

## GOD'S END-TIME STRATEGY 1

For years I've been dissatisfied with just asking God for revival. We've had those. And they've served a purpose, but I've been asking for a restoration of New Testament apostolic Christianity like in the book of Acts, which I believe will usher in His return. Because of this, it is important to carefully examine the book of Acts and take note of any patterns and insights into restoring ancient ruins. So we're going to dive into Acts starting with chapter 13. Why chapter 13?

I believe that from chapter 13 on, we see the best example of NT Christianity and apostolic building through the Apostle Paul and his missionary journeys. But here is something crucial to keep in mind as we go through our journey—the picture of the ekklesia in the book of Acts is showing their progression of revelation. One of the mistakes Christians make in studying the Bible is not understanding this and then proof texting to create doctrine.

For example, when the Lord was resurrected and ascended heaven, it hasn't even entered the apostles' minds that the way of salvation would be opened to non-Jews a.k.a. Gentiles. We see this revelation shifting the early ekklesia dramatically with the salvation and Spirit-baptism of Cornelius and his house. This plus Paul and Barnabas' work created a problem—did Gentile believers have to follow the Law. They convened a council and determined that was not the case based on the prophecies of David's tabernacle. But that one issue of the Law had to be fleshed out over decades. And we see in Paul's writings his stronger and stronger argument against it.

Remember, that even after Peter knew Gentiles were welcomed into the kingdom, he was playing a hypocrite in this area and Paul confronted him. According to Paul's record in Galatians, Peter was not practicing the Law when around Gentile believers, but when the brothers from Judea came, he'd quit even associating with them and go back to the Law. Paul called him out on it in front of everybody.

There are so many examples of continued revelation that we must discern whether what we're reading is the full revelation or only what that person has at that time. The entire book of Job is God confronting Job's wrong theology about Himself. Another example is, I believe, in Ecclesiastes that says that there's nothing new under the sun. But when God became Man, that was new. When He cast out demons, that was new. In the OT, they believed God made people sick. We find in the NT,

that Jesus came to take that away. And, even today, some Christians try to live under the OT mentality in a NT era.

You're going to see the same thing in Paul's life—an ongoing revelation of who he was in Christ that made him almost untouchable. And as you see this revelation, you will be blessed and walk away with a sense of incredible destiny and vision. So let's dive in!

## SENT OUT

---

### Acts 13:1–5 ESV

<sup>1</sup> Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. <sup>2</sup> While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." <sup>3</sup> Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

<sup>4</sup> So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. <sup>5</sup> When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them.

I'm sure you can imagine the excitement and nothing can stop us mentality! We're anointed and called out to do this work! No demon and no human can stop us now! And things start off pretty good. They go through the entire island as far as Paphos. It's there that they encounter "a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus." He was the "spiritual advisor to the regional governor, Sergius Paulus, considered by many to be a wise and intelligent leader (TPT)." Sergius requested a meeting with Barnabas and Saul to hear the message of God's word, but Elymas, the sorcerer opposed them. Paul then spoke temporary blindness over the magician and they led him away. Sergius believed and was astonished at the teaching. We find out that John went back home in verse 13 (probably offended by Paul's heavy-handed style).

### Acts 13:14–16 ESV

<sup>14</sup> but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. <sup>15</sup> After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it." <sup>16</sup> So Paul stood up, and

motioning with his hand said:

“Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen.

As was Paul’s custom, they go to the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia where he delivers the good news. At first things seem great.

#### **Acts 13:42–46 ESV**

<sup>42</sup> As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. <sup>43</sup> And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

<sup>44</sup> The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. <sup>45</sup> But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. <sup>46</sup> And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

The “WHOLE CITY” came out to hear the word of the Lord, which sparked envy in the hearts of the Jewish leaders just like they crucified the Lord out of envy. It’s the same devil. Reviling means to blaspheme, revile, hurt the reputation with reports and words, speak evil of, slander, etc. toward God or even man. Paul and Barnabas soundly rebuked them and turned to the Gentiles.

#### **Acts 13:48–52 ESV**

<sup>48</sup> And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. <sup>49</sup> And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. <sup>50</sup> But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. <sup>51</sup> But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. <sup>52</sup> And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Note, the Jews “incited the devout women of high standing and leading men of the city” and stirred up persecution again Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of their district. Incited is “stir up hostility against” like

we've been seeing with mobs of rioters and thugs like Antifa and BLM. Note that they targeted the "devout women of high standing and leading men of the city." So Paul and Barnabas go to Iconium probably rejoicing at being persecuted for Christ. Their disciples were "filled with joy and the Holy Spirit."

#### **Acts 14:1–7 ESV**

<sup>1</sup> Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. <sup>2</sup> But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. <sup>3</sup> So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. <sup>4</sup> But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. <sup>5</sup> When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, <sup>6</sup> they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, <sup>7</sup> and there they continued to preach the gospel.

Continuing their custom, they go to the synagogue and spoke to both Jews and Greeks and many believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against them. But Paul and Barnabas were able to stay for a "sufficient time" (def. of phrase "long time") to get a work started. And we see in verse 5, "an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews WITH THEIR RULERS to mistreat and stone them..." and they fled to Lystra and Derbe. This is now the second city they were prematurely ran out of.

At Lystra, Paul healed a man crippled from birth. When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they believed Paul and Barnabas were gods in the "likeness of men." The priest of Zeus brought oxen and garlands to the gates to offer a sacrifice. Paul and Barnabas were able to calm the crowds down and deliver the good news of the kingdom, but "even with these words, they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them" ([Acts 14:8-18](#)). But then the same ole, same ole started again.