

The Church - Acts 13:1-12 - How do I Get Direction from the Lord?

Message to Conversation Guide

Acts 13:1-12

1 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. 2 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." 3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

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

6 They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, 7 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. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. 9 Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, 10 "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? 11 Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable 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. 12 When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord. NIV

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss how chapter 13 of Acts shifts attention away from Peter and the Jerusalem church to Paul and the church at Antioch.
2. Antioch was major city of about 500,000 residents. Why do you think that the early Christians focused their outreach on major city centers. Read and discuss the quotes below.

"We usually identify the preaching of the Gospel with the quiet rural villages of Palestine where the Lord Jesus ministered. For this reason, many Christians are surprised to learn that the church in the Book of Acts was almost entirely urban. Historian Wayne H. Meeks writes that 'within a decade of the crucifixion

of Jesus, the village culture of Palestine had been left behind, and the Greco-Roman city became the dominant environment of the Christian movement' (The first Urban Christians, page 11).” Warren Wiersbe, *Be Daring: Acts 13-28*, 9.

“The church began in Jerusalem, and then spread to other cities, including Samaria, Damascus, Caesarea, and Antioch in Syria. At least forty different cities are named in Acts.” Warren Wiersbe, *Be Daring: Acts 13-28*, 9.

3. The church at Antioch was very diverse and had many different types of people. The people had different economical, racial and social backgrounds. Why is Luke the author of Acts pointing this out? What implications does this have for the modern church?

Acts 13:1

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- **Barnabas** - Jewish outgoing and sanguine man.
- **Simeon** - Dark skinned man, possibly the same man as Simon of Cyrene (**Matt: 27:32**).
- **Lucius of Cyrene** - man from North Africa.
- **Manaen** - probably wealthy, educated and well connected socially.
- **Saul** - Highly educated Jewish man.

4. Direction came to Barnabas and Saul (and the general church at Antioch) while they were worshiping the Lord. If worship is loving the Lord and seeking his face what is the implication of the role worship may play in us obtaining guidance from the Lord? How does the Psalm below hint at the importance of seeking God's face when we need guidance?

Ps 32:8-9

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;

I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

*9 Be not like a horse or a mule, without understanding,
which must be curbed with bit and bridle,
or it will not stay near you. ESV*

5. Sergius Paulus is open to the gospel and what Paul and Barnabas are saying but Bar-Jesus (Elymus) is seeking to turn them away from the faith (**Acts 13:8**). Discuss the importance of identifying negative influences in our life and eliminating them.