

THE  
ACTS  
OF THE APOSTLES  
WE ARE THE CHURCH!

## Review 12:24-25.

- **12:24** tells us that *the word of God continued to spread and flourish*. God showed that He was still moving. Evil has not won. God's story would continue.
- Bringing John Mark, the author of the gospel of Mark, along with them, Saul and Barnabas continued their work of spreading the gospel.
- No matter what these early Christians encountered, they could not stop speaking of what God was doing. They had found that even in suffering, God is where the joy is!
- As **Acts 12** ends, the focus now begins to shift. God starts using key leaders—Saul (later called Paul), Barnabas, and John Mark to take the gospel beyond Jerusalem.
- Even in persecution and difficulty, God's people continue to share His message, and His mission moves forward.
- ❖ Where do you see yourself in Acts 12—earnest in prayer, struggling to trust, or surprised by God's power, and what's your next step because of that?

## A Turning Point in Acts: From Peter to Paul

### ➤ Acts 1–12: Peter's Leadership

- Central figure: Peter
- Ministry focus: Jews in Jerusalem & Judea
- Key theme: Opening the door of the gospel (Acts 2, Acts 10)
- God establishes the church

### ➤ Acts 13–28: Paul's Mission

- Central figure: Saul (Paul)
- Ministry focus: Gentiles & the wider Roman world
- Key theme: Expanding the gospel across nations
- God multiplies the church

## Acts 13:1-3

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> 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.” <sup>3</sup> So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

## Review 13:1-3.

- Today's passage covers the first of Saul's missionary journeys in the book of Acts. Luke sets the scene with five prophets and teachers worshiping in the church at Antioch. We are familiar with Saul's shady past by this point in our study. But he is not the only one with a past.
- ❖ Who was Manaen a lifelong friend of according to **13:1**?
- This is the same Herod who presided over one of Jesus's crucifixion trials and beheaded John the Baptist (**Mark 6:14-29**).
- Some scholars believe the Simeon mentioned in this passage is the same Simeon who carried Jesus's cross (**Luke 23:26**).
- We see this dynamic repeated often in Acts: former enemies thrown together in ministry under the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. Truly the gospel at work.

## Review 13:2-3.

- ❖ In **13:2**, which of these does the Holy Spirit say regarding Barnabas and Saul?
  - A. “Set them apart for the work I’m about to call them to.” (future tense)
  - B. “Set them apart for the work to which I am calling them.” (present tense)
  - C. “Set them apart for the work to which I have called them.” (past tense).
- This shows that: God had already been preparing Barnabas and Saul. This moment in **13:2** isn’t the start of their calling—it’s the public commissioning. The Holy Spirit is revealing and activating what was already God’s plan.
- The Spirit doesn’t create their calling in Acts. The Spirit confirms and commissions what God had already purposed.
- ❖ In addition to praying, what were they doing in **13:3** before they sent off Paul and Barnabas? What had they been doing in **13:2** in addition to worshipping?

## Antioch: The Church That Gets Sent

- **Worship & fasting** — the church worships the Lord (13:2)
- **Spirit direction** — the Holy Spirit speaks clearly (13:2)
- **Corporate obedience** — the whole church discerns and responds (13:2–3)
- **Mission launch** — Barnabas & Saul are sent out (13:3)
- **Mission flows** from worship, fasting, and listening—not human strategy.
- ❖ What would it look like for us individually or our church to be shaped more by worship and listening than by urgency and activity?

## Acts 13:4-12

### On Cyprus

<sup>4</sup> The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. <sup>5</sup> When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

<sup>6</sup> They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, <sup>7</sup> who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. <sup>8</sup> But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. <sup>9</sup> Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, <sup>10</sup> “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? <sup>11</sup> Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.”

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. <sup>12</sup> When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

## Review 13:4-12.

- As they preached their way Cyprus (Barnaba's home turf), they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues first. Paul's missionary journeys took the gospel to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles. That process was God's plan from the beginning of Scripture. We will continue to see the ways that played out perfectly to spread the gospel to all nations.
- The John mentioned in **13:5** is the same John Mark we met in **12:25**. Note his presence because he causes some drama down the road.
- ❖ By what name is Saul also known according to **13:9**?
- ❖ Why does Acts start using the name "Paul" and how does that connect to his mission to the Gentiles?
- ❖ How is Saul being called "Paul" different from God changing names like Abraham and Jacob in Genesis?

## Review 13:4-12.

- Saul was most likely known by both the names “Saul” and “Paul” from birth, rather than receiving a new name later in life. In **13:9**, the text introduces him as “Saul, who was also called Paul,” which strongly suggests that both names were already in use.
- This was not God giving him a new name, the way God did with *Abram/Abraham* and *Jacob/Israel* in Genesis. In those cases, God clearly changed their names to mark a new identity and a special promise.
- This fits well with the cultural setting of the time: as a Jew from Tarsus and a Roman citizen, he would naturally have a Hebrew name for use within Jewish communities and a Roman/Gentile name for interaction in the broader Greco-Roman world.
- Rather than marking a dramatic name change, the shift in Acts reflects a change in context. Once his ministry turns more toward Gentiles, the narrative begins using “Paul,” the name more familiar in that setting. A helpful modern comparison would be someone named “John” in English who also goes by “Juan” in Spanish-speaking contexts. It’s the same person with two culturally appropriate versions of the same identity, not a new name given later.
- ❖ According to 13:11-12, what led to the proconsul’s belief?
- ❖ What similarities do you see between Saul’s conversion in Acts 9 and Sergius Paulus’s response in Acts 13, especially in how God uses blindness and sight?