



Sermon Series: Acts

Sermon Title: Two Kingdoms

Date: 6/14/2026

### Acts 13:1-12

**Big Idea: Two kingdoms are battling for the souls of the people around you.**

Acts 13 opens with the first organized missionary journey in church history - the Holy Spirit calling and sending Paul and Barnabas from Antioch. They land in Cyprus and almost immediately run into two men: a Roman proconsul named Sergius Paulus who wants to hear the word of God, and a Jewish sorcerer named Bar-Jesus who is determined to get in the way. What looks like a first-century confrontation is something far bigger. The Bible describes two kingdoms - the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness (1 John 5:19, Matthew 12:28) - and what we see in Acts 13 is both of them advancing toward the same man at the same time.

#### **Reality 1: This War Has Been Fought for All of Human History**

The conflict Paul walked into in Cyprus was not new. It started in the Garden of Eden - two voices competing for one man, and his choice changed everything. Romans 5:12 says sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin. God declared the outcome even then, telling Satan in Genesis 3:15 that the offspring of the woman would crush his head. The winner was named before the war fully began.

The conflict continues to play out on different battlefields ever since - Elijah facing the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, Moses before Pharaoh's magicians, Saul and the witch of Endor. Different faces, same two kingdoms, same question: who will this person follow? Acts 13 is another battlefield - And it is important to understand these kingdoms are not equal. Satan is not God's opposite. He is a created being operating on a leash. The demons themselves knew this - in Matthew 8:29 they did not ask whether they would lose, only whether their end had come early. The outcome was never actually in question.

## Reality 2: Someone Around You Is Caught In This Battle Right Now

Sergius Paulus is not just a character in a first-century story. He is someone in your life - the husband who keeps coming to church but never makes a decision, the college student asking faith questions while voices pull her away, the coworker you have been building a relationship with for years and something keeps getting in the way. **Colossians 1:13** describes it as the dominion of darkness - and that is exactly what God is able to rescue them from.

**2 Corinthians 4:4** explains why it often feels so hard to get there: the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel. The resistance you keep hitting is not just human stubbornness. There is an active force working against it. That does not excuse the person - they still have to choose. But it explains what you keep running into. **Ephesians 6:12** is clear: our struggle is not against flesh and blood. The person in front of you is not your enemy. They are who both kingdoms are fighting over.

## Reality 3: Don't Stop Fighting for Them

First, don't confuse the obstacle with the mission. Bar-Jesus was loud, active, and hostile - and Paul never lost sight of who he was actually there for. When you keep hitting the same wall trying to reach someone, stay focused on the person, not the obstruction.

Second, be bold. Paul did not shrink or try to negotiate around the resistance. He engaged it with the authority he had in Jesus Christ. You do not have to be aggressive, but you do not have to back down either. **2 Timothy 2:26** says people held in the enemy's trap can come to their senses and escape - but someone has to stay in the fight long enough for that to happen.

Third, trust the outcome to God. Sergius Paulus believed not because Paul out-argued Bar-Jesus, but because God opened his eyes (**Acts 13:12**). Your job is to be faithful, present, and keep showing up. The opening of eyes is God's part. The war is already over - the cross happened, the tomb is empty, and every battle being fought between now and the end is being fought by a defeated enemy running out of time. That is not a reason for fear. It is a reason for urgency.

## **Discussion Questions:**

- 1. The sermon says these two kingdoms are not equal - Satan is a created being on a leash, not God's opposite. How does understanding that change the way you think about spiritual opposition in your own life?**
- 2. Sergius Paulus wanted to hear the word of God, but Bar-Jesus was working against it. Who is the Sergius Paulus in your life right now, and what does the opposition to reaching them look like?**
- 3. Ephesians 6:12 says our struggle is not against flesh and blood. Have you ever mistaken the person you were trying to reach as the problem, rather than seeing the spiritual battle behind the resistance? What shifted when you recognized the difference?**
- 4. Paul did not try to debate or reason with Bar-Jesus - he stayed focused on Sergius Paulus. How do you stay mission-focused when an obstacle feels louder than the person you are actually trying to reach?**
- 5. The sermon ends with this: the war is already over. How does knowing the outcome is certain change the way you pray for and pursue the people in your life who don't yet know Jesus?**