



## "REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

## "RIDING THROUGH"

### THE BOOK OF ACTS-LESSON 13

Acts chapter 13 marks the beginning of the third major division in the Book of Acts. Remember that the church was established in Jerusalem (Acts 1-7), scattered to Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12), and now the Gospel is about to be taken to the uttermost parts of the world. Acts 13 begins the record of Paul's missionary journeys, based from the city of Antioch. In Acts 1-12, Jerusalem had been the center of early church activity, with Peter being the key apostle. In chapter 13, the center becomes Antioch, and the key player is Paul.

Paul's first missionary journey into Asia Minor is recorded in Acts 13:3-14:28. We read about his second journey in Acts 15:36-18:22, and his third in 18:23-21:17. Paul also took a final, one-way trip to Rome, which some consider his fourth missionary journey.

Before you begin today, please pray. There is so much found in God's Word and it's vital that we read these chapters with a yearning to know Him more. Ask God to prepare your heart for the Holy Spirit to speak to you personally.

### First Day

1. Read Acts 13:1-52. How would you break this chapter into sections? What do you think is the main thought?
2. Are there any key words or phrases? Any thoughts or facts that are new to you?
3. Who are the main characters? Are there any people mentioned that we've already studied?
4. Reread Acts 13:1-5. Title this section.
5. Review Acts 11:25-26. Who was already ministering in Antioch, and for how long?

6. The leadership in the church at Antioch had grown from two men to five. Why? Read Ephesians 4:11-12 to understand some of Paul's goals as he ministers. Did he practice what he preached?

Acts 13:1 tells us that there were prophets and teachers in Antioch. Both offices were recognized as gifts from the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:28). Everett F. Harrison, in his book, "Interpreting Acts," helps us distinguish between these two ministries:

"As a prophet, a person spoke in response to a distinct moving of the Spirit, providing edification, exhortation, and consolation (1 Corinthians 14:3). As a teacher, one presumably had a more sustained ministry, making use of the Old Testament and the traditions of the life and teaching of the Lord Jesus as handed down in the church (Acts 2:42, Matthew 28:20). The teacher provided the basic information for living the Christian life; the prophet furnished special guidance from the Lord as needed."

Let's meet (or get reacquainted with) the five men in leadership in the church of Antioch...

- A. **Barnabas:** We looked at his life in a previous lesson. Note that he was from the island of Cyprus.
  - B. **Simeon:** He was nicknamed "Niger." This word is a Latin word meaning "black" or "black skinned." Simeon was probably from Africa and is sometimes thought to be Simeon of Cyrene who carried the cross of Jesus (Luke 23:26). This could possibly be true, although it is strange that he is not singled out in this text as from Cyrene, like Lucius is.
  - C. **Lucius:** Lucius is a Greek name. He was from Cyrene, which is west of Egypt on the coast of Africa.
  - D. **Manaen:** He was a convert from the household and court of Herod. The Greek word that is translated "brought up with" can mean a type of foster brother relationship. This also describes a title of honor given to boys who were reared at court with princes as their companions in education. Manaen grew up and probably played with Herod, the one who was responsible for the beheading of John the Baptist. Luke seems to be very interested in the affairs of the Herodian household ... could Manaen have been Luke's source of information?
  - E. **Saul:** Saul was from the city of Tarsus.
7. How was the leadership in Antioch different than the leadership in Jerusalem? You can read Galatians 3:27-29 for help.

8. Acts 13:2 tells us that the Holy Spirit spoke to these men. What were they doing at the time?

How did the Holy Spirit speak to them? Was it audibly? Was it by a loud thunderous voice? I tend to believe that He spoke divinely through the prophets that were there.

In Acts 13:1-4, we find the guys ministering to the Lord through praying and fasting. When God desires to speak to them, He has their attention. What about you? When God has something to tell you, are you ready and listening? Or are you too busy?

In verse 2 we find that the most important ministry is not ministering FOR Him, but ministering TO Him in worship and praise. We can't minister TO people unless we first minister TO God Himself.

9. What are some ways that we can "minister" to the Lord?

10. How much time do you spend ministering to the Lord? Do you spend much time praising and worshipping Him? Are you magnifying and exalting Him?

11. Acts 13:2 tells us that Barnabas and Saul were separated for, and called by, the Holy Spirit. Why is that an important fact to know?

It's important that we know we are called before we "go." Verse 4 says that they were "sent" by the Holy Spirit, not by man. Many people "go" without being "sent" by the Holy Spirit. Whether we are going to the mission field or going to speak to our neighbor, we need to rely on the Holy Spirit to lead and direct us.

12. Saul and Barnabas were called to be missionaries. What are you called to do? What has He "separated" you for? Is it motherhood? Evangelism? Teaching? Encouraging? Spend some time waiting on the Lord for your answer.

This ends our lesson for today. We're going to have a great time jumping on board with Saul as he travels around, telling the world about Jesus. All aboard!

**Memory Verse of the Week:** "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will." Acts 13:22b

## Second Day

**Review this week's memory verse.**

Saul and Barnabas begin their first official missionary journey by sailing from the seaport of Seleucia, headed for the island of Cyprus. Cyprus means copper, and it is called that because of the rich copper deposits located there. Barnabas was probably very excited about going there first, since it was his hometown. They landed on Salamis, which was a great commercial center on the east end of the island.

1. Read Acts 13:1-5.
2. What did Saul and Barnabas do immediately after they landed in Salamis? Who was with them?

In Acts 12, we met John Mark, who was the nephew of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10). Mark was probably led to the Lord by Peter since Peter considered him a "son in the faith" (1 Peter 5:13). His mom's house was a gathering place for believers to pray (Acts 12:12).

3. Read Acts 13:6-13.

Next the team travels 90 miles to Pathos, the capital of Cyprus, which was located on the western coast.

4. Whom did they first meet in Pathos? (Verse 6) What other name did he go by?
5. Why was Bar-Jesus trying to interfere with Saul and Barnabas?

One was considered a false prophet when he wrongly claimed to be a channel of divine communication.

6. Who else did they meet in verse 7? How is he described?
7. What is a proconsul? (Webster's has a good answer.)

In verse 9, Saul now begins to be referred to as Paul, which means "little." It was customary in bilingual countries to have two names. Saul probably had both names from childhood, but because he had been primarily in Jewish surroundings, he went by Saul. Now that he is entering the Gentile world, he goes by Paul. Very interesting, isn't it?

8. What did Paul accuse Bar-Jesus of doing?
9. What happened to Bar-Jesus in verse 11?
10. What was the proconsul's reaction to all this? (verse 12) Why was he astonished?

Verse 9 describes Paul as being filled with the Holy Spirit. Luke 4:1 says that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit when He was tempted in the wilderness. In Ephesians chapter 6 Paul tells us to put on the whole armor of God. But before we do that, he tells us in Ephesians 5:18 that we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We need the power of the Holy Spirit not only to discern spirits as Paul does here in chapter 13, but even to stand against the wiles of the devil.

11. **Are you having trouble fighting the Christian battle, day after day?**  
(Maybe you're trying to withstand the battle in your own strength instead of being filled with the Spirit.) Are you having trouble discerning spirits? (Maybe you're being deceived because you're trusting your own wisdom instead of the Holy Spirit.)
12. Read Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43. How is the incident in Acts 13 an example of the parable of the wheat and the tares?
13. What will happen to the tares at the end of the age? (Matthew 13:40-42)
14. Do you know any false prophets, tares, or pretenders in the faith? Do they still exist today? How can we recognize them?

Wherever there is a work of the Lord, satan is there to try to pervert God's ways. He has many tricks, but he loves to imitate God's ways with just a little twist of truth to deceive the believer. He will use any means he has to distract you from the straight way of the Lord.

When the ministry was finished in Cyprus, the missionary team sailed to the district of Pamphylia in Asia Minor. The city of Perga was 12 miles inland from the seaport of Attalia.

### 15. Who left the missionary team? Do we know why? (verse 13)

Mark's departure leaves room for much speculation. Was he sick? Homesick? Scared? Disloyal? The text doesn't say. We do know that his departure later caused a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas, when Barnabas wanted him to accompany them on another trip, and Paul refused to let him go (Acts 15:36-40). It is good to know that later in Paul's life, he saw Mark as a faithful servant of Christ, and useful in the ministry (2 Timothy 4:11).

This ends today's lesson. The story of Bar-Jesus is a good reminder to us that there are still people today who are false prophets, trying to distort God's Word and purposes. Oh, Holy Spirit, how we need You in our life! You truly are a **"Reason to Rejoice"**!

### Third Day

#### **Review your memory verse.**

In today's lesson, we find ourselves sailing with the team from Perga to Antioch, which is about 100 miles. (Can you feel the wind on your face?) This is not the same Antioch that we previously studied. There are actually seven different cities by the name Antioch, distinguished by the naming of the nearby cities (like in verse 14).

When the team arrives, they go straight to the synagogue to preach. Paul's burden for his people is quite obvious, as he always goes to the synagogues first when the opportunity permits. Their strategy is simple. They would preach the Gospel in Antioch, which was in the heart of Asia Minor, and it would filter down and around to all the other regions.

It is important to remember that this is the first missionary team of this kind to ever set sail to spread the Gospel. They had no books to read, testimonies from

previous missionaries, or any type of instructional manual. They were pioneering the land for Christ, totally following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

1. Read Acts 13:14-41.
2. This is Paul's first sermon recorded in the Book of Acts. Read verses 16-41 again. What is the central theme of his message?

Paul gives them a historical overview of Israel history. It is similar to Stephen's sermon in Acts 7. Remember that Paul stood and watched as Stephen was being stoned, and I'm sure he heard Stephen's words. I wonder if those words were still etched in Paul's heart ...

3. What did Paul remind them of in verse 17?

Paul mentions the prophet Samuel in verse 20 because he was preparatory for David, like John the Baptist was for Jesus. We can read about all the judges of Israel in the book of Judges. The number 450 in verse 20 is probably a round number that covers the sojourning in Egypt (400 years), the wilderness period (40 years), and the conquest of Canaan (about 10 years).

4. Verse 21 tells us about King Saul. We read his story in 1 Samuel 8-12.
  - a. Why did God give Israel a king? (1 Samuel 8:1-9)
  - b. What did God tell the people that Saul would do? (1 Samuel 8:10-18)
  - c. Why did the people want a king? (1 Samuel 8:19-20)
  - d. How is Saul described in 1 Samuel 9:1-2?
  - e. God was greatly displeased with Saul. Why? (1 Samuel 15:10-11)
5. David became God's choice for a king in 1 Samuel 16:1-13. What was God looking for in a king?
6. How is David described in Acts 13:22? Why?

Notice that verse 22 says that David wanted to do ALL of God's will, not part of it. Partial disobedience is disobedience. We can read about King Saul's disobedience in 1 Samuel 15.

7. Can you fill your name in the blanks?

\_\_\_\_\_ is a woman after God's heart. \_\_\_\_\_ seeks after all of God's will, and God is pleased.

8. If you don't feel your name fits in those blanks, why not? What changes do you need to make? In what area of your life are you struggling to obey? Search your heart. God wants your heart to be pure and blameless. That doesn't mean that we'll never sin, but that we are continually bringing those sins to the foot of the cross, asking for forgiveness and mercy. It means purposing to follow after the things of the Lord, instead of the things of the world.

The men in the synagogue can agree with everything Paul is saying -- up to verse 23. Now he introduces a new theme. They're interested. He begins with the name of Jesus, then he shows how Jesus was foretold by all the prophets, beginning with John the Baptist. He uses all the Old Testament Scriptures because he's dealing with a synagogue congregation.

In verse 33, Paul quotes Psalm 2:7, claiming that it refers to the resurrection of Jesus, not His birth. In verse 34, Paul quotes from Isaiah 55:3 which refers to the covenant that God made with David. In verse 35, he quotes from still another Psalm, Psalm 16:10. He points out that this prophecy had to be about Jesus, because David had died, been buried, and was still in the grave. But Jesus saw no corruption, because He rose from the dead.

9. Which verses from 28-37 speak about the following:

- a. The Crucifixion:
- b. The Burial:
- c. The Resurrection:

**Paul closes his message with a challenge and a warning.**

10. What's the challenge? (verses 38-39)

11. What's the warning? (verses 40-41)



Justification (Acts 13:39) is the act of God by which He declares the believing sinner righteous in Jesus Christ. It means to be made one with God. It helps to remember what justification means by saying that we have been made "just as if we've never sinned" (Romans 4:1-8). The law cannot justify a man. The law shows us our sin and condemns us (Romans 3:19-20). The great news of the Gospel is that man's debt was paid by Christ's death, and full forgiveness is available to all who will trust Him for it.

Paul warns them by quoting from Habakkuk 1:5 in verse 41. He basically applies the words of the coming judgment to those who reject the Gospel. He wants them to make a decision to either reject or accept the Gospel of Christ.

This ends our lesson for today. I pray that God spoke to your heart, especially regarding obedience. Let's give Him a "**Reason to Rejoice**" today, shall we?

### Fourth Day

**Recite your memory verse to someone. Are you a woman after God's heart?**

Today we will be looking at the response of the crowd as Paul preached. Remember to keep in mind that Paul's goal in preaching is not to make friends, but to save the lost from their sins!

1. Read Acts 13:42-47.
2. In verses 42-43, what was the response of the crowd? Why?
3. If they were so excited in verses 43-44, what happened to make the Jews so angry in verse 45?

Envy is a gross, deadly sin. It's like a poison that spreads throughout the whole body. Your envy does not only affect you, but it affects those in the body of Christ as well. The story of Joseph is a good example of envy not only affecting one man's life, but those around him.

4. Read Genesis 37. Answer the following questions:
  - a. Who was envious?
  - b. Why were they envious?
  - c. What did their envy cause them to do?
  - d. How did it affect them?
  - e. How did it affect others?

5. What did envy cause the chief priests to do to Jesus in Mark 15:10?
6. Read Romans 13:13-14. What's the remedy for envy? Explain what "put on" means.
7. What are some things that cause believers to be envious of each other?
8. Are you living in the sin of envy today? Is there someone whom you are envying? Repent today and start afresh.
9. From our previous studies, explain in your own words what Paul meant in verses 46-47. Read Acts 3:26 and Romans 1:16.
10. What was Paul's response to the rejection? (verse 46)

We are closing today with the *Gentiles* rejoicing in the Word of the Lord. Verse 49 tells us that God's Word was being widely spread throughout the region. These *Gentiles* were excited about what God had made available to them -- eternal life!

Verse 48 says that those who have been appointed to eternal life will believe. The word "appointed" means to be ordained, or enrolled. Believers have their names written in the Book of Life (Luke 10:20 and Philippians 4:3). This verse shows us God's sovereignty and gives us the divine side of evangelism. God chose you before the foundations of the world.

Verse 49, on the other hand, gives us the human side of evangelism. It is our responsibility to preach the Word. God uses humans as His instruments to tell others about Himself.

That's it for today. See you tomorrow. Are you looking for "**Reasons to Rejoice**" this week? I hope so!

### Fifth Day

Write your memory verse by memory.

As we read today, notice the changes in the order of people that are mentioned in chapter 13. Verse 7 used the phrase "Barnabas and Paul." In verse 13, Luke writes "Paul and his party." Now in verse 43, it changes to "Paul and Barnabas."

1. Read Acts 13:44-52. Reread verses 50-51.
2. Why were the Jews stirring up women?
3. After they had been rejected, what did they do? (verse 51) What did Jesus say to do in Luke 9:1-5?
4. What do YOU do after you've been rejected? Can you just shake the dust off your feet? Have you been rejected because of the Gospel lately? How did you react?

"Shaking the dust off your feet" is a gesture of abandonment. It means abandoning our wills for His, trusting Him, and moving onward. The missionary team traveled to Iconium, which is about 100 miles SE of Antioch. This small setback didn't ruin their parade!

5. What made it possible for them to have such joy, despite the controversy?  
Read verse 52.

It is possible to have joy during rejection and hard times. That joy is only found by being filled with the Holy Spirit. He is the one that gives us the ability to hang in there when the going gets tough!

Paul and Barnabas are very courageous men! They have set sail on a course that's built totally on faith. It takes faith in a great God to move toward the unknown. They really have no idea where they're going, only that they want to share Jesus. **What course are you on? Have you even set sail?**

**Let's review for a few minutes:**

6. What is the biggest lesson you learned from Acts 13?
7. What did you learn about God this week?

8. Are there any changes you need to make in your life as a result of this week's lesson?

Below is a chart that briefly summarizes Paul's missionary journeys. You can refer back to it as we continue to study.

	<b>First Journey</b>
<b>Scripture</b>	*13:1-14:28
<b>Missionaries</b>	*Barnabas, Saul, John Mark
<b>Highlights</b>	*Elymas blinded in Paphos *John Mark abandons mission *Persecution from the Jews *Paul stoned in Lystra *Churches established in Asia Minor
	<b>Second Journey</b>
<b>Scripture</b>	*15:36-18:22
<b>Missionaries</b>	*Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke
<b>Highlights</b>	*Visit to churches in Asia Minor *Paul's vision of the man from Macedonia *Philippian jailer converts to Christianity *Paul preaches in Athens *Paul writes 1 or 2 Thessalonians in Corinth
	<b>Third Journey</b>
<b>Scripture</b>	*18:23-21:17
<b>Missionaries</b>	*Paul, Luke, Timothy and others
<b>Highlights</b>	*Paul stays about three years in Ephesus *Paul writes first Corinthians *Riot in Ephesus *Paul writes 2 Corinthians from Macedonia and Romans from Corinth *Paul returns to Jerusalem

This chart was taken from Charles Swindoll's book The Growth of an Expanded Mission. I pray that it will help to give you an overall picture of Paul's journeys, and the rest of the Book of Acts. God was really spreading His Word! Rejoice!!

