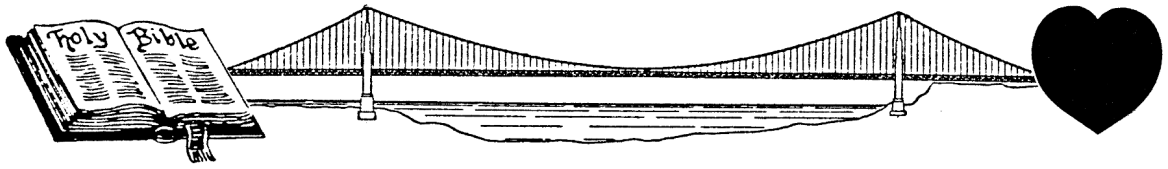
"The Enemy's Attempts To Close The Bridge"

(Satan's Tactics to Keep People from being Saved)

ACTS 13:4-12, 45; 14:2, 19; 15:1, 5

8-30-2026

The Gospel **You** **Needy Souls**



***BEWARE OF THE ENEMY'S ATTEMPTS TO CLOSE THE BRIDGE!**

(Warning: Our Adversary is trying to keep people from being saved)

5 of Satan's attempts to close the bridge to salvation:

I. The Enemy may Attempt to <u>Block</u> the Bridge (13:4-12)

(To keep people from being saved, Satan may set up someone to <u>stand in the way</u>)

II. The Enemy may Attempt to <u>Detour</u> From the Bridge (13:45)

(To keep people from being saved, Satan may set up someone to <u>speak against the truth</u>)

III. The Enemy may Attempt to Falsely <u>Warn</u> About the Bridge (14:2)

(To keep people from being saved, Satan may set up someone to <u>sow discord</u>)

IV. The Enemy may Attempt to <u>Tear Down</u> the Bridge (14:19)

(To keep people from being saved, Satan may set up someone to <u>send persecution</u>)

V. The Enemy may Attempt to <u>Restrict</u> the Bridge (15:1, 5)

(To keep people from being saved, Satan may set up someone to <u>spread false doctrine</u>)

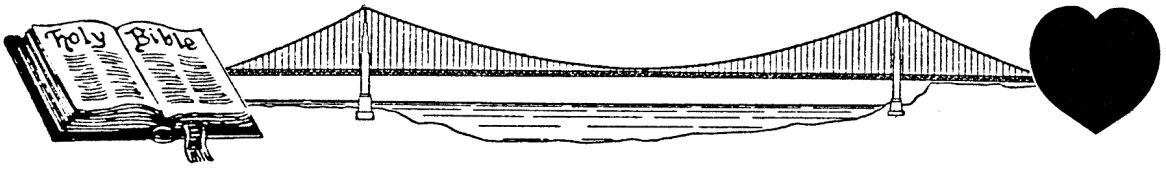
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INTRODUCTION:

Paul and Barnabas were about to launch out on their first missionary trip.

When God (the Holy Spirit) leads us)cp. 13:4), it will not necessarily be:

--a road without obstacles
--a mission without conflict
--a job without struggles
--"smooth sailing"

Satan makes attempts to stop them at every corner.

Was he successful? Would he succeed in hindering the message that had the potential of changing the course of history and the eternal destiny of multitudes?

Today, like then, God has a message to tell to the nations: a message of truth, forgiveness, and life. A message that will rescue the perishing! A message that a Savior has died (to provide eternal life) and risen again (to guarantee eternal life).

Like Paul and Barnabas, you and I have the only answer to man's greatest need. The answer is the Word of God (SEE 13:5, 7), the Gospel of God.

Somehow we must get God's answer to lost sinners.

Picture in your mind an island. On this island are eternal riches, treasures, and joys that words cannot express. A bridge leads to this island. And many people pass by (walk past, no on) this bridge every day wondering what is on the other side. The bridge often looks inviting and at times some are interested in trying it out and seeing for themselves.

However, an enemy exists whose primary goal in life is to see that no one goes across that bridge to find out. He has been told that he will never enjoy what is on that island, and therefore he wants no one else to enjoy it either.

The "treasure-filled island" is the Gospel of God.
The "bridge" represents believers.
Those who pass by are unbelievers.
The enemy is Satan.

God has chosen to use us as links or channels to get His answer to those in need.

We are a "bridge" that connects the Word of God to the hearts of men.

How will the unsaved understand and believe without someone telling them the Gospel?

The Ethiopian eunich said: "How can I except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:31).

Paul said to Titus that God had "manifested His Word through preaching" (Titus 1:3).

Romans 10:14 says: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Paul and Barnabas were two of God's bridges by which He could carry the Gospel to lose men. As they extended themselves to reach out and bring the unreached world to Christ, the enemy did not sleep.

We will find today in Acts 13, 14, & 15 five attempts to stop the Gospel.

These attempts should bring about an awareness on our part of the enemy's tactics.

The Gospel **You** **Needy Souls**



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5 of Satan's attempts to close the bridge to salvation:

I. THE ENEMY MAY ATTEMPT TO BLOCK THE BRIDGE (13:4-12)

(To keep people from being saved, Satan may set up someone to stand in the way)

A. THE ENEMY'S ATTEMPT

Satan's first "fiery dart" (cp. Eph. 6:16) thrown in the way of God's missionaries can be called "obstruction"
(Obstruction at Cyprus)

Elymas the Sorcerer provides a full-blown (complete) description of a worker of Satan (a captive, pawn or puppet who will do Satan's will at His bidding):

1. His Identity (v. 6)

   a. He has power to attract attention ("magician")

   b. He bears a message ("false prophet")

   c. He is religious ("a Jew")

      (NOTE: Everyone whom Satan set up to hinder the gospel in Acts 13-15 was a Jew. I don't bring this up to belittle the Israelite nation, but to point out that when a people [a nation] rejects God they sell themselves over to Satan to do his bidding)

   d. He wears a false name ("BarJesus" = "the son of the Savior")

2. His Mission (v. 7-8)

   His mission is basically to obstruct, hinder, or be an obstacle to the proclaiming and acceptance of the Gospel.

   a. He stands in the way of those who proclaim God's Word

   b. He stands in the way of those who want to hear God's Word

      NOTE: Elymas was not just a passive hindrance, but one who actively and zealously sought to hinder.

      --"Withstood" = imperfect tense. He continually stood in the way. No doubt he was in Paul's face constantly and seductively trying to divert Paul from fulfilling his mission

      --"Seeking" = from a root which refers to zeal

3. His Characteristics (v. 9-10)

a. He is a deceiver

"Subtilty" - used of bait for catching fish

b. He is full of wicked motives

"Mischief" = false pretense, to be a fake, phony, or fraud.

c. He is just like his father (cp. Jn. 8:44 - "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murder from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

d. In his heart, he hates what is right

e. He lives to twist the correct ways of the Lord.

Those whom Satan sets in the way of people being saved today would be:

1) False teachers (ex: cults)
2) Close relatives/friends
3) Immoral people (who attempt to pull others down with them (EX: the harlot - Prov. 7:24-27; 9:17-18)

B. THE MISSIONARY'S RESPONSE:

How did Paul overcome the obstacle that stood in the way?

By being Spirit-filled (13:9).

The Holy Spirit allowed him to use his apostolic authority to say what he said.

The Holy Spirit probably will not lead you to a similar choice of words and way of handling the problem; but He will give you wisdom and insight in regard to your course of action.

V. 12

It is interesting to note that: It was the doctrine (teaching) of the Lord that amazed the deputy and not the miraculous judgment.

It was his being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord that caused him to believe.

II. THE ENEMY MAY ATTEMPT TO DETOUR FROM THE BRIDGE (13:45)

(To keep people from being saved, Satan may set up someone to speak against the truth)

A. THE ENEMY'S ATTEMPT

Satan's second "fiery dart" is contradiction.

(Contradiction at Antioch in Pisidia)

He has always contradicted God to man. EX: Eve - "You shall not surely die."

Satan this time uses jealousy to motivate the Jews to speak against (contradict) what Paul was saying.

This manner of speaking against him was to deny what he said about God and Christ. This is blasphemy.

B. THE MISSIONARY'S RESPONSE

How did Paul and Barnabas counter the severe contradiction to their message?

With boldness (13:46)

Boldness is needed to share the Gospel and defend your faith.

III. THE ENEMY MAY ATTEMPT TO FALSELY WARN ABOUT THE BRIDGE (14:2)

(To keep people from being saved, Satan may set up someone to sow discord)

A. THE ENEMY'S ATTEMPT

Satan's third "fiery dart" is "contention"

(Contention at Iconium)

He instigated strife, hostility, dissension to cause a distrust in the credibility of the Apostles and believers.

"Stirred up" = to rouse up; excite. To make someone "uptight" over someone else. To cause someone to be hot under the collar or rowdy toward someone.

"Minds evil affected" = to cause someone to think nothing but evil about someone, to poison someone's thinking toward someone else.

B. THE MISSIONARY'S RESPONSE

How did they respond to the Adhominim attack (i.e. personal attack)?

They responded by being faithful in their testimony (14:3).

they spent the time that was necessary to build confidence in the minds of those they ministered to.

IV. THE ENEMY MAY ATTEMPT TO TEAR DOWN THE BRIDGE (14:19)

(To keep people from being saved, Satan may set up someone to send persecution)

A. THE ENEMY'S ATTEMPT

Satan's fourth "fiery dart" is physical opposition.
(Persecution at Lystra)

The Jews were so angry that they left their cities of Antioch and Iconium and traveled many miles to persecute Paul.

They persuaded the crowds that Paul was doing things worthy of death and had him stoned.

Everyone thought Paul was dead so they dragged his body outside the city and dumped him for the dogs to come and eat his body.

(NOTE: During this time, Paul may have had his experience of being ushered into the Third Heaven - II Cor. 12)

B. THE MISSIONARY'S RESPONSE

How did Paul respond to physical opposition?

Answer: With courage to continue his mission.

He just brushed the dust off and continued on, without even "sick leave."

V. THE ENEMY MAY ATTEMPT TO RESTRICT THE BRIDGE (15:1, 5)

(To keep people from being saved, Satan may set up someone to spread false doctrine)

A. THE ENEMY'S ATTEMPT

Satan's fifth "fiery dart" is unbiblical doctrine.
(False doctrine back home at Antioch in Syria)

This time he uses ignorant, legalistic Jewish "believers" to promote a false teaching that would limit those who could be saved to those who kept the O.T. Law!

The final attack was to tie words to salvation (and therefore make eternal life limited to those who meet a certain condition: the Law of Moses).

The false doctrine that was being spread would:

1. Restrict the recipients of salvation (making Gentiles become Jews for salvation)

2. Complicate the simplicity of salvation (adding Law [works] to grace for salvation).

B. THE MISSIONARY'S RESPONSE

What gave Paul and Barnabas the confidence that they were right and the Judaizers were wrong?

Answer: They knew the will (Word) of God!

When you have convictions, you will defend them!

God's salvation is not restricted to:

1) a particular race
2) a legalistic law code (works)
(those who work hardest for it)
3) a particular denomination

God invites all--Jews and Gentiles--to come to Christ, in humility and sincerity, as you are!

CONCLUSION:

How did Paul and Barnabas remain a bridge?

What was their secret of not quitting (contrast with John Mark - Acts 13:13).

Why didn't they break each time an attempt was made to silence their testimony?

How did they overcome the fiery darts of the wicked one?

1. They were Spirit-filled (13:9)

2. They were extremely bold (13:46)

3. They were faithful in their testimony (14:3)

4. They were courageous in their mission (14:20)

5. They knew the will (Word) of God (15:2-4)

NOTE: If we respond correctly to each attempt of the enemy to stop our witness - God will bless!

(In every case, Paul and Barnabas saw God work and accomplish His will. Souls were saved and saints were edified, all because they refused to allow their bridge to be closed)

If someone will go to extremes to stop believers from sharing the Gospel, it tells me five things:

1) Our message must be very significant
   EX: No other religion has been fought against like bible Christianity
   EX: Testimony of Bill Murray (Madelaine Murray O'Hair's son), who was driven to God because of his mother's hatred for Him.

2) Our witness is very important

3) We must depend upon God's strength. We are wrestling against forces beyond our control.

4) Opposition may not be a sign to give up, but to work harder and be more faithful.

5) Something good must be about to happen (when and where God works the most, Satan fights the hardest)

What will it take to stop you? What will it take to close down your life as a bridge to carry the Gospel?