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## Acts 13

### Paul's First Missionary Journey

([Acts 15:36-41](#); [Acts 18:23-28](#))

**1Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.**

This list of Believers is as diverse as one could imagine at this time. We know that Barnabas and Saul had known each other likely from their youth as both were from north of Cyprus.

Simeon is thought by some commentators due to his name that he was from Africa. His name being Simeon and given the nickname Niger to differentiate him from several other Simeon's.

Lucius of Cyrene is another manner of differentiation as last names were not used at this time. So, if you had two Lucius's you would simply say their name and where they were from. So, in this case this Lucius was from Cyrene. History tells us that many nationalities later used the home location as a last name for a person.

Now a brief history of this last verse:

***and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.***

Saul is mentioned in this verse as one who was present at this time in Antioch but was not raised with Manaen and Herod.

Manaen according to historical documents from Josephus was an Essene, a righteous and devout man. It does not give the relative age of Manaen and Herod but at some point, when Herod was young, God revealed to Manaen that Herod would someday be King of the Jews. A bit curious is that if these two were raised together, the Essenes were a self-separated group from the larger Jewish population. It does not tell us if Herod was raised within the Essene population or that they were simply associated with each other.

Quoting from, <https://ccel.org/j/josephus/works/ant-15.htm>

**Chapter 10, section 5.** *“Now there was one of these Essens, whose name was Manahem, who had this testimony, that he not only conducted his life after an excellent manner, but had the foreknowledge of future events given him by God also. This man once saw Herod when he was a child, and going to school, and saluted him as king of the Jews; but he, thinking that either he did not know him, or that he was in jest, put him in mind that he was but a private man; but Manahem smiled to himself, and clapped him on his backside with his hand, and said,“ However that be, thou wilt be king, and wilt begin thy reign happily, for God finds thee worthy of it. And do thou remember the blows that Manahem*

*hath given thee, as being a signal of the change of thy fortune. And truly this will be the best reasoning for thee, that thou love justice [towards men], and piety towards God, and clemency towards thy citizens; yet do I know how thy whole conduct will be, that thou wilt not be such a one, for thou wilt excel all men in happiness, and obtain an everlasting reputation, but wilt forget piety and righteousness; and these crimes will not be concealed from God, at the conclusion of thy life, when thou wilt find that he will be mindful of them, and punish time for them." Now at that time Herod did not at all attend to what Manahem said, as having no hopes of such advancement; but a little afterward, when he was so fortunate as to be advanced to the dignity of king, and was in the height of his dominion, he sent for Manahem, and asked him how long he should reign. Manahem did not tell him the full length of his reign; wherefore, upon that silence of his, he asked him further, whether he should reign ten years or not? He replied, "Yes, twenty, nay, thirty years;" but did not assign the just determinate limit of his reign. Herod was satisfied with these replies, and gave Manahem his hand, and dismissed him; and from that time he continued to honor all the Essens. We have thought it proper to relate these facts to our readers, how strange soever they be, and to declare what hath happened among us, because many of these Essens have, by their excellent virtue, been thought worthy of this knowledge of Divine revelations."*

Lest we think of Herod as a righteous man let me remind you also according to this from Torah.com

Herod was devout in his Jewishness on some matters including his eating habits. He would not allow any pork in his world as food. An interesting piece of history about not being so devout in his love of family.

Torah.com

*“Herod executed his wife, Miriam, and her mother Salome, in 29 B.C.E. The next year, he murdered his brother-in-law Kostabar. These acts stemmed from his paranoia about relatives wishing to take away his throne. This paranoia only worsened over time, leading to his most famous act, namely the accusation of high treason against two of his sons, Alexander and Aristobolus, and their subsequent execution in 7 B.C.E.*

*To proceed with the trial (which took place in the Roman court in Beirut), he needed to get permission from Augustus Caesar, which he received. The incident led to Augustus’ famous quip,*

*It is better to be Herod’s pig (Greek: hua) than son (Greek: huia).<sup>[14]</sup>”*

*The pun is based on the assumption that, as Herod was a Jew, he would not eat pork, and thus, his pig would be safe from the butcher’s knife, unlike his own flesh and blood.*

Back to these men identified as being in Antioch at this time:

These were men of God, Believers and teachers of the Good News.

**2As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.**

We have spoken over the years of crafting our own plans on how we will help God. If you recall the axe head in the water story 2

Kings 6:5, we know that is always best to ask God what His plan is and not set about carrying out our plan and asking God to go along with us. It is best to function exactly where God has you and wait on Him to give direction. That is what happened here. They were carrying out the mission they had been given as a team when the Holy Spirit called upon them to separate out of the team Barnabas and Saul for a special mission.

They laid hands on them is not a Biblical mandate or prescribed process but seems to stem from the Law when Aaron was instructed to lay his hands on a sacrifice.

***Leviticus 16:21 Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness.***

We often will lay hands on others as a physical representation of joining together in whatever the person being prayed for is enduring or embarking on. As usual there have been some that have taken it to an extreme but as said, it is not a Biblical mandate. As a matter of fact, there is a Biblical caution associated with laying on of hands.

***1 Timothy 5: [22](#) Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.***

This caution is more about ordination, moving someone into a position of leadership. Caution should be taken that a person that is not spiritually prepared or mature would be put in a position that is beyond their wisdom and experience. As to healing, Jesus both laid hands on those He would heal and did not lay hands on some that He healed. We are given no direction, specifically on this issue.

The following verses are amazing declarations of how the power of God through Jesus and Holy Spirit can move men to speak righteousness and life to those who are lost. Some to salvation and others to eternal death and damnation.

### **On Cyprus**

**4So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.**

**5And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to *their* minister.**

John is John Mark, the author of the Book of Mark. Even though he abandoned this missionary journey later after Mark had matured Paul was quite fond of him and asked that he be brought to Rome where Paul was imprisoned.

**6**And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:

Barjesus is this man's given name from his family. He will also in a few verses be called Elymas an Aramaic name usually associated with "sage" someone of great wisdom. This man was evil as the large part of the area was a melting pot of foreigners. The local Jews in the area to some extent lived on their heritage, trading in evil anti Godly ideals and items.

**7**Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. **8**But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

The source behind the sorcerer is Satan. God does not tell us that here, but there seems to be a connection consistently throughout scripture between those who seek to do evil relate to Satan in some manner including sorcery. This effort of resisting God's Word from coming to Sergius Paulus is not by chance.

**9**Then Saul, (who also *is called Paul*,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

This may be the last time Paul is referred to as Saul throughout Acts except when a reference is made back to when Saul of

Tarsus was waging war against the Church. Paul is a gentile name and Saul was a Hebrew name.

Paul is said to have focused intently on this evil man, “ ***filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,***”

**10And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?**

Paul makes no illusion as to who he is talking to and where the evil power comes from. The word used for devil here is “diablos” meaning slanderer.

We are not told whether Elymas was allowed or even could respond when dealing with God and His spokesman at the moment through the power of the Holy Spirit. Any response would have been useless and likely antagonized God, so silence may have been Elymas’s best option.

**11And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.**

There are people even today that question why a loving God would send anyone to Hell. The fact is He sends no one to Hell, each person does it to themselves. In this case how could a loving God blind a person. Same issue, Elymas did it to himself.

Elymas intentionally tried to interfere with the preaching of the Good News from God.

**12Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.**

Belief seems to come so easily by seeing which is fully understandable. How much more challenging to humanity when we believe by faith, not seeing.

*John 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*

### **In Pisidian Antioch**

**13Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.**

Several things to note here. Up until now it was usually Barnabas and Paul, but it has now changed as to the leader is to Paul and his company or sometimes Paul and Barnabas.

It is unknown why John Mark departed; it may have been that his cousin Barnabas was no longer in charge. Some commentators proffer that John Mark left because there was hardly any committed Jews in Perga. It was completely gentile influence and deep in worship of Greek and Roman gods. There were temples

to Venus and Diana. The cities were filled with people from all over the world due to the prolific trade.

**14But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.**

There is another Antioch that is in Syria, so the distinction of Pisidia is for that distinction. It appears they did not stay in Perga. We know later that a church was started in Perga as Paul would preach there.

Paul gives such an amazing testimony of history of the Israelite nation as well as the Coming Messiah. I will try not to interrupt Paul's dissertations as little as possible.

**15And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men *and* brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. 16Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.**

“Men of Israel,” obviously Jews. “And ye that fear God” is likely a reference to the gentiles in the audience at the synagogue.

**17The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.**

This is a reference to Deuteronomy.

*Deuteronomy 1:31 And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.*

**19**And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. **20**And after that he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

Sorry to interrupt but I think it is wise to understand the context here as to Israel demanding of God a king. Paul is well aware of Israel's dealings with God and wants to make that clear here.

*1 Samuel 8: 1And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba. 3And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.*

*4Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 5And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. 6But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 7And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. 8According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. 9Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet*

*protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.*

**21**And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. **22**And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. **23**Of this man's seed hath God according to *his* promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: **24**When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. **25**And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose.

Paul completed the history of Israel from bondage in Egypt to John the Baptist and to the Messiah that had come almost simultaneously to Israel.

**26**Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

Here again Paul acknowledges that there are gentiles present at the Synagogue. That will become a larger point as we continue. Paul will now condemn Jerusalem and those Jews who dwell there for the death of the Messiah.

**27**For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the

prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*. [28](#)And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. [29](#)And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre. [30](#)But God raised him from the dead: [31](#)And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. [32](#)And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, [33](#)God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

*Psalms 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*

[34](#)And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. [35](#)Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

*Psalms 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

The corruption spoken of here is decay of the body.

[36](#)For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: [37](#)But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. [38](#)Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: [39](#)And by

**him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.**

Grace and Mercy has superseded the Law. Justification not by slaying of innocent animals but by the blood of the Son of God has justified all flesh of those who believe in Christ.

**40Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;**

**41Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.**

*Ephesians 2:8 8For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

### **The Gentiles Ask to Hear the Gospel**

**42And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.**

Some of the chosen leave and some stay along with the unchosen who remain to become graphed in to the chosen.

**43Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.**

**44And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. 45But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and**

**spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.**

First to the Jews and then to the gentiles. Romans written by Paul in 55 or 57, Acts written by Luke in about 60AD

*Romans 1:16 **16**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. **17**For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

**46**Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

**47**For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

**48**And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. **49**And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. **50**But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. **51**But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. **52**And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

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