

## 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 the biblical importance of the word *separate*? Two people may have a good friendship, yet they may separate to go to different schools or jobs or locations. In the Bible 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. Afterwards, he went up to Jerusalem where he became acquainted with Peter and where he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic Jews; but they were attempting to put him to death. When the brethren learned of it, they brought Saul down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus. Later, when the news about the growing church in Syrian Antioch reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas off. After encouraging them, Barnabas left for Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch to minister with him and others. And the disciples in Antioch were first called Christians, which means "belonging to Christ". Galatians 1:17-18, Acts 9:29,30, Acts 11:19-26.

As the leaders of the church in Syrian Antioch ministered and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Acts 13:2. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to the island of Cyprus. At Paphos they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But Bar-Jesus (type/picture of Israel) was opposing them, seeking to turn Sergius Paulus (type of Gentiles) away from the faith. But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, and called him a son of the devil, an enemy of all righteousness. He said that Bar-Jesus would be blind and not see the sun for a time. Acts 13:4-11. This is a picture of Israel being partially blinded until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. Romans 11:25. Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened. Even so the Gentiles are now saved through the fall of Israel.

They left Cyprus and traveled on to Perga and Pisidian Antioch. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue, the meeting place of the Jews, and sat down. After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, they were invited to say any word of exhortation for the people. Paul stood up and preached forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ and that through

Him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified through the Law of Moses. As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people kept begging that these things might be spoken to them the next Sabbath. The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles." Acts 13:13-49. With that statement, Paul crossed over from the Jewish side of DOUBLE HIGHWAY to the Gentile side.



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During Paul' second missionary journey, he went to Corinth. And there he was solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed. But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. 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 as a prisoner at Rome. There he was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him. When the leading men of the Jews had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe. And when they did not agree with one another, Paul said, "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah...Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen." Acts 28:23-28. With the pronouncing of these words, a great STOP sign had been placed across KINGDOM HIGHWAY. Now, there is blindness on Israel. 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 have and 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. How? By believing the bad news that all sinners who die without Christ, deserve to die for their sins an *eternal* spiritual death, as well as a physical death. Romans 6:23. But by believing also the good news that "Christ died for our sins...was buried, and...was raised on the third day." 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. From that moment on, a person will be indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. 2 Timothy 1:14, Romans 8:9,11. This blessing comes with a moral and spiritual obligation to be a godly host to the Royal Guest within us.

**MEMORY VERSE: "In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit;" 1 Thessalonians 5:18,19.**

## LESSON 23 – WORK SHEET

1. Where was Saul when the Holy Spirit said: “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to 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 magician 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.
  - The Jews (Israel) were filled with jealousy and \_\_\_\_\_ the things spoken by Paul. Acts 13:45.
  - Bar-Jesus was seeking to \_\_\_\_\_ the proconsul \_\_\_\_\_ from the faith. Acts 13:8.
  - Israel tried to keep Paul from \_\_\_\_\_ to the Gentiles. 1 Thessalonians 2:15,16.
  - Bar-Jesus was made \_\_\_\_\_ for a time. Acts 13:11.
  - Israel will be \_\_\_\_\_ until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. Romans 11:25.
  - Then the proconsul Sergius Paulus \_\_\_\_\_ . Acts 13:12.
  - The Gentiles will also \_\_\_\_\_ . Acts 28:28.
- 7.-8. Write the verses that show what Paul said 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 do not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved? \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Write 1 Thessalonians 5:18,19: \_\_\_\_\_