

LESSON 23 - THE DOUBLE ROAD FROM GENTILE BYWAY TO GRACE HIGHWAY

Acts 13 - 28

THEME: *To show that rejection of God's light brings darkness.*

Do you know what the word *separate* means? Two people may have a good friendship, yet they may part to go to different schools or jobs or locations. In other words, they separate. God separates both things and people for His special purposes. Israel was separated for the purpose of witnessing to all the world of the living God. Today we will study how Israel failed, and how Saul was separated by God for the working out of a new purpose.

After Saul's conversion he went into Arabia, then returned again to Damascus. Three years later he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and returned to the regions of Syria. Several years after his conversion he was ministering with Barnabas and others in the church at Antioch of Syria. Galatians 1:17-18, Acts 13:1.

As the leaders ministered and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Separate for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Acts 13:2. Immediately they departed to the seaport Seleucia; and from there sailed to the island of Cyprus. At Paphos they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus who was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus. We read this in Acts 13:6-12. NOTE: Bar-jesus (type/picture of Israel) tried to hinder Sergius Paulus (type of Gentiles) from hearing God's message. Saul called the sorcerer a child of the devil and pronounced blindness upon him (picture of Israel being blinded for a season). Romans 11:25 Then the deputy, seeing the miracle that was done, believed: even so the Gentiles are now saved through the fall of Israel. Saul's name was then changed to Paul, also the name of his first Gentile convert, Sergius Paulus.

They traveled on to Perga and Antioch of Pisidia. As their custom was, they went first to attend the synagogue, the meeting place of the Jews. They preached *justification by faith*. When the Gentiles desired that these words might also be preached to them, the Jews were filled with pride and envy and spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul. They contradicted and blasphemed. Then Paul and Barnabas became bold, and announced: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not

consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles." Acts 13:14-49. With that statement Paul crossed over from the Jewish side of DOUBLE HIGHWAY to the Gentile side.

At the city of Corinth Paul again went to the Jews and reasoned in the synagogue. He testified that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. They opposed him and blasphemed so Paul shook his clothes saying, "Your blood be on your own heads; I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." Acts 18:1-6. Paul had crossed back again to the Gentile side of DOUBLE HIGHWAY.

Finally Paul arrived at the capital city, Rome. Again he went over to the Jews--again he was rejected as he tried to convince them concerning Jesus. Acts 28:23-24. Some were convinced, but most did not believe. When they disagreed among themselves, Paul said again, "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth by Isaiah...Be it known therefore to you, that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles and that they will listen." Acts 28:25-29. With the pronouncing of these words *the third time*, it is clear a great STOP sign had been placed across KINGDOM HIGHWAY. Israel had rejected the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Now there is blindness on Israel for a season. The KINGDOM is postponed while God works out His new, *secret* purpose.

Thus we see how a whole nation chose darkness instead of light. How can the world be blessed if Israel, God's channel of blessing, is blinded? However, if we look carefully at the chart, we see there is a turn at the end of DOUBLE HIGHWAY, a turn where we are now going to enter upon another glorious part of *THE HIGHWAY OF LIFE*. We call it GRACE HIGHWAY. Grace means unmerited favour, or gift of love, which God is now showing to *both Jews and Gentiles*, who deserved nothing because they both had given up God.

Something else we can observe here is the terrible consequence of rejecting God's Word. Could you be guilty of that today? When you do not obey the Word, you are rejecting it. Continued rejection of light brings darkness. The whole world today needs to be brought back to the light of God's Word. We praise God for His wisdom and knowledge, and we beg Him to help us to always hear and obey the voice of His Holy Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit." 1 Thessalonians 5:18-19.

LESSON 23 - WORK SHEET

1. Where was Saul when the Holy Spirit called: "Separate Barnabas and Saul for the work for which I have called them"? Acts 13:2 _____
2. To what island did they go? Acts 13:4 _____
3. What were the two names of the Jewish sorcerer they found in the town of Paphos? Acts 13:6, Acts 13:8. _____
- 4.-6. Show that Saul's experience with Bar-jesus was a type /picture of what God's dealings with Israel are today. Read Acts 13:7-11. Fill in the spaces and you will see the answer.

Bar-jesus _____ them (Paul and Barnabas) Acts 13:8.
Israel (the Jews) was filled with envy and _____
those things spoken by Paul. Acts 13:45.

Bar-jesus tried to _____ the deputy from the faith. Acts 13:8.
Israel tried to keep Paul from _____ 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16.

Bar-jesus was made _____ for a season /time. Acts 13:11.

Israel will _____ until the fulness of the Gentiles
has come in. Romans 11:25.

Then the deputy /proconsul Sergius Paulus, _____ Acts 13:12.

The Gentiles will then _____ Acts 28:28.

- 7.-8. Write the verses that show what Paul said three times when he crossed over from KINGDOM HIGHWAY to GENTILE BYWAY on DOUBLE HIGHWAY.

Acts 13:46: _____

Acts 18:6: _____

Acts 28:28: _____

9. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:10,12 what happens to those who reject the truth? _____

10. Write 1 Thessalonians 5:18-19 from memory. _____