

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for September 14, 2014

The Confrontation with Paul
Acts 13:4-12

The second half of Acts begins in chapter 13 as the word of God spreads to the remotest part of the world (Acts 1:8).

1. Paul reaches Cyprus (13:4-5)

Paul was sent out by the Holy Spirit but without a specific destination.

Not only was Barnabas born in Cyprus (Acts 4:36), also tradition holds that he was stoned to death at Salamis about 16 years later.

They went to where they knew, first Cyprus and then to Asia Minor.

Seleucia was the port city of Antioch. Salamis was a large city on the east coast of Cyprus, with a sizable minority of Jews. Paul and Barnabas often visited the Jews first as they traveled (cf. Romans 1:16).

John is mentioned as helping them as a precursor to his upcoming desertion (Acts 13:13; 15:38).

2. Paul received by the Sergius Paulus (13:6-7)

The journey to Paphos was over 100 miles from Salamis and the ministry over the whole island would have taken time.

Bar-Jesus (“son of Jesus”) was a Jewish false prophet and magician, an eclectic mix of Judaism and superstition.

Sergius Paulus was the procounsel of Cyprus, the appointed ruler of the island by the Roman senate. He sought out the word of God.

3. Paul rejected by Elymas (13:8)

The name Elymas comes from an Arab word for magician.

The story of the unbelieving Jew seeking to turn the Gentile ruler away from the Lord sets the stage for the gospel going directly to the Gentiles.

4. Paul rebukes Elymas (13:9-11)

As the gospel goes to the Gentiles, Paul will no longer be referred to by his Hebrew name but only by his Greek name. Paul rebuked Elymas for:

- Misleading people: Sergius Paulus was misled by Elymas through deceit (DOLOS, meaning “bait”) and fraud.
- Mistaken allegiance: Jesus earlier rebuked the Jews as having the devil as their father (John 8:44).
- Misrepresenting righteousness: “Make crooked the straight ways” is an OT concept (Isaiah 40:4; 59:8; Luke 3:5).

Elymas is struck with blindness for seeking to prevent Sergius Paulus from seeing. His name meant the “Son of Jesus” but he was the “son of the devil.”

5. Sergius Paulus responds to God (13:12)

Sergius Paulus responded not only to the work of God but particularly to the word of God.

If we are truly concerned about those who seek to hear the word of God, then those who are hindering this ministry must be opposed.

May God give us the grace to find people eager for the word and to oppose those seeking to turn them away.