



## Approaching God

Read this portion of Psalm 24 and begin with an opening prayer

*The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters. Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God their Savior.*

(Psalm 24:1-4)

The joyful confidence imparted to us by a good creation is matched by an immense responsibility to live as loved creatures. Our inner (heart) and outer (hands) life are aspects of a single discipleship that responds to God's trustworthiness. Take a moment to remember God's sovereign trustworthiness.

## Acts 13:1-12

**Passage Introduction: Paul & Barnabas are Commissioned**

Luke now comes to a turning point in his story. Here we are at the start of an extraordinary triple journey which will take Paul across Turkey and Greece and back again, then again once more, and finally off to Rome itself. We would prefer the story to be one of gentle persuasion rather than confrontation. We would like it better if Paul had gone about telling people the simple message of Jesus and finding that people were happy to accept it and live by it. But there is no advance for the gospel without opposition. Christian mission is about the radical transformation of life, something which was already happening all over the place in the early chapters of Acts.

## Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

**Start with Engaging the Text:** Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.

### **Vs. 6-10**

Bar-Jesus was a magician (Gk. magos), similar to Simon (8:9-13), and a Jew. He was also a false prophet. Paul's subsequent characterization of him as a "son of the devil" suggests that his "magic" was assisted by demonic powers.

**Acts 13:1-12 - 1** Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. **2** While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." **3** So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

**4** The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. **5** When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper. **6** They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, **7** who was

Magic in antiquity was practiced by both pagan and Jewish people with the goals of healing diseases, bringing physical blessings, cursing or otherwise harming others, and guarding against both curses and demons. Magicians also claimed to foretell the future.

an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. **8** But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. **9** Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, **10** “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? **11** Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.” Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. **12** When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

## Questions for Reflection & Meditation

- What are 2 or 3 things you observe about God the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit in this passage?
- How would you characterize the church at Antioch?
- How does Paul respond to the sorcerer/magician that he meets on Cyprus? What are the results?

## Key Takeaway:

Choose the verse or truth that is most striking and/or helpful to you today. Paraphrase the thought or verse in your own words.

## Close in Prayer:

Pray that you and the church family at KCP would creatively respond to the cafeteria of spiritual options people prefer these days. Ask God to help us as a church speak with truth and love as we look to share the gospel in word and deed in our community.