

ACTS 12:24-13:3

Taking The first words of the consecutive verses 12:24-13:1

But the word of God grew and multiplied.”

‘He was a self made man who worshipped his own creator’.

This 3rd growth point is very pointed. Another tyrannical Herod has tried stealing Gods glory. Contrast the hearts of Peter and Paul who point away from themselves when deification is presented to them: Acts 3:12; 10:25-6 ; 14:11ff.). Herod was eaten with worms but the Word of God grew and multiplied. And examples will follow.....now through the life of Saul of e /Paul the apostle.! (Hebrew and Roman names.) . Peter was the main human character in Acts 1-12; now we follow Paul, as the main human character for this part of the Jesus story. If anyone questions Paul’s integrity, then Luke provides a defence. Virtually everything that Peter does, Paul does also. (E.g. Both preach the Good News, both are arrested for it, both have Divine interventions in prison etc. You can add more to this list-why not try.) And note the “Word of God/Lord” occurs 7x in Chapter 13. We stand on the very word that we preach, on its promises for their fulfillment.

And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their service, bringing with them John, whose other name was Mark”.

They delivered the gifts from Antioch to Jerusalem. The man with 2 names mentioned in 12:12. But it is quite probable that you met him b4 that, probably as the young man in Mark 14:51. This Current verse (Acts 12:25) picks up on the story from Acts 11:27-30

Now in the church at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers”.

Green: As the Jerusalem church, was a centre and base for sending out their leaders, so with the church at Antioch: here we have them listed. (So the church leaders in Jerusalem (Acts 1:13-14). We know Barnabas and Saul (first and last in list). We can infer and investigate from the others in the list:

“Simeon, called Niger:” Niger means 'black or dark' n Latin. So it was not an abusive term as it later became in the English language. It was descriptive.

“ Lucius of Cyrene”: North Africa, so in all likelihood a black man, (See also Acts 2:12 and Acts 11:20. These 2 disciples show the church as multi ethnic and diverse. Colour or race should never be a bar to leadership or ministry or membership.

“ Manean, a friend of Herod the tetrarch”: This family, this dynasty, who have carried out attacks upon the Messiah and His people, actually have a lifelong friend (ESV) who is a follower of Jesus.. (Cp. Phil. 4:22- the Christian's in Caesars household.). It's gloriously subversive.

V.2:” While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said....”

WORSHIP : **latreo..** To serve, priestly service etc. In an atmosphere of worship, here was prayer with fasting. and God spoke. More specifically, “The Spirit of God said....”. According to FF Bruce, it was probably a word of prophecy.

“Separate/set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them/ the work to which I have already called them.” So B and S were not taken by surprise. "Already called" but now time to set apart for another aspect of God’s work. (The inspiration of

individual guidance and the check of corporate guidance need to be hand in glove.) Barnabas and Saul didn't immediately strike out on their own. (There are exceptions e.g. Bruchko, Jackie Pullinger.saw amazing Divine interventions as unsupported missionaries but the agreement of the Spirit and the church should be the norm, as here)

(ILLUSTRATION : I knew a man who went as a missionary to India. After 2 years he came home. He obeyed a word of prophecy and went,,without an inner conviction that he was sent by God. The church/ denomination sent him to fill a post but God hadn't When he returned to Britain his gifts flourished in teaching and pastoring .)

Now it was a tough missionary journey for P and B but they had an inner conviction and calling which kept them going through Cyprus and Galatia etc (modern day Turkey). The KOG was extended, churches were planted.

And it was probably 2 of their most prominent leaders who were "sent".

" then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off". It seems there was more " prayer and fasting". God had spoken but they soaked themselves in prayer and fasting.we need God's presence,firstly to know Him. Work flows from that. - again,as we said b4 God wants better worshippers not better workers. The order is critical.

The church sends them off with support no doubt in prayer and encouragement.

But the Spirit sends them out (v.4). We can send people off but only the Spirit sends them out.

Are you afraid of being sent ? Not to Siberia or Iceland.But into the world or to your neighbour. " Ours is the fullness,theirs is the overflow." (D.Shepherd).