

## ACTS CHAPTER 13

### *First Apostolic Journey (Acts 13:1-43)*

Now there were at Syrian Antioch, in the church that was there, the following church leaders who were prophets and teachers:

- Barnabas. He was sent originally to Syrian Antioch by the church in Jerusalem;
- Simeon who was called Niger. Niger is Latin for black and may indicate his dark complexion;
- Lucius of Cyrene. Lucius is a Latin name and Cyrene was the chief city in Libya and north Africa, half way between Alexandria (in Egypt) and Carthage (nowadays a suburb of Tunis, Tunisia);
- Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch. Since he was the foster brother of Herod Antipas (who had beheaded John the Baptist and had tried Jesus), he would be able to tell of the thoughts and actions of Herod;
- Saul.

Prophets were believers who had the gift of prophecy. Therefore they could preach, exhort, explain or foretell.



Map 4.  
Shows the location of Syrian Antioch, Cyrene and Alexandria

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.

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, the seaport of Syrian Antioch, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. There they reached Salamis, a town on the east coast of the central plain of Cyprus, near modern Famagusta.



Photo 13

The gymnasium of Salamis  
in Cyprus

In Salamis they began to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they also had John Mark as their helper. They went through the whole island as far as Paphos, located at the western end of Cyprus, nearly 161 kilometers (100 miles) from Salamis. There they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus. “Bar” is Aramaic for “son of”; “Jesus” is derived from the Greek for “Joshua” which means “The Lord saves”. He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. A proconsul was a governor of a province in the Roman Republic appointed for one year by the senate. And so Sergius Paulus was the governor of Cyprus.

This man requested Barnabas and Saul to appear and sought to hear the word of God. But Elymas, the semitic name for the magician, was opposing them, seeking to turn the

proconsul away from the faith. Semitic refers to a language family of largely Middle Eastern origin, now called the Semitic languages. This language family includes Aramaic, Hebrew and Arabic among others.



Photo 14

Odeon amphitheatre  
in Paphos, built in 2<sup>nd</sup>  
century AD

But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes upon Elymas, 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 pervert the straight ways of the Lord?”

Deceit is the distortion of the truth for the purpose of misleading and fraud is wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in financial or personal gain.

“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.

Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga, the capital of Pamphylia; but John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. Going on from Perga,

they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. Pisidian Antioch lies approximately 1 km northeast of Yalvaç, the modern town of Isparta Province in Turkey. The city is on a hill with its highest point of 1236 m in the north.



Map 6  
Shows the location of Seleucia, Salamis, Paphos, Perga, Pamphylia, Jerusalem and Pisidian Antioch

Pisidian Antioch was 177 kilometers (110 miles) from Perga and was at the centre of good roads and trade. The city had a large Jewish population. Paul’s regular practice was to begin his preaching in the synagogue as long as the Jews would allow it.

After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, “Brethren, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.” Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand 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. “For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. “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. “After

these things He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. “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. “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 descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Saviour, 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.’

“Brethren, sons of Abraham’s family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent.”

*Why did Paul say not only to the Jews but also to the God-fearing Gentiles in his audience: “To us the message of this salvation has been sent”? Because Israel’s rejection of her Saviour was not to keep God from blessing the Gentiles.*



Photo 15

Ruins of Pisidian Antioch



Photo 16

The remains of the classic theater in Pisidian Antioch

“For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the words of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Jesus. “And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. “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. “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, ‘YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.’ “As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer 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 Psalm, ‘YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR 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. “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, 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. “Be careful, so that the following thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon you:

‘LOOK, YOU MOCKERS, AND WONDER, AND DIE; FOR I AM DOING A WORK IN YOUR DAYS, A WORK WHICH YOU WILL NEVER BELIEVE, EVEN IF SOMEONE SHOULD DESCRIBE IT TO YOU.’”

*Why is Paul’s message a definite departure from the program of prophecy and the ‘great commission’? Paul did not offer the kingdom to his audience. He offered them salvation by grace, lest they die with the nation Israel.*

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 converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.



Photo 17

Details of the inscriptions is now in the museum in Yalvaç

### ***Paul Turns to the Gentiles (Acts 13:44-52)***

The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming.

Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first;

*Why was it necessary that the Word of God should first be preached to the Jews? Because according to the Abrahamic covenant and all prophecy, they were to be the channels of blessing to the Gentiles. But they failed, not because of God's unfaithfulness to them, but because they refused to trust the blessing of eternal life themselves.*

“But since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, look, we are turning to the Gentiles.

*Is salvation here being sent to the Gentiles because of Israel's acceptance of Christ, or because of her rejection of Christ? It's being sent through Israel's rejection of Christ and this is never anywhere predicted in the prophetic Scriptures. Here we have the essence of what Paul elsewhere calls “the mystery”, God sending salvation and blessing to the Gentiles, through Christ despite His people's failure, indeed, through their fall.*

“For so the Lord has commanded us, ‘I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.’”

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. And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. But the Jews incited 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 (which is nowadays called Konya and is the seventh most populous city in Turkey). And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.



Photo 18

City view of Konyo which was called Iconium before



## **QUESTIONS OF ACTS CHAPTER 13**

ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THE TEXT OF CHAPTER 13

1. Who were church leaders in the church at Syrian Antioch?

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2. Who said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

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3. What did Sergius Paulus, the governor of Cyprus, request from Barnabas and Saul?

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4. What was the reaction of the magician Bar-Jesus, a Jewish false prophet?

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5. What did Saul, who was also known as Paul, say to Elymas?

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6. What was Paul's regular practice to begin his preaching?

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7. What did Paul proclaim to the men of Israel and to those who fear God in Pisidian Antioch in order to be freed from all things?

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8. What did Paul and Barnabas urge the Jews and the God-fearing converts to do?

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9. What happened to the Jews when they saw the next Sabbath nearly the whole city of Pisidian Antioch assembled to hear the word of the Lord?

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10. What words did Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly to them?

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## **ACTS CHAPTER 13 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)**

### ***First Missionary Journey***

**1**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.

**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. **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.

**13**Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; but John left them and returned to Jerusalem. **14**But going on from Perga, they arrived at Pisidian Antioch, and on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. **15**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.” **16**Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said,

“Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: **17**“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. **18**“For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. **19**“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. **20**“After these things He gave *them* judges until Samuel the prophet. **21**“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. **22**“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.’ **23**“From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, **24**after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. **25**“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.’

**26**“Brethren, sons of Abraham’s family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. **27**“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*. **28**“And though they found no ground for *putting Him to death*, they asked Pilate that He be executed. **29**“When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. **30**“But God raised Him from the dead; **31**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. **32**“And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, **33**that God has fulfilled this *promise* to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘YOU ARE MY SON; TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU.’ **34**“As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: ‘I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY and SURE *blessings* OF DAVID.’ **35**“Therefore He also says in another *Psalm*, ‘YOU WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.’ **36**“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; **37**but He whom God raised did not undergo decay. **38**“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, **39**and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not

be freed through the Law of Moses. **40**“Therefore take heed, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon you:

**41**“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.”

**42**As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. **43**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.

### ***Paul Turns to the Gentiles***

**44**The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. **45**But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and *began* contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. **46**Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

**47**“For so the Lord has commanded us,  
‘I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES,  
THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.’”

**48**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. **49**And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. **50**But the Jews incited 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. **51**But they shook off the dust of their feet *in protest* against them and went to Iconium. **52**And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

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