

RUSSELL SANDERS

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THE APOSTLE PAUL – LESSON 8

FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY – PART 1

CYPRUS

Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus have just been ordained (commissioned) as missionaries by the prophets of the church of Syrian Antioch. They now are set forth along with young John Mark, Barnabas' cousin to the coastal Mediterranean port of Seleucia. There they caught a ship to the sea island of Cyprus.

Upon landing on the eastern coast of Cyprus, they began to traverse it while preaching day by day along the way. They sought out synagogues to preach to Jews. They eventually reached the city of Paphos, on the far western end of Cyprus where they found opposition from a Jew who claimed to be a prophet. His name was Bar-Jesus, which means "son of Jesus." Jesus was a common name not to be confused with "Jesus Christ" (the Anointed One). He was a false prophet who used sorcery. His Greek name was Elymas.

The Roman Proconsul (governor) of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, was a wise man that heard of this disturbance and called for a hearing with Barnabas and Saul. Elymus interfered to prevent the meeting but failed to stop them even as they were sharing the gospel with Sergius Paulus. Saul then set his eyes on Bar-Jesus and rebuked him in the Lord's name. Immediately, Elymas was struck blind and led away from before the Proconsul. This miraculous demonstration of God's power caused the governor to become a believer.

This also elevated Saul's leadership above Barnabas for the first time, and henceforth he is called Paul.

This completed the first stop on the first missionary journey. Paul and Barnabas would now set sail to the Roman province of Galatia in Asia Minor (present day Turkey). However, John Mark chose not to continue on with them. He returned home to Jerusalem. Mark would join Barnabas again a few years later, but without Paul.