

**PAUL AND BARNABAS IN CYPRUS**

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**To Study:** Acts 9:20-31; 11:19-30; 13:1-13.

**To Read in class:** Acts 13:4-13.

**Memory Texts:**

**Younger:** Ecclesiastes 9:3 "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil and madness."

**Older:** Ecclesiastes 9:3 "This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness."

**OBJECTIVES:** To teach that:

1. As soon as an individual is converted, he ought to begin testifying of his Saviour.
2. Belonging to Christ may result in suffering, hostility or and mockery from former friends.
3. As a follower of Christ, one is brought into fellowship with other Christians and can serve God with them.
4. Satan tries in different ways to keep sinners from accepting Christ or listening to the truth.
5. The gospel is for all people; rich or poor, great or small, politicians, government officials, etc.

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**SCENE 1. VISUAL AIDS. (H-21) Saul’s house in Tarsus. Figures of Saul at work and Barnabas coming to visit him. Inset: Figure of Paul escaping from Damascus in a basket over the wall.**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- During some of the first three years after his conversion, Saul was in Arabia (Galatians 1:17).
- Following his conversion, Saul was an energetic preacher of the resurrected Jesus. This resulted in persecution against him.
- He fled to Jerusalem, where at first the believers were distrustful of him.
- Barnabas knew of Saul’s conversion and spoke on his behalf to the brethren, after which they lost their fear of him.
- Due to the persecution inspired by the Grecians, (Gr. Hellenistes), Saul had to flee from Jerusalem.
- Note:** The Hellenists were Jews born in foreign lands who spoke the Greek language.
- He returned to Tarsus, his native city, where he may have worked in the trade he had learned, that of making tents.
- No doubt Saul also studied the Scriptures during his stay in Tarsus.
- The Lord was preparing him for the service for which He had saved him (Acts 9:15-16).
- Cmt.** The Lord has purposes for the life of each person. When one accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour he ought to say, as did Saul, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”
- During this period, the Christians who had been dispersed by the persecution that began in Jerusalem preached in other areas (Acts 11:19-26).
- These Christians reached Antioch of Syria where they formed the first church outside of Jerusalem, The majority of these were converted Gentiles.
- The brethren in Jerusalem heard the news and sent Barnabas to visit Antioch and learn about this new development in the work of the gospel.
- Note:** Antioch was the third most important city of the Roman Empire at that time.
- Barnabas remained in Antioch, dedicating himself to teaching the new believers. The number of believers grew and he realized he needed help in this work.
- Barnabas then went to Tarsus seeking Saul, perhaps because he remembered that the Lord had said Saul was “a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name before the Gentiles.”
- Cns.** Barnabas did not try to do the work alone, but recognized that in the work of the Lord, companionship was needed.

**SCENE 2. VISUAL AIDS. (H-12). The meeting place of the church in Antioch with figures of several of the believers and Saul and Barnabas at the door, ready to leave on their missionary journey. Inset: Figure of the elders praying before commending the two missionaries.**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- Saul and Barnabas met for a year with the new church in Antioch.
- While they were occupied in the work of teaching, the Spirit of God showed the brethren of Antioch that they must commend Barnabas and Saul to the work to which He was calling them.
- Patch: The brethren prayed about this before sending away the first two missionaries.
- They placed their hands on them, as was the custom in those times. This showed their recognition and fellowship with them in the work they would carry out.
- Saul and Barnabas said goodbye to their beloved brethren and left the comforts of Antioch to begin their journey on foot.
- The sending forth of these missionaries was a work of the Holy Spirit: “So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.” (Acts 13:4).
- Cmt.** Those who serve the Lord as missionaries today ought also to be sent by the Holy Spirit. Commendation “to the work” ought not to be just the personal desire of the one going out.

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**SCENES 3A and 3B. VISUAL AIDS. (I-3) Inside a Roman government building (A) Figures of Saul and Barnabas preaching before Sergius Paulus the governor and of Elymas trying to hinder the preaching. (B) The figure of Elymas is changed to one of him blind and seeking help.**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

- Saul and Barnabas reached the island of Cypress where Christians who had been scattered by persecution, had been preaching the gospel to the Jews only (Acts 11:19).
- Barnabas was from Cypress (Acts 4:36).
- John Mark accompanied them as helper. He was a relative of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10).
- Beginning in Salamis, they preached in several places and reached the port of Paphos.
- In Paphos there was a false prophet, a magician called Barjesus (“bar” means “son of ..”). He was also known as Elimas, which means “magician” or “man of wisdom”.
- Cmt.** The Jews were forbidden to practise magic.
- Elimas was with Sergius Paulus, the most important man of the island, the deputy or proconsul or representative of the Roman government
- The deputy was “a prudent man” who desired to hear the Word of God.
- Perhaps he thought that with the magician at his side he would find the truth he desired to know.
- When Sergius Paulus called Barnabas and Saul to hear the Word of God from them, the magician withstood the missionaries.
- Being a servant of Satan, he sought to turn away the proconsul or deputy from the faith.
- Cmt.** Students should realize that companions can be a hindrance to them listening to the Word.
- From this point onward, Saul was called Paul, the Greek form of his name (Acts 13:9).
- Paul recognized where the resistance of Elimas came from and named it openly.
- Apl.** Satan always tries to hinder the work of God. At times he uses some entertainment to distract the attention of a person so that he will not listen. At other times he uses friends.
- Paul used power given him by the Lord to bring about a miraculous sign, and Elimas became blind.
- This display of the power of God convinced Sergius Paulus that Elimas was a counterfeit and the deputy believed and was converted.
- Cns.** When the supposed “prophet” became blind, it revealed his real condition and his inability to foretell or prophesy truth.
- Apl.** God saves both the rich and the poor, common people and nobles.
- Cns.** The conversion of the proconsul would make a great impression on those in high places of government.