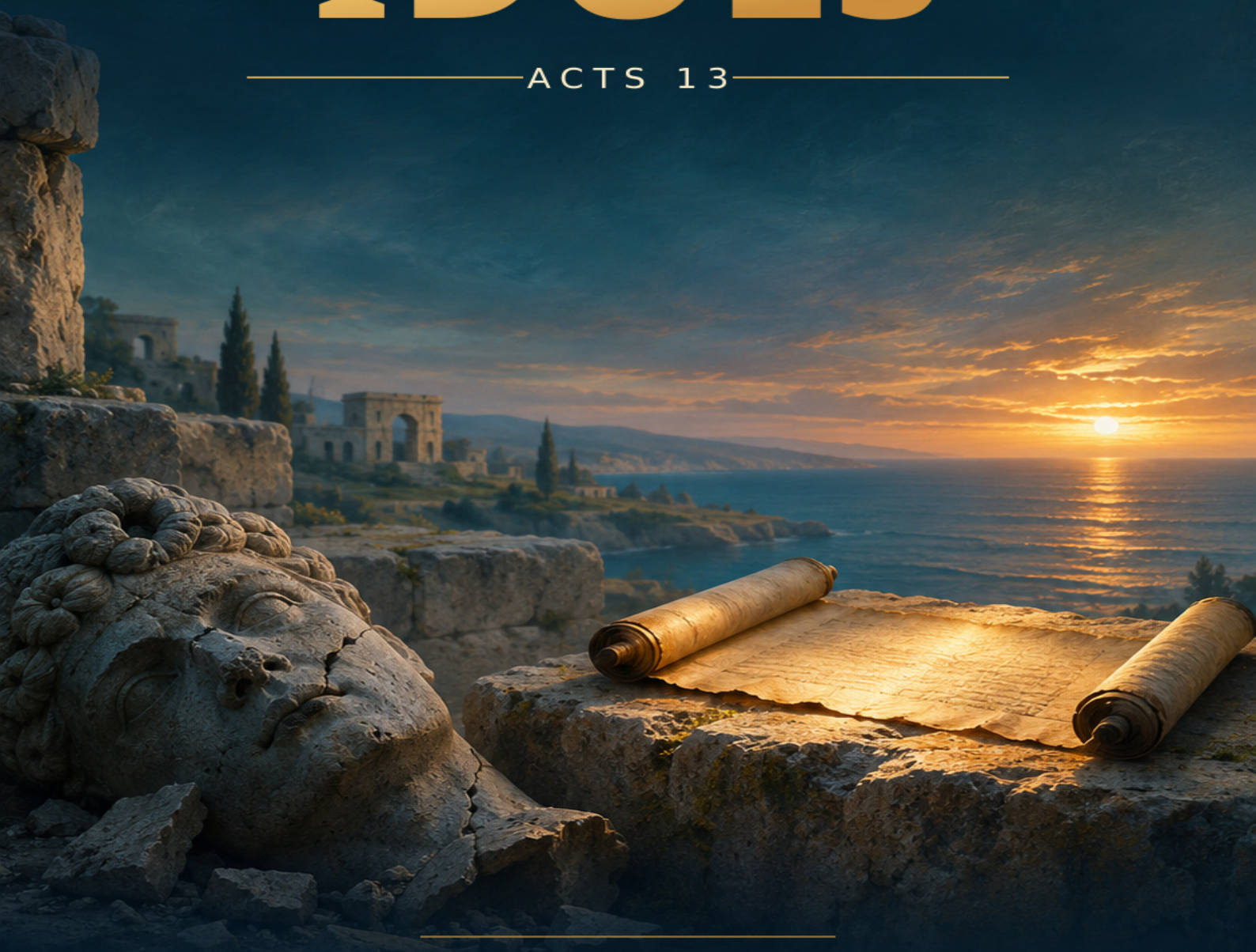
THE BRIDGE CHURCH

SEVEN-DAY DEVOTIONAL

SEEING JESUS BEYOND OUR IDOLS

ACTS 13



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LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Seeing Jesus Beyond Our Idols

Sean Lindecke · Elske Lindecke · Devin Askham · The Bridge Church · 15 November 2026

WELCOME

This week three preachers took us through Acts 13. The journey began with resistance to the gospel, moved to the difference between knowing Scripture and knowing Jesus, and ended with a challenge to surrender idols and take a step of faith. Invite everyone to reflect honestly without asking anyone to disclose more than they wish. The aim is to hear God's Word and respond together.

THE WORD BEFORE OUR WORDS

Read Acts 13:4–12 and Acts 13:38–39 aloud, then ask someone to read Acts 13:44–49. Keep Bibles open at Psalm 115:2–8 and 2 Corinthians 3:14–18 for later discussion. Notice who receives the Word, who resists it, what Christ offers, and how trust affects the response.

FOCAL SCRIPTURE — ACTS 13:39 (NIV)

> 39 Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.

THE SERMON IN A FEW MINUTES

Sean opened with the need to receive the whole Word of God and to be ready for what God might reveal. Paul and Barnabas were sent to Cyprus, but Bar-Jesus—also called Elymas in Acts 13:8—opposed the gospel. These two names identify the same man. Resistance was not treated as proof that God's call had failed; trials may produce perseverance, and Ephesians 4 called the church to maturity through discipleship.

Sean interpreted the magician's resistance as an attempt to protect his influence, exposing the problem of idolatry: whatever takes God's place in the heart can blind us to the truth. Psalm 115 described lifeless idols. Sean contrasted a Christian profession with the fruit of genuine faith, recalled how money and status lost their hold on his life, and treated Elymas's temporary blindness as a serious warning with time left for repentance.

Elske asked what it means to live as a Christian. In the synagogue, Paul traced Israel's story and announced Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promises, bringing justification that the Law could not supply. Elske's old checklist of Christian behaviours showed how the right answers can still miss Christ. John 5 and Habakkuk warned against familiarity, pride and self-reliance that refuse to come to Jesus.

Devin then drew together the warning: we become like what we worship, cannot see beyond what we worship and discover the futility of idols. Isaiah 44 pictured an idol made from ordinary wood. In Acts 13, jealousy drove opposition, while Gentiles rejoiced and the Word spread. Offence and defensiveness may reveal what we are protecting.

The conclusion turned to 2 Corinthians 3: turning to the Lord removes the veil and the Spirit transforms us. Devin challenged hearts divided between worldly trust and God, spoke of guarding the heart, recalled the frightening first jump from a cliff at Wondergat and invited three responses: come to Jesus, repent of idols and dedicate ourselves to God each day.

WHAT WE HEARD THIS WEEK

1. The whole Word of God leads to growth, and obedience can meet genuine resistance.
2. Discipleship and the body of Christ help us mature instead of drifting into deception.
3. Idols are whatever claims God's place in our trust; genuine salvation changes what we pursue.
4. Scripture and the history of God's promises point to Jesus, not a checklist of self-made righteousness.
5. We become like what we worship; jealousy and offence can reveal a defended idol.
6. Turning to Christ removes the veil and calls for repentance, daily dedication and a step of faith.

THREE CONVERSATIONS

CONVERSATION 1 • RESISTANCE AND MISPLACED TRUST

Paul and Barnabas were sent to proclaim Christ but Bar-Jesus (also known as Elymas) opposed them. Sean spoke about growth through trials and the idols that threaten our obedience.

LET'S TALK: When do I interpret resistance as a reason to stop following God, and what other source of security competes for my trust? How could discipleship help me respond?

FROM THE WORD: Acts 13:4–12; James 1:3; James 2:17; Ephesians 4:12–15

CONVERSATION 2 • KNOWING THE BIBLE AND KNOWING JESUS

Paul announced Jesus in the synagogue as the fulfilment of God's promises. Elske's 2020 checklist reminded us that religious knowledge and good behaviour can miss Christ.

LET'S TALK: Where might our religious activity become a substitute for dependence on Jesus? How can our group help one another read Scripture as a witness to Him?

FROM THE WORD: Acts 13:26, 38–41; John 1:1–4; John 5:39–40; Habakkuk 1:5

CONVERSATION 3 • RELEASING THE IDOL AND RESPONDING

Begin by reading Isaiah 44:13–17 aloud, as Devin did when explaining the futility of idols. He also used Psalm 115 and the contrasting responses in Acts 13. The final invitation was to turn to Christ, repent and step out in faith.

LET'S TALK: What reaction, fear or familiar security might reveal an idol in our hearts? What one practical step of repentance and trust could we take this week?

FROM THE WORD: Psalm 115:2–8; Isaiah 44:13–17; Acts 13:44–49; 2 Corinthians 3:16; Proverbs 4:23

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

Invite several people to pray briefly and honestly. Let the Word shape the requests rather than pressing anyone to offer a public confession.

Openness: ask God to show us Christ clearly as we listen to the whole counsel of Scripture.

Maturity: pray for those encountering resistance, and for faithful discipleship in the church.

Repentance: lay down false sources of security, pride and self-righteousness.

Faith: ask the Spirit to transform us and give us courage for a concrete next step.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

We become like what we worship. Let our Bible reading bring us to Jesus, our repentance release the things that cannot give life, and our steps of faith demonstrate trust in the living Lord.

ONE LAST QUESTION FOR THE WEEK

What will we encourage one another to do this week that shows Jesus—not an idol—has our deepest trust?

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