ACTS 13

Sent Out: A Light for the Gentiles

a praying church, a blinded sorcerer, a synagogue sermon, and a word that ran through a whole region

> *"Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses."*
> ACTS 13:38–39

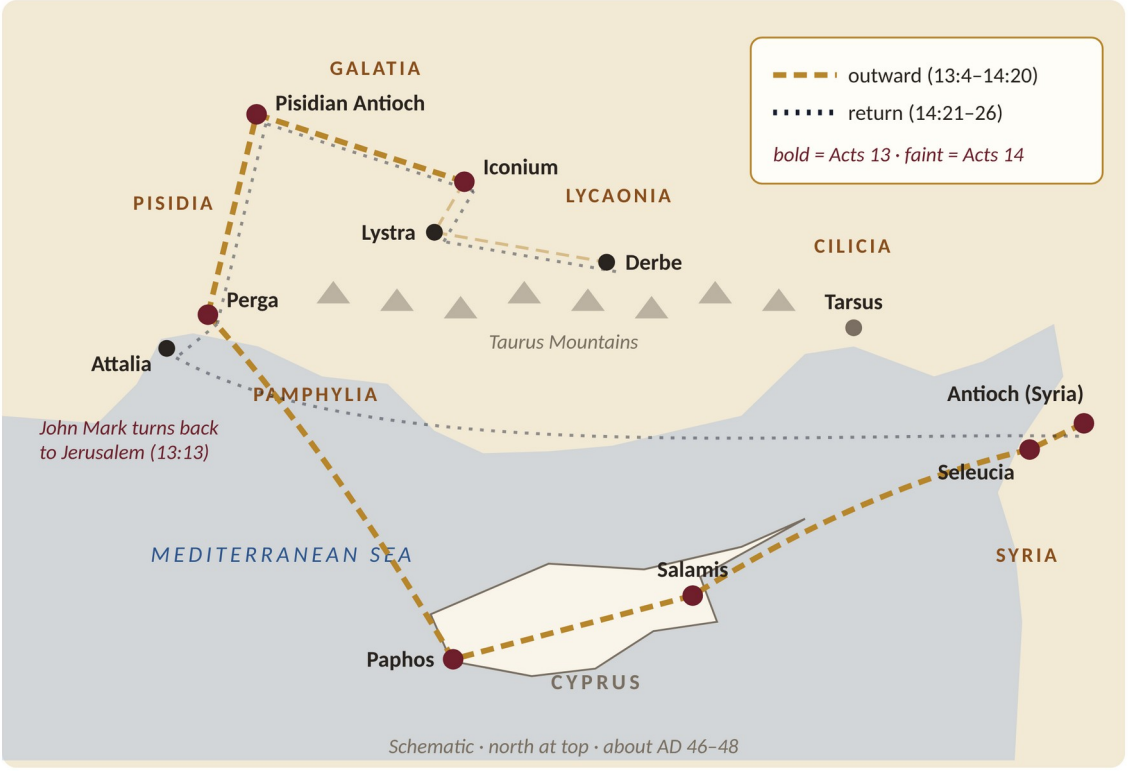
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where Luke has brought us

1. Acts turns a corner here.

2. The leaders listed in verse 1 are a picture of what the gospel was already doing: Barnabas, a Levite “of Cyprian birth” (4:36); Simeon called Niger (Latin for “black”); Lucius from Cyrene in North…

3. The route, usually dated about AD 46–48, runs from Antioch to its port at Seleucia, across to Barnabas’ home island of Cyprus (Salamis in the east, Paphos in the west, the seat of the Roman…



Set Apart for the Work

A praying church at Antioch, the Spirit's call, and hands laid on two men

ACTS 13:2

While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

DAVID GUZIK

Worship is the first job; they went with only the Spirit's call and power.

R.C. SPROUL

We can commission, but we have no power — the Spirit sends.

MATTHEW HENRY

They prayed for them; Christ keeps no servants idle.

ἀφορίσατε

APHORISATE · "SET APART"

From aphorizō, to mark off by a boundary, to separate.

The Hand of the Lord on Cyprus

Synagogues in Salamis, a sorcerer at Paphos, and a Roman governor who believes

ACTS 13:4

So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

DAVID GUZIK

Harsh because the proconsul's soul was at stake; Elymas never repents.

R.C. SPROUL

Rome meets the gospel; blindness for a time; faith in the teaching.

MATTHEW HENRY

Satan is busy with great men; Saul is first called Paul.

μάγος
MAGOS · "MAGICIAN"

The same word as the "magi" who came from the east to worship the newborn King (Matthew 2:1).

Paul Stands Up in the Synagogue

John Mark turns back, the Law and the Prophets are read, and Paul tells Israel's story up to David's Son

ACTS 13:13

Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; but John left them and returned to Jerusalem.

DAVID GUZIK

Why Mark left is unknown; Jesus is the goal of history.

R.C. SPROUL

Mark signed up for the duration; Paul began with election.

MATTHEW HENRY

Mark's fault — we shall hear of it again; God no debtor.

παράκλησις
PARAKLĒSIS · "EXHORTATION"

"If you have any word of exhortation (paraklēseōs) for the people, say it" (v15).

Paul's first recorded sermon



History leads to a Person; the Person leads to a choice — believe and be freed, or scoff and perish.

Read the bars from top to bottom: Paul walks the synagogue from Israel's history to David's Son, the empty tomb, three Old Testament texts, and then an offer and a warning.

But God Raised Him

The message of this salvation: a cross, a tomb, and three Scriptures that prove the resurrection

ACTS 13:32

"And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers,

DAVID GUZIK

Events are the sermon; God was greater than man's sin.

R.C. SPROUL

They fulfilled the Scriptures they read; His flesh did not decay.

C.H. SPURGEON

"To you" is this word sent; serve your generation, then sleep.

MATTHEW HENRY

Resurrection proves the Son; He rose to die no more.

ἀνίστημι
ANISTĒMI · "RAISED UP"

Verse 33 says God fulfilled the promise "in that He raised up (anastēsas) Jesus," and verse 34 repeats the verb with "from the dead."

Freed from All Things

Forgiveness proclaimed, a freedom the Law could not give, and a warning to scoffers

ACTS 13:39

and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.

DAVID GUZIK

Forgiveness clears the debt; justification credits the account.

R.C. SPROUL

Justification by faith alone; a day of doom for scoffers.

C.H. SPURGEON

God pardons all — a full and a free pardon.

MATTHEW HENRY

Your sins may be forgiven; the Law could never justify.

δικαιοῦται

DIKAIOUTAI · "IS FREED"

Dikaioō, to declare righteous — the verb of Romans and Galatians.

A Light for the Gentiles

A city gathers, jealousy and joy, a turn to the nations, and the dust shaken off

ACTS 13:46

Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

DAVID GUZIK

Not novelty but the word; joy that contradicted circumstances.

R.C. SPROUL

Election is to faith, not by faith; the rejecters are responsible.

C.H. SPURGEON

Some never like it — but "there is the comfort!"

MATTHEW HENRY

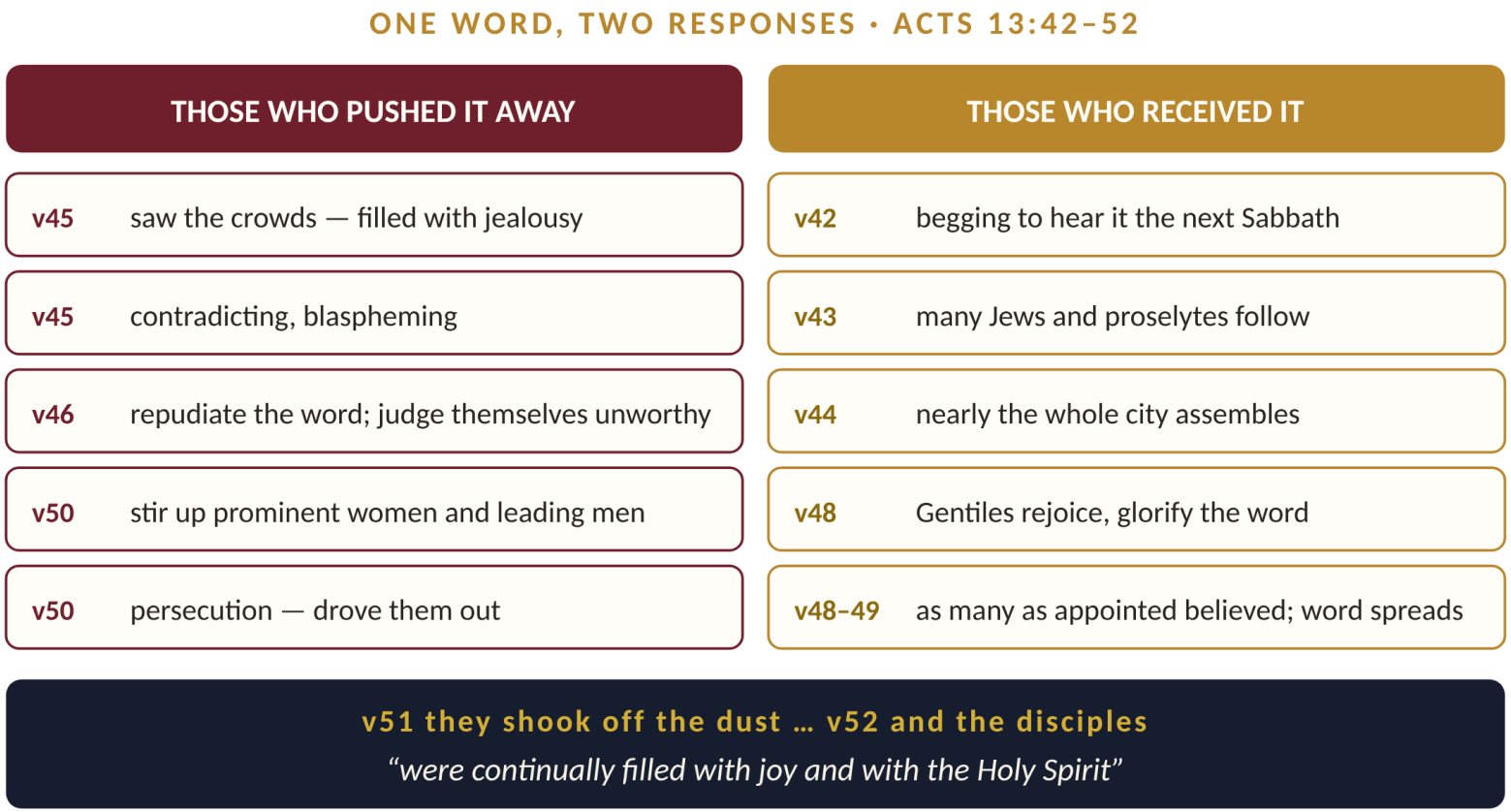
The Jews' loathings were the Gentiles' longings.

τεταγμένοι

TETAGMENOI · "APPOINTED"

A perfect passive participle of tassō, to station, to set in order, to appoint — a word at home in military and official use.

One word, two responses



The same word of the Lord met jealousy on one side and rejoicing on the other; notice that many Jews were among those who followed (v43).

What to carry from this chapter

1

The mission was born in worship.

The call came “while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting” (v2).

2

The church sends, but the Spirit empowers.

Antioch laid on hands (v3); Luke says they went “being sent out by the Holy Spirit” (v4).

3

The man who twisted the way lost his sight.

Elymas tried to “turn” (diastrephō) the proconsul and to “make crooked the straight ways of the Lord” (vv8, 10) — and was led by the hand, as Saul once was (9:8).

4

A quitter is not finished.

Henry: “It was his fault, and we shall hear of it again.”

More to carry

5

The gospel is news about what God did.

Sproul: “The gospel has to do with a proclamation of what happened in history in the person and work of Jesus.”

6

David decayed; Jesus did not.

Diaphthora occurs only in Acts (2:27, 31; 13:34–37).

7

Freed from all things.

Dikaioō — the NASB’s “freed” here is Paul’s word for justification.

8

The pardon is full and free.

Spurgeon: “When God pardons a person’s sins, he pardons them all; he makes a clean sweep of the whole.”

Talk it through

1. The call came while the leaders were worshiping and fasting, not while they were planning (13:2). What would it look like for me to put ministering to the Lord ahead of my plans this week?

2. Elymas tried to keep a seeking man from the faith. Who in my life is standing between someone and Jesus — and could it ever be me?

3. John Mark quit at Perga, and Paul later called him “useful.” Where have I quit, and what would it take to get back in the work?

4. Paul told the gospel as history — what God did. If I had three minutes, how would I tell what God has done in history and in my life?

5. Paul says believers are freed “from all things” the Law could not free them from. What am I still trying to fix by my own law-keeping instead of trusting Christ?

CLOSING

Acts 13 begins with a few men worshiping in Antioch and ends with disciples full of joy in a city that threw their teachers out. In between, the Spirit sends, a sorcerer is blinded, a quitter goes home, and Paul preaches a risen Savior through whom "everyone who believes is freed from all things." That word is sent to you; believe it, and then carry it to someone else.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Acts study page.