

# **We Struggle Not Against Flesh and Blood**

For notes and audio visit [the-lamp-lighter.com](http://the-lamp-lighter.com)

Acts 13:1-12

One commentator begins his analysis of Acts 13 with this humorous adage: Some people make things happen, others watch things happen, and others are left wondering what happened! This is true not only of individuals but also of churches. The church at Antioch is a church that made things happen.

We were introduced to this church in chapter 11. **Acts 11:21**, *And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord.* The church grew as Barnabas and Saul ministered to the congregation. The name Christian was first used here: **Acts 11:26**, *...And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.*

The most significant factor in the success of the church at Antioch was the Holy Spirit. Time and again, reference is made to the believers being in submission to Him. (Leaders 11:24, 13:9) Congregation (13:2, 4) This submission is characterized by their obedience to the will and word of God.

This chapter is a turning point. Chapters 1-12 focused on Peter and the Church in Jerusalem. Now, Chapter 13 to the end of the book will focus on Paul and the spread of the church through Rome. Chapter 13 begins about 25 years after the Resurrection.

## **I. The Foundation of the Church (Acts 13:1-3)**

### **A. The roles**

1. Prophet – preacher of God’s Word and, before the canon of Scripture was complete, they were responsible for instructing the local church.
  - a) Prophets laid a foundation for the church. (Ephesians 4:11)
  - b) Receive and declare the revelation of God’s word (Ephesians 3:5)
  - c) Confirm that word through signs, wonders, and miracles (2 Cor 12:12)
2. Apostle - the 12 original apostles chosen by Jesus plus Matthias and Paul.
  - a) The source of doctrine for the church (Paul)
  - b) Leaders and Elders of the church.
  - c) Witnesses to the resurrected Christ.

### **B. The men**

1. Barnabas or Joseph (Acts 4:36)– an early leader of Saul. Responsible for teaching and discipling the apostle, Paul. However, subtly, Luke acknowledges that Paul has assumed leadership. It is no longer Barnabas and Saul (Hebrew) but Paul (Roman) and Barnabas (13:50).
2. Simon called Niger (Black) – believed to be of African descent by his given nickname, Niger.
3. Lucius of Cyrene – Jewish African from Cyrene, located in North Africa (modern Libya).
4. Manaen – Grew up in the household of Herod as a “foster-brother” to Herod the tetrarch (reigned 4 BC – 39 AD). This Herod had John the Baptist executed by beheading.
5. Saul – will now come to the forefront of the book of Acts.

### **C. The ministry (Acts 13:2)**

1. Worshiping (*leitourgeō*) – to serve; to minister; serve a god as a priest. It is only used one other time in the New Testament. (**Hebrews 10:11**, *And every priest stands daily at his service (leitourgeō), offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.*) (We are a chosen priesthood at His service daily! (**1 Peter 2:5,9**)
  - a) Teachers offer lessons and studies. Ushers, Greeters, Directors, Outreach, Meals.
  - b) Everything we do should be “As unto the Lord.”
2. Fasting – going without food either partially or entirely. It is always connected with prayer (Neh 1:4; Psalm 35:13; Dan 9:3; Matt 17:21; Luke 2:37). You can pray without fasting, but you cannot fast without praying!
3. The work of the Spirit
  - a) It is His choice.
  - b) It is His work.
  - c) It is the His call.

---

**D. The mission (Acts 13:3)**

1. Fasting and Praying
2. Laying on of hands and prayer (laying hands – affirmation, support, identification).
3. Sending them off

**II. The Mission Effort of the Church (Acts 13:3-4)**

- A. Where in Cyprus? Salamis, a port city of commercial commerce and a chief city of Cyprus. It was quite large as evidenced by multiple synagogues.
- B. Why go to Cyprus? Cyprus was the home of Barnabas (Levite) (Acts 4:36)

**III. The Adversary of the Church (Acts 13:5-12)**

**A. The Arrival (Acts 13:5)**

**B. The Summons (Acts 13:6-7)**

1. Toured the island and came to Paphos, the capital and seat of the Roman government
2. Met two prominent individuals
  - a) A “certain magician” named “Bar-Jesus” (Bar–Son of...) who was a Jewish false prophet.
  - b) Sergius Paulus – Roman proconsul – governor; a man of intelligence (learner; comprehends).
    - (1) Summoned Paul
    - (2) Sought the Word of God – the Good news.

**C. The Resistance (Acts 13:8)**

1. Elymas *opposed* them – this was an open, overt hostility towards Paul and Barnabas.
2. Seeking to mislead the proconsul away from the faith
  - a) Test the spirits; does what they say pass the doctrinal test?
    - (1) **1 John 4:1**, *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*
  - b) Beware of False Teachers
    - (1) **2 Peter 2:1**, *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.*
  - c) Encouraged by Jude to fight for the faith
    - (1) **Jude 3**, *Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.*

**D. The Stand (Acts 13:9-10)**

1. Paul stood! (Acts 13:9a)
  - a) Converted saint – filled with the Spirit.
  - b) Obedience to the Word of God
  - c) Walking in agreement with the Spirit.
2. Paul stared! (Acts 13:9b) (Ephesians 6:10-20, Stand)
  - a) Looked intently; gazed; stared him down.
  - b) Paul’s intense stare (Acts 14:9, 23:1)
3. Paul spoke (Acts 13:10)
  - a) Identified his father – the devil (10a)
  - b) Declared him an enemy – righteousness (10b)
  - c) Exposed his motivation.
    - (1) Deceit – craftiness; shrewdness; skilled in deception
    - (2) Villainy – dishonest without any moral hesitation.
    - (3) Make crooked the straight

**E. The Success (Acts 13:11-12)**

1. Elymas’ curse (Acts 13:11)
2. Sergius Paulus’ conversion (Acts 13:12)

**IV. Take-Aways**

- A. Seek to walk in obedience and agreement with the Holy Spirit (Amos 3:3, Galatians 5:25)
- B. Serve the Lord and offer spiritual sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 2:5)
- C. Anticipate spiritual opposition along the way (Acts 13:8)