

THE BOOK OF ACTS

ACTS 13:1-12 | LESSON SUMMARY

Diversity

ACTS 13:1, "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." (NIV)

- Simeon
 - "Niger" is Latin for "black"
 - Some scholars believe this is the same Simeon who carried Jesus' cross
 - Introduction assumes readers familiarity: "And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus." (Luke 23:26, ESV)
- Lucius of Cyrene
 - Possibly the same Lucius Paul refers to in Romans 16:21 as a "fellow Jew"
- Manaen
 - Grew up with Herod
 - Same Herod who beheaded John the Baptist and presided over Jesus' trial
 - Went opposite directions
- Barnabas and Saul set apart
 - 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." (13:9, ESV)



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Seleucia → Cyprus → Salamis → Paphos

- The call isn't "light"
- A serious assignment looms ahead of both men
- Many regard these two as the first "missionaries," but it is clear that they did consider themselves superior or go looking for a title
- They teach at the synagogue, which again was traditional for any learned Jew
 - You may recall their assistant is John Mark, who later writes the Gospel Mark

Bar-Jesus

ACTS 13:6, "When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus." (ESV)

- Paphos is known for depravity: cult of Aphrodite and other fertility goddesses
- Luke will intentionally switch to "Elymas" because Luke refuses to call this sorcerer "Bar-Jesus" as it translates to "son of Jesus"
- Summoned by Sergius Paulus
 - "Proconsul" responsible for entire province and answers to Roman Senate



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ACTS 13:8, "But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith." (ESV)

- Elymas is trying to ensure that Sergius Paulus isn't converted

Saul = Paul

ACTS 13:9-10, "But Saul, who was also called Paul..."

- Saul has received a name-change
 - Saul was a Jewish name, referencing King Saul
 - Paul actually translates to "little"
 - "But many who are first will be last, and the last first." (Matthew 19:30, ESV)

ACTS 13:10, "...filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?" (ESV)

- Paul gives a full picture of the devil's character here
- Echoes Jesus' words
 - "When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."



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ACTS 13:1-2 | LESSON SUMMARY

- Paul temporarily blinds Elymas

ACTS 13:11, "Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand." (ESV)

- In the same way that Elymas tried to prevent others from spiritually seeing the truth, Paul prevents his physical sight
- Sergius Paulus is converted after witnessing this miracle

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: R. Kent Hughes, Acts: The Church Afire, John B. Miller, Convinced That God Had Called Us, C. Hemer, The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History

