

Katamares: Acts: 12:25-13:12.

13:1 *Prophets and Teachers*

Cooperating with the Spirit.

Ammonius: “And Manaean, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch.” Behold the customs of each of them: not even the fact of being brought up together saves them both. See how absolutely evil Herod was, for he did not want to be converted. But his foster brother Manaean certainly changed a great deal, because he was considered worthy of the gift of prophecy. Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 13.1.2

13:2 *Set Apart Barnabas and Saul*

They Could Be Sufficient for Many.

Chrysostom: But consider the authority of the Holy Ghost. “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul.’” What being, unless of the same authority, would have dared to say this? And this happened so that they should not remain together among themselves. The Spirit saw that they had greater power and could be sufficient for many. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 27.3

Remaining Attentive.

Ammonius: It must be noticed that the Holy Spirit does not speak to those who happen to be there by chance but to those who serve him and observe fasting. And it must be noticed again that they did not lay hands on the deacons at random but on those who were previously fasting and praying. Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 13.2.4

13:3 *Ordained and Sent Off*

Ordained Through the Grace of the Spirit.

Chrysostom: “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” What does “worshiping” mean? It means preaching. “Set apart Barnabas and Saul.” What does “set apart for me” mean? It means for the work, for the apostleship.

Remember who ordained him? Lucius the Cyrenean and Manaen, or rather, one should say, the Spirit. For the more lowly the personages involved, the more palpable the grace of God. Paul is ordained henceforth to apostleship, to preach with authority. How is it then that he himself says, “Not from men nor by men”?
5 Because it was not humankind that called him or brought him over. This is what “or by men” means. For this reason he says that he was not sent by this man but by the Spirit. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 27.6

13:4 *Sent by the Holy Spirit*

The Spirit Directs Their Movements.

Chrysostom: As soon as they were ordained they went forth and hastened to Cyprus, seeing that no plot was being hatched against them there and the Word had already been sown. In Antioch there were enough [teachers]. As to Phoenice, it was near Palestine, but not so Cyprus. However, do not ask why, when it is the Spirit that directs their movements. For they were not only ordained by the Spirit but also sent forth by him. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 28.13

13:7 *A Man of Intelligence*

A Badge of Honor.

Jerome: As Sergius Paulus, proconsul of Cyprus, was the first to believe in his preaching, he took his name from him because he had subdued him to faith in Christ. On Illustrious Men 5.4.2

13:9 *Paul Filled with the Spirit*

The Least of the Apostles.

Augustine: The apostle Paul, who was previously called Saul, had no other reason, it seems to me, for choosing this name but to point out his own smallness as the least of the apostles. Hence, in order to praise this grace of God, he frequently fought courageously and vigorously against the proud and the arrogant and those who relied on their own works. After all, the grace of God was really seen more clearly and more obviously in him. On the Spirit and the Letter 7.12.3

13:10 *Making Crooked the Straight Paths*

Reproof, but Not Vengeance.

Chrysostom: Why didn't Paul perform another miracle? Because there was none equal to this—the capture of the enemy. And notice how he first makes his indictment and shows that the man suffers justly by saying, "O full of all deceit." Nothing [Paul] said was lacking, and he said it well. "Of all deceit," because the man was playing the part of a hypocrite. "Son of the devil," because he was doing his work. "Enemy of righteousness," because this [which they preached] was the whole of righteousness. It seems to me that he is also reproofing his manner of life. It was not out of anger that he spoke, and to show this, the writer begins with, "filled with the Holy Spirit," that is, with his operation.

"And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon you." It was not vengeance, then, but healing. For it is as though he had said, "It is not I but the hand of God." Look how unassuming it is! No "light," as in the case of Paul, "shone round about him." ⁴ "Thou shall be blind," he says, "not seeing the sun for a season," so that he may give him a chance for repentance. Never did they wish to become conspicuous by their sternness, even in the case of enemies. But in respect to their own people, they were stern; in the case of others, no, lest [the obedience of faith] be thought a matter of compulsion and fear. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 28.⁵

13:11 *Blinded*

Blindness Meant for His Conversion.

Chrysostom: "And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind." It was the sign by which [Paul] was himself converted, and by this he wished to convert this man. And the words "for a season" were spoken by one who seeks not to punish but to convert. For if he had wanted to punish, he would have made him blind forever. This is not what happens here, but only "for a season," so that he may gain the proconsul. For the man was prepossessed by sorcery, and he had to teach him a lesson by this punishment, just as the magicians [in Egypt] were taught by the boils. ⁶ Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 28.⁷

Blinded So That He Might See.

Isidore of Pelusium: Be reasonable now. What happened to the magician through the intervention of the apostle is not contrary to the divine commandment that commands us to love our enemies. But since that man distorted the ways of preaching and drove the proconsul away from the faith through which the entire multitude could easily have been admitted to salvation, Paul punished that blasphemer on the basis of his own way of working things out. After he was warned by being blinded he was then led to knowledge. Indeed he was taught through Paul to cure his infidelity with a remedy, just as Paul cured the contradictions of the law. After he set the limit "until the right time" for judgment so that it might cause in itself the recuperation of the man, he changed his ways for the better. Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 13.10.8