

STUDY GUIDE

for the week of 8/25 thru 9/1
Acts 12:20-13:52



WHATS THE STORY?

As the focus shifts from Jerusalem to the expansion of the church into Asia Minor and Southern Europe, Paul and Barnabas do their best to bring the gospel message to the Jews and the Gentiles. However, resistance from both pushes them to continue spreading the gospel outward.

LECTIO DEVINA

Prepare: Find a calm and quiet place to read and absorb the passage.

Read: Read through the passage. Listen for any words or phrases that jump out and listen for what God has to say.

Reflect: Try to understand what God could be saying to you through this passage.

Respond: Journal or pray to God, communicating about what you think God was telling you through Scripture.

Rest: Spend time contemplating, allowing God to work.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What causes people to be resistant to the message of the gospel?
- Where do you see Jesus in the story of Israel?

Discuss: Why did Paul and Barnabas leave Antioch?

What was similar between Paul's conversion and Bar-Jesus' punishment?

What does Luke mean by "The Word of the Lord"?

A Deeper Look

After the humiliating death of Herod at the end of chapter 12, the next chapter begins with the Holy Spirit communicating to the believers in Antioch that Paul and Barnabas were to leave "for the work I have called them"(v2) They were sent off to Seleucia, where they met up with John and preached there from synagogue to synagogue. They then made it to a place called Paphos, where they were confronted by a magician and false prophet named Bar-Jesus. When Bar-Jesus tried to oppose them, Paul, "filled with the Holy Spirit", said that he was, "a child of the devil...making crooked the straight paths of the Lord"(v10) in contrast to what John the Baptist claimed was his commission from the prophet Isaiah. (Matthew 3:3, Mark 1:3, Luke 3:4, John 1:23) Paul then made Bar-Jesus "blind for a while"(v11), a parallel to Paul's own experience, leaving hope for Bar-Jesus' on repentance.

Paul and some others took off and separated from John and arrived at a synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. After the usual reading of the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue leader asked if anyone had a word to share. Paul (unsurprisingly) stood up and gave a speech. He used their people's history to proclaim the good news of Christ (v32) saying that "by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses."(v39) Intrigued, the Jewish worshipers begged them to stay and tell them these same things at the next Sabbath. At their return the next week, the whole town showed up to hear "the word of the Lord."(v44) However, after they preached the next Sabbath, opposition arose among some of the Jewish people who came to listen. In response to this opposition, Paul tells them that they have been sent first to the Jews but that the church is expanding to include Gentiles as well, quoting Jesus saying, "I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles".(v47) At this the Gentiles rejoiced and the opposition grew, but the Spirit continues to move, and the word of the Lord spread. The disciples left feeling full of joy and of the Spirit.