

SOME THOUGHTS ON ACTS CHAPTER 13

During the beginning of Paul's first missionary journey, he went to the island which spawned his associate - Barnabas, this being Cyprus. The date of this mission is about A.D. 47.

Paul had just left the predominantly Gentile church in Syria Antioch and is now testifying in Cyprus in the Jewish synagogues (which contain Jews and Gentiles and proselytes). On Cyprus, the Gentile proconsul, Sergio Paulus, wished to hear Paul's message. In chapter 13 verse 7, we note an apparent seniority given to Barnabas, or an equality with Paul, and note Barnabas is a Jew.

But before they can effectively speak to this Gentile [Sergio Paulus] one Bar-Jesus (Chaldean for "son of savior") intervenes. This man was a *Jewish* false prophet. The name "son of Jesus (savior)" could also mean "son of Joshua". An example of Israel! Elymas (as Dr. Luke translates it) means a "wise one" or a sorcerer. This Jewish false prophet had sway over Sergio Paulus [verse 7]. Most Bible students see in Elymas a type or an excellent representation of the NATION of Israel.

Like Israel (the nation) Elymas is blinded (temporarily).

Like Israel Elymas opposes Paul.

Like the Jews Elymas is trying to hinder or stop Paul from speaking to the Gentiles. I Thessalonians 2:16.

I have noted a further similarity. *Before* Paul [and Barnabas] could speak to this particular Gentile, the Jewish nation must *first* be cut-off, blinded or temporarily set aside. Before the Gentile nations can be grafted on the Jewish nation must **FIRST** be cut off (Romans 11:17).

After the blinding of the Jewish false prophet, Paul and Barnabas spoke with effect to the Gentile proconsul. This coincides perfectly to what transpires in verses 14-50 of this chapter 13 in Acts. Paul did not go to the Jews first with a priority, they simply and clearly reacted **FIRST** in opposition, to reveal their **REJECTION FIRST**. Beginning here in Acts 13 we see the apparent rejection of Paul's gospel by the dispersed Jews. Israel (the nation, *i.e.* Jerusalem and its leaders proper) had already rejected Paul's message;

note Acts 22:18, and 9:29 with the Jews of Greece in Jerusalem. This rejection continues throughout Paul's ministry, even after Acts 28.

Like Israel, Elymas was considered an "enemy" of "all righteousness" (verse 10). Today the Law, and the nation of Israel is also considered our ENEMY from the standpoint of the gospel, this is evident in Romans 11:28.

Acts 13 is a mini-portrait of Paul's ministry and its relationship to the Jews, it is also illustrating a dispensational change. Gentiles were now being reached, but *not via Israel*, Israel is set aside during this present dispensation. Moses, and even the Kingdom Gospel, is not the message Paul carries, it is one of grace, with heavenly hopes. Paul calls it "my gospel"!

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