

'Acts' - Extra Teaching Points #15

Acts 13:1 – 12 (NASB)

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. ² 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." ³ Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Q: Who planted the church in Antioch?

- Acts 11:19-21 People who had been scattered by persecution after Stephen was stoned.

Q: Who were the leaders there, and who appointed them?

Q: Why do you think Luke draws attention to the presence of prophets and teachers in Antioch?

- It says that Jesus was equipping this church to work for Him.
- Eph 4:11-16 *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.*
 - "Joints" are the places where parts of a body connect.
 - The work of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, was ultimately to help people mature to the point where they could work together with others, so all the believers could function as the body of Christ.

Q: What is a prophet?

- One who is divinely inspired to communicate God's will to His people, and to disclose the future to them.

Acts 13:4-5

⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵ **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.**

Q: Why do Barnabas and Saul go to the Jews in the synagogues first (a pattern we will see repeated over and over again)?

- In that day, there was an instant fellowship among Jews all around the world.
 - They recognized fellow Jews as a part of their "team", and would customarily invite a visiting Jew from somewhere else to speak in their synagogues, hoping to hear a fresh and encouraging word after the reading of the Law and the Prophets.
 - This made it a natural starting place for Paul to explain how those scriptures had been fulfilled in Jesus.
- Paul couldn't wait to tell his fellow Jews the good news because it was the answer they all had been waiting for!
 - The Jews were the ones who knew most intimately they owed a debt they could not pay, and were waiting for God to somehow save them.
 - Romans 1:16-17 *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it **the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith**; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."*

Q: Who was John Mark, and whose idea was it to take him along?

- John, also called Mark, was Barnabas' cousin (Col 4:10).
 - His mother had a small group in her house in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12).
 - Paul and Barnabas brought him to Antioch after they took money to Jerusalem (Acts 12:25).
- We're not told whose idea it was to take him on this missionary journey, though we could assume it was Barnabas.

- The fact that the Spirit asked for Paul and Barnabas suggests that it was not the Spirit's idea to take him along.
- John Mark got cold feet, and went home when things got tough (Acts 13:13; 15:13); which led to a falling out between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:39).
 - John Mark wasn't mature enough for missionary work.
- When **we appoint** people, instead of the Holy Spirit appointing them, things can go bad!

Extra Info on “The Righteousness of God”:

2Cor 5:21 *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become **the righteousness of God in Him.***

- Some have thought of “the righteousness of God” as the righteousness He gives us.
- More likely, we are the proof of His righteousness, which makes the gospel message that much more amazing!

Rom. 3:21-26

*“But now apart from the Law **the righteousness of God** has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a **propitiation** (sacrifice of atonement) in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because **in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶ for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”*****

- God revealed His righteousness, (i.e., that He is a just judge, not willing to show favoritism, or allow wrongdoing to go unpunished), by sending Jesus to identify with the Jews, become their representative, and take their punishment, so God could institute a New Covenant with His people.
 - The amazing Grace of God has now opened the door for the Gentiles to be a part of this new covenant on the same basis as the Jews—Faith in Christ Jesus!
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Acts 13:6-12

*⁶ When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, **they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, ⁷ 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. ⁸ But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. ⁹ But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, ¹⁰ 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? ¹¹ “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. ¹² Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.***

Q: When Barnabas and Saul arrive in Paphos, they met two people in particular: the Roman Governor, and a local magician. What can we learn from these two men?

- There is no advance of the gospel without opposition!
 - We will see over and over again, as the gospel advances, that it threatens the predictable seats of power: Government, Religion, and Money.
- When we work for God, we can expect to disturb these same seats of power today, and we should expect opposition, difficulty, problems, and confrontation. It's normal!!
 - How God helps us through it, and how long it takes Him, is not knowable.
 - But the fact that He will help us through it – if we continue in prayer, faith, and trust – is a given.

Q: Verse 9 is the first time we see Saul called Paul. Who changed his name, and why?

- Paul was a Roman citizen born in Tarsus. He probably had a Greek name as well as a Jewish name.
 - If he didn't have a Greek name, it's possible he chose a Greek name that sounded similar to his Jewish name.
- Paul was serious about getting the message out to the wider world... serious enough to either use his Greek name or change his name in order to reduce roadblocks!

Follow Up Assignment

Q: How would you feel if two of your most prominent leaders were sent to work for the Lord somewhere else?

- How would it make a difference in your life?

Q: What is the problem with adding a “John Mark” to your journey, if God didn’t call them to go with you?

- Is there a “John Mark” you need to leave at home?

Q: How serious are you about getting the message out to the wider world?

- What are you willing to change to reduce roadblocks?