

ACTS 13 PART 2

Main Point: Paul's First Missionary Journey

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.
Ephesians 6:12 NKJV*

Digging Deeper

As Paul and Barnabus were sent out on their first missionary journey together they encountered some pretty serious opposition from the enemy. Bar-Jesus, a sorcerer ironically named 'son of Jesus', while truly being a son of Satan, had a great deal of influence in the Roman political ear. As Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor of the province, longed to hear the Gospel, he was twisted, misled, and influenced away from hearing the word by the sorcerer. Something to note is that sorcery, magic, dark arts, and the like are very real! It's the kind of power that we see in Exodus as Pharaoh's magicians opposed God by duplicating everything God did, on a smaller scale. But they could never undo what God did. They could not hold a true candle to God's power, as the enemies' power, although very much real, is limited. It's also worth noting that this same kind of power is on display in modern psychic mediums and similar concepts. Leviticus 19:31 the Lord tells us, *'Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.'* This shows that it's pretty clear the spiritual realm exists, has real power (although limited compared to God), and seeks only to defile the people of God by twisting the truth.

Read Matthew 13:1-23. How does this compare to the actions of Bar-Jesus in Acts 13?

Discussion Questions

1. As we have discussed, the book of Acts is about the work of the Holy Spirit THROUGH the apostles, so it is the Spirit that is responsible for the results while we are responsible for our obedience. How often do we try to take responsibility for the outcome? What impact does that have on our lives? (Mental or Physical?)
2. Paul's first recorded sermon has a lot we can learn from. For instance, the format, a historical narrative through the old testament prepares us for the declaration of what God is doing right now. How does our history with God parallel Israel's history? How does that impact or inform our testimony?
3. Every Christian is in ministry whether they recognize it or not. People are watching the way you live your life. Are you preaching the Gospel with your life? Any time the Gospel is preached the enemy is there to oppose it. How do we see that opposition in our lives?
4. Paul offers a harsh rebuke of Bar-Jesus as he was in direct opposition to the Gospel. What is the difference between someone who is in willful direct opposition and someone who simply doesn't know any better or is misled by culture? How should we treat them differently?
5. Many times, God uses opposition to redirect our path. Think Jonah, the storm, and the whale, as well as here in Acts 13 as Paul shifts his attention from the Jews to the Gentiles. How has God used opposition to redirect you to his calling in your life?