

# Acts 13 Handout

The rest of the book of Acts (chapter's 13-28) follows Paul's ministry as he and his companions take the Gospel to the *uttermost parts of the earth*. The next two chapters (13-14) describe Paul's ministry to six different cities and make up what is known as Paul's first missionary journey.

## Verse 1

This verse starts with the word "now" which indicates transition, continuation or further thought.

## Acts 12:25

*"And Barnabas and Saul returned when they had fulfilled their mission to Jerusalem, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark."*

John Mark was the cousin of Barnabas. His mother's home in Jerusalem was often a gathering place for believers. He would no doubt have been exposed to the teachings of the early church. This is the same man who ended up writing the book of Mark.

Chapter 12 ended with Barnabas and Saul along with Mark returning to Antioch from Jerusalem. If you remember, their mission was to bring aid from Antioch for the disciples suffering because of the famine in Jerusalem that we read about at the end of chapter 11. Now they are returning to Antioch.

## Who are we told are at Antioch in verse 1? \_\_\_\_\_

The prophets helped lay the foundation of the church as they proclaimed the word of God. The teachers helped ground the converts in the doctrines of the faith.

We are given a list of five men. These men were of different races and economic standing. We've already met Barnabas. Simeon was thought to be of African decent. Lucius was from Cyrene and some think he was one of the men described in Acts 11:20, but we don't know for sure. Manaen was brought up with King Herod whether as a close friend or maybe an adopted foster brother we don't know. Saul was both Roman and Jewish. Even though these five men came from different races and backgrounds, the main thing they had in common was their deep faith in Christ.

This list of men shows the social, geographic, and racial diversity that is found in the kingdom of God.

## Verse 2-3

### What two things are we told these men were doing? \_\_\_\_\_

While these men were serving/ministering, God redirects them through the Holy Spirit.

### What does the Spirit want them to do? \_\_\_\_\_

We are told that after they fasted, prayed and laid hands on these two men, they sent them away.

## **Verses 4-5**

**Who are we told sent them out?** \_\_\_\_\_

Look at your map – we are told they went down to Seleucia which was about 15 miles to the west of Antioch and from there sailed on to Cyprus. The island of Cyprus was Barnabas' hometown. It was located about 60 miles off the Syrian coast and was about 90-100 miles long and 60 miles at the widest part. Two major cities were seaports. The chief port was Salamis and Paphos the other sea port was the capital. Cyprus was said to be rich with minerals and precious metals as well as abundant crops. It was a popular stopover for merchant ships that were sailing the Mediterranean Sea.

**What are we told they did when they reached Salamis?**

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**Who is there helping them as well?** \_\_\_\_\_

Barnabas and Paul took John Mark with them as their assistant. Most likely John Mark helped by relieving Barnabas and Paul of tasks and details so that they could concentrate on what they had been called by God to do.

## **Verses 6-8**

**After they had gone through the whole island all the way to Paphos, who did they find?**

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**What three things do we learn about him from verses 6 and 7?**

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Bar means “the son”, so Bar-Jesus means “the son of Jesus.” In the Hebrew culture, to call yourself the son of someone was to designate yourself as their follower. This man was claiming to be a follower of Jesus, but what he was teaching totally went against what Jesus taught. It was unusual to find a Jewish false prophet and sorcerer because traditionally the Jews would shun such demonic activities.

**How is Sergius Paulus the proconsul described?** \_\_\_\_\_

A proconsul was a governor of a senatorial province in the Roman Empire. Sergius Paulus would have been functioning as the governor of the island. Many of these types of leaders would have a private sorcerer.

**Why does he summon Paul and Barnabas?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why was Elymus the magician opposing them?**

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## **Verse 9-12**

**What are we told about Saul here?** \_\_\_\_\_

This is the first mention of Saul as Paul.

As a Jewish Roman citizen, Paul's full name was probably "Saul Paulus", as many Jews had both Jewish and Roman names. They would be known by their Jewish name in their circle of friends and family. Their other name was Greek and used in the wider world. Some think it's possible that this name change from Jewish to Greek was because of the shift that was taking place from focusing on the Jews to now focusing mostly on the Gentiles.

**How does Paul describe Elymus?**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Deceit (dolos) literally refers to a fishhook, trap, or trick, all of which are various forms of deception. It is a desire to gain advantage or preserve a position by deceiving others.

Paul ends with a rhetorical question: "*will you not stop making crooked the straight ways of the Lord?*"

**What does Paul tell Elymus the Lord will do?** \_\_\_\_\_

We are told that a mist and a darkness immediately fell on him and he had to seek to be led by the hand.

**What happens with the proconsul?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Verse 13-15**

**What are we told at the end of verse 13?** \_\_\_\_\_

We don't know for sure why John Mark left, but whatever the reason, it didn't seem to sit well with Paul.

Some ideas on why John Mark might have left are:

- He was homesick
- He didn't like the change in leadership from Barnabas (his cousin) to Paul.
- He became ill
- He was unable to withstand the dangers of the journey
- Maybe he only planned to go so far before turning back but didn't communicate that to Paul Barnabas.

We are going to see how this issue of John Mark leaving is going to come back in Acts 15.

From Perga they arrive at Pisidian Antioch. It was called Pisidian Antioch because of its close proximity to Pisidia and to distinguish it from another Antioch located in Phrygia. This town was in the Roman province of Galatia and was the chief military and political center in this area.

**What day do they arrive there?** \_\_\_\_\_

We are told they go to the synagogue and sit down.

A typical synagogue service would start with the Shema (“Hear, O Israel . . .”) and then would continue with a liturgy of benedictions, blessings and prayers. The leaders would then read two passages from the Old Testament. After that, some competent person designated by the synagogue rulers would give an address. Then the service would conclude with a benediction.

The synagogue officials end up asking Paul and Barnabas if they have an “word or exhortation for the people.”

### Verses 16

“Men of Israel” would be addressing the Jewish hearers while “you who fear God” would be addressing the Gentile hearers.

### Verses 17-22

Paul starts with reviewing Israel’s history from Abraham to David. We see that he highlights five major points that the Jewish people often stressed in their confessions:

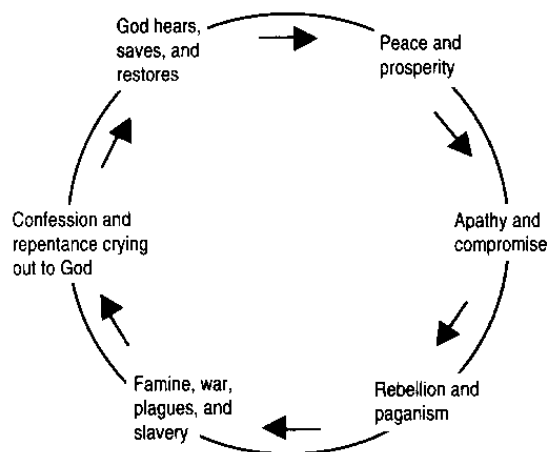
1. God was the God of the Israelites (vs.17)
2. God chose the patriarchs (vs. 17)
3. God created the Israel nation, redeemed them out of Egypt, and patiently led them through the wilderness (vs.17-18)
4. God gave them Canaan as an inheritance (vs.19)
5. God gave the Israelites King David after a line of lesser leaders (vs. 20-22)

**How many years are we told the first four highlights took?** \_\_\_\_\_

In case you don’t understand how they get 450, here’s how it breaks down:

400 years in Egypt + 40 years wandering in the desert + 10 years of conquest and settling into the Promised Land.

**What are we told God gave them before the prophet Samuel?** \_\_\_\_\_



This time of judges could be summed up with what is written in Judges 21:25 – “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.”

This was a horrible time in Israel’s history that could be shown with this repeated cycle of sin and restoration.

**What are we told they finally asked for in verse 21?** \_\_\_\_\_

God gave them Saul for 40 years and then He raised up David to be their king.

## Verse 23

Who are we told came through the line of David? \_\_\_\_\_

## Verses 24-26

Paul goes on to talk about John the Baptist and how he was the forerunner to Jesus' coming.

What does Paul say at the end of verse 26?

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## Verses 27-31

Paul proceeds to tell about the rejection, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus. He points out that these events were fulfillments of the Old Testament predictions: "fulfilled these", "everything that was written concerning Him".

## Verses 32-37

In this section Paul quotes three Messianic passages from the Old Testament:

**vs. 33 – Psalm 2:7** *"I will proclaim the Lord's decree: He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have become your father.'"*

**vs. 34 – Isaiah 55:3** *"Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David."*

**vs. 35 – Psalm 16:10** *"because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay."*

In these verses, Paul uses "raised up" in two different ways:

1. In verses 33 and 37, he talks about God raising up Jesus as the promised Messiah. He also refers to God raising up David as king in Psalm 2:7.
2. Back in verse 30 and then here in verse 34, Paul speaks about God raising up Jesus from the dead.

Paul's emphasis on the resurrection of Jesus in verses 30-37 seems to be showing how he's proving Jesus is the Davidic King.

## Verses 38-39

What does verse 38 begin with? \_\_\_\_\_

After all the scripture evidence that Paul has shown them, he now makes an appeal.

What does Paul say is proclaimed to them through God? \_\_\_\_\_

What else do they experience through God according to verse 39?

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In the NIV verse 39 reads, "Through Him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the Law of Moses."

What was holding them back from freedom before now? \_\_\_\_\_

The law can't justify the sinner; it can only condemn him. This verse is talking about justification through faith. Justification is more than just your sins are forgiven. It also means to have your sins forgiven in such a way that God's honor and integrity are preserved by it.

What Paul is really saying here is that if God forgave sins the way many people think He does, meaning He's just so loving and kind that He just ignores it, His honor and character would be defiled. He could no longer be considered the God of justice and truth, because he would be condoning our sins. But God found a way through His Son Jesus to lay all of the guilt of our lives upon His own Son. By this, He can preserve His honor, character and integrity while simultaneously being free to show His whole love to us. That's justification.

### **Verses 40-41**

Paul concludes his message with a warning from Habakkuk (1:5). He seems to be warning those who reject the good news about Jesus Christ.

The words in Habakkuk are referring to an invasion of Judah by a Gentile nation (Babylon) that would be used to discipline God's people for their disobedience. Paul seems to be seeing this generation under the same issue.

### **Luke 21:24**

*"They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."*

The time of the Gentiles began back in 586BC with the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile to Babylon. Israel was no longer an independent nation but was under the rule of Gentile rulers.

Now in Jesus' day, Rome was governing Israel, and eventually a Roman ruler would destroy Jerusalem (AD 70). This domination of Israel that started so long ago (time of the Gentiles) will continue until Christ returns again.

### **Verses 42-43**

**What are the people begging Barnabas and Paul to do?**

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**What do Barnabas and Paul urge the people following them to do at the end of verse 43?**

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In verse 43, it refers to "many of the Jews and the God-fearing proselytes". A "proselyte" (proselutos) describes a stranger or foreigner, someone who comes from their own people to another. In the New Testament, proselutos is a technical term for a Gentile who has come over into Judaism. Adding the word "proselytes" would be identifying these Gentile God fearers as those who had already taken the next step and been circumcised and baptized and made sacrifices. Cornelius on the other hand was a God-fearer but not a proselyte.

### **Verses 44-45**

**A week goes by and what do we see?** \_\_\_\_\_

**How do the Jewish leaders react?** \_\_\_\_\_

The jealousy may have been because of the large crowd that had gathered to hear the message being taught by Paul and Barnabas. Another reason for the hostile reaction from these Jews could have been that just like other Jews in other places, these Jews probably didn't believe that Jesus was the Messiah. That's most likely what they were blaspheming about.

**What do they do?** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Verses 46-47**

**How do Barnabas and Paul speak out against these people?** \_\_\_\_\_

Paul says that it was necessary for the word of God to be spoken to the Jewish people first.  
**Why?**

#### **Genesis 12:3**

*"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

God's plan was to bless the entire world to know about Himself through the Jewish nation.

**What does Paul say is happening because of their rejection?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Who does he say gave them this command?** \_\_\_\_\_

Paul quotes Isaiah 49:6 showing that they are carrying out God's will.

#### **Verses 48-49**

**What was the Gentile's response to what Paul had said?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What is the result of what was happening here?** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Verse 50**

The unbelieving Jews were not going to sit back and let Paul and Barnabas take over. First, they disputed with them. Now they take things a step further.

**Who did the Jews incite to instigate persecution against Paul and Barnabas?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What do they end up doing?** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Verses 51-52**

**What did Paul and Barnabas do?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What did that represent?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Listen to what Jesus had told His followers in Luke 9:5:**

*"If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them."*

We are told they went on to Iconium.

**What are we told about the disciples in verse 52?**

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As we follow Paul's journey in the book of Acts, we can see that he chose strategic cities, planted churches in them, and then went on from these churches to evangelize the surrounding areas. We can also see that where it was possible, he began his ministry in the local synagogue because he had such a burden and love for his people.