

Bible Study Group Notes

Acts 13.1–12

THE BIG PICTURE

Acts 13 marks a major turning point in the book of Acts. Until now the gospel has spread from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria. Now, for the first time, the church deliberately sends missionaries into the wider Gentile world.

As Barnabas and Saul begin this new work, Luke reminds us that Christian mission is not simply a human initiative. The Holy Spirit sends, the church obeys, and the word of God is proclaimed. Yet as soon as the gospel advances, it meets opposition. Even so, the Lord continues to open blind eyes through his word. The passage asks us a searching question: When the gospel meets resistance, where do we place our confidence?

INVESTIGATE

Read Acts 13.1–12.

1. What do you notice about the church at Antioch in 13.1–3? What were they doing before Barnabas and Saul were sent?
2. Who is the true sender of this missionary journey according to 13.2–4?
3. What is the first thing Barnabas and Saul do when they arrive in Cyprus (13.5)? Why is that significant?
4. What do we learn about Sergius Paulus and Elymas in 13.6–8? How are they very different?
5. What was Elymas trying to achieve in 13.8?
6. Why does Paul speak so strongly to Elymas in 13.9–11?
7. According to 13.12, what finally leads Sergius Paulus to believe?

REFLECT & APPLY

8. The church in Antioch was worshipping, praying and listening before acting. How easy do you find it to begin with prayer and dependence rather than immediately trying to solve problems yourself?
9. The sermon suggested that the gospel often meets resistance because it is true. Where might you see quieter forms of resistance today – in our culture, in conversations with friends, or even in your own heart?
10. Have you ever found that taking your faith more seriously seemed to bring unexpected opposition or discouragement? How does this passage help you interpret that experience?
11. Paul's confidence rested in "the teaching of the Lord", not in personality or cleverness. What might that look like in our evangelism, small groups, family life, or conversations with those exploring Christianity?
12. Sergius Paulus came wanting to hear the word of God. Is there someone in your life who seems spiritually curious or open at the moment? How might you prayerfully encourage them to keep listening to Jesus?
13. Elymas tried to make "the straight paths of the Lord" crooked. What are some ways the gospel can become distorted today? How can we remain both gracious and faithful as we speak about Christ?

PRAY

- Thank God that the risen Lord Jesus still sends his people and speaks through his word.
- Pray for confidence to share the gospel with humility and love.
- Pray for those exploring Christianity, that God would open their eyes to the truth of Christ.
- Ask that, like the church in Antioch, we would be a people who worship, pray, listen carefully to the Holy Spirit, and gladly join in God's mission.

NB The Church Prayer Pointers for July are available in church or on the WhatsApp group.