

I AM - The Greatest Battle of Your Life

Unit 5: Accountability

Lesson 4: Do It

The Cave of Wisdom

The Cave Opening: The Burning Bush - Action to correct

Welcome back to the cave of “Hindrance”. There seems to always be something or someone in our way to keep us from doing God’s work and becoming his dream for our lives. Paul and Barnabas experienced the hindrances of life everywhere they went to preach the gospel. They were beaten and left for dead, thrown out of town, thrown into jail, and eventually martyred.

In today’s lesson we see one of these hindrances: Bar-Jesus or Elymas, the sorcerer. Elymas couldn’t stop Paul from sharing the Good News with the proconsul of Paphos, but he could try to persuade the proconsul against the faith. But Paul was determined to give the proconsul the chance to receive the Lord. He saw the hindrance, owned the removal of it, solved the issue and took action to eliminate it. Paul called Elymas what he was, “a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right!”

Stop right there, this is the trusted adviser to the proconsul, a man of power, and a sorcerer as well. Paul, you have a lot of guts to talk to Elymas this way! Or are you just crazy! The

Bible tells us what Paul is: “filled with the Holy Spirit”. When you looked in the mirror last lesson, did you see the Holy Spirit in you? If so, then remember and take actions as Paul did: call out wrong for what it is, evil, and through the Holy Spirit, remove it from your life. Help others to also see the evil and remove it from their lives.

Circle of Fire: Remove any hindrances from your path

Scripture: Acts 13: 6-12 ⁸ But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. Then Paul, who was filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, “You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! ... You are going to be blind for a time.”

Biblical Character: The Sorcerer named Elymas or Bar-Jesus.

The word sorcery as used in the Bible refers to the use of evil for power. In Paul’s letter to the Galatians, Paul lists “sorcery” in chapter 5: 19-21 as one of the “works of the flesh ... for which one will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

φάρμακεία (pharmakeia/Far. mak .i. ah) is the Greek word used by Paul in this scripture. From this word we get “pharmacy”, the use of or administering of drugs.

Sorcery goes far back in history. People who had knowledge of the use of plants gained much power in tribes, both from

fear and trust. While natural remedies for disease is good, the use of them to gain power over people for evil desires was not a proper use of God's creations. We also see "magic" considered sorcery in the response of the Egyptian priests to Aaron's rod turning into a snake before Pharaoh. The priests also turned rods into snakes which were eaten by God's snake.

Magic was powerful and used to influence rulers. In our lesson, Paul encountered such a person who was an attendant to the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. Sergius sent for Paul and Barnabas to hear the new message they were preaching. But Elymas tried to prevent Paul from speaking to the proconsul. Why would Elymas care what Paul had to say? Because he knew the word of God would reduce his power over Sergius.

The stage was set for a classic battle between good and evil, and God wins again, just as in Egypt! The closing verse is great: "he believed". Sergius, a member of government, believed and was saved. But what if Paul had done nothing and given up? We are to take action to confront evil and share the gospel at each opportunity.

Have a student play the part of Elymas, the Sorcerer. Dress the part of Proconsul Sergius Paulus. See "Elymas and Sergius" skit in Appendix A. Perform the skit. Use jelly beans to fake pills. Talk about how great the pills will make you feel. Show a few magic tricks, like "fingers smoking", "ketchup packet diver", "water boiling without fire", "Scarf

through neck”. Explain the danger of being drawn in to magic and drugs ... “such a person will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Show the videos “Paul and Elymas” and “Twenty-First Century Sorcery” from Appendix 2, Unit 5.

Modern Character(s): “ABC News: Boy and His Train”: Taking action to help others in need does not require us to be over 21 years of age. Twelve-year-old John Thomas Robertson turned his love for trains into a mission to help those who could not share the ride because of disabilities. Remember the words of our Lord: “If you do unto others, you do also unto me”. John took action as he saw the opportunity. Can you see how he “saw it”, “owned it”, “solved it”, and “did it”? You too can be a doer of the word!

Other videos: “ABC News: SC School” and “Michelle Obama on Language” in Appendix 2, Unit 5.

The Tribe: We must take action to remove any hindrances to God’s dream for us. This includes the people with whom we associate. We are to remove the bad people from our lives and help those in need.

Craft: “Hindrane Buster Hammer”. See Appendix 8 Craft for instruction and material.

Recreation Activity: “Man Mines”. See Appendix 6 Recreation for instructions.