

“The Acts Of The Apostle Paul”

Acts 12:20-13:13

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Teaching Aim: To realize what goes around comes around, this was certainly the case as God ended King Herod Agrippa I's life. To follow Barnabas and Saul as they began their public ministry together and prepared for their First Missionary Journey to Asia Minor. To recognize the early church was led by a team effort, the church was never intended to be a one man show. To understand the significance of Saul's change in name to Paul. To recognize the importance of not allowing false teachers to lead others astray.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORK (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: The horrible death of King Herod Agrippa I in A.D. 44 (Acts 12:20-24)

1. **Acts chapter 12** opens with King Herod Agrippa I killing the Apostle James, it ends with God killing Herod. What were the circumstances surrounding the downfall of King Herod Agrippa I according to **verse 20**? Do we know why Agrippa was angry at the people of Tyre and Sidon? In what modern country are those two cities located today?
2. The people of Tyre and Sidon were dependent upon the region of Galilee for its grain supply, this made it crucial that they have a good relationship with King Herod (**vs. 20**). What strategy did the people of Tyre and Sidon use in their attempt to get back on Herod's good side? Who was Blastus? What was the significance of the position he held? Do people still use this strategy today?
3. In **verse 21** we find Herod Agrippa I hosting a festival in honor of Claudius Caesar; Claudius was in his third year as Caesar. As the masses gathered on this special occasion, Herod arrayed in his royal apparel, sat down on his throne, and began to deliver a speech to the people. **Verse 22** says, *“And the people kept shouting, ‘The voice of a god and not a man!’”* According to Jewish historian Josephus, what caused the people to react this way?
4. How should Herod have responded? What was his response? What was the Lord's response to Herod's blasphemous reception of the praise (**vs. 23**)? Instead of Herod killing Peter (as he has attempted to do earlier in the chapter), it was the Lord who killed Herod. According to **verse 23**, what slow and painful method did the Lord use to kill Herod Agrippa I? Note: Josephus said Herod suffered under intense pain for five days before he finally succumbed in death. Even at that, the worst was yet to come for Herod. (See **Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:11-15**)

5. King Herod Agrippa I had attempted to kill the leaders of the early church, but after killing the Apostle James, it was Herod who lost his life. It seems what goes around comes around. What can we learn about the growth of the early church from **verse 24**? (See **Matt. 16:18**)

Part II: The commissioning of Barnabas and Saul to missionary work (Acts 12:25-13:3)

1. As we pick up our story from where it left off in **Acts chapter 11**, what are Barnabas and Saul doing in **Acts 12:25**? Barnabas and Saul had been teaching at the new church in Antioch, Syria for a year with great success. (See **Acts 11:22-26**) What report caused Barnabas and Saul to head back to Judea? (See **Acts 11:27-30**) In light of these verses, why did Barnabas and Saul return to Jerusalem in **verse 25**? Who did Barnabas and Saul take with them? What can we learn about this young man from **Acts 12:11-12** and **Col. 4:10**?
2. In **verse 1** we learn that there was a team of leaders in the church at Antioch. Who are the men mentioned and what do we know about each man? Why do we find teams of leaders leading the early church? (See **Acts 14:23; 15:22-23; 20:17; 21:18; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:17**) Why is it important to have a team effort over the efforts of one man?
3. What message came to the leaders of the church as they fasted and prayed (**vs. 2**)? What is the importance of fasting and praying for the Christian today? Have you noticed that it is easier to turn a car while it is moving? Why do you think God calls busy people into ministry and not those who are sitting around? How are you serving the Lord today?
4. **Verse 2** is the third time in Paul's life where we see him being separated by God, what are the other two times? (See **Gal. 1:15-16; Rom 1:1**) What is the purpose behind the church laying hands on missionaries? Why did Paul say in **1 Tim. 5:22**, "*Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure*"? Who did the instructions come from in **verse 2**? What did the church do once they had prayed and laid hands-on Barnabas and Saul? Note: This began Paul's First Missionary Journey.

Part III: The salvation of the Roman appointed proconsul on the island of Cyprus (Acts 13:4-13)

1. Where did Barnabas and Saul head once they left Antioch (**vs. 4**)? Why? How far of a journey was this? (See Commentaries) What island was the destination of Barnabas and Saul on the first leg of their trip? Who was from this island? How far was this island from the port city of Seleucia? Note: The island of Cyprus had a large Jewish population.
2. What did Barnabas and Saul do once they arrived at the port of Salamis on the eastern shore of Cyprus (**vs. 5**)? Why is it significant that they went to the synagogues of the Jews first. What can we learn about the role of John Mark from **verse 5**?
3. Following their visit to Salamis, the team journeyed approximately 100 miles from Salamis to the city of Paphos on the western coast of Cyprus. Who did Barnabas and Saul run into at Paphos (**vs. 6**)? What was the name of this false prophet and sorcerer? How do we know this individual was of Jewish descent? What did he do to make a living?
4. Who were Barnabas and Saul visiting when they met Bar-Jesus (**vs. 7**)? What can we learn about the proconsul Sergius Paulus from **verse 7**? (See Commentaries) How did Barnabas and Saul come into contact with Sergius Paulus (**vs. 7b**)?
5. Another name for Bar-Jesus was Elymas (which can be translated sorcerer). How did Elymas react to the teachings of Barnabas and Saul (**vs. 8**)? Why was he opposed to them?
6. What major change took place in **verse 9a**? What is the meaning of the name "*Saul*?" What significance is there in Saul being given the name "*Paul*," which means "*small*"? (See **1 Cor. 15:19**) Note: From this moment on in the Book of Acts, the order of the names changes with the exception of the Jerusalem Council (See **Acts 15:12, 25**). From this point on, it would be "*Paul and Barnabas*."

7. How did Paul respond to Elymas (this sorcerer) as he attempted *“to turn the proconsul away from the faith”* (**vv. 9-10**)? Why do you think Paul reacted so strongly? Should we react strongly when false teachers are leading people astray today?

8. Bar-Jesus (or Elymas) was spiritually dead like unbelievers today, and he didn’t even know it. He was in a dark place, darker than he realized. What did the Lord do to Bar-Jesus as punishment for what he was doing to others (**vs. 11**)? Who else went through a similar situation? (See **Acts 9:7-9**) How did the outcome of the two men differ? Who alone has the power to remove the darkness from our lives? (See **Isa. 42:6-7; John 8:12**)

9. Who came to faith in **verse 12** following the blindness, the blind sorcerer Bar-Jesus, or the proconsul Sergius Paulus? According to **verse 12**, what two events led to the salvation of Sergius Paulus? Many Christians today say they wish they could see a real-life miracle; but in doing so they forget that they have already received a miracle through their own regeneration. In what way is our regeneration a miracle? (See **Eph. 2:1-5; Col. 2:13-14**)

10. Where do we find *“Paul and his party”* setting sail from (**vs. 13**)? What do the words, *“Paul and his party”* imply? What was their destination? Perga was a major city in the Roman province of Pamphylia, it was in Asia Minor. In what modern country is the Roman province of Pamphylia located in today? What disturbing news do we find in **verse 13b**? Why do you think John Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas at this time? How would this desertion later affect the relationship between Paul and Barnabas? (See **Acts 15:36-41**) Why do you think Barnabas fought so hard for John Mark to be on their Second Missionary Journey?

11. In **Romans 8:28** we learn, *“...all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”* What good came out of this separation? How do we know that Paul and John Mark’s relationship was restored? (See **2 Timothy 4:11-13**)

12. John Mark is an excellent example of *“failing forward.”* What does it mean to *“fail forward”* and how can we do so today? What are some of John Mark’s accomplishments in ministry after his initial failure? How have you *“failed forward?”* Is your life today better for it?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- ☐ **Acts chapter 12** began with Herod Agrippa I killing the Apostle James, it ends with God killing him.
- ☐ There is a lot of truth to the statement, "*What goes around comes around,*" that was certainly the case with King Herod Agrippa I.
- ☐ God's design for the church is that it be run by a team of godly men using their gifts together.
- ☐ The laying on of hands was symbolic of the church being one with Barnabas and Saul as they left for their First Missionary Journey.
- ☐ On their First Missionary Journey, Barnabas and Saul stayed close to their homes (Cyprus and Cilicia), perhaps there is a lesson in this for us today.
- ☐ Saul boldly confronted the false teacher Bar-Jesus and was used by God to bring blindness on him for a season.
- ☐ The first government official to come to faith in Christ also had the name of Paul.
- ☐ The desertion of John Mark turned into a magnificent lesson on "*failing forward.*"