

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

Evangelist W. Paul Redmond Sr.

Volume 6, Issue 9

February 2010

The Proper Reaction to Those who Oppose the Gospel (Part 2) Acts 13:6-12

Last month we left off considering that the Sending of Paul was because he was Called of the Spirit. No man should enter the ministry because he thinks that it would make a good career or because the preacher makes a good impression on him. A parent should not encourage their son to become a preacher because they want him to. A man should enter the ministry, or become a preacher, because the Holy Ghost has called him. Likewise, one should not go to the mission field because of someone else. They should not go to a certain place just because it is a needy place. They should go and do what the Holy Ghost tells them to do. Too many men have gone to the mission field or taken a pastorate or become an evangelist for a reason other than they were called by the Spirit. They responded to their emotions, they listened to someone else, or for some other reason they tried to do something or go somewhere. They were miserable and left what they were doing because they were not called of the Spirit. If the Holy Ghost calls you, you will enjoy what you are doing, even in difficult times. You will not quit just because something bad happens.

But let me add this as well. If someone is called of the Spirit to do a particular task or go to a particular place, do not stand in their way and try to stop them. Some have truly been called of God, but have been hindered in accomplishing God's will for their life, because a parent or a friend convinced them not to leave home. It should be the highest honor for parents to have their children in the ministry, even if that ministry will take them to the other side of the world. God's will is always best. He knows what He is doing. If the Lord calls your son to be a preacher or your daughter marries a

-2-

preacher, do not hinder God's will for their life by standing in their way and opposing God. They will be better off, and so will you, if everyone surrenders to the Lord.

Notice a third aspect of the Sending of Paul. It was Commissioned by Servants. Acts 13:3 says, "*And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*" From the reading of verses 1-3, the Holy Ghost spoke to all of the men. He told them that Barnabas and Saul were to be separated and sent to do the work that He wanted them to do. It is important to note that these men did not try to stop Barnabas and Saul from doing the Lord's work. They were in fellowship with the Holy Ghost, and He told them as well as Barnabas and Saul, what He wanted done. It is essential that we return to the time when all of God's people are in tune with the Holy Ghost and listening when He calls. If He let everyone know then what was to be done, I believe He will do the same today. The problem is that most believers are not in fellowship with the Holy Ghost, and therefore do not hear when He calls. These men sent Barnabas and Saul out just like the Holy Ghost said to do.

But I also must note that Barnabas and Saul did not just go out on their own without the authority of the church that they were in. Barnabas and Saul had labored in Antioch for a year (Acts 11:25-26), and then had gone to Jerusalem to deliver some "*relief*" (Acts 11:29-30). As Acts 13 begins, they have returned to Antioch. This signals the beginning of the "missionary" work that Paul is so noted for. (I put missionary in quotation marks because the word does not appear in the Bible. Paul was not a missionary in the modern sense. We consider a missionary one who goes to a place, evangelizes the lost, starts a church, and then trains someone to take his place. Paul did not do that. Paul was more of an evangelist than missionary-pastor. He never stayed in one place long enough to be considered a pastor. Paul would go to an area, with at least one associate and later on with several, and preach in the public places. After some were saved, a church would be started and Paul would leave one of his associates

to pastor and ordain and train pastors. That is what we know he did with Timothy and Titus, and I believe that was his pattern everywhere.) But even though Paul would be called of God to labor around the known world and would have apostolic authority, he was still sent out by his church. This gives us the pattern for evangelistic and mission work in our day. No man is an island unto himself. No man is called without being sent by a church. That is the Bible way and should be practiced today.

One may say that God has called them to do a certain task. But they cannot accomplish that task in their own name or in their own authority. They may come up with hundreds of reasons why they do not want to work through a church, but they are arguing against the plain teaching of Scripture. The first evangelists (missionaries) were sent by the church where they were laboring. That is why I put our home (sending) church on all of our material. I am not laboring as an entity all alone. Our ministry of evangelism is an extension of our church. We have been commissioned by our church and sent out to accomplish what God has called us to do. The Biblical example is very clear—evangelists, missionaries, etc., must be sent out by their church. That is how Barnabas and Saul started their ministry and that is how we must do it today.

The final introductory idea is the **Situation in Paphos**. Some of the information is just that—information. Other details will provide some application thoughts. The city was located on Cyprus and is technically New Paphos, ten miles north of Old Paphos. Its good harbor made it prosperous, and it had several rich temples. It was the administrative capital of the island and the seat of the governor. Its main goddess was Aphrodite, a nature-goddess. She was represented by a white conical stone. Her worship was sensuous in character. This false goddess was often referred to as the deification of lust.

Paul did not avoid this city because it had much idolatry. That was one reason that the Holy Ghost (Acts 13:4) led him to this island. It is amazing to me how often Christians will ask why a missionary

will go to a certain place. They will say, “Isn’t it dominated by Mormons, or Catholics, or Buddhists, or witchcraft, etc?” It may be, but that is why the Holy Ghost has called the missionary to that place—to preach the Gospel to those who need it most. Paul was not put off by the idolatry or wickedness of a place. That made him more determined to preach the Gospel. Often, Christians in America will bemoan the wickedness that abounds here. But Paul faced it in his day too. As I mentioned above, the worship of Aphrodite was very wicked and involved much lust and sensuousness. We look at our society and say it is too far gone. Paul would look at it and say we need to preach more. The wickedness in our society should not cause us to quit; it should cause us to do more to get the Gospel to those who need it.

These introductory thoughts set the stage for *The Proper Reaction to Those who Oppose the Gospel*. When Paul went to a city, he did not meet a welcoming committee. As we will see, he met opposition even on this first journey. If we are determined to do what God has told us to do, we will meet opposition too. Some may say that no one has ever opposed them. But that is because they are no longer in the fight. The Bible says over and over again that we are at war with spiritual things. The world, the flesh, and the devil will oppose us. But when we face opposition, what should we do? Thankfully, the Bible gives us the proper response. May we learn from it and obey it.

First of all, consider **The Root of the Problem**. We will understand why Paul faced what he did when we understand what is involved with the opposition. So many Christians act so surprised when opposition comes. But they should not. We have been told it would come. The devil hates Jesus, and he hates the Gospel. He will hate those that proclaim it as well.

The Description of the root of the problem is found in Acts 13:6. The verse says, “*They found a certain sorcerer.*” The word for sorcerer is “the name given by Babylonians and others to the wise

men, teachers, priests, physicians, astrologers, seers, interpreters of dreams, augurs, soothsayers, and sorcerers.” Interestingly it is the same word found in Matthew 2:1. There it is translated “*wise men.*” We usually think of that phrase as describing the men as being wise, but it really refers to their occupation. (Admittedly, they were “wise” because they used their knowledge to learn about God.) Both the “wise men” in Matthew 2 and the “sorcerer” here in Acts 13 practiced the same craft—but with different intentions. The wise men worshipped God; the sorcerer worshipped Satan. As we will see several times in these verses, the devil will often throw out counterfeits. We must be ready to see the difference between what is right and what is wrong.

He is also described as “*a false prophet.*” This refers to “a spurious prophet, i.e. a pretended foreteller or religious imposter; it talks about one who, acting the part of a divinely inspired prophet, utters falsehoods under the name of divine prophecies.” Again, we must be careful. The devil has his prophets, or preachers, too. He is a master counterfeiter. That is all he knows how to do. He cannot make something real, but he does copy. Those copies sadly deceive many. All the false religions of the world try to counterfeit the true message of Jesus Christ. We are warned about this in II Peter 2:1 and I John 4:1. We will look at them next month.