**ACTS 13**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. **2**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.” **3**So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

**On Cyprus**

**4**The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. **5**When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

**6**They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, **7**who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. **8**But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. **9**Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, **10**“You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? **11**Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.”

Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. **12**When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

The Apostles were experiencing both incredible acceptance but also increased rejection wherever they went (Antioch, Cyprus/Salamis, Paphos, Psidian Antioch). Some would accept their message and repent, others would vehemently oppose them and turn other against them.

This chapter starts in Antioch, and makes it’s way through the Eastern Mediterranean to a place called Psidian Antioch. There were several cities named Antioch in the Bible, the main two were Antioch, which is also known as Syrian Antioch and Psidian Antioch which is up near Galatia.

Regardless of whom they were talking to in every region, they never stopped preaching the Word of God to both Jews and Gentiles in the synagogues and in public.

**In Pisidian Antioch**

**13**From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. **14**From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. **15**After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak.”

**16**Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: “Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! **17**The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; **18**for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; **19**and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. **20**All this took about 450 years.

“After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. **21**Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. **22**After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’

**23**“From this man’s descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised. **24**Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. **25**As John was completing his work, he said: ‘Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.’

**26**“Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. **27**The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. **28**Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. **29**When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. **30**But God raised him from the dead, **31**and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

**32**“We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors **33**he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

“‘You are my son;
    today I have become your father.’[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2013&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27396b)]

**34**God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said,

“‘I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.’[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2013&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27397c)]

**35**So it is also stated elsewhere:

“‘You will not let your holy one see decay.’[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%2013&version=NIV#fen-NIV-27398d)]

**36**“Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. **37**But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

**38**“Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. **39**Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. **40**Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:

**41**“‘Look, you scoffers,
    wonder and perish,
for I am going to do something in your days
    that you would never believe,
    even if someone told you.’]”

**42**As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. **43**When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

**44**On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. **45**When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to *contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse* on him.

Even though most of those who believed their message were Jews from the synagogues, their primary adversaries were the *non-believing Jews.* They were people of influence ad power and not only disagreed with their message, but they also vehemently opposed it. They contradicted the message of the gospel and verbally attacked them publicly . *(Sound familiar?, when we stand up for the gospel, we have many in society that treat us this way.)*

**46**Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. **47**For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

“‘I have made youa light for the Gentiles,
    that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

Ever since Acts 10, the message of “Jesus the Messiah” was being preached regularly to both Jews AND Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas reminded the Jews that this was God’s plan all along, and in fulfillment of many scriptures, particularly Isaiah (here they quote Isa. 49:6)

**48**When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

**49**The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. **50**But the *Jewish leaders* incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. **51**So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. **52**And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”

*ACTS AND US?*

Who represent the “Jewish Leaders” of today?

These are those in society who consider themselves, religious, just, enlightened, or in a position of moral authority, but reject the gospel, and the Word of God when it is preached directly and accurately.

These are those who feel that they are in a position to judge those who call upon the name of the Lord, and submit to the authority of the Word of God.

They are all around us, in society, in politics, in education, in entertainment, even *in religion.*

*There are those in established religious institutions and denominations who will be quick to “contradict you, and heap abuse on you” just like they did to Paul and Barnabas for simply stating the truth of the Word of God to them or to others.*

I run into clergy very often, who simply don’t believe the Bible. They hold to beliefs that are not just unbiblical, but anti-biblical, and teach things that are literally opposite of what the word of God is actually saying.

I have a friend who pastored a church in one of the richest and most influential communities in the country who said, some of the other Pastors in the town, do not even believe in God.

[ Example: Harvard Atheist Chaplain – Voted in unanimously even though he doesn’t believe in God and has very little respect for the Bible. Those who oppose his appointment are called *intolerant, backwards and narrow-minded.]*

So how do we respond to these types of people in modern society? DO we dumb down the message of the gospel, and speak only about things we all agree with? Do we keep silent about the message of repentance and salvation in order not to offend?

Jesus gave us the great commission, and in it He told us:

"go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20**and *teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you*." (Matt 28:19-20)

He did not say “*go into all the world and coexist”.*

The Apostles might have been tempted to appease the Jewish Leaders who opposed them, and sit and discuss which parts of their message they should jettison in order to not offend anyone. But they didn’t. They responded boldly and directly in this way;

**Acts 13:*46*** *“Then* Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.”

“A form of godliness but deny the power..”

**2 Tim. 3:5“**having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.”