

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Lesson #12 -God's Word Prevails

Scripture Reading: Acts 12:25-13:3

Introduction:

1. During Paul's first missionary journey, there were challenges, but God's word prevailed!
2. While the forces against the church variate, the word of God still prevails.
3. We observe some challenges on Paul's first missionary journey.

I. PREACHING AT CYPRUS -13:4-12

A. The proconsul

1. Structure of the government
 - a. Imperial province
 - i. which was for more troubled areas which required more Roman legions
 - ii. The money collected went to the Emperor
 - b. Senatorial province. Money collected from them went to the Roman Senate.
2. History of the government in Cyprus
 - a. Cyprus was taken by Rome in 57 BC
 - b. It was a Imperial province until 22 BC when it became a senatorial province
 - c. The ruler of the senatorial province was called proconsul.
 - d. At this time, the proconsul was Sergius Paulus
 - i. He is described by Luke as “an intelligent man” or “a man of understanding”
 - ii. He sought to hear the word of God and sent for Barnabas and Saul.

B. The false prophet Bar-Jesus

1. He was a sorcerer who did not want Sergius Paulus influenced by Barnabas and Saul.
 - a. Their teaching would cause him to lose his place of influence.
 - b. He was motivated out of selfish ambition rather than a desire for truth. How truth this is still for many today!
2. Paul struck him with blindness
 - a. This is one of the rare times when miracles are intended to harm -Ref. Ac 5:1-11
 - b. This blindness was to accomplish two key purposes:
 - i. It revealed to proconsul that God's power was far greater than Bar-Jesus
 - ii. It would hopefully reveal that same truth to Bar-Jesus as well. It is unknown if he ever became a follower or not.

II. PREACHING AT ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA

A. Paul's sermon

1. History of the OT that points to Jesus -vs. 17-25
2. The resurrection witnessed -vs. 26-32
3. The resurrection prophesied -vs. 33-37

4. The demand for a decision -vs. 38-41
 - a. Through Jesus a person can be forgiven of all sins against God
 - b. Therefore, they must put their faith in God and be obedient to His will.
 - c. Verse 41 is from Habakkuk 1:5
 - i. He predicted calamity would come on Israel from Nebuchadnezzar if they did not repent.
 - ii. Today, if people will not repent of their sins they will suffer eternal calamity.

B. Reaction to his sermon

1. Almost the whole city comes to hear more of God's word
2. The Jews see this and are filled with envy
 - a. This envy causes them to blaspheme and to contradict Paul and Barnabas
 - b. Because of their rejection, Paul moves on to the Gentiles.

C. Message for us today

1. NOTE: two statements of Paul
 - a. To those who believe he "...persuaded them to continue in the grace of God" -vs. 43
 - b. To the others, "...since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life..." -vs. 46
2. The application:
 - a. We have no control over how others will react to the gospel
 - b. If they accept it and follow it, we rejoice!
 - c. If not, they have sealed their own destiny

Conclusion:

1. We must not grow weary in well-doing, but continue to fight the good fight of faith.
2. No matter man's reaction to the word of God, His word always prevails -Ref. Is 55:10, 11