
Question:
In Acts 13:1, we read about a man named Manaen who is described as the *foster brother* of Herod. What does this term mean theologically and culturally?

Answer:
The phrase *“foster brother”* (NIV) or *“brought up with”* (ESV) refers to a person who was raised in the same household as another from infancy. In the biblical and ancient Near Eastern context, this often meant someone who was breastfed or nourished alongside the biological children of a family. While not a blood relative, such a person was considered part of the family, often treated as kin, with strong familial bonds formed through shared upbringing.

In Manaen’s case, he was raised alongside Herod the Tetrarch most likely Herod Antipas though they were not biological brothers. This close upbringing created a social and familial connection described as *“foster brothers”* or *“brought up with.”*

Acts 13:1 (NIV) states:

> “Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch), and Saul.”

Theological Significance:

Herod and his family were infamous in the New Testament for their harsh persecution of Christians (Matthew 2:16; Acts 12). The Herodians were often depicted as enemies of the early Church. Yet, Manaen’s inclusion in this passage highlights a remarkable transformation. Despite his close ties to the Herodian family, Manaen became one of the earliest Gentile Christian leaders and a prophet in the church at Antioch one of the first predominantly Gentile churches.

This transformation underscores the power of the gospel to transcend social and familial barriers, bringing even those connected to oppressive powers into the body of Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16). It also reflects the inclusiveness of the early Church, welcoming both Jews and Gentiles, and those from various social backgrounds.

Antioch and the Birth of the “Christian” Identity:

Antioch is notable for being the place where followers of Jesus were first called *“Christians”* (Acts 11:26, NIV):

> “He brought him to Antioch. For a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. And in Antioch the disciples were called Christians first.“*

This name marked a new identity, distinguishing followers of Christ as a distinct community, rooted in faith rather than ethnicity or

---

Be blessed

JIUNGE NA GROUP LETU LA WHATSAPP HAPA >> WHATSAPP GROUP….

Share on:
WhatsApp