

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

LESSON 16: CHAPTER 13

11 September 2015

- Vs. 1** The church in Antioch was composed of brethren from different backgrounds, nationality, financial status, and skin color. Their common bond was the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Vss. 2-3** The Lord selected Barnabas and Saul for a missionary work. The brethren at Antioch “**laid their hands on them.**” The laying on of hands did not impart any spiritual benefit to these men. It was a way of showing their support for them in the ministry God had chosen for them. Churches will support a man when they can see that he is actively serving God every day. That’s a man they can trust will CONTINUE to minister to the Lord on the mission field.
- Vss. 4-6** Paul and Barnabas travelled west to the coast and sailed southwest to the isle of Cyprus. They “**Preached the word of God**” in the synagogues as they made their way across the whole Island to the western side, which is the location of the city of Paphos.
- Paphos was another of Satan’s strongholds, so God sends the Gospel there at the start. Venus was worshipped there. She is called the “goddess of love,” but lust is her true religion. The Greeks call her Aphrodite. In Paphos, there was a sorcerer named “Bar-Jesus” (son of Jesus).
- Vss. 7-12** Sergius Paulus was a prudent man (Prov. 22:3, 14:15). He was cautious, wise, and careful. He “**desired to hear the word of God**” (vs. 7). Elymas (the sorcerer) tried to hinder Sergius Paulus from receiving the Gospel (vs. 8). [Cross references: 2 Tim. 3:8, 4:15]. Paul rebukes the sorcerer and prophesies that God is going to blind him for a season, which instantly takes place. Afterwards, the once famous sorcerer couldn’t find anybody to help him find his way home (vs. 11). The result: Sergius Paulus became a believer (vs. 12).

THE DISPENSATIONAL PICTURE

Elymas, a **Jew** (vs. 6) tried to keep the word of God from Sergius Paulus, a **Gentile**. The result: blindness for a season (not permanent).

Likewise, the nation of Israel has been smitten with blindness (for a season) because they tried to keep the word of God from Gentiles. (Isaiah 6:9-10 with Acts 28:19, 25-28 and Rom. 11:25-26).

- Vs. 13** Leaving Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas head northwest to “Perga in Pamphylia.” John Mark departed from them and went southwest to Jerusalem. God’s grace is seen here. Nothing negative or judgmental is said about Mark here—because God knows Mark will come back later (Acts 15:37, 2 Tim. 4:11), and He uses Mark to write a gospel.
- Vss. 14-41** The journey leads Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch where they have an open door to preach in the synagogue. Paul begins his sermon, which is almost identical to Peter’s sermon in Acts 2. The words “**men and brethren**” (vss. 15, 26, and 38) mark three divisions in his sermon:
- Verses 16-25: the history of the nation, from Egypt to David to John the Baptist to Jesus.
Verses 26-37: the historical facts of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Verses 38-41: the application of the sermon.

1. Through Jesus, all that believe have forgiveness of sins and are justified from all things (vs. 38). We are declared righteous, as though our sins never existed.
2. The sermon ends with a warning (vss. 40-41) from Habakkuk 1:5. God is going to do a work in your days that you're not going to believe. Paul is declaring that work to them.

Vs. 42 Paul preached the same sermon that Peter preached, but the response was different. Thousands of Jews were saved after Peter's sermon. When Paul preached, the Jews walked out of the synagogue and the Gentiles wanted to hear more the next week. This reveals that the ground (Mark 4:5, 8) is different from place to place. Note: modern bibles remove the word "Gentiles" from the verse to add confusion and contradiction to the passage.

Vs. 43 Many Jews and religious proselytes (devout Gentiles like the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius) followed Paul and Barnabas. They were told to "**continue in the grace of God.**" That means keep on trusting nothing but Christ and what He did in their place to justify them (vs. 38). Grace excludes works (Rom. 11:6) when it comes to matters of salvation in the New Testament.

Vss. 44-46 A week later, almost the entire city came to hear the word of God. This caused the Jews to be envious (vs. 45, Mt. 27:18, Acts 17:5) and to oppose the preaching. Paul and Barnabas explained how it was necessary for the Jews to hear the Gospel first, but now they're going to turn to the Gentiles.

When they say, you judge yourselves "**unworthy of everlasting life,**" This is pure sarcasm. Nobody is worthy of everlasting life in the sense of deserving it. He's rubbing it in, saying, "*Okay, if you don't think you're good enough, we'll find some people who are; the Gentiles.*"

Vs. 47 "**A light of the Gentiles.**" Paul quotes Isaiah 42:6 and Isaiah 49:6, which was applied to Jesus Christ in Luke 2:32, but here is being applied to Paul and Barnabas showing that it was always God's plan to reach out to the Gentiles.

Vs. 48 The Gentiles were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord. "**And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.**" This verse is used by Calvinists to prove their doctrine of "unconditional election." God ordained that His Son would be the Saviour of all men (Jew and Gentile). The problem is that the Jew refused it.

God will "ordain" anybody to eternal life when they have followed their conscience (Rom. 2:7) to where they are willing to hear the word (vs. 42, 48). Hearing is believing (Rom. 10:17). Believing is salvation (Eph. 2:8).

Vss. 49-51 As the Gospel spread "**throughout all the region**" (of Antioch Pisidia), the Jews put together a plan to stir up certain people of the city who persecuted them (1 Tim. 3:11) and expelled them. They shook off the dust of their feet on the way out (Matthew 10:14, Mark 6:11, Luke 9:5. That's what Jesus told them to do.) However, they're not finished with Antioch. They'll be back here quite often throughout Acts.