

ACTS 13:4-13

Introduction:

The church at Antioch has been well established through Saul's teaching and mature leaders coming to the forefront. There is a special separation of the church sending out Barnabas and Saul (vs. 1-3). The church recognized the Holy Ghost had picked them for the work He planned for them (direct communication to the prophets?). Just remember, we are in mid-Acts. Special gifts were given because the Scripture (Paul's epistles) had not been written yet!

A. The First Missions Trip -

Acts 13:4-5 - So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. Acts 13:5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to *their* minister.

1. Map
2. When they reached Salamis (Cyprus - 4:36), which was Barnabas' native island, John Mark (Barnabas' nephew) travels with them to help in the ministry.
3. By going to the synagogues, they were going to the Jews first (their kinsmen). That was Saul/Paul's practice until the close of Acts. Even though the nation failed to believe in Christ and was temporarily set aside, it was Paul's love and desire for some of them to be saved.

Romans 11:5, 14 - Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Rom. 11:14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them.

4. Remember, God says (in Rom. 11) that He always has a Jewish remnant. No doubt the Little Flock were the Messiah's remnant, and in Acts God uses Saul/Paul to help win God's remnant of grace.
5. Saul/Paul went to individual Jews outside of Jerusalem (and land) who had not participated in their rejection of Christ. Saul would share Israel's events and then the Gospel of Grace, giving individuals the opportunity to be saved!

* Israel, as a nation, had their chance, so there is no reason or excuse for them to complain when

* salvation goes to the Gentiles. The reason God was doing a new dispensation was because of

* Israel's unbelief and rejection of Messiah-Christ (and now going to the Gentiles).

Note:

Acts 13:46 - Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Acts 18:6 - And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

Acts 28:27-28 - For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Acts 28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

Romans 11:11 - I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

B. Paphos' False Prophet -

Acts 13:6-12 - And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name *was* Barjesus: Acts 13:7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. Acts 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Acts 13:9 Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, Acts 13:10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? Acts 13:11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Acts 13:12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

1. Anytime that the **true** gospel is being proclaimed, it seems that Satan puts roadblocks, difficulties, and enemies in the way to try to **pre**vent the truth from being heard (II Cor. 4:4).
2. The missionary team comes upon a man named Barjesus, meaning "Son of the Savior". Barjesus' other name was Elymas, meaning "wise". He was a **sor**cerer who practiced magic, astrology, fortune telling, and prediction of future events (supposedly). Also, he was called a false prophet.

*Having these two names shows that evidently he had **pious** parents who named him.

3. The other man with Barjesus was Sergius Paulus, who was the **gov**ernor of the island. Evidently, he used Barjesus as his advisor, a **Jew**, who had some control over him. Upon hearing about Barnabas and Saul/Paul spreading their message, being "prudent", he sent for Barnabas and Paul to come and share with him God's Word!

In verse 8, when Elymas the sorcerer learned of the governor's desire to hear God's Word, he realized his own influence over Sergius Paulus was in **peril. So he tried to stand against God's **men** and turn the governor from the truth - faith.

4. Saul/Paul shows a little of his own power with God through his apostleship and it is not trickery or satanic! Saul/Paul openly rebukes Barjesus-Elymas, revealing that he was a child of the **devil** and enemy of everything that was right. Immediately this apostate Jew was stricken with a temporary **blind**ness. The governor, Sergius, was amazed and became a believer. But also notice, it was

God's

doctrinal teaching that **con**vinces him (vs. 12).

* Note: I wonder when Saul/Paul did this, what was going through the **minds** of Barnabas and John Mark?

5. This story (within mid-Acts setting) is a tremendous "**type**" that illustrates why Paul was raised up away from Israel to go to the Gentiles.
 - a. We see in this story a **Gentile** desiring to hear God's Word and a **Jew** trying to **stop** him from hearing the truth (Jews as a nation).
 - b. This Jew acted out of fear and jealousy of **los**ing prominence and influence over the Roman

governor Sergius (Jews' religious leaders).

- c. Judgment was pronounced upon Barjesus, but it was only temporary (Israel set aside).

Note: Isn't this the picture we get in Acts regarding the Israelites and Gentiles? The Church Body was beginning to spread, to be the main ministry of God. The Jews resented this, withstood Paul often, and even sought his life. Israel rejected Christ, but that wasn't enough for them. They also did not want other individual Jews and Gentiles to believe in Christ!

- d. Even in this story/chapter, we find Gentiles asking to hear God's Word. We also see the Jews who should themselves have been the very ones that were to be a blessing to the Gentiles - and were not!

Note:

Acts 13:42 - And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

Acts 13:45 - But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

- e. But instead of being the believing Israel nation, they are found to be false prophets, a son of the devil, and under God's judgment, while the Gentiles receive the truth with joy!

Acts 13:46 - Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:48 - And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

**Remember what Paul wrote in Romans 11:7-8 - [What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded Rom. 11:8 (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.]

- f. Also remember how long Barjesus Elymas was blinded - for only a season (vs. 11). Likewise Israel, as a nation, also has been blinded only temporarily. Her blindness will also pass away some day!

Romans 11:25-26 - For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Rom. 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

C. Two Big Changes -

Acts 13:13 - Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

1. Saul of Tarsus' name is changed to Paul only. It is no longer Barnabas and Saul.

- a. Interestingly, the Apostle Paul **never** refers to himself as "Saul" in **any** of his epistles, from Romans through Philemon. He always calls himself "Paul". The name "Saul" in relation to Apostle Paul appears in the K.J.V. **22** times (only in Acts); whereas, the name "Paul" appears **157** times in the K.J.V.
- b. Saul in Hebrew means: asked-desired-wished. The name Paul in Greek means: little - related to the Greek "pauo" meaning to **pause**, stop, desist, cease. This Saul to Paul is showing that God is temporarily pausing Israel's prophetic program and has begun the mystery program.

- (1) *From Acts 13 on, he is only called Paul. That should **remind** us of God's pause with Israel and His one new man of today. We today have **not** replaced Israel as Covenant Theology claims!
- (2) **Paul, a Roman and a Jew, is the perfect **reflection** of the Church Body of Christ being made up of Jews and believing Gentiles.

Romans 9:24 - Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Ephesians 2:14-15 - For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Eph. 2:15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even the law of commandments contained in ordinances*; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

- c. Also of importance is that the leader of this missionary team is now **Paul**. No longer, **ever**, is it Barnabas and Saul. This goes with Paul's calling.

Romans 11:13 - For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

2. The other change is that John Mark **departs** from the ministry to go back home to Jerusalem.

- a. I am not sure if he was **fear**ful of doing ministry because of the experience he had just witnessed with Paul, or just was **homesick**, or possibly the change in who the leader was ...Paul and not his Uncle Barnabas! Whatever it was, John Mark **wavered** in his faith or comfort zone.
- b. It is also possible that John Mark had not worked through the **new** mystery message being proclaimed by Paul. We know that later, when beginning their second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted John Mark on their team again. However Paul, at that time, did not think John Mark was ready **yet**. Paul wanted someone he could count on and who would not quit.

Proverbs 25:19 - [Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble *is like* a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.]

- c. The contention over this became so **divisive** that Paul and Barnabas separated from one another.

Acts 15:36-40 - And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see how they do*. Acts 15:37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. Acts 15:38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; Acts 15:40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

Note: This situation demonstrates that even **good** believers can disagree, but still love and respect one another. Paul and Barnabas did that. It also shows us that at times it is best **not** to serve together if there is a serious disagreement, for the sake of peace.

******I personally believe that God **used** this in order to launch Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. Up to this point, Paul had kingdom believers helping him. But now they needed to regroup with the Little Flock. Now Paul, with his new helpers Silas - and soon Timothy - will begin their Gentile ministry together as Paul will begin to **write** his epistles.

Note: Galatians 2:11-13 - [But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. Gal. 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. Gal. 2:13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.]

