

**"The Start of the Missionary Journeys"****Part 1****Acts 13**

**Introduction:** Tonight, in our study of Acts we have come to a very significant chapter which is chapter 13. Before this chapter Peter's ministry was the focus, but now it will all change and from here on the Apostle Paul's ministry will be the focus. It will be his ministry to the Gentiles which the Holy Spirit draws our attention to. This chapter is a turning point. Let me pull a few thoughts together for you.

**Acts 1:6-8**

<sup>6</sup> *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*

<sup>7</sup> *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

<sup>8</sup> *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

At the end of verse 8 Jesus tells His disciples that they were to be witnesses unto Him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth. We have seen the witness in Jerusalem, Judea, and in Samaria. As we step into chapter 13, we are going to see the beginning of the witness into the uttermost parts of the earth. It is in this chapter that Paul will begin his Apostleship. Up until this chapter, after his conversion on the Damascus Road, Paul never acted as an Apostle, but in this chapter, he will begin His Apostleship. The most important point that we shall see in this chapter will be how the Holy Spirit guides and directs the believer.

**➤ Sending the Missionaries****Notice Acts 13:1-2**

I first of all want to draw your attention to the first word which is "NOW". This is referring to a specific time after certain events. I want you to see within these first verses a beautiful picture of a Biblical principle for us. It will be in verse 2 that the Holy Spirit will guide this church at Antioch to send Barnabas and Saul out on the first missionary journey. We are not told how the Spirit communicated with the leaders of the church but we do know the message was very clear as to who they were to send. This

guidance from the Spirit happened "NOW" and as I said it was after certain events that I believe paint the picture that I want you to see.

The previous events started with the death of James who was a righteous man because he was a believer. The next event was the freedom of Peter from the prison he was locked up in awaiting his execution. Then there were the prayers of the church as they went to the Throne of God on behalf of Peter. Then there was the death of Herod and through his death the church was able to breathe freely again. Then we come to chapter 13 and the Holy Spirit moves and tells the church to separate Barnabas and Saul for the ministry. So, what is in all of this for us?

Two thousand years ago a righteous Man died at the approval of the Jews just as James did and His name was Jesus. It was because of His death and His grace that we were set free from "prison" in the sense that we were bound to sin and we too were sentenced to die just as Peter was. Now because of the of His death there has been a way made so that we can come to the Throne of God and we too can pray for our loved ones and friends. The death of Herod is a reminder to us that our old "leader" is now dead. That would be the "old man" or our sin nature.

**Romans 6:6-7**

*<sup>6</sup> Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

*<sup>7</sup> For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

Now there is a New Leader that lives within us and He is the Holy Spirit. He wants to guide us and lead us in a life that will glorify and honor God. This is the most important point communicated in the chapter before us. When we reckon our selves to be dead unto sin and alive unto God, and we refuse to let the old man lead, it is then that we can be guided by the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 6:11-18**

*<sup>11</sup> Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

*<sup>13</sup> Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

*<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

*<sup>15</sup> What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*

*<sup>16</sup> Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

*<sup>17</sup> But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*

*<sup>18</sup> Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

Back to the first word "NOW", it is not until the previous events happen in our lives that we can be led by the Spirit. We must see ourselves as dead to sin and to the old man. He is not to be the leader anymore. We have a new Commander and He lives within us.

**Notice Acts 13:1 again.**

It is important that we notice the individuals who are mentioned here. First there was Barnabas and we know him from Acts 4 when he sold his land to give to the poor. He is a man who is an encourager. Next there was Simeon that was called "Niger". The Roman name "Niger" means black which many see as meaning that he was a man who had dark skin. He may have been from North Africa and he was possibly the same Simon who carried the cross of Jesus.

**Matthew 27:32**

*<sup>32</sup> And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.*

Then there was Lucius from Cyrene who we know very little about. He may have been one of the believers who witnessed to the Gentiles in Antioch.

**Acts 11:19-20**

*<sup>19</sup> Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.*

<sup>20</sup> *And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the LORD Jesus.*

Then we are told there was a man named Manaen which had been "brought up" with Herod the tetrarch. This individual is very interesting. He was a foster brother to Herod Antipas. The term "tetrarch" means he ruled over one fourth of his father's kingdom. His father was Herod the Great who ruled during the birth of Jesus Christ. This Herod mentioned here, who was the foster brother to Manaen, was the same Herod who killed John the Baptist. He was the Herod whom Jesus referred to as a fox.

**Luke 13:31-32**

<sup>31</sup> *The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.*

<sup>32</sup> *And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.*

F. F. Bruce shared the following:

*Josephus mentions an earlier Manaen, an Essene, who was honoured by Herod the Great for having foretold his rise to royal estate; he could well have been the grandfather of this Manaen. It is natural to suppose that Luke's special knowledge of members of the Herod dynasty may have been derived from Manaen. But what a commentary on the mystery and sovereignty of divine grace that, of these two foster-brothers, one should attain honour as a Christian leader, while the other should be best known for his shameful behaviour in the killing of John the Baptist and in the trial of Jesus!*

Notice the words of Phillips:

*"Manaen became a believer; Herod became a beast; Manaen became a minister, Herod became a murderer; Manaen found salvation in the arms of Jesus, Herod found shame in the arms of Herodias, a woman who goaded him on to ruin."*

The last one mentioned is Saul in verse 1. So, there was quite a mixture of individuals who were teachers and/or prophets in this church at Antioch but they were all focused upon one thing, serving the Lord. They had a burden to reach the lost and to teach the saints.

**Notice Acts 13:2 again.**

I want you to see when the Holy Spirit spoke to them who to send on the mission trip. It was while they ministered to the Lord and they fasted. They ministered to the Lord as they ministered to the people.

**Conclusion/Application:**

When I read this, it makes me wonder how many people are not hearing from the Spirit today because they are not serving and they are distracted by something of the world. The fasting here in verse 2 was setting aside food so that they could spend time concentrating on the Lord and His work. There is a need for fasting today but I do not mean to set food aside. There are many other things that completely steal away the attention of believers today that it would be good to fast from. Cell phones, computers, sports, television, and the list goes on and on. I am convinced that there are few people that get direction from the Spirit because they are caught up in so many other things. He will not force His guidance upon anyone. He wants us to seek His will and His direction. Let us not miss also that the Spirit spoke to them when they were ministering to the Lord. This means they were serving the Lord by serving others. They were exercising their gifts. God often gives to us the direction we need when we are moving forward for Him. Let us notice something from the life of Nehemiah.

In chapter 1 Nehemiah was given a burden for the people of Jerusalem.

**Nehemiah 1:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> *And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.*

<sup>4</sup> *And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,*

He prayed and fasted and now notice in chapter 2 what happened.

**Nehemiah 2:11-12**

<sup>11</sup> *So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.*

<sup>12</sup> *And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.*

God gives direction to us when we are doing what we can where we are at and when we are not distracted with something of this world.