

# Acts 13-14

Some time ago I had a long conversation with someone who was an atheist, who simply couldn't understand why I could be a Christian. To him that was nonsense - that an intelligent, thinking person could be so backward and almost stupid for believing in God. It was incomprehensible to him. At the end of the conversation he had moved from being an atheist to being an agnostic. That was a huge change and was the first step towards the possibility that there actually was a God. People come to faith sometimes over a long period of time and in many steps.

Have you ever tried to explain the Good News of the gospel to someone? If so, what did you include in that explanation and what did you leave out? Obviously we cannot include everything and so we have to shape what we say to suit the person we are speaking to. We have to build a bridge to "where they are at". Of course that is difficult if we don't know them but if we do we can build on what we might know about their beliefs and their world-view. Eventually though, we (like Paul) need to leave that person with something of a challenge, even if all that is, is to challenge them to think more or to find out more. With such steps, people come to faith.

## Read Acts 13.1-12

What does vv.1-3 tell us about the church in Antioch?  
Why do you think that Paul and Barnabas headed first for Cyprus?  
What was Sergius Paulus, the proconsul, impressed with and why?

## Read Acts 13.13-25

What sad thing happened in Perga and is this the end of the story for John Mark?  
What is Paul's message to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch?  
What does Paul include in his speech and what does he leave out?

## Read Acts 13.26-43

In his speech, what is Paul's most important point?  
How does he back it up that would make sense to his hearers?  
What is the challenge that he gives?  
What is the result of that?

## Read Acts 13.44-52

The following week there is more of a reaction - why is this?  
What does Paul do as a result and how does he justify this?  
Again - what happens because of this?

## Read Acts 14.1-7

Again - what happens here and why is this becoming a pattern?

## Read Acts 14.8-20

Explain what is going on in Lystra?  
What is Paul trying to talk about in this presentation of the gospel?  
What else do you think he would have wanted to say if he had not been stoned?

## Read Acts 14.21-28

What do Paul and Barnabas do next and why is this so important?  
Finally, after such a lengthy missionary trip what do they do?

Reflect on the way that Paul built bridges to be able to share the Good News.