

Blinded by the Light
God Shuts Down Evil
The Empowered Church Series - Part 23
July 29/30
Acts 13:1-12

Introduction

- **The Power of Good** – Too often you hear about the power of evil. But have you ever considered the power of Good? Imagine being on the opposite of God and trying to shut Him down. No way. I remember back in the day when I was struggling with anxiety really bad, God gave me a thought: **Impending Hope**. Not impending doom. Not impending evil. Impending Hope. No one can shut down God's Hope because He's fully in charge and there's no one to stop Him.

God CANNOT be STOPPED

- **Context** – the center hub of Christianity has shifted from Jerusalem, as a predominantly Jewish movement, to a more international movement in a port city called Antioch up north in Syria.

Lesson

- **Great Leaders; Great Location**
 - **The Leaders of the Antioch Church**
 - **Ac 13:1** - *"Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger,¹ Lucius of Cyrene,² Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod [Antipas] the tetrarch,³ and Saul."*
 - **The Antioch Church** – the new hub of Christianity. More international location.
 - **Prophet Office vs. Role** – lots of prophets in the Old Testament that we may be familiar with, but the New Testament has plenty as well. For example, there is

¹ "Who was "Symeon called Niger"? Why was he given a Latin surname? The reason for the surname, apart from its Latinity, can scarcely be in question; he was presumably of dark complexion. It is tempting to identify him with Simon of Cyrene, who was made to carry Jesus' cross on the way to the place of execution, but Luke does not suggest the identification, although he mentions Simon in his passion narrative (Luke 23:26); moreover, it is Lucius, not Symeon, who is here called the Cyrenaean... Latin was spoken in the Roman province of Africa, but that lay farther west along the North African coast than Cyrene. Do the evangelists use "Cyrenaean" in the general sense of "African"?" NICNT (New International Commentary of the New Testament) by F. F. Bruce.

² "As for Lucius, there is no evidence to connect him with the Lucius (Paul's kinsman) of Rom. 16:21, and his identification with Luke the physician and evangelist is not only unprovable but improbable, although it was made in early Christian times, as appears from variant readings in the text. Lucius, one of eighteen Latin *praenomina*, was a common name in the Roman world. This Lucius may well have been one of the men of Cyrene who, along with men of Cyprus, first preached the gospel to Gentiles in Antioch (11:20)."

³ "Manaen is a Greek form of Hebrew Menahem (meaning "comforter"). The title "foster-brother" was given to boys of the same age as royal princes, who were taken to court to be brought up with them. (The word is found in inscriptions with the looser meaning "courtier" or "intimate friend," but there is no reason to give it this looser meaning here.) Herod the tetrarch, to whom Manaean was foster-brother, was Herod Antipas, youngest son of Herod the Great, who ruled Galilee and Peraea as tetrarch from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39.⁸ Josephus mentions an earlier Menahem, an Essene, who was honored by Herod the Great for having foretold his rise to royal estate; it has been conjectured that he might have been the grandfather of this Menahem (Manaen). It is natural to suppose that Luke's access to information about the Herod family was derived from Manaen. But what a commentary on the mystery and sovereignty of divine grace that, of these two boys who were brought up together, one should attain honor as a Christian leader, while the other should be best remembered for his inglorious behavior in the killing of John the Baptist and in the trial of Jesus!" NICNT

the prophetic team that was in Jerusalem (that came to Antioch – Acts 11:27); Judas, Silas (Acts 15:32); Philip's 4 daughters (Acts 21:9); Agabus (Acts 21:10).

- **Prophets are Foundational to the Church** - 1 Co 12:28–31 – *“And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But earnestly desire the higher gifts.”*
- **Walking Bibles** – We have to remember that the Holy Spirit had a ton of stuff to clarify for the early church and building upon what Christ had revealed in His short 3-year ministry. So, who could they trust to consistently provide that revelation? There was no written materials (the gospels were written later). The earliest guess on a gospel being written is the view that Matthew wrote in the early 40's AD. We are currently in that era. At this point it would be one gospel that may have been available. The others wrote between 50AD and 90AD depending on how late John wrote (late 60's or early 90's). The bottom line is that there isn't a New Testament yet. Paul is just now starting his missionary journeys and he wrote most of the theology of the New Testament (at least 13 books). So, **without the New Testament, without theology, without the gospels**, what was the church able to go out and teach besides what they had HEARD from the early apostolic witnesses? And how limited was the availability to get to the apostles in Jerusalem during persecution and distance? Therefore it seems that **the Holy Spirit would be getting revelation to a lot of believers in a lot of different places. Who could He consistently move through that the Church would respect and trust? Prophets.**
- **The Office of Prophet** – **the office of prophet** and role of the prophet **was to be in touch with the Spirit and be a clean conduit for Him to share WHAT He wants to share WHEN He wants to share. That office would be held accountable** for their prophetic words. They were seen more like how we think of pastors in a church today, because they would consistently be ministering in a checks and balances way.
 - **Regular believers moving in the prophetic** – apart from the consistent prophets in their office, there were regular believers who the Holy Spirit moved through more randomly. ANY Believer can hear the Holy Spirit and receive a download from Him. So, sometimes a believer would just give a word in church, but they weren't considered “official prophets.” Just like everyone can share from the Bible, but there are official teachers, the church used prophets in a similar way.
 - **1 Co 14:26–33** – *“What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. ²⁷If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. ²⁸But if there is no one to interpret, let each of*

them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. ³⁰ If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, ³² and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.”

- **The Prophetic Office Goes Dormant** – Unfortunately because prophecy is one of the most difficult roles and gifts in the church to monitor and hold accountable, it quickly became messy in the early church and the office of prophet fell into a poor reputation. Instead of solid prophets bringing on apprentices and training them properly a lot of different outsiders and insiders began claiming that they had a ‘word from the Lord’ and many saw it as a means to make money. Quickly prophecies became resisted (see Didache below – it was an ancient church manual written around AD100). For the last 2,000 years the office of prophet has lain dormant. But that doesn’t mean the gift is dormant, that the Holy Spirit is dormant, or that the office SHOULD be dormant. My view is that it should be revived and organized similar to the preacher/teachers role.
 - Didache, Chapter 11 – “Whosoever, therefore, comes and teaches you all these things that have been said before, receive him. But if the teacher himself turn and teach another doctrine to the destruction of this, hear him not; but if he teach so as to increase righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord. But concerning the apostles and prophets, according to the decree of the Gospel, thus do. Let every apostle that comes to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain except one day; but if there be need, also the next; but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle goes away, let him take nothing but bread until he lodges; but if he ask money, he is a false prophet. And every prophet that speaks in the Spirit you shall neither try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven. But not every one that speaks in the Spirit is a prophet; but only if he hold the ways of the Lord. Therefore from their ways shall the false prophet and the prophet be known. And every prophet who orders a meal in the Spirit eats not from it, except indeed he be a false prophet; and every prophet who teaches the truth, if he do not what he teaches, is a false prophet. And every prophet, proved true, working unto the mystery of the Church in the world, yet not teaching others to do what he himself does, shall not be judged among you, for with God he has his judgment; for so did also the ancient prophets. But whoever says in the Spirit, Give me money, or something else, you shall not listen to him; but if he says to you to give for others’ sake who are in need, let no one judge him.”
 - Didache, chapter 12 – “But every true prophet that wills to abide among you is worthy of his support. So also a true teacher is himself worthy, as the workman, of his support. Matthew 10:10; cf. Luke 10:7 Every first-fruit, therefore, of the products of wine-press and threshing-floor, of oxen and of sheep, you shall take and give to the prophets, for they are your high priests. But if you have not a prophet, give it to the poor. If you make a batch of dough, take the first-fruit and give according to the commandment. So also when you open a jar of wine or of oil, take the first-fruit and give it to the prophets; and of money (silver) and clothing and every possession, take the first-fruit, as it may seem good to you, and give according to the commandment.”
- **Prophecy Today (and at Bridgeway)** – Today, prophecy by most charismatic (Continuationist) churches is viewed on a case-by-case basis with individual believers. Those with the gift of prophecy have a more consistent revelation stream coming to them from the Lord. Those that are more mature and discerning are more trusted and they are heard in Bridgeway. All words are tested, prayed over, examined against Scripture and then assessed for their usage in the church. We will be doing more training in prophecy in the coming year so that we have a more healthy and robust access to the voice of the Lord as a community.

- **Prophecy and the Word of God** – It's important to note that we do not consider modern-day prophecy through a believer on par with Scripture in all ways. Yes, the Bible is actually believers being carried along by the Holy Spirit and prophesying by writing it down. So, yes, it is the same process, The difference is that there is internal supernatural and authoritative validation for the Biblical revelation, but not so the personal revelation of today. We match today's revelation AGAINST, the Bible for verification so they aren't on the same par. That doesn't mean that modern revelation can't be as important as the Bible to an individual. **The Holy Spirit is the author of BOTH. That means if God is speaking, God is speaking and it's legit and powerful. The only difference is the lack of ability to authenticate fully.**
- **Teaching Office vs. Role** – The Book of Acts and our passage today also mentions that they are teachers in the Antioch church and that those named filled that role as well. It's possible that they were duplicate prophets/teachers which would be a dual role and dual gifting. But the office of teaching/preaching is a very popular one in the church especially since the time of Christ. Even today it's the most heralded of the leadership gifts, whether it should be or not. The reason is that it's the most trustworthy, since it's based on Scripture, and it's the easiest to hold accountable (to match against 2,000 years of analysis).
- **Bridgeway Preacher/Teacher Leadership Office** – at Bridgeway we have a core teaching team that are the primary deliverers of the message and purveyors of culture. **They are called not only to adhere strictly to Scriptural Truth but also to communicate in alignment with the vision and principles that guide our culture here at Bridgeway.** They are not to simply show up and give their personal opinions, unless they call that out as such. There is High accountability to this office. The vision is designed not in the pulpit but in the ministry of Senior pastor and designed through the elder board and sharpened by the SLT (Senior Leadership Team).
- **Preaching and Teaching at Bridgeway** – apart from the official office of preacher teacher with our core leadership, there are many, many preachers and teachers at our church. They are held accountable to adhere to similar alignment, but they are not speaking for the whole church at all times, when they teach in a **smaller setting. They have a lot more room to share opinions.** They are localized teachers and leaders in various states of maturity and growth. One of our cultural values here at Bridgeway is **'equipping ONE ANOTHER'** which means that everyone can bring something to the table and we need to consider if it's from the Lord (instead of simply ignoring it). God can speak through all of us.
- **Barnabas** – An incredible leader in the early church. "Son of Encouragement" was a charismatic (personality) and influential leader. He was the one who helped Saul/Paul be included into the early church when everyone else was afraid of him. We've talked about him extensively in prior messages.

- **Simeon/Niger** – dark skinned leader. Niger is Latin for ‘black or dark’. This is the first named New Testament ‘black’ character, since color of skin didn’t play a significant factor in that part of the world at that time. It mattered more what nation you were from than that you looked like. But it’s important to note that there was **diversity from the beginning of the Christian movement that was the norm.**
 - **Lucius of Cyrene** – not Simon of Cyrene who carried Christ’s cross but someone from the same region. Cyrene is in **Northern Africa, in modern-day Libya.**
 - **Manaean** – lifelong friend most likely means ‘foster brother’ and that they were raised together. **This is an important concept: two raised very similar and yet ended up in dramatically different places in life. one was an adherent, and the other was openly hostile.**
 - **Herod Antipas** – Herod the Great’s son who beheaded John the Baptist and led part of the trial of Jesus Christ. Imagine that tension later on.
 - **Saul/Paul** – He’s still being referred to as his Hebrew name: Saul. He’s a core figure/character in the Book of Acts.
- **Let the Games Begin**
 - **Paul & Barnabas are Sent Out as Missionaries**
 - **Ac 13:2–5** - “[in the year AD 47] *While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said,⁴ “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them⁵ and sent them off.⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to [the ship port] Seleucia,⁶ and from there they sailed to Cyprus.⁷ When they arrived at [the*

⁴ “As these prophets and teachers were carrying out their appointed ministry in the church, the Holy Spirit made known his will to them— doubtless through an inspired utterance from one of their number. There are indications in the New Testament that Christians were specially sensitive to the Spirit’s communications during fasting... A remarkable reading of vv. 1 and 2 down to this point is found in a Latin work entitled *Prophecies collected from all the books* originating in the African church early in the fourth century: “Now there were in the church prophets and teachers, Barnabas and Saul, on whom the following prophets laid their hands—Symeon who is called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene who remains to this day, and Titus his foster-brother; they had received a response from the Holy Spirit, by reason of which they said ...” As this work is also a witness for the Western reading at 11:27–28, which introduces the narrator at Antioch, it may be that here it identifies Lucius of Cyrene with Luke the evangelist. As for Titus, it is a natural inference from Gal. 2:1–3 that he was an Antiochene; that he was Luke’s brother has been suggested, e.g., by W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 390; *Luke the Physician* (London, 1908), pp. 17–18; A. Souter, “A Suggested Relationship between Titus and Luke,” *ExT* 18 (1906–7), p. 285; “The Relationship between Titus and Luke,” pp. 335–36. T. Zahn, in reconstructing the Greek text presumed to underlie this Latin reading, supposes that some words have fallen out and expands “Titus his foster-brother” to “Titus (an Antiochene, and Manaen, Herod the tetrarch’s) foster-brother” (*Urausgabe der Apostelgeschichte* [Leipzig, 1916], pp. 280–81; he reproduces the Latin text on p. 80). He takes this reading to be the original Western text of the passage.” NICNT

⁵ “The laying on of hands in this instance imparted to Barnabas and Saul no spiritual gift or authority that they did not already possess; but by this means the church of Antioch, through its leaders, expressed its fellowship with them and recognized them as its delegates or “apostles.” NICNT

⁶ “Barnabas and Saul, then, having been sped on their way by the Antiochene church, took ship from Seleucia Pieria, the port of Antioch, five miles north of the mouth of the Orontes,…” NICNT

⁷ “Cyprus figures in cuneiform texts from the eighteenth century B.C. on under the name Alashiya, the Elishah of Gen. 10:4. Its principal export was copper, to which it gave its name.¹⁴ Its inhabitants in early days were known to the Greeks as Eteocypriots, but in historical times it was extensively colonized by Greeks and Phoenicians. It was annexed by Rome in 57 B.C., and was incorporated in the province of Cilicia two years later. In 27 B.C. it became a separate province, governed on behalf of Augustus by an imperial legate; in 22 B.C. Augustus transferred it to the control of the Roman senate, and from that year, like other senatorial provinces, it was administered by a proconsul, as Luke indicates in verse 7.” NICNT

eastern seaport of the island called] *Salamis*,⁸ *they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John [Mark]⁹ to assist them.*”

- **Worshipping the Lord** – usually this phrase ‘worshipping the Lord’ is associated either with prayer or song. It’s turning your attention not only to the Lord but ENGAGING as an ACTION.
- **Fasting** – self-denial provides a wonderful atmosphere for God to move and speak to us.
- **Conducive atmospheres for the Holy Spirit to move** – we tend to think that it’s silly that if we play a song for people to go down the aisle means that the Holy Spirit is tied to music. But *that’s not it as much as our hearts are prepared and our minds are less distracted. Be listening in worship.* Be listening in fasting. The upcoming 40 day long fast is a key time to hear from the Lord. *Too often we remain in a resistant mode and expect the Holy Spirit to overcome our resistance.*
 - **Elisha prophesies in an atmosphere of worship** - 2 Kings 3:14-16 – “*And Elisha said, “As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, were it not that I have regard for Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would neither look at you nor see you. ¹⁵ But now bring me a musician.” And when the musician played, the hand of the LORD came upon him. ¹⁶ And he said, “Thus says the LORD,...*”
- **The Holy Spirit said** – *how did He “say it?”* The Bible states plainly when God speaks (in all His various ways – e.g. via the Holy Spirit) without mentioning the method or conduit or mode of speaking. The concept of God speaking is used for dreams, visions, images, impressions on the heart, vocalization/audible words, visitation, etc. We assume it’s always verbal but it’s not.
- **NICNT Commentary Comment** - “...a Latin work entitled *Prophecies collected from all the books* originating in the African church early in the fourth century wrote a **parallel passage** of this story: “*Now there were in the church prophets and teachers, Barnabas and Saul, on whom the following prophets laid their hands—Symeon who is called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene who remains to this day, and Titus his foster-brother; they had received a response from the Holy Spirit,...*”
- **Set apart for me Paul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them** – this is a call/assignment, based on the context, that says: It’s time to go do what I

⁸ “The first place in Cyprus where they preached was Salamis, a Greek city on the east coast of the island and the administrative center of eastern Cyprus. It was a flourishing commercial entrepôt, and its Jewish community, dating probably from the time when the island belonged to the Ptolemies, was apparently large enough to require more synagogues than one.” NICNT

⁹ “John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, whom they had taken with them from Jerusalem to Antioch, accompanied them on this mission, and acted as their “attendant”—which some scholars have taken to imply that they availed themselves of his eyewitness knowledge of certain important phases of the gospel story, in particular the passion narrative... The word “attendant” represents Gk. ὑπηρετής, used also in Luke 1:2, ὑπηρεταί ... τοῦ λόγου, “ministers of the word”—among whom Mark is probably reckoned. A. Wright, *Composition of the Four Gospels* (London, 1890), pp. 15–16, argued that Mark attended Barnabas and Saul as a duly authorized catechist; cf. G. Salmon, *Some Thoughts on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London, 1897), p. 142. “It may be that Mark was taken on Paul’s first missionary journey because his eyewitness reminiscences supplied an element in the Gospel-preaching that neither Paul nor Barnabas could supply” (G. J. Paul, *St. John’s Gospel: A Commentary* [London, 1965], p. 26, n. 1, quoted by C. F. D. Moule, *Essays in New Testament Interpretation* [Cambridge, 1982], p. 47).” NICNT

built you to do. You know it. You've been waiting for it. It's time. The concept of 'set apart' means, 'select those two to do it.'

- **After fasting and praying** – they did more. **Once they know the assignment, they are now going to prepare for that assignment** and there's no better way to prepare than to fast and pray into it. It's alignment, it's focus, it's engaging with God and asking for His empowerment, guidance and direction. It's partnering with Him BEFORE you go out and do it.
- **They laid their hands on them**¹⁰ – This is the concept of **Impartation** (spiritual transference) and the idea of **Commissioning** (sending out with authority and ambassadorship). Why do we do this? Why is it biblical? What's happening?
 - **Many uses and concepts** – although they all are similar in sense (conveying/imparting & identifying/markings), there are actually different meanings of laying on of hands. Here are the most common uses/meanings:
 1. **Identification with** – in the Old Testament sacrificial system, an Israelite would lay hands on the head of a sacrificed animal, as well as the priests, to 'convey' their sins upon the animal as it was slaughtered. It was the idea of imparting sins, but also an identification saying, 'you are standing in my place.'
 2. **Commissioning leaders** – Israelites laid hands on Levites to be anointed to serve, Moses laid hands on Joshua to take over leadership, and new leaders were commissioned by laying on of hands (1 Tim 5:22).
 3. **Imparting the Holy Spirit** – Moses laid hands on Joshua so he would get a portion of the Holy Spirit on him. Peter and John laid hands on the Samaritans when they received the Holy Spirit. Ananias laid hands on Paul the Apostle to receive the Holy Spirit. Paul laid hands on the Ephesians and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6). It's not the only way to receive the Holy Spirit but was common in the early church. This is the idea of someone who HAS the Holy Spirit can impart and transfer that same anointing and presence on another. In other words when they touch in a meaningful way in prayer, the Holy Spirit takes that opportunity to expand His influence and presence onto another in solidarity of the two (unity).
 4. **Healing and Blessings through hands** – Elisha stretched out upon the boy to bring him back to life; Jesus laid hands on people to allow them to see and be healed. Jesus blessed little ones by laying His hands on them. Ananias laid hands on Paul for the regaining of his sight. It's a primary way that healing is conferred per Mark 16:18. Paul did it constantly.
 - **Sent them off** – It's likely AD 47. saying goodbyes, making sure they had what they need, making plans for return, etc.
 - **Being sent out by the Holy Spirit** – **the holiness and supernatural element of doing ministry**. If you are involving God in it and trying to follow His lead it is

¹⁰ "An action of God or human beings, often understood to convey healing, blessing or the gift of the Holy Spirit. It also indicates the conferring of authority upon individuals for the purpose of ministry." Dictionary of Bible Terms

likely that the ministry idea wasn't yours, it was His. It means that you are not going out in your own power but in His.

- **Where's Seleucia?** – It's actually called Seleucia Pieria and it's the ship port of Antioch. So it's the practical way you get on a boat from Antioch.
 - **Where's Cyprus?** – This is Barnabas' home town where he was born. It's an island in the Mediterranean sea, just south of Turkey. It has been inhabited for millennia, initially because of the copper mines that were eventually exhausted. Cyprus, which it was named by the Greeks later in its history means in Greek: Copper ('Cyprian bronze' or 'copper').
 - **Where's Salamis?** – The eastern seaport of the island of Cyprus. It does happen to be the administrative center for the east side of the island and clearly had a large Jewish population (multiple synagogues). They are going to eventually travel over to the Western side of the island, so they begin here first.
 - **Proclaimed the Word of God** – **what Word of God?** There's no New Testament. What did they proclaim? The Old Testament with the Jesus parts highlighted? Or the message of the gospel given by Jesus Christ? How did they know all the things that He said when neither of them walked with Jesus on earth?
 - **Preaching in synagogues**¹¹ – there are pros and cons to this (Jews talking to Jews but also hostile to Christianity), but it's the natural place to begin for these guys (especially Saul/Paul). Saul was an intense Jew so he knew how to talk to his brothers on a deep level.
 - **They had John to assist them. Who?** – John (Hebrew name) Mark (Roman name). Barnabas' cousin. His mom's house was where the church where Peter and the guys attended. He will later write the Gospel of Mark (Peter's perspective).
- **Party Pooper**
 - **A Pagan Magician Tries to Derail Ministry**
 - **Ac 13:6–8** - *"When they had gone through the whole island [like walking from here to San Francisco]¹² as far as [the city of] Paphos [from Eastern edge to western edge],¹³ they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus.⁷ He was with the proconsul [or governor], Sergius Paulus,¹⁴ a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. ⁸ But Elymas*

¹¹ "The practice of presenting the Christian message first of all in the Jewish synagogue or synagogues of each city they visited was to be a regular feature of Barnabas and Paul's missionary procedure. It was a practical expression of the principle laid down by Paul in Rom. 1:16—that the gospel should be presented "to the Jew first." It has been asked if Barnabas and Paul would have continued this policy after the Jerusalem agreement described in Gal. 2:9, by which they were to concentrate on preaching the gospel to Gentiles, leaving the evangelization of Jews to Peter and the leaders of the Jerusalem church. But even then the synagogue provided a bridgehead for reaching Gentiles: Paul "was always sure of a good opening for his Gentile mission among the 'God-fearing', who formed part of his audience in every synagogue." NICNT

¹² Cyprus is 3500 square miles. Delaware is 2500 square miles.

¹³ "Paphos, the seat of the provincial government, on the southwest coast. This was the Greek settlement of New Paphos, so called to distinguish it from the Phoenician settlement of Old Paphos, which lay about seven miles to the southeast. Both cities were noted, among other things, for the cult of the goddess called "the Paphian," a divinity of Syrian origin identified with the Greek Aphrodite." NICNT

¹⁴ "The proconsul at this time was Sergius Paullus, member of a family which rendered distinguished services to the empire in the first and second centuries. This man may be identical with Quintus Sergius Paullus, who is mentioned in an inscription from Kythraia, in the north of the island, as holding office in Cyprus under Claudius (apparently)." NICNT

the magician (for that is the meaning of his name)¹⁵ opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.”

- **Gone through the whole island** – what island again? How big is that? What does it mean to ‘go through it’? 140 miles wide and 60 miles high. Just about the distance from here to San Francisco (120 miles).
- **Where’s Paphos?** – this is the western harbor town of the island of Cyprus. It was the government seat for the Western portion of the island.
- **What’s a magician?¹⁶** – The Bible speaks of ‘magicians’ a number of times (Pharaoh’s magicians who he called for dream interpretation, but Joseph was able to handle it; The magicians who stood against Moses in Pharaoh’s court; those in Nebuchadnezzar’s cabinet that were bested by Daniel & Co. & Simon who was confronted by Philip; perhaps even the Magi as well), usually it’s a bad thing. The concept of who was considered a magician during what ancient era is a little complicated. In the story of Daniel we see that **they are looped in with advisors, scientists and dark art enchanters**. They are usually seen around nobility or leadership as advisors which is why Daniel was called the ‘chief of the magicians’. It doesn’t mean that he was a magi, only that from a secular point of view, no matter how you discerned and gained info or wisdom for the king, didn’t matter. Either you were helpful or you weren’t. **Pagan kings didn’t care what arts you used as long as you were successful**. In this case, this guy is, again, with a leader, but we know that he’s a bad guy and regardless if he was a sham or legit in his arts, he was selfish and anti-God.
- **What’s a Jewish false-prophet?¹⁷** – **Jews were forbidden to be dark art enchanters**. They would never want to be known as a magician unless they were only Jewish by birth and had embraced another culture. Clearly this guy didn’t care and did whatever he wanted to do, but was still a Jew by birth. But the Bible explains that, yes he did give messages (whether by sham or not we don’t know for sure) but they were **false messages**. That’s what a false prophet is.
- **What does the name Bar-Jesus mean?** – ‘son of Jesus/Jeshua’ (a common name in the ancient Middle East). We find out that his other name is Elymas which is not a clearly or commonly known word/term/name. Some believe it to be the Arabic version of sage.¹⁸
- **What’s a proconsul?** – a proconsul is basically a governor of a region. A consul was the highest elected political official in the Roman Republic. They were elected for 1 year terms and there were two at a time. A proconsul is a “deputy consul”.

¹⁵ “Elymas, the alternative name which Luke gives him, is probably a Semitic word with a similar meaning to *magos*; it cannot be an interpretation of “Barjesus.” NICNT

¹⁶ “The Greek word translated “magician” or “sorcerer” is *magos*. As Peter confronted Simon Magus in Samaria, so Paul confronts Barjesus in Cyprus.” NICNT

¹⁷ “A Jew, even a renegade Jew (as this man evidently was), would not have been a member of the magian priesthood; he was a *magos* in the more popular sense. Luke calls him a false prophet, not (probably) in the sense that he foretold things which did not come to pass, but in the sense that he claimed falsely to be a medium of divine revelation.” NICNT

¹⁸ “**1681. Ἐλύμας *Elúmas***; gen. *Elúma*, masc. proper noun. Elymas, or Bar-Jesus (*Bariēsoús* [919]), a magician or sorcerer who resided with Sergius Paulus at Paphos in Cyprus when Paul and Barnabas were there (Acts 13:6ff.). Elymas, meaning sage, is the Arabic designation of his name.” Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates

- **Who's Sergius Paulus?** – there is some debate about which Sergius Paulus he was but it doesn't matter other than for dating this story.
- **What's a man of intelligence? Why highlight that?** – This was no dummy and he was wanting information and intelligence wherever he could find it including from the sages of the world. He was a seeker of information and truth which created an opening for Paul and Barnabas to be called for and present the gospel to him.
- **He called Saul & Barnabas to hear the Word of God** – Why would he do that? I'm sure there were practical reasons and reasons that made sense to him at the time. But, we know that God was orchestrating the whole thing. The Bible says that **no one will come to faith without being called by the Holy Spirit and Father.**
- **Elymas opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith** – how did he do that? **Why did he do that?**¹⁹
 - **Fleshly resistance** – he didn't like the idea of losing influence or power.
 - **Demonic resistance** – the power he was likely drawing from (unless he was a total scammer) was demonic. Therefore any advance of the Kingdom of God would be resisted.
- **Holy Ire**
 - **Paul Unleashes on the Pagan Magician**
 - **Ac 13:9–12** - *“But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him¹⁰ and said, “You son of the devil,²⁰ 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.”*
 - **Saul/Paul**²¹ – we have a shift in his name right here. It begs some explanation. **Why the change? It's likely because he was going to do almost all of his work moving forward to the Gentile base and they would use the name Paul more than Saul.**
 - **Paul was 'filled with the Holy Spirit'** – what does that mean? It means that **the Holy Spirit came upon him to such a degree that He was taking over for the moment and filling up Paul with everything necessary to get it done.**
 - **Why does it matter that he 'looked intently at him?'** – It means he's ticked off and not backing down. **Is there a time for Spirit-inspired intensity? Fire from God? Yes.** But it better be because God's mad, and not just you.

¹⁹ “opposing it for all he was worth; no doubt he suspected that, if the proconsul paid too much attention to the faith the missionaries were proclaiming, his own place at court was likely to be endangered.” NICNT

²⁰ “Gk. διάβολος, “slanderer,” was used as a rendering of Heb. *šātān*, “adversary” (cf. 10:38). In his letters Paul prefers to use the Gk. transliteration Σατανᾶς (cf. p. 105, 14, on 5:3); διάβολος occurs in Eph. 4:27; 6:11; 1 Tim. 3:6–7; 2 Tim. 2:26.” NICNT

²¹ “here for the first time in Acts is given his Roman *cognomen* Paullus (Paul), by which he is henceforth regularly called.” NICNT

- **Paul goes off on him:** in chapter 8 we studied the time when Peter went off on Simon the magician for trying to buy the power of the Holy Spirit. He wasn't having it. Now Paul has his turn to see this happen and go ballistic.
 - **You son of the devil** – “son of the **accuser/slanderer**” is the focus here (the word for devil is diabolos in **Greek**). Satan was known as the father of lies and deception, so anyone who is lying or deceiving for evil intent is going to be just like him, thus a ‘son of’. This is Paul naming what the main thing he was doing wrong was.
 - **You enemy of all righteousness** – This speaks toward his **character**, that he stands against all that is good and right and Godly. He is **pursuing and pushing an agenda that is wrong and selfish**.
 - **Full of all deceit** – This is his **mode**. He gets what he wants by means of deception.
 - **Full of all villainy** – This is a parallel to the first word. More deception.
 - **When will you stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?** – **This is a challenge about behavior and a rhetorical question to pose out loud to demonstrate why Paul is about to shut him down.**
 - **Why is this such a big deal?** – To many of us in modern day America, this seems like an overreaction. We've been taught that everyone is entitled to their own opinion. But that is not true. There is God's way and not. That's it. There are no other valuable opinions. The only value any opinion has is whether or not it's aligned with the heart and mind of God.
 - **Jesus rebukes Peter similarly** – Peter had our mindset going on when he tried to correct Jesus' perspective and approach to ministry and Jesus took him down.
 - Mt 16:21–23 – “From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”
 - **The hand of the Lord is upon you** – Yikes! Not in a good way. Usually we hear that the hand of the Lord upon someone is a good thing and empowering thing. But if you are an enemy, then you don't want God's hands to come upon you because they will be coming for discipline, judgment or wrath.
 - **Paul blinds him in the power of the Holy Spirit** – **did he just proclaim it, or cause it?** That's a detail-argument that bible students like to discuss. I don't think that it matters at the end of the day. God did it. Paul was happy about it. They were in partnership. So, it still begs the question: **can things like this be done in the power of the Holy Spirit? What're the ramifications of that?**
 - **Paul was blinded by Christ directly** – remember it's part of his testimony (road to Damascus). He knows what this is like.

- **It caused the proconsul to believe in Christ²²** – this is clearly the fruit and purpose of that blinding incident. We don't have to guess as to the meaning.
 - **Another word on Power Evangelism** – why operating in the supernatural is so important. **It moves out of the way and let's God do the speaking and acting instead of simply us and our opinions.**
 - **Action AND Teaching** – **notice that it was the experience AND the words of instruction that they gave that was the super combo to lead this man to the Lord.** We must never be content with simple a talking or content only faith. We must partner that with actions to make it real.

Conclusion

- **God always wins.** WE may lose a battle or two, but the war is won and God's in control.
- **We need to walk in power and authority over the enemy.**

²² "The proconsul was greatly impressed. What exactly is meant by the statement that he "believed" is a matter of dispute. Ramsay suggests that, for Luke, belief is the first stage in the process of conversion, in which the second is "turning to the Lord" and the third the settled Christian life."
NICNT