

June 20, 2021

Happy Father's Day!

La Jolla Christian Fellowship

Paul's First Journey // Episode 2: The Politics Of Paul

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Acts 13:4-12

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

⁶They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, ⁷who 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. ⁸But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. ⁹Then 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? ¹¹Now 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. ¹²When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

Proactive Gentile Mission Begins

Frequent references to the word of God throughout the account of this first missionary journey show us that communicating the message of salvation must be the main activity of missions. In a day when specialist short-term work, humanitarian relief and support services are all being called missions, and rightly so, the church needs to make sure it does not shift its primary focus away from the central purpose of missions—the communication of the gospel.

- **Vs. 4** Sent on their way by the Holy Spirit
- **Vs. 5** Began preaching in the synagogues
- **Vs. 5b** Accompanied by John Mark

Repelling a Sorcerer, Attracting a Governor (13:6-8)

- **Vs. 6** Paphos: Archaeology shows that Old Paphos has been inhabited since the [Neolithic](#) period. It was a center for [Aphrodite's](#) cult. Aphrodite's mythical birthplace was on the island. The [founding myth](#) is interwoven with the goddess such that Old Paphos became the most famous and important place for worshipping Aphrodite in the ancient world.
 - **Aphrodite** is an [ancient Greek goddess](#) associated with [love](#), [beauty](#), [pleasure](#), [passion](#) and [procreation](#). She was syncretized with the Roman goddess [Venus](#)
 - Where there is witchcraft and sorcery there is sexual perversion.

Paphos was the political center Cyprus

- **The political governance of Cyprus was being influenced by sorcery—** They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus.
 - *In the governor's court a Jew, Bar-Jesus (transliteration of the Aramaic "Son of Salvation"), operates as a sorcerer and false prophet. Sorcerer (magos) was a venerable term for students of the metaphysical, including members of the Median priest class (Mt 2:1), possessors and users of supernatural knowledge and ability (Josephus Jewish Antiquities 10.195, 216), magicians who used demonic magic (Acts 8:9-10),*
- **The politics of Paul — Vs. 7b** *The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.*

The politics of Paul begin with seeing salvation come to those who govern.

A prophecy fulfilled—Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man (Saul/Paul) is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.*

Small Group Questions:

1. Is there a group of people that God has specifically called you to share the gospel with?
2. Vs. 4 says that Paul and Barnabas were sent on their way by the Holy Spirit. How do you know when the Holy Spirit is sending you somewhere?
3. This was an ancient culture that was being influenced by the occult? Do you see any signs of this in our culture today?
4. Paul was more about changing people's eternal destiny than changing government policy. Do you feel that Christians are more focused on public policy or people?
5. In Acts 9:15 we see that God had spoken a prophecy over Paul about his calling to preach the gospel to rulers and kings. Has God ever spoken to you about your calling?