



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Saul's Name Change—The First King to Believe

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Acts 13:6-12 *“Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, 7) Who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the Word of God. 8) But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9) Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him, 10) and said, ‘O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? 11) And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.’ And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12) Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.”*

“BUT THE LORD SAID TO HIM, ‘GO, FOR HE IS A CHOSEN VESSEL OF MINE TO BEAR MY NAME BEFORE GENTILES, KINGS, AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. FOR I WILL SHOW HIM HOW MANY THINGS HE MUST SUFFER FOR MY NAME’S SAKE.’ AND ANANIAS WENT HIS WAY AND ENTERED THE HOUSE; AND LAYING HIS HANDS ON HIM HE SAID, ‘BROTHER SAUL, THE LORD JESUS, WHO APPEARED TO YOU ON THE ROAD AS YOU CAME, HAS SENT ME THAT YOU MAY RECEIVE YOUR SIGHT AND BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.” ACTS 9:15-17

How is this sorcerer, Bar-Jesus, advising the king over the entire island of Cyprus? Why is Sergius Paulus considered

intelligent? What proved his intelligence? What reasons would the sorcerer have to withstand Barnabas and Saul? Why would Saul change his name in the middle of his mission trip? Is this verbal explosion against the evil of the sorcerer a work of the Holy Spirit? Was this blindness actually a mercy? What was the real cause of the belief or conversion of the proconsul?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- JUNE 1-3: ACTS 13:13-19 *THE THIRD CAPITOL-PAUL’S FIRST RECORDED MESSAGE*
- JUNE 8-10: ACTS 13:20-28 *THE PRIVILEGED RECIPIENTS OF THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION*

After being made aware of the coming famine by the prophet Agabus, this church sacrificially saved to provide for the Jerusalem church. They had sent the gift by their two founding pastors, Barnabas and Saul, who had probably appointed Symeon, Lucius and Manaen to preach in their absence. When they returned, the entire pastoral team *“were ministering to the Lord and fasting,”* no doubt seeking the Lord’s direction for their church. Only here, the Holy Spirit spoke, requiring the service of the founding pastors. The whole church then with fasting and prayer, commissioned them and released them. The Holy Spirit guided them to Cyprus, the most strategic island in the Mediterranean where they began their ministry in Salamis, the provincial capitol of East Cyprus. They preached the Word of God in the synagogues throughout the island, which led them to the capitol.

“THE PLACES IN WHICH PAUL LABORED WERE, WITH BUT FEW EXCEPTIONS, CENTRALLY LOCATED AND OF GREAT IMPORTANCE.” LOUIS BERKOFF

I. THE OPPORTUNITY

ACTS 13:6-7

Evidently Barnabas and Saul were seeking to meet with the king and had been told about Bar-Jesus, so they *“found”* this Jewish sorcerer and false prophet and were

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM –FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 & 12:00 NOON – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 14490 SMOKETOWN RD.

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY’S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

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thereby probably spoken of before the Proconsul. This ruler, appointed by the Senate in Rome, seemed to be searching for the true God, and is called “*intelligent*” because he believed that the truth about God was contained in the Jewish Scriptures. Thus, Sergius Paulus included in his court a Jew who called himself a prophet. So when the king heard that there were two other Jewish prophets in town, he summoned Barnabas and Saul because he eagerly “*sought to hear the Word of God.*”

“AND HOW SHALL THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER? ... SO THEN FAITH COMES BY HEARING AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.”
ROMANS 10:14-17

II. THE OPPRESSION

ACTS 13:8

Suddenly, as the Word of God was preached, the one who commended them to his ruler realized that he must receive the truth himself, or if not, he may be removed from the court if his proconsul believed. His own eternal destiny in heaven or hell was weighed in the balances and he was found wanting. Thus he proved he was a false prophet, Elymas the sorcerer, and he refused to live up to his name Bar-Jesus, “Son of Salvation.” But to add to his infamy, in the midst of this one opportunity, he turned against Barnabas and Saul and “*withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.*” He not only refused the grace of God, found only through Jesus Christ, personally, now he selfishly sought to deceive his king into joining him in the fires of hell for all eternity! Sergius Paulus was having difficulty discerning which of these Jews were correct but probably leaned toward his friend.

“AND DO NOT FEAR THOSE WHO KILL THE BODY BUT CANNOT KILL THE SOUL. BUT RATHER FEAR HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DESTROY BOTH SOUL AND BODY IN HELL.”
MATTHEW 10:28

III. THE OUTRAGE

ACTS 13:9-11

Saul must have pleaded that if God would grant him this first king, then he would take his name and carry it with him from then on as a fulfilling of his commission (9:15) and answered prayer. He was furiously indignant at the audacity of this lying turncoat as Saul watched him turn his own leader away from eternal truth that would rescue his soul. For the first time Paul exercised his Apostolic authority and “*filled with the Holy Spirit,*” literally “*staring into him*” exposed his diabolical aims: “*O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?*” The merciful blindness not only shut his eyes, but represented his dark heart, and instead of leading his king astray, “*he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.*”

“IF OUR GOSPEL IS VEILED, IT IS VEILED TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING, WHOSE MINDS THE GOD OF THIS AGE HAS BLINDED, WHO DO NOT BELIEVE, LEST THE LIGHT OF THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD, SHOULD SHINE ON THEM.”
2 COR. 4:3-4

IV. THE OVERCOMING

ACTS 12:12

When Sergius Paulus saw what happened, he was easily able to discern who was telling him the truth and “*then the proconsul believed.*” Notice that his faith was not in the miracle but instead it was in “*the teaching of the Lord.*”

“AS SCIPIO WAS CALLED AFRICANUS FROM THE CONQUEST OF AFRICA, AND METELLUS CALLED CRETICUS FROM THE CONQUEST OF CRETE, SO SAUL CARRIED AWAY HIS NEW NAME AS A TROPHY OF HIS VICTORY OVER THE HEATHENISM OF THE PROCONSUL PAULUS.”
JEROME (AD 347-419)

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Do you take the opportunity to give the Word of God to those in leadership around you and above you?
- 2) When you meet with obstacles and oppression do you pray for the help of the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom?
- 3) Has Christ overcome the darkness of your heart and are you helping others overcome through the truth of Scripture?