

Jesus Builds – the book of Acts

Lesson Sixteen | Acts 13

Background

The book of Acts was written by the physician, Luke, as a continuation of his Gospel. Jesus said he would build his church and Acts is the earliest history we have about that. It begins with the Ascension on Mount Olivet and then tracks the development of the early church with a particular focus on Peter in the early chapters and Paul in the later chapters, taking us to the early AD 60s.

Context

The focus now moves away from Peter (mentioned once more in Acts 15) to Saul. He will begin to be referred to as Paul, which is his Roman name (from Paulus). In Acts 13-14 we find Paul on his first missionary journey, which likely took place in AD 48-49. He and Barnabas were sent out by the now prominent church at Antioch.



Paul's First Missionary Journey (Part 1)

1. **Led by the Holy Spirit to Send Barnabas and Paul (1-4):**

As we see frequently in Acts, the Holy Spirit is directing the events. And while people prayed for them and sent them (13:3), the Text says they were sent out by the Holy Spirit (13:4).

- What does this say about how ministry and church decisions ought to be made?
- Notice the mention of fasting (13:2), what role should fasting have today?

2. **Travels:** They will travel to Seleucid (13:4), a seaport 16 miles from Antioch, from which they sailed to the island of Cyprus (13:4). They arrived first in Salamis, the largest city on the eastern half of Cyprus (13:5), then traveled through the island to Paphos (13:6), which is 100 miles southwest of Salamis and was the seat of the provincial government. They later left Paphos to go to Perga (13:13) in Pamphylia, then to Pisidian Antioch (13:14). This was not the Antioch on the Orentes River from whence they started, but Antioch in Phrygia and referred to as Pisidian Antioch because it was so near the city of Pisidia. This was a Roman colony. From Pisidian Antioch they went to Iconium (13:51).

3. **Elymas the Magician (6-12):** Satan used this sorcerer to oppose Paul's ministry.

- What does this episode teach us about how Satan operates?
- How does God use the wicked Elymas to help reach the proconsul Sergio's Paulus (a governor appointed by the Roman senate)?

4. **Paul's First Recorded Sermon (13-41):** Luke records other of Paul's sermons but this appears to be the most completely preserved. It is designed for a Jewish audience.

5. **"You are my son":** In Acts 13:33, Paul quotes from Psalm 2:7, which is also quoted in Hebrews 1:5 and 5:5. Paul sees Psalm 2:7 fulfilled in some way by the resurrection.

- What does it mean that "this day I have fathered [begotten] you"?

6. **The Jewish Response vs. Gentile Response (43-50):** This passage shows how in general the Jews rejected the gospel while the Gentiles were embracing it. Luke will present a nearly parallel event later in Acts 17:1-12.