

Acts 13:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Analysis

The deputy, when he saw what was done, believed (ὁ ἀνθύπατος ἰδὼν τὸ γεγονός ἐπίστευσεν, *ho anthypatos idōn to gegonos episteusen*)—Sergius Paulus's faith followed seeing Elymas struck blind (vv. 9-11), yet Luke distinguishes his conversion from mere amazement at the miracle. The aorist ἐπίστευσεν (*episteusen*) indicates decisive faith-commitment, not superficial belief. His conversion establishes a pattern: confronting occult power with divine authority opens hearts to the gospel.

Being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord (ἐκπλησσόμενος ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ κυρίου, *ekplēssomenos epi tē didachē tou kyriou*)—the present participle ἐκπλησσόμενος (*ekplēssomenos*, 'being astounded') emphasizes ongoing amazement at τῇ διδαχῇ (*tē didachē*, 'the teaching'). Sergius Paulus believed because of gospel teaching, not merely the miracle. Divine power authenticated the message but didn't replace it.

Historical Context

This marks the first recorded conversion of a Roman official and signals the gospel's penetration of imperial governance. Sergius Paulus's conversion (c. AD 46-47) occurred during the early expansion phase when Christianity was still viewed as a Jewish sect. His prominent conversion would have encouraged other Roman officials to investigate Christianity.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Sergius Paulus's response—faith based on teaching authenticated by power—provide a biblical model for signs and wonders in evangelism?
2. What does it mean that he was 'astonished at the doctrine' rather than merely the miracle?

Interlinear Text

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|-------------------------|--------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|----------------------|-----------------|
| τότε | ἰδὼν | ὁ | ἀνθύπατος | τὸ | γεγονὸς | ἐπίστευσεν |
| Then | when he saw | G3588 | the deputy | G3588 | what was done | believed |
| G5119 | G1492 | | G446 | | G1096 | G4100 |
| ἐκπλησσόμενος | ἐπὶ | τῇ | διδασχῇ | τοῦ | κυρίου | |
| being astonished | at | G3588 | the doctrine | G3588 | of the Lord | |
| G1605 | G1909 | | G1322 | | G2962 | |

Additional Cross-References

Acts 13:7 (Parallel theme): Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

Luke 4:22 (Parallel theme): And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?