



## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week of July 20, 2025

Acts 13:4-12

***4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. 5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. 6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. 7 He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.***

1. Although directed and led by the Holy Spirit, Paul and Barnabas used their discretion and common sense to make pragmatic decisions in determining where, to whom, and with whom they would travel to spread the gospel. Why is pragmatism not always the best way for Christians to base their decisions? When does pragmatism cross the line from Spirit led, wise decision making to self-centered, faithless decision making?
2. Charles Spurgeon described Cyprus as the place where Satan's seat is located. Based on that description alone, why might it be surprising to hear that Paul and Barnabas' first recorded convert on Cyprus was none other than Sergius Paulus, the governor of the island? But, having witnessed Jesus' heart for the tax collector and prostitute and having seen the mercy of God in the life of the apostle Paul, and knowing the miracle of our own salvation, why shouldn't this surprise us at all?
3. With a name like Bar-Jesus, which literally means "son of the savior", is it surprising that such a one would oppose Paul and Barnabas and try to turn Sergius Paulus away from the faith? What are some modern day examples of people who may claim to be all about Christ but in reality actively oppose Him?
4. Paul responded forcefully and passionately to Elymus calling him a son of the devil, an enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, before blinding him temporarily. What do you think was behind Paul's heated and vehement response? Wasn't Paul guilty of doing far worse?
5. In spite of the supernatural blinding of Elymus, Luke makes a point of telling his readers that the proconsul was even more astonished at the teaching of the Lord. In other words, it wasn't the magnificent show of miraculous power that led Sergius Paulus to faith. Instead, it was the gospel. Why is it so important for Christians to understand this truth about the power of the gospel?