

Acts 13

Acts 13:1-3

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

This is the section of Acts where the gospel goes to the entire world. As gospel moves beyond the boundaries of Israel—Paul becomes the predominant leader.

In Acts 12:25—we see Barbabas, Saul and John Mark are all in Antioch after delivering their gift to Jerusalem.

- The church in Jerusalem had not demonstrated being a 'missionary church'—Christians moved out based on personal circumstances or persecution—rather than vision for the Kingdom.
- Church in Antioch had a missionary vision.
- This gives great insight into the church 'gathered'—ministering to Him—waiting for the Holy Spirit to give inspired direction. This is different than ministering to people (worship, praise, prayer, waiting, obeying).
- Simeon—called Niger: means 'black'—possibly the Simeon who carried cross for Jesus (Lu 23:26)
- Manean—grew up with the Herod who had beheaded John the Baptist (Lu 23:7-12)
- Separate to Me—can't say yes to God without saying no to other things.
- They find that God wants to send two of their key leaders elsewhere. These were probably the most gifted/able men in the congregation. Consider Eph 2:10 in light of this.
- A larger picture of Saul's call is found in Acts 9:15-16
- To make inroads in the enemy's territory—must know that you have been sent by the Holy Spirit.
- Fasted/prayed: this vision required a complete dependence on God.

Acts 13:4-5

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they reached Salamis, they *began* to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they also had John as their helper.

- Sent out by Holy Spirit—first known missionary effort of the church.
- Seleucia—on coast—port of Antioch
- Paul always used Jewish synagogues as a springboard from which he shared the gospel.
- Acts 11:19—missionary workers have already been in Cyprus.
- John Mark—mentioned in Acts 12:25—grew up in Jerusalem—eyewitness to many events in the life of Jesus.
- Cyprus—home of Barnabas—Acts 4:36
- Salamis—east end of Cyprus

Acts 13:6-8

And when they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas the magician (for thus his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

- Paphos—south end of Cyprus—the capital
- When they arrived—they met two people: the Roman governor and a local magician.
- In Paphos—they encounter opposition (resistance should not be perceived as a closed door) by the evil one.
- This is a city known for its immorality. Saul and Barnabus face serious immorality and spiritual darkness here. The people here worship Venus—the goddess of sexual love—the deification of lust. Her shrine defiled both mind and character.
- Proconsul: one who is responsible for an entire province—answerable to Roman Senate. All Roman Provinces were divided into two categories: those that required troops and those who were ruled by Roman Senate—through Proconsuls.
- When a new work of God begins—you can expect opposition—problems—difficulty—opposition.

- Sergius Paulus is under demonic influence.
- Bar-jesus=Elymas

Acts 13:9-12

But Saul, who was also *known as Paul*, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him, and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? "And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.

- Saul was a Hebrew name. To the Greeks—the word, 'saulos'=an adjective describing someone walking or behaving in an effeminate manner. The name 'Paul' means: small or little—could be he changed his name as an act of humility. (interesting to note that first convert here is named 'Paulus')
- Paul recognized the true nature of his opposition and addresses this with full authority. Speaks from discernment/word of knowledge—rebukes and pronounces judgment.
- Elymas was already in spiritual darkness—now placed in physical darkness as well (sound familiar?)
- Sign gifts are given as Paul opposes the sorcerer.
- Proconsul is not only amazed at the teaching—but the power accompanying it.

Acts 13:13:13-15

Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John left them and returned to Jerusalem. But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, "Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it."

- Paul's leadership is evident

- Not much shared here about John Mark's departure. We find out later that he deserted the work (his mom was a prominent member of Jerusalem church—church met at her house). This is the one who would later write the Gospel of Mark.
- Perga—a coastal, harbor city in Turkey
- Antioch Pisidia—135 miles inland—generally known as Galatia—somewhat mountainous—elevation:3,600 feet. (about 200 miles from Tarsus).
- First century synagogue service followed a customary order: opening prayer—reading from the Law—reading from the Prophets—educated people were then invited to comment on the readings.
- Paul's first recorded sermon.

Acts 13:16-21

And Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand, he said,

“Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: “The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. “And for a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. “And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance—*all of which took* about four hundred and fifty years. “And after these things He gave *them* judges until Samuel the prophet. “And then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

- Paul begins by recounting Israel's history—his audience would be familiar with what he begins to lay out.
- Jews as well as gentile proselytes are present.
- In chapter 7—as Stephen rehearses history—he focuses on Abraham, Joseph and Moses. Paul will focus on Saul and David as well. In sharing story of Saul and David—shows that Israel had to wait for its' true king.
- It takes time to unfold the purposes of God. To review their history allows them to observe God's hand. History shows that God has a plan for Israel.
- Once he has made this their story—he introduces Jesus.

Acts 13:22-25

“And after He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, ‘I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.’ “From the offspring of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. “And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, ‘What do you suppose that I am? I am not *He*. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.’

- What God has promised to Israel—He fulfills
- Message came to Israel first—but was intended for the world (Ps 2, 72,89)
- All signposts from David to John the Baptist point to Jesus.
- The sacred words that God gave to David are being fulfilled (Messiah must come from him).
- Shows how Israel both received and rejected Jesus—John the Baptist responded the right way—put himself in submission to Jesus

Acts 13:26-31

“Brethren, sons of Abraham’s family, and those among you who fear God, to us the word of this salvation is sent out. “For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled *these* by condemning *Him*. “And though they found no ground for *putting Him to death*, they asked Pilate that He be executed. “And when they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. “But God raised Him from the dead; and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people.

- Core of his message is the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- Those who did not know Him—and thought that they knew the scriptures—rejected Him.
- Deut 21:22-23: Jesus was cursed—so we could be blessed—Gal 3:13

Acts 13:32-37

"And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'THOU ART MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE.' "And as for *the fact* that He raised Him up from the dead, no more to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY *and SURE blessings* OF DAVID.'"Therefore He also says in another *Psalms*, 'THOU WILT NOT ALLOW THY HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.' "For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay; but He whom God raised did not undergo decay.

- Jesus never underwent decay—sign that He was without corruption.
- Resurrection means that Jesus is the unique Son of God
- Ps 2:7—does not refer to the birth of Jesus—but to the resurrection
- His work of the cross is holy—Ps 16:10
- These promises sit in the context of Is 53-54...there is a Chosen One who will accomplish God's will so all may drink.
- Paul focuses on actual events that took place—rather than argue points of doctrine. Christianity is a proclamation of facts that concern what God has done.

Acts 13:38-41

"Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses. "Take heed therefore, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon *you*:

**'BEHOLD, YOU SCOFFERS, AND MARVEL, AND PERISH;
FOR I AM ACCOMPLISHING A WORK IN YOUR DAYS,
A WORK WHICH YOU WILL NEVER BELIEVE, THOUGH
SOMEONE SHOULD DESCRIBE IT TO YOU.'"**

- Jesus has ability to justify—Moses did not
- Paul speaks the same message—in part—that Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost.
- Scriptures spoke of coming Messiah—being rejected by His people.

- The new work of God is about forgiveness of sins—for all people—Israel must be converted to God as well.
- Habakkuk 1:5, 2:4
- If we fail to embrace the full work of Jesus—we are mockers/despisers who will perish. Sin must be judged if not atoned for through Christ.

Acts 13:42-43

And as Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. Now when *the meeting of* the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.

- Many of the Jews/proselytes responded favorably

Acts 13:44-48

And the next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy, and *began* contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. "For thus the Lord has commanded us,

'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU SHOULD BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.'"

And when the Gentiles heard this, they *began* rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

- Whole city assembled—to hear the word of God.
- Opposition is introduced through envy.
- The One who will put God's plan for Israel into effect—will not only effect the tribes of Israel—but be a light to the nations
- Eternal life--the 'life of the age to come'—experienced now
- Message now is directed to gentiles—Rom 1:16, Is 49:6
- This church is birthed in about a week.

Acts 13:49-52

And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. But the Jews aroused the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust of their feet *in protest* against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

- Though there is revival—opposition is great enough that Paul and Barnabas move on.
- Jews have the same indignant response that Paul had initially—it is a righteous zeal concerning all that they had embraced as Jews (Gal 1:14, Phil 3:6, Rom 10:2)
- Shook dust off feet—Luke 10:11

Acts Chapter Thirteen—Workbook

Key Words:

Harmonize:

Read Matthew 3:7 and Luke 3:7—when do these verses indicate it is appropriate to verbally confront?

Dig:

- 1) Who were the prophets and teachers in Antioch? How did they function together? What do we know about them?
- 2) What does 'ministering to the Lord' mean?
- 3) What is the Lord's response to this prayer time?
- 4) What does the Holy Spirit ask the church to do?
- 5) Who is on this first missionary journey?
- 6) How is Elymas described? What effect has he had on Sergius Paulus?
- 7) What spiritual gift is functioning as Saul confronts Elymas?
- 8) When does Paul go through a name change?
- 9) What do we know from verse 16—as Paul greets the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch?

10) What Old Testament leaders does Paul speak of in his sermon? Why are they important? Is there anyone left out of this list that is unusual?

11) What Old Testament verses are used to support the resurrection of Jesus?

12) What happens to John Mark on this trip?

Discuss:

- 1) How willing is the church to confront sin or spiritual strongholds that have a grip on a region?
- 2) Discuss what took place between verses 43-44. What conditions would allow such a response to take place?
- 3) How has jealousy interrupted the work of the church? How can this be exposed and dealt with?

Point of Prayer:

Pray for those who serve in our government and military.

Integrate:

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

Application:

- 1) How have you learned to minister to the Lord during your times of prayer?
- 2) Do you have a regular practice of fasting? How has fasting contributed to your ability to hear/discern the voice of the Lord?
- 3) Who has recognized the giftings in your life and encouraged and blessed you?
- 4) If you were 'sent out' by the Lord for ministry—is there a place you would desire to go? Is there a place that you hope He doesn't send you?
- 5) Have you encountered an obvious spiritual stronghold as you engaged in ministry? What was it? How did you respond?
- 6) Would you ever be willing to confront someone like Paul does in verses 9-11? Why or why not?
- 7) Have you experienced the kind of hunger for the Word of God described in verses 42-45? Have you experienced persecution for your faith lately?