

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 31ST, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

SENT (ACTS 13:1-3) THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

Luke has returned us to Antioch. By this time, Barnabas and Saul have been teaching and discipling there for one year, with other teachers joining in the work.

- Luke has already shared that Antioch was a diverse congregation with Jews and Gentiles being called Christians with hearts to serve other Believers in need.

PROPHETS AND TEACHERS

We are introduced to some new leaders in Antioch. It is probably not an exhaustive list, but it is important to notice their names.

- Each person represents diversity in leadership: two from Africa and one who was raised with Herod the Tetrarch.
- **The church was growing, breaking boundaries and stereotypes to reach people for the glory of God.**

AS THEY WERE WORSHIPING AND FASTING

Luke gives us a quick view of the condition of the church and leadership as we find them in a cycle of worship and fasting.

- A lifestyle of prayer and self-discipline helped them be in a prime spiritual disposition to hear and respond to the Holy Spirit as He would lead them.

CONFIRMATION

The Holy Spirit spoke to the leadership and maybe even the congregation of Believers. Either way, we see God giving confirmation of His instruction to people beyond Barnabas and Saul.

- **God speaks to His church. Are we listening? Are we responding to Him?**

THEY LAID THEIR HANDS ON THEM

After prayer and fasting, they set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work God had called them to.

- This was not so much a commissioning as it was a connecting. They were not just sending them; they were connecting to the mission and the men.
- **The missionaries were leaving, but the spirit of mission would grow in Antioch.**

ENCOUNTERS (ACTS 13:4-12) STARTING AT THE SYNAGOGUE

The pattern of Paul's missions continues in Cyprus, Barnabas's hometown.

- He would go first to the Jews and teach in the synagogues, then to the Gentiles.
- The Jews should have been the most receptive, as they were expecting the Messiah.
- **Sometimes, the most religious can have the most difficult time seeing the truth.**

THEY CAME ACROSS A SORCERER

As they traveled across Cyprus, they met Bar-Jesus (son of Jesus), a Jewish false prophet.

- He was making a living as a sorcerer to the proconsul (a powerful government official).
- He recognized the gospel would reduce his power and position, so he opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

PAUL WAS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Luke calls Saul by his Roman name from this time forward, as Paul steps into the role of reaching the Gentiles for Christ.

- He was filled with the Holy Spirit as he spoke directly to Elymas and exposed his evil heart.
- **Paul was given the gift to discern the spirits and know the heart of this man.**

REVEALED AND JUDGED

Paul reveals Elymas's true character as an opponent of the straight paths of the Lord.

- Elymas did not just oppose Jesus; he had been in opposition to God for years.
- Paul pronounces that God would send a temporary judgment of blindness, possibly to give an opportunity for repentance.
- We do not know if he did, but we do know that he was given a chance.

THE PROCONSUL BELIEVED

What happened to Elymas was not a hidden event; people heard Paul's words and saw God's judgment.

- The proconsul believed because he heard the teaching of the Lord.
- **The Word is advanced in the world by Spirit-filled Believers who share the gospel faithfully and boldly. God will remove barriers as He sees fit.**

HISTORY (ACTS 13:13-26)

JOHN LEFT THEM

As Paul and his companions travel, Luke informs us that John (the assistant) left them and returned to Jerusalem.

- We do not know why he leaves, but we will find in Chapter 15 that Paul considered it a desertion and refused to serve with him.
- This division will last around 10 years, but John Mark will eventually be credited as the author of the Gospel of Mark.

"...YOU CAN SPEAK."

Paul and the team entered the local synagogue and were invited to speak after the normal liturgy was done.

- Paul was not about to pass up an invitation to proclaim the gospel, so he started with the Old Testament and worked his way to Jesus.

ISRAELITES AND GOD-FEARERS

Paul calls everyone in the room to listen to what he is about to say.

- Not everyone in the room was born Jewish. Some Gentiles had come to believe in the God of Israel and were there to learn more.
- **There are always people who are ready to listen—not just the people we think are ready.**

GOD'S TOLERANCE AND PROVISION

Paul begins by reminding them that God chose the Israelites, sustained them in Egypt, delivered them, put up with them, protected them, and gave them a land to live in.

- The focus was on what God had done to them and for them. Paul established that God was good and a keeper of promises.

GOD'S COMMITMENT TO HIS PEOPLE

Paul notes that after 450 years of caring for His people, God continued to fulfill His promises, even when the people wandered.

- He gave them judges and prophets, and when they asked for a king, He gave them Saul.
- **Sometimes, what we want is not what we need.**

GOD GIVES THEM DAVID

After God removed Saul, He set David on the throne.

- David was not perfect, but his heart was set to respect and honor God by doing His will.
- In the synagogue, only a few men in Israel's history commanded as much respect as David, and they knew that the Messiah would come from David's descendants.

PAUL SHARES JESUS

In fulfillment of His promise, God brought the Savior, Jesus, to Israel.

- Paul reminded them of God's promise. Then he shared how John proclaimed Jesus' arrival.
- Just as Saul was not the king Israel needed, John was not the person they thought he was.

JOHN'S TESTIMONY

John had come, proclaiming repentance before the coming of the Messiah, but people were confused and thought he might be the One.

- John sets the record straight.
- Paul helps them understand that just as David was greater than Saul, Jesus was greater than all.

EVENTS

- History is full of events.
- **Our lives are filled with events.**
- **When we look back or forward, we see that our lives are built around the events we can remember and the ones we have planned. What events have mattered the most?**

MEMORY

- We sometimes remember the worst.
- **We sometimes romanticize the best.**
- **Just as Paul gave a clear and documented history, God has given us His Word to know and understand what He has done to keep His promises, save us, and protect us. This is not memory; this is a record. Are we taking the time to read it? Are we just choosing to remember the worst or best?**

TESTIMONY

- We have an experience to share.
- **It is the amazing story of our lives.**
- **We have good times and bad times, but the one event that matters most is what we do with Jesus. Believe Him or reject Him; that changes everything. If we believe, He becomes the center of our story, and we should share Him with others. Reject Him, and you become the center of our mission to share Him with the world.**