

Acts Chapter 13

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[0 : 0 0] You have been given a scripture sheet now that concludes the balance of Acts chapter 12, and we intend to engage chapter 13, which is one of the most significant chapters in all of the Bible, and it is one of the most important to you.

Because chapter 13 deals with the origin of the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul. And although you might not be too profoundly influenced or affected by Paul's first missionary journey, you certainly are by his second missionary journey.

Because on his second missionary journey, he entered the continent of Europe, and there Christianity reached the shores of Europe, primarily in Greece, beginning with Philippi, and then Corinth and Ephesus, etc., other cities there in Greece, and from there it spread all throughout Europe.

And most of us here today are descendants of Europeans who had likely come to America from someplace in Europe.

Most of us. If you look back in your ancestry, you may have to go back to the 1700s, 1800s, but most of us are descendants of people who came from Europe.

[1 : 3 3] And that's where the gospel penetrated, particularly on Paul's second missionary journey. So, in a very real sense, all of us here are beneficiaries of Paul's second missionary journey.

Because when he came to the point where he didn't know what to do, and we'll see this in Acts 15 and 16, where he didn't know what direction to go in, he was going to go one way, and the Spirit of God forbade him, and he was going to go another way, and the Spirit of God said no.

And then he saw this vision of this man from Macedonia, which is northern Greece. And he was saying in this vision, come over into Macedonia and help us.

And Paul took that revelation as from God, and he crossed the Hellespont and the Bosphorus and went over into Europe, and there began proclaiming the gospel.

And we today are beneficiaries of that particular trip that Paul made, and we'll see that when we get to it. But for now, let us finish up with verse 25 in chapter 12.

[2 : 4 2] We read that Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry. And this had to do with the distribution of funds for the poor in those areas that they visited.

They were assigned that, and you can see that in other translations. Knox, for instance, says, Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, their mission of relief fulfilled.

And they took with them John, whose surname was Mark. Just a couple of comments about this now. It's a little confusing because this young man's name was John Mark.

Who was he really? Well, he was Mark who wrote the Gospel of Mark. But his first name is John, which is a very common name.

And when you study the Bible, you've got to keep your John separate because there were a lot different people named John. So don't confuse them. But John Mark is going to accompany Saul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey.

- [3 : 52] And we don't know why, but he's going to peel off and go home. We are not given the reason for that. We are not told that it was because of the hardships they endured that Mark wasn't willing to put up with.
- We are not told that it was because of the danger that was involved, and John Mark just wimped out and said, I'm going home. We aren't given a reason.
- All we know is whatever it was that motivated John Mark to leave the missionary team of Barnabas and Saul, it really perturbed Saul.
- So much so that when they go to take a second missionary journey sometime later, Barnabas says to Saul, I'd like to take Mark again.
- And Paul says, nothing doing. He bailed out on us before. I'm not taking him along. And there was an argument that arose between Barnabas and Saul.
- [4 : 58] And they could not agree on what to do. So their solution was, well, let's just agree to disagree. I say he goes. Saul says, I say he doesn't go.
- So they had a difference. And it's important to note that. We'll see it when we come to it. That great men, even like apostles, can have differences of opinion, and they don't always get along.
- And what happened was, Barnabas, in essence, said to Paul, well, if Mark doesn't go, I'm not going either.
- And Paul must have said, okay, if that's your decision, have it your way. But I'm digging in my heels, and Mark is not going. So what happened was, Barnabas took Mark, and they went one way.
- And Paul chose another comrade by the name of Silas, and they went another way. So the upshot of this wasn't all negative, even though they had a kind of a disagreement.
- [6 : 01] But now, two missionary teams are created, instead of one. So the gospel is going to be doubled, as opposed to before. But I'm getting ahead of myself.
- That's on later down the road. But I bring it up, because in this last verse, in verse 25, we read that, they took with them John, whose surname, or last name, was Mark.
- And that brings us now to chapter 13, and it opens, that now there were in the church, that was at Antioch. This Antioch is a very, very strategic place.
- It isn't even in the land of Israel. It is a foreign country to Israel. It is located to the north. The capital of Syria was, and still is, Damascus.
- And if you follow the news, you know that this is a nation state now, that is in tremendous difficulty. They are engaged in a civil war. And Bashar Assad, who is the puppet dictator of Syria, is trying to maintain his position, as president of the country.
- [7 : 15] And of course, the people, the common people, are trying to depose him, and put him out of business, and take over the government. But this is ancient Syria.
- And Damascus, has the reputation, for being the oldest existing, continually inhabited city, in the entire world. There, Damascus, Syria.
- Antioch, is going to become, the headquarters, for Christianity, in the Mideast. It will not be, Jerusalem, as one might suspect.
- Although, Jerusalem, is where it began. But it is going to morph, into headquarters, in Syria. And this is, out of the country, up north.
- Remember, it was Damascus, to which, Paul, or Saul, was traveling, when he had the experience, on the Damascus road, that resulted, in his conversion.
- [8 : 13] So, Antioch, of Syria, is going to become, very, very strategic. All of Paul's, missionary journeys, are going to be launched, from, Syrian Antioch.

And this Antioch, and by the way, I'll have maps for you, within the next week, or so, so we can follow this. Within, the, the general area, there is another Antioch, not to be confused, with Antioch, of Syria, and it's called, Antioch, of Pisidia.

And that is located, over in Asia Minor, and we'll see that, when we get to it. So, this is, Antioch, of Syria, that is mentioned here, in verse 1, of chapter 13.

And in, the assembly there, the church, the ecclesia, there were certain, prophets, and teachers. This is a carry over, if you will, from the Old Testament, because we know, the Old Testament, is replete with prophets, a prophet, is simply someone, who was ordained of God, to speak, the truth of God, to people.

A prophet, was God's, spokesperson, from himself, to people. Now, God could have spoken, directly. He still can. But more often than not, he chooses not to.

[9 : 29] He uses human instrumentality. He uses angels. He uses prophets. prophets. And he would, inspire prophets, with information, that nobody else had, and then they were commissioned, to pass that on, to the people.

So, a prophet, was one who got information, from God, and gave it to the people. It is very much, like, the responsibility, of a preacher. Except, the preacher, doesn't get his information, directly from God.

He gets it, directly from the scriptures. But the reason, prophets were so important, in earlier days, was because, there was a huge, lack of scripture.

And, until, until about, 100 AD, the Bible wasn't, even completed. So, God frequently spoke, through human, intermediaries.

And, we see that, of course, with Moses, and, and with others. So, bear in mind, the office of prophet, and I question, whether it's even, legitimate anymore.

[10 : 29] I'm, I'm not at all sure, that it is. And, I rather think, that it is not. Because, the need for the prophet, passed off the scene, with the completion, of scripture. And, the Bible, is, a completed, revelation.

It is, a finished, thing. The word of God, is complete, and entire. There is nothing, in the Bible, that shouldn't be there. There is nothing, missing from the Bible, that should be there.

The record, is complete. And, when people, come on the scene today, and there are, numbers of them, who claim, to be a prophet, and they say things like, God revealed to me, that, thus and so, and thus and so, or that you should do, thus and so.

What they are actually doing, whether they realize it, or not, they are adding to, the revelation of God. God. And, I do not believe, that this is valid.

I don't think, the scriptures will sustain it. If somebody, claims to be, God's spokesman, God told me, you should do, thus and so. Well, that's funny, he didn't say anything, to me about it.

[11 : 42] No, but God told me. Well, if you believe, that God, did tell, that person something, and you refused to do it, what are you doing?

You're actually, disobeying God. So, this can be used, as a tool of manipulation. I've even heard it, used this way. This is a low blow, but, some guys, who are desperate, will, stoop to anything.

Mary Lou, God told me, that you're supposed, to marry me. What's Mary Lou, going to do? You know, this can be a tool, of crass manipulation, and sometimes it is.

Sometimes, whole congregations, are manipulated, by that. God revealed, to me, that we are, to engage, in this, big, building program.

God has laid, this on my heart. And, all the money, that we need, to complete this project, is already, available. And the people, say, wow.

[12 : 53] The only problem is, it's still in your pocket. So, you are supposed, to give, to support. Well, what are people, going to do? If they have confidence, in their preacher, if they want to be, obedient to God, they kind of, scratch their head, and say, well, gee, you know, if God revealed that, to our pastor, who am I, to go against it?

That, that would be, fighting against, God himself. So, I better do that. And, it can be used, as a tool, of crass manipulation. And, by the way, guys, this is where, the concept, which is also found, throughout scripture, the concept of, false prophets, comes in.

The Old Testament, in particular, is filled with them. Sometimes, they were the prophets, of Baal, who was nothing, but a foreign deity, a God, of non-existence, but one that was worshipped.

Sometimes, they were the God, or goddesses, of fertility cults, and they all had their prophets. And, they would manipulate people, and intimidate people, and put hexes, and curses upon people, if they didn't comply.

So, this game of manipulation, of using people, to get people, to do what you want them to do, has taken many avenues, and it is alive, and well today.

[14 : 11] This is why, we need to keep coming back, to the authority of scripture, and make sure, that it is in the book. Yes? Ed? Does the devil, have power to heal?

Does the devil, have power to heal? Well, you are not going to like, my answer. I am not sure.

I am not sure. I know that he was, suspected, of having power to heal, because, when Christ performed, his miracles, and healed the blind, and caused the lame to walk, and gave hearing to the deaf, he was accused, of being in league, with Satan.

And the people would say, to their leaders, Christ must be, the Messiah. because, he wouldn't be able, to do these miracles otherwise, and we can't deny, that he has done, these miracles.

Remember when Nicodemus, came to Jesus at night, and Nicodemus said to Jesus, we know, that you are a man, come from God, because, no man can do, these miracles, that you are doing, unless God is with him.

[15 : 31] So, Nicodemus was convinced, that God was with him. But, when the scribes, and Pharisees, confronted Jesus, and he had these miracles, already accomplished, and the people, were just, absolutely, stunned, by them, and, turned out, in huge throngs, wherever Jesus was, to hear him.

And people would say, things like this, well, how can he not be of God, and be able to do, these miracles, that he does? And we can't deny, that these are genuine miracles.

I know, old so and so, he's been crippled for years. And now, he not only walks, he runs. How can you explain that? And the scribes and Pharisees said, we know how he does it.

He does it through the power, of Beelzebul, which is another name for Satan. He is in cahoots, with the devil himself. And the power, that Jesus is using, to heal, comes from the devil.

Well, well, in connection with your question, can the devil heal? Some believe that he could, and that he did. I'm not so sure.

[16 : 40] I do not know of any instance, I cannot think of any instance, in Scripture, and you can help me out here, if you can think of something, where Satan was actually involved, in healing.

Jesus responded, to the charge, of being in cahoots, with the devil, by saying, a kingdom, divided against itself, cannot stand.

That was the line, that Abraham Lincoln, picked up on, when he delivered, one of his addresses. A kingdom, divided against itself, cannot stand. In other words, Satan is over here, on this side, God is over here, on this side.

If Satan, is, who is the destroyer, that's one of his, primary names. He's referred to that, in the revelation, as Apollyon. Apollyon.

And the word, Apollyon in the Greek, means, the destroyer. That's Satan's specialty. He's not a creator. He's a destroyer. He works through, deception.

[17 : 43] He's the master deceiver. When you deceive somebody, you make them think, that things are other, than they are. You give people, a false impression, of reality.

That's deception. And you do it deliberately. So, Satan is the deceiver, and he is a destroyer. And Christ is saying, Satan is not going to work, counter to himself.

He's not going to heal, and at the same time, try to destroy. On the other hand, you can see that, as being part of his scheme. So, I can't think of any place, in scripture, where I do know, that he's a destroyer.

He destroys. God creates, Satan destroys. Satan's game plan, is to oppose God, in every way, and any way, that he possibly can.

To thwart the plan, and program of God. So, whatever of God's creation, he can bring, to wreck and ruin, whether it's individual lives, through addiction, through crime, through temptation, to destroy, to ruin families, to ruin lives, to ruin people, that's Satan's game plan.

[18 : 53] That's what he wants to do. And that's what he is, an expert at. So, any other thoughts about that? Roger? I believe that Satan, will use whatever means possible, to promote, a non-saving gospel, to be like an angel, a bearer of good news, but not saving news.

Exactly. I think, definitely, probably in the tribulation period, that there will be, those supernatural things, fired back up. Yeah, the tribulation period, makes that quite clear.

I have always worried about, when missionaries, go down in the third world countries, and see supposedly miracles, we don't think that God, uses people, to do miracles, unless it be like, a doctor with knowledge, or something like that.

Yeah. God can intervene, himself, I believe he did in my life, but, in the third world countries, they got more voodoo, and cults, and stuff. Oh, they do. Yeah, third world countries, are rampant with this.

I think you remember, the Kuypers, I said, had supper with him, one time, at a conference, and I asked him, does he believe, in demon possession, and he said, absolutely.

[20 : 11] Oh, he's seen it first hand. Yeah. So, he does what he can get away with. Yep. In this country, he can't get away with it. Yeah. But, possibly, someday, he does.

Yeah. Satan thrives, Satan thrives, on ignorance, and superstition. Those are some of his, main tools.

And he uses them, to manipulate people, and to gain his own end. But, that's another subject. We're just talking about prophets, and we got into false prophets, but, I really question, the need for prophets today.

And let me just make this one, final explanation, and we'll move on. In the, in the Old Testament, particularly, where you find a lot more prophets, than you do in the New Testament, although they're in the New as well.

And I told you that the prophet, is a spokesperson, from God to man. And the priest, the priest is just the opposite. In the Old Testament, the priest, is the spokesman, for man, to God.

- [21 : 10] He intercedes, to God, for man. So, there's a two way, address there, going on. But, the main responsibility, of a prophet, was, to prophesy.
- And a prophet, is a noun. Prophecy, is, a verb. And it literally means, to preach. To deliver a message.
- To prophesy, is P-R-O-P-H-E-S-Y. That prophesying, is an act of, orating, or forth telling. It means, forth telling.
- To foretell. Or, to tell forth. It would be a better way, of putting it. To tell forth. But when you, when you use the word, prophecy, as, P-R-O-P-H-E-C-Y, instead of S-Y, it is, prophecy, that has to do, with something, that is future.
- And when, when one, prophesies the future, or foretells the future, that is, utilizing, prophecy. And the Bible, has a lot of that in it too.
- [22 : 18] But the main responsibility, of a prophet, wasn't to predict the future. It wasn't to tell, what's going to happen, in the future. The main responsibility, of the prophet, was to preach.
- And you preach, to the people, the message that God gave you. A perfect example, of that is Jonah. Jonah, was a prophet. And he delivered, the message to Nineveh, that God gave him.
- And in a sense, it also contained, an element of foretelling, because Jonah said, yet, forty days, forty days, and Nineveh, shall be overthrown.
- So he was both, preaching, and predicting the future. So we find that, in a number of places, in the Old Testament. So I just wanted to clarify that, regarding prophets, and these teachers here.
- As Barnabas, and Simeon, that was called Niger, and Lucius, of Cyrene, and Menaeon, and fellows, you read these names, some of them are hard to pronounce, and they just go right over our heads, and we just don't even stop to think about them.
- [23 : 18] They're just weird names, that we're not familiar with. But let me tell you something. These are real people. These are real, flesh and blood people. They had these names. They lived.
- They went through, a lot of kinds of things, that we read about, in the scriptures. And they were strategic individuals, in the annals of history. And Menaeon, which had been brought up, with Herod, the Tetrarch, and Saul.
- We don't know anything, hardly about this man, Menaeon, except that, when he was a child, when he was a child, one of his playmates, was Herod, the Tetrarch.
- Tetrarch is a name, that is given to, one who controls, a certain amount, of real estate, like we would say, a state, or province, or something like that. That's the meaning, of the word, Tetrarch.
- And we are told that, in some of the, other translations, well, Berkeley says, that he was a childhood, companion of Herod.
- [24 : 16] So he had some connection there. And a member, of the court of Herod, is the way it's rendered. As they ministered, to the Lord, and this was, as they were engaging, in worship, and fasted.
- And there's that word, that we talked about, a little bit. And that, Joe Moore elaborated on, somewhat, when he taught, in my absence. This fasting, is generally, something, that is resorted to, out of an act, of solemnity, seriousness, real purpose.
- You wrestlers, know something, about fasting, don't you? You know what it means, to try to make weight, only you're doing it, for a different reason. You're just trying, to get down to where, the scales say, you need to get to. But fasting, is found in the Old Testament, and in the New.

I don't know, of any place, in scripture, where, we are required, to fast. Except, there is some question, about, about the Jewish, day of atonement.

Yom Kippur, and, if I'm not mistaken, they may have been, required to fast, all day long, until the evening, and they took a meal then.

[25 : 32] But, fasting, seems to be, something, that, they engaged in, in the Bible, when they were, desperate, or seeking, very serious, instruction, for the Lord, or were facing, some kind of a crisis, and looking for answers, they would appeal to God, and sometimes, to show, their seriousness, or to reflect, their seriousness, they just forgot, about food.

They just had, no appetite, for food. It wasn't, a torturous, kind of experience. It was that, their mind, was so focused, and so channeled, on a certain avenue, that food, was just, unimportant to them.

They just couldn't, think about, eating. And, some of you, have experienced that, I'm sure, based on what's going on, in your life. I know, I know, when you, when you suffer, a really extreme loss, like, the loss of a mate, or a child, or something like that, food, has no appeal to you, at all.

You have no appetite, no interest in eating. Now, that is a kind of a fast, but that's, more or less, a different kind of a fast. It's just because, you don't want to eat.

But here, it appears that they, willingly, withdrew from food, because they wanted to focus, and concentrate, on the need, that was at hand.

[26 : 57] And, as they, ministered to the Lord, and fasted. And, what do you suppose, what do you suppose, they might have been, praying about, and fasting about?

I'll give you a, wise man opinion. And, take it for what it's worth. I think, that these people, these prophets, and teachers, that are mentioned here, were so, overcome, with the message, of the grace of God, and of salvation, through Jesus Christ.

And, they themselves, had already, experienced, this wonderful, forgiveness, and release, from their sins, through believing, on Jesus Christ.

They all got together, and had that in common. And, they said to one another, guys, we got to do something, to get this word out. This information, is too good, and too vital, to keep to ourselves.

We've got to find, some way, of spreading this. Of getting this, good news, spread everywhere, so people, can believe, and receive, the Lord Jesus Christ. What are we going to do?

[28 : 12] And, I think, the idea, of attending, the next meal, was the furthest thing, from their mind. They just wanted, to give themselves, wholly, to this, problem, that needed, to be addressed.

How are we going, to disseminate this gospel? How are we going, to get it out? So, they got together, and they had a prayer meeting. And, they fasted, no interest in food.

They were consumed, with the object, and the item at hand. And, they prayed, and they prayed, and they fasted. And, we are told, as they ministered, to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, how did He say it?

I don't have any idea. It isn't said, that the Holy Spirit, spoke to them audibly. It doesn't say, that they heard this voice, out of the blue. It doesn't say, that an angel, was sent to them, to deliver the message.

We aren't told, how the Holy Spirit, spoke to them. But, there appears to be, unanimity. That the Spirit of God, was communicating, the same thing, to each of these, as individuals.

[29 : 28] And, they came to, a unanimous, kind of decision, because, it was a decision, that the Holy Spirit, made. Why do you think, He made it? I think, it was because, of their concentrated, prayer, and fasting.

I think, they were seized, with a sense, of desperation. We need, to do something. What's our game plan? We need, to organize something.

We need, to get something going, so as to get this word out. What's it going to be? And, the Spirit of God, however, he communicated it to them, said, set apart, Barnabas, and Saul.

And, we're going to read this phrase, repeatedly. Barnabas, and Saul. Barnabas, and Saul. But, when we go on through the Acts, there's going to be a change.

We aren't told, why the change occurs. It's just a change. But, it is an obvious change. And, instead of it being, Barnabas, and Saul, it's going to morph into, Paul, and Barnabas.

[30 : 35] And, the Greek language, has a way, of prioritizing, its content. And, whenever the Greek language, wants to emphasize, something, or someone, their name, is put forward, in the front, of the sentence.

And, that gives, that gives, predominance, to that name. So, as it started out, the major player, was Barnabas.

And, Barnabas was older, in the faith, than Saul was. Saul didn't come to Christ, until sometime, after Barnabas had. But, now, the prominence, is going to change.

We aren't told, that there was a rip, between them, that there was a disagreement, or anything like that. We're just told, by the use of the term, in the scripture, that it becomes, Paul, and Barnabas.

And, we'll see that, when it actually happens. So, here, they are, commissioned, for the work, that they have been called to, and it is going to be, a super, super, special thing.

[31 : 43] We'll see that develop later. A question, or comment, before we, conclude. Yeah, Jeff? What's the difference, between a judge and a prophet? I know we're going back, a little bit here. A judge, and a prophet?

A judge had a, a judge, well, actually, judges were given the name, because that's exactly, what they did. They judged. And, the judges came on the scene, after Joshua died.

Joshua was a successor, to Moses. And, then when Joshua died, a period of the judges began. And, the judge, was simply, what the name implies, judge was established, at a certain location, and people who had, conflicts, differences, needed decisions, etc., they would come to the judge.

And, the judge, would render a decision. Solomon did that. Solomon acted as a judge. Remember when the woman, came to him about the baby, who the baby belonged to?

And, Solomon says, well, we'll just divide the baby in half. We'll just cut it in half, and give half the baby to this woman, and half the baby to that woman. And, the woman who was the real mother, says, no, no, don't do that.

[32 : 52] Let her have the baby. And, Solomon knew, that it was the mother who felt that way, that wanted that baby's life spared. She was a real mother. And, ever since that, it's been referred to as the wisdom of Solomon, and his judgment.

And, perhaps the most prolific judge, in all of scripture, was, Samuel. He was the greatest of all the judges, lived the longest, had the most profound influence.

And, he had the responsibility of decision. In other words, the judge in the Old Testament, was like, our supreme court, of nine justices, morphed into, one person.

And, he judged Israel. And, there was a period of several hundred years, where they didn't have a king, and, they had judges instead. Joe? God, set up the judges.

God wanted them to have judges. They're not kings now. God did not want them to have kings. That's true. That's true. People wanted the kings. People wanted the kings, because they wanted to be like everybody else. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. But, God did want them to have judges.

[33 : 57] That's right. That's the idea to have judges. It was indeed. It was indeed.