

“The Worm, The Word, and The Gentile World”

Acts 12:20-13:3, ESV

Introduction: Chapter 13 in the book of Acts provides for the reader a major turning point in the narrative. The focus shifts from Peter’s ministry to the Jews to Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles. While the emphasis was upon Peter’s ministry to Jews, the base of operations was found in Jerusalem. Now, with the emphasis on Paul’s ministry to Gentiles, the base of operations transitions to Antioch. This text is interesting.

Perplexing Text (Potentially Three Working Main Ideas):

- 1). Herod’s ostentatious **foolishness** (v. 20-23).
- 2). The increase and multiplication of the **Word of God** (v. 24).
- 3). The launch of Paul’s **first missionary journey** (13:1-3).

THE WORM (12:20-23).

- ❖ Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. Why? No idea. Text does not say.
- ❖ They won over a man named Blastus (the King’s treasurer) and had him arrange a meeting with Herod.
- ❖ On an appointed day, the King, dressed in royal regalia, took his throne, and delivered an oration (v. 21).
- ❖ The people shouted: “The *voice of a god*, and not of a man!” (v. 22)
- ❖ IMMEDIATELY, Herod is struck down by an angel of the Lord. Why? The text says, “...he did not give God the glory...” (v. 23).
- ❖ Herod was eaten by worms and breathed his last (v. 23).

Application:

THE WORD OF GOD (12:24).

- ❖ Luke writes, “But the **Word of God increased** and multiplied.”
- ❖ Isaiah 40:8; Isaiah 55:11; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16

Application: What is the Bible to you? Do you read it? When? Why? It is God’s Word. I urge you to read it.

THE GENTILE WORLD (13:1-3).

- ❖ We have in these verses **the call of Saul and Barnabas** to missionary service.
- ❖ While they were engaged in the **ministry of public worship** (and fasting), the Spirit made His will known (v. 2).
- ❖ These men were **uniquely set apart** for the work to which the Spirit (v. 2) had called them. They would deploy and tell the good news where it had not yet been heard. It is extremely exciting!
- ❖ After prayer and fasting (indicating a legitimate earnestness), the leadership of the church “**laid their hands**” on them and launched them (v. 3).

Application: What is the Spirit calling you to do? Have you considered that question? All of us have a task, an assignment.