

"Opposition to the Gospel"

Acts 13:6-12

Introduction: Last week in our study we looked at the start of the first missionary journey as recorded in Acts 13. Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark left Antioch on a mission to reach the lost. In verse 4 we read that they sailed to the Island of Cyprus. They went into the synagogues and when they were given the opportunity, they shared the Gospel with the Jews who were there. It would be in Cyprus where they would encounter the first opposition.

➤ **Barjesus the Sorcerer and Sergius Paulus**

Notice Acts 13:6

We see several points about this Barjesus here. He was a sorcerer, a Jew, and a false prophet. This man's name means "son of salvation", but he is not a son of salvation but he is a son of Satan as we shall see. This man is a deceiver and it is his goal to deceive the people around him into believing Satan's lies. Let us notice who he is connected with.

Notice Acts 13:7

He was with the deputy of the country. This man, Sergius Paulus, was the governor of the entire island. He was a political ruler.

Application:

Let us not miss something here that is important. This false prophet had made his way into the life of the political leader of the island and was now a man whom the governor would look to for counsel and advice. Satan works the very same way today and it can be clearly seen in our nation as well as others. Satan will plant advisers, in the lives of leaders in order to influence them because Satan knows that the leaders have great influence over the people and many will accept what they say. This is so clear in our world today. Just look at the people who surround our national leaders who are in favor of abortion and same sex marriage. Satan will use the political leaders like megaphones to plant lies in the minds of the people. You can be sure that in our nation there are Satanic plants that are behind the President as well as many others and they are there because Satan wants to use them to spread deception. I always advise you to be very careful about who you get your direction from. Look at what they stand for and that will tell you where they get their so called "wisdom" from. If they support principles that are contrary to the Word of God then you can be sure they are false prophets placed here to cause confusion. There is an example of this in 1 Kings.

Notice 1 Kings 22:6-23

God had permitted an evil spirit to be a lying spirit in the mouths of 400 prophets and they then influenced the king.

Notice Acts 13:6 again.

As I said his name meant "son of salvation" or "son of Jesus", but he was far from salvation. The point we need to understand is that he professed to be a man of salvation and Truth but when the True Gospel is proclaimed his heart will be revealed. There are many who proclaim to be believers but are not today. In the days we live in we must be careful concerning who we listen to.

Notice Acts 13:7 again.

We are told here that Sergius Paulus was a prudent man which means he was an intelligent man. What is an intelligent man doing with a magician/sorcerer? Notice the words of Barclay.

"These were intensely superstitious times—and most great men, even an intelligent man like Sergius Paulus, kept private wizards, fortune-tellers who dealt in magic and spells."

There was something different about this governor, however. He called for Barnabas and Saul so that he could hear the Word of God. Apparently, he had received word about their preaching in the synagogues and the Spirit of God was now drawing him. It was not normal for a man in his position to seek out the Word of God.

1 Corinthians 1:23-27

²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

²⁴ But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

²⁵ Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶ For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men (like Sergius) after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble (like Sergius), are called:

²⁷ But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise;(like Sergius) and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;(like Sergius)

Sergius was seeking God because God had been seeking and drawing him.

Romans 3:11

¹¹ *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

This meeting between Barnabas, Saul and Sergius was a divine meeting.

Application:

This is the way the Holy Spirit often works even in our lives. We set out to go somewhere and to do something and then we meet someone who may show interest in spiritual matters or may just ask questions that can easily lead to a conversation about the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us learn to be tuned into these unexpected meetings which God arranges for us. I can assure you that Barnabas and Saul never expected to meet with the governor of Cyprus but God arranged it. Notice the words of an unknown writer.

"As you go about living your life, do you do so with your senses trained to be on the lookout for those lost people (both poor and rich) you encounter in whom God is clearly doing a supernatural work? And then do you boldly join God where He is working? If you begin to live your life with this supernatural focus, God's Spirit will bring you into some of the most supernaturally satisfying situations you will ever be blessed to experience in this short life."

Notice Acts 13:8

Here is the Satanic opposition to the message of the Gospel. Barjesus professed to be a follower of Jesus Christ but when the message of the cross was preached, he hated it and he resisted it. He did all he could to keep Sergius from turning to Jesus Christ. One reason was because he knew if Sergius had Jesus then he would no longer be needed.

Application:

Let us keep in mind that Satan will use whoever he can in order to keep people from coming to Jesus. Whoever will allow themselves to be used can and will be used. We are in a spiritual battle and Satan will do all he can to keep the Gospel from being proclaimed and he will do all he can to keep people from hearing the Gospel. He will distract by any means possible.

Matthew 13:31-33

³¹ *Another parable he put forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:*

³² *Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.*

³³ *Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*

These two parables remind us that demons will come into the church and cause confusion and they will stir up sin so that the Spirit is hindered. All of this to keep people from salvation.

Notice Acts 13:9-11

Paul was not intimidated by Barjesus. He confronted him with his sin and then he called for God's hand to blind him for a season.

Application:

This tells us how false teachers are to be withstood. We are not to be intimidated but we are to boldly stand for the Truth. The fact that Paul called for temporary blindness and not death, is a picture of grace. We do not know what happened later in this man's life but possibly when his sight returned, he too may have turned to the Lord and got saved.

Conclusion:

Notice Acts 13:12

Sergius was saved but it was not the miracle that saved him. It was the "Doctrine"/ the teaching of the Gospel that saved him.

Romans 10:17

¹⁷ *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*