



ACTS THE GREAT ADVENTURE ~SUPERNATURAL~

Game On!

Apostle Paul begins his First Missionary Journey, 44 A.D

Since the church at Antioch was now self-sustaining it was time for Barnabas and Saul (who had spent a year there) to move on to the next phase of their lifetime of ministry.

ACTS 13:1-5 ¹ Among the prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch of Syria were Barnabas, Simeon (called “the black man”), Lucius (from Cyrene), Manaen (the childhood companion of King Herod Antipas), and Saul. ² One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them.” ³ So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way. ⁴ So Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They went down to the seaport of Seleucia and then sailed for the island of Cyprus. ⁵ There, in the town of Salamis, they went to the Jewish synagogues and preached the word of God. John Mark went with them as their assistant.

Some interesting points to make about what we just heard in the preceding scripture:

- The men were worshiping and fasting
- The Holy Spirit spoke and called Barnabas and Saul to a special work

Question: Do you think it was coincidence that the Holy Spirit spoke during a time of worship and fasting? What happens to us spiritually in worship and fasting?

In previous lessons we discussed gifts of the Holy Spirit. The above text illustrates the church at Antioch now had its gifted in place as prophets and teachers. The church at Antioch had matured to the point where it could function very well without the continuous attention of Barnabas and Saul. The Holy Spirit endowed men of Antioch with the necessary gifts to carry on so that He could call Barnabas and Saul to set out on their first missionary journey.

Acts 13:6-8 : ⁶ Afterward they traveled from town to town across the entire island until finally they reached Paphos, where they met a Jewish sorcerer, a false prophet named Bar-Jesus. ⁷ He had attached himself to the governor, Sergius Paulus, who was an intelligent man. The governor invited Barnabas and Saul to visit him, for he wanted to hear the word of God. ⁸ But Elymas, the sorcerer (as his name means in Greek), interfered and urged the governor to pay no attention to what Barnabas and Saul said. He was trying to keep the governor from believing.

How interesting that the governor, intelligent and fully capable of making decisions for himself could be in the company of a sorcerer named Bar-Jesus who was a magician and false prophet, one who claimed supernatural powers and probably made a good living selling his services as fortune teller.

Question: In the time God was calling you near to Him for the first time and you told unbelieving friends or family that you wanted to know more about God and Jesus, did they try and dissuade you? How did you respond to their presumption that you perhaps were incapable of making up your own mind?

Acts 13:9-12: ⁹ Saul, also known as Paul¹, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he looked the sorcerer in the eye. ¹⁰ Then he said, “You son of the devil, full of every sort of deceit and fraud, and enemy of all that is good! Will you never stop perverting the true ways of the Lord? ¹¹ Watch now, for the Lord has laid his hand of punishment upon you, and you will be struck blind. You will not see the sunlight for some time.” Instantly mist and darkness came over the man’s eyes, and he began groping around begging for someone to take his hand and lead him. ¹² When the governor saw what had happened, he became a believer, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.

You could say Paul and the sorcerer had a bit of a showdown! This was a huge mismatch because the supernatural power claimed by Bar-Jesus ² was no match for the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit that Paul was filled with. Talk about supernatural power! The Holy Spirit and Satan were in direct confrontation and it was no contest. Satan lost.

Pastor Rob: “A supernatural life is one aware that we live and move in a very real, yet unseen, supernatural environment which keeps us from relying on our own wisdom and strength to further the Kingdom. “We must realize that just as we are empowered supernaturally, the enemy is too. That being said, this should not result in fear but rather an ongoing reliance on the One who is greater than he who is in the world (greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world.) “

Ephesians 6:10-17: ¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹ Acts 13:9 is when Saul first becomes known as Paul.

² Bar-Jesus The prefix *bar* stands for "Son of" so the meaning of his name was *Son of Jesus* in the Greek language or *Son of Joshua* in Hebrew. (*Jesus* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name *Joshua*.)



Bringing it Home

Clearly we've learned over the last few weeks that God's supernatural power will easily overcome an earthly king, prison chains or a prison guard; not to mention an enemy of all that is good! Nothing was going to get in the way of God's word reaching Jews and Gentiles alike. Additionally in this lesson we see Paul's faith in action in verse 11. There was no doubt blindness was going to overtake the sorcerer in that instant; the unleashing of supernatural justice. Consider at the time when all this happened, that the sorcerer demonstrated only this in the eyes of God—he deliberately attempted to get in the way of someone wanting to speak and hear the gospel.

Paul and Barnabas were fitted with little more than the Holy Spirit to carry out the missions ahead. Interestingly we look to things of this world to carry out our missions don't we? It's a truly amazing thing to experience what it feels like when you finally submit to God's will for your life. You may not know at the time where He's leading you but you will know when He's called you to take those first steps and when you do, it might be like meeting your first love for the first time, all over again.

