangelism, baptism, and catechism or CHURCH PLANTING! He did not call them to be merely “soul winners” or to start “para-church” ministries, but to start independent and autonomous churches like the Antioch and Jerusalem Baptist Churches! The only unity these churches would have would be around church truth.

**Acts 13:3**

\*The calling and sending of these two *“apostles”* (Acts 14:14) was spiritual and simple! The assembly had *“fasted and prayed”* (cf. Neh. 1:4), laid hands on (cf. Acts 6:6), and sent them out (also v. 4).

\*Scripture gives principles for church planting. 1) “Missionaries” were called and sent from the membership of Baptist assemblies. 2) They had been proven as faithful church members. 3) They were approved by the assembly after prayer and fasting. 4) They started autonomous churches and reported back to home church. 5) The ABC had resources (Acts 11:29-30) but chose not to support financially (Phil. 4:15-17). Paul financed himself and Barnabas probably used personal wealth (cf. 4:36-37). 6) The ABC was the “Mission Agency.” 7) The plan was to start house churches; they did not need “church buildings” to have a church! 8) The churches they planted were to be Self-Governing, Self-Financing, and Self-Evangelizing (the “3-Selfs”). 9) Paul and Barnabas trained nationals to start churches in foreign lands. 10) The Antioch Baptist Church nor her missionaries “owned” the churches they started, nor the property, nor the building facilities.

\*The Book of Acts gives Two Models for church planting. 1) The First Model is the Persecution Model in the Case Study of Philip who left Jerusalem because of persecution and started a church in his home with his family (Acts 8:5 ff.). The Second Model is the Purposeful Model in the Case Study of the Antioch Baptist Church purposefully, planning, and planting Baptist assemblies in locations, meeting immediately in homes of believers. Para-church Bible colleges, seminaries, and mission boards have no biblical authority to train, ordain, expect support, or send out missionaries, nor to plant churches!

**Acts 13:4**

\*Who sent out Barnabas and Saul for Baptist church planting? The Scripture is clear that the Holy Ghost sent out the church planters through the instrumentality of the members of the Antioch Baptist Church. The Lord’s Baptist assemblies work in harmony with Heaven (Mt. 16:18-19; 18:15-20).

\*The trio (including John Mark) went 16 miles west to the Syrian city Seleucia (“white light”) and then on to the homeland of Barnabas (Acts 4:26). As Saul had a burden for his homeland of Tarsus so likewise Barnabas for his people. The First Missionary Journey started about AD 46.

**Acts 13:5**

\*Luke gave basic details concerning the major city of Salamis (“salt”) on east end of Cyprus, where they preached the word of God in Synagogues to the Jews, and had the nephew of Barnabas, John Mark, who joined the Antioch Baptist Church and had gone with them. He may have had the proclivity to evangelize Gentiles since his Gospel was directed toward them (Mk. 7:1-5).

**Acts 13:6-7**

\*The trio went to the west end of Cyprus and continued the Great Commission in the large city Paphos (“boiling”). Their practice was to start churches in major cities and then have them reach out to surrounding areas. Here, archeology discovered the statue of Venus, called *Paphian Venus*. This place was teeming with demon-possessed sorcerers such as this *magos* (cf. II Cor. 4:4). They encountered the first satanic hindrance (cf. I Thes. 2:18) in the Jewish false prophet named *Bar-Jesus* (“Son of Joshua”).

\*The false prophet associated himself with the deputy of the country Sergius Paulus, no doubt hoping to influence the populace with occultism. Sergius was a *“prudent”* (*sunetos* > wise) who wanted to hear the word of God from the missionaries. Leaders like Herod Antipas wanted to hear Jesus (Lk. 23:8).

**Acts 13:8**

\*Another fact about the sorcerer was his other name *Elymas* (“powerful”) as Luke focused on double names (Sergius Paulus and Saul Paul). He *“withstood”* (imperfect tense [cf. II Tim. 3:8]) the missionaries, not wanting to lose his devotee/money to the Christian faith (Jude 1:11; II Pet. 2:15).

**Acts 13:9-11**

\*At this critical time in the history of the evangelization of the Gentile world in Asia and Europe, Satan threw his best/worst opponent at the called and commissioned missionaries. The spiritual battle was set in array; true prophet against false prophet! Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost (Eph. 5:18); Elymas was full of subtilty and mischief. The Lord’s man, means, and message was ready for spiritual warfare.

\*With eyes, mouth, and heart ready, Paul scathingly denounced Satan’s man as a *“child of the devil”* and “*enemy of all righteousness”* who perverted *“the right ways of the Lord.”*His last assertion was in the form of a question as a rebuke but also as a final call for repentance.

\*With the *“discerning of spirits”* (I Cor. 12:10), Paul imprecated Elymas with the curse of the judgmental *“hand of the Lord”* upon him for precise but limited judgment (see Acts 9:8-18).

\*His physical blindness typified his spiritual blindness. Immediately he was engulfed with *“a mist”* (II Pet. 2:17) and *“a darkness.”* The gracious Lord gave Elymas a foretaste of his eternal future if no repentance: *“But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Mt. 8:12), including unquenchable fire (Mk. 9:43-48).

**Acts 13:12**

\*The deputy believed the Lord’s doctrine, having seen the miracle judgment (Jn. 20:30; II Cor. 12:12).

**Acts 13:13**

\*Having ministered in the homeland of Barnabas, the trio left towards the homeland of “Paul of Tarsus.” The trip to Perga in Pamphylia from Paphos was about 105 miles. Presumably a church was planted in Perga, being one of the churches of Southern Galatia (Gal. 1:2).

\*Luke revealed personal dynamics within the missionary team. Whereas Mark’s uncle was the elder believer and head of the team, the writer phrased the group as *“Paul and his company”* (literally “those around Paul”)! Paul quickly took over the team (see him with *Elymas* [v.8])!

\*Apparently, Paul’s gift of prophecy (I Cor. 13:2) overshadowed Barnabas’ gift of exhortation (Acts 4:36) and John Mark was offended! (**Pastoral note**: of course, other church members offend you with their respective gift: recognize you need their gift [I Cor. 12:25]. Do you ever offend anyone?!).

\*At the harbor city of Perga, John Mark abandoned the missionaries and the mission! This spiritually tragic decision had long time ramifications for young Mark, and later Barnabas had to encourage him back into the Lord’s will (Acts 15:36-40) where he eventually wrote his Gospel, after receiving Paul’s commendation about 20 years later (II Tim. 4:11)! Paul offended Mark’s gift of “service” (Mk. 10:45)!

\*John Mark returned to the Jerusalem Baptist Church. This seems to demonstrate that Mark had weak ecclesiological knowledge since he was answerable to the Antioch Baptist Church, and spiritual immaturity and lack of character. He should have received church discipline for this public sin. Did any church censure come? Presumably he repented of his sin and received forgiveness, even from Paul!

**Acts 13:14-15**

\*Luke’s interest was not in personal dynamics at this point, but in the biblical pattern that the missionaries developed. First, they went to a major city which was the seat of military and civil authority—Antioch of Pisidia (cf. Acts 14:24). Second, they located the place where the *Tanak* was read—the Synagogue. Third, they evangelized on the day of Jewish worship—Saturday.

\*They sat down until the Scripture was read and were given the invitation to expound with *“any word of exhortation”* (see further explanation). The duo knew that the *Tanak* pointed to the Lord Jesus (Lk. 24:44), and that Paul was always on the *“ready”* to preach the Gospel (Rom. 1:15).

\*Since Paul was trained by the tanakian scholar Gamaliel, he could take any passage and preach Christ!

\*He took all of the figures, examples, shadows, and types of the *Tanak* and eventually wrote his *“the word of exhortation”* in what became known as the *Book of Hebrews* (Heb. 13:22)! This became the manual for Jewish evangelism and sent it to the Jerusalem Baptist Church (c. AD 65). Although the mention of *Melchisedec* occurs only in the *Book of Hebrews* (9x [see also in the *Tanak*: Gen. 14:18; Ps. 110:4]), he no doubt constantly alluded to this True High Priest, fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth!

**Acts 13:16-17**

\*The Apostle Paul stood up and made a hand gesture (cf. also Acts 21:40; 26:1), getting everyone’s attention. He addressed the duo audience of the *“Men of Israel”* and the God fearers (Gentiles such as Cornelius [Acts 10:2].) His authority was the Scripture; he did not employ pulpiteerism, theatrics, gimmicks, props, or the *“excellency of speech or of wisdom”* (I Cor. 2:1)! Exposition needs no help!

\*He followed the pattern of the Lord (Lk. 4:15-21), of Peter (Acts 1:16-20), and of Stephen (Acts 7:2-53) by giving a theological-historical presentation of the *Tanak*! Basically, he started with the beginning of the nation, deliverance from Egypt, the Wilderness, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Saul, David, the seed of David in Jesus, John the Baptist, the life, death, burial, resurrection of Jesus, and the final warning!

**Acts 13:18-19**

\*The scholar of Israel, Paul of Tarsus, gave summary statements of Jewish history, starting with the exodus from Egypt and Jehovah’s great power for their deliverance (v. 17). The LORD suffered the manners of the Jews, including their rejection of miracles for the basic needs of the 2-3 million, including the supply of daily water (Ex. 17:6) and food (Ex. 16:35), preservation of clothing (Dt. 8:4), and protection from enemies (Ex. 17:8-13). See also Neh. 9:19-21.

\*Step by step, the Apostle summarized the Book of Joshua concerning the destruction of the Canaanite nations (Josh. 3:10) and the dividing of the Promised Land allotments (Josh. 23:3 ff.).

**Acts 13:20-21**

\*Apparently, Paul included in the four hundred and fifty years the time in Egypt, the wilderness, and the ten years of conquering Canaan under Joshua. He knew that *“the LORD raised up judges”* (Jdg. 2:16) until Samuel who bridged the period between judges and the monarchy with King Saul.

\*His *“word of exhortation”* moved in the direction of King Saul to King David to King Jesus. Paul did not get sidetracked with Jewish *minutia* except to notice his namesake *“Saul”* from his tribe of *“Benjamin”* (Phil. 3:5) served forty years (BTW, Paul served about 35 years).

**Acts 13:22-23**

\*In his theological history, the Apostle Paul focused on the removal of the people’s choice (I Sam. 15:23-28) and the new replacement David. With great versatility of the *Tanak*, Paul targummed two passages, citing Ps. 89:20 (*“I have found David”*) and I Sam. 13:14 (*“a man after his own heart”*).

\*Paul presented the importance of royal kingship for the Jewish nation, and condensed all of the prophecies concerning the Saviour-King in the person of Jesus (II Sam. 7:12-16). He compressed the tanakian promises to David which no doubt included *“The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne”* (Ps. 132:11; see also Isa. 11:1, 10; Jer. 23:5-6; Zech. 3:8). Paul punned on *“Saviour, Jesus”* since “Jesus” means “Jehovah saves.”

\*Furthermore, the Seed Promise through the woman (Gen. 3:15) would have to find fulfillment within the specific parameters saturating the *Tanak*. Such would include *via* the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10), through the virgin birth (Isa. 7:14; Jer. 31:22), according to the timetable of Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27), concerning the *“desire of women”* (Dan. 11:35) in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2).

\*The Apostle expanded on known truth to the Jewish people of the first century, such as the lineage of Jesus from David (Mt. 1:1-17), the fulfillment of the *Tanak* in the birth of Jesus (Mt. 1:21-23), His *“Star”* (Mt. 2:2; Num. 24:17), His title as *“Nazarene”* (Mt. 2:23), the testimony of *“God was manifest in the flesh”* (I Tim. 3:16), His miraculous ministry in fulfillment of Isa. 61:1-2, and His death, burial, and resurrection (Jn. 19:30 ff.). Also, Paul preached that Christ was the *“Seed”* of Abraham (Gal. 3:16).

**Acts 13:24-25**

\*All knew of the person of John the Baptist who baptized thousands, and had demanded the *“fruits meet for repentance”* (Mt. 3:1-8). He came abruptly and initiated the Gospel era or *“Baptist Church Dispensation”* (Mk. 1:1-4). Paul declared that Christianity *“was not done in a corner”* (Acts 26:26).

\*The bold Baptist had an exclusive but short ministry declaring that he was not the Messiah but that he did indeed point to Jesus of Nazareth and declared *“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”* (Jn. 1:29, 36).

\*Thus, the apostle gave the theological history of Jesus the Saviour from the Exodus to the Baptist!