



**Seeking Power  
by Killing the Truth**  
*Living in the Image of God*  
*Module 05 Session 10*

Banking Blessings Ministry  
San Antonio, Texas  
USA



**Living in the Image of God**

- God creates every person to represent him in interactions with others
- Be for others what God would be for them if he lived with us in human form
- He provides resources for people to perform the responsibilities
- He blesses those that do

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**Living in the Image of God**

- Program seeks to understand
- Meaning of *Living in the Image of God*
- Resources God has provided to guide us
- Human responsibilities
- Benefits of *Living in the Image of God*

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**What We Will Learn**

- Jewish leadership interactions regarding Paul and Barnabas during first missionary journey
- Strategies for seeking to cling to power against growing popular understanding of a different source of authority
- Among religious leadership in Israel during early period of the Gospel message
- Religious leaders sought to cling to power against growing popularity of the Gospel


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**What We Will Learn cont'd**

- Their strategy for clinging to power
- Actions directed against the message, messenger, and the people
- Contradict the Gospel message
- Discredit the messenger
- Sow division among the people
- Banish or kill the messenger

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**What We Will Learn cont'd**

- Sought to cling to power against growing acceptance of the Gospel
- Had no real argument against the Gospel but feared the Gospel would undermine their authority over the people
- Could diminish their power over society
- Same strategies used in present-day interactions in other aspects of living
- Acts 4, 13, and 14

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### Jealous of Paul and Barnabas

- At Pisidian Antioch, Jewish leaders were jealous of Paul and Barnabas
- Because of large following around them by believers of the Gospel message
- Began to challenge the Gospel message
- Resorted to verbal abuse against Paul and Barnabas
- Acts 13:42–45

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### Acts 13 (NIV)

42 As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath.

43 When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

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### Acts 13 (NIV)

44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.

45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy...

- “Jews” (verse 45) refers to the religious leadership among Jews, i.e., Teachers of the Law and their followers
- Jealous of Paul-Barnabas following

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### Religious Leadership Challenge Gospel Message

- First they tried to challenge the message
- Tried to discredit Paul
- Incited persecution against Paul and Barnabas
- Had them expelled from the region
- Acts 13:45 and 49–50

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### Acts 13 (NIV)

45 ...They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him.

49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.

50 But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.

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### Reason for Persecution of Paul and Barnabas

- Religious leaders had no real argument against the gospel message
- Were afraid the message could diminish their authority among the people
- Feared the gospel was a source of power and authority available to everyone
- Persecution of Paul and Barnabas was an attempt to suppress the Gospel
- Same reason they persecuted Peter and John for healing a lame man

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## Suppressing the Gospel

- Religious leadership recognized gospel as potential source of power and authority available to ordinary people
- Sought to suppress the gospel
- By banishing or killing the apostles
- Sowing division among the people
- Examples based on events in Jerusalem, Pisidian Antioch, and Iconium

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## Suppressing the Gospel

- In Jerusalem: Peter and John healed lame man and Jewish leaders warned them to stop preaching the Gospel

**Acts 4:16–17** “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it.

But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

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## Suppressing the Gospel

- Pisidian Antioch: Jewish leaders sowed division among the people, stirred up persecution of Paul and Barnabas and had them expelled from the region

**Acts 13:50** But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.

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## Suppressing the Gospel

- At Iconium and city of Lystra
- Jewish leaders opposed to the gospel implemented strategy of sowing division among the people
- Paul and Barnabas had gone to Iconium after they were expelled from Pisidian Antioch
- Acts 14:1–2 and 4–6
- Acts 14:19–20

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## Acts 14 (NIV)

1 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed.

2 But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.

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## Acts 14 (NIV)

4 The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles.

5 There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them.

6 But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country,

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### Acts 14 (NIV)

- Jewish persecutors from Antioch and Iconium followed Paul and Barnabas to Lystra
- Where they incited a mob that tried to kill Paul by stoning

19 Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.

20 But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

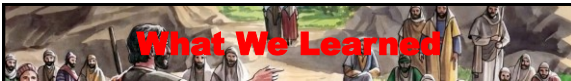
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### Strategy Against the Gospel

- Making laws or rulings against spreading the Gospel
- Discrediting the apostles
- Banishing or killing the apostles
- Sowing division among the people to divert attention from seeking the truth
- Strategy today against democracy is similar to strategy against the Gospel

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### What We Learned

- Power-hungry elite in Israel during early period of the Gospel message
- Recognized the Gospel as source of power and authority available to ordinary people
- Feared the Gospel could diminish their power over society
- Sought to cling to power against growing popularity of the Gospel

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### What We Learned cont'd

- Tried to contradict the gospel message but had no real argument against the message
- Tried to discredit the apostles
- Adopted strategy of suppressing the message by banishing or killing the apostles
- Inciting division in society
- Inciting hostility against the apostles
- Same tactics employed today by political organizations that face waning capability to win power by voluntary persuasion

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# Seeking Power by Killing the Truth

## Living in the Image of God M05S10

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A powerful elite during the early periods of the Gospel sought to preserve their power over society by suppressing the message. They had no real argument against the Gospel but feared the Gospel message of human relationship with God could undermine their authority as religious experts and leadership. They sought to suppress the Gospel by inciting division in society, instigating hostility against the apostles, and banishing or killing the apostles; because they feared the Gospel promise of independent relationship with God was a potential source of power and authority available to ordinary people. Similar to modern-day experience where holders of political power fear a population increasingly diverse and away from their views of society, doubt their capability to continue to win power by voluntary persuasion, and seek to retain power by suppressing and subverting democracy. They seek to preserve their power the same way the early religious leadership sought to cling to power: by killing the truth.

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This bible study discusses the behavior of Jewish religious leadership in their interactions with Paul and Barnabas during the first missionary journey and their earlier response to Peter and John for healing a lame man. The discussion seeks to understand their strategy for seeking to cling to the power of religious authority despite growing popular acceptance of the Gospel as a source of power and authority available to every person. They feared the Gospel message could undermine their authority over society and sought to cling to power despite growing popularity and understanding of the Gospel.

We will see that their strategy included actions directed against the message, the messenger, and the people. They tried to contradict the Gospel message or discredit the messenger but had no real argument against either the message or the apostles. Therefore, they adopted a strategy of suppressing the Gospel by inciting division in society, instigating hostility against the apostles, and banishing or killing the apostles.

The real objective of their strategy was to hold on to the power of religious authority over society, despite growing acceptance of the Gospel message of personal relationship with God available to every person and independent of earthly powers or authority. They sought to retain power despite growing understanding and decreasing dependence on their religious authority.

Their strategy of seeking to retain power by subverting legitimate evolution of society appears to have been adopted by modern-day political organizations that face waning capability to win power by voluntary persuasion. They find the population growing increasingly diverse and away from their views of society. As a result, they doubt their capability to win political power by free and fair elections. Instead, they seek to retain power via new laws and trickery that suppress and subvert democracy. They seek to preserve their power the same way the early religious leadership sought to cling to power: by killing the truth.

## Jealous of Paul and Barnabas

The study begins with an event in Pisidian Antioch, when the Jewish religious leadership showed themselves jealous of Paul and Barnabas. They were jealous because of large following around Paul and Barnabas by believers of the Gospel message [Acts 13:42–45]: “As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews

and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy...”

In the quoted passage, the statement “when the Jews saw the crowds” refers to the religious leadership, i.e., teachers of the Law and their followers. They were jealous of the following around Paul and Barnabas and the apparent popular acceptance of the Gospel message among the people.

## **Challenge the Message and Discredit the Messenger**

Their first act of defiance was to challenge the Gospel message. As their challenge of the message proved ineffective, they tried to discredit Paul, the lead messenger: “...They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him” [Acts 13:45]. Then, they incited persecution against Paul and Barnabas and had them expelled from the region [Acts 13:50]: “But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.”

## **Reason for Persecution of Paul and Barnabas**

The Gospel provided a message of personal relationship with God that was available to everyone and independent of earthly powers and authority. The religious leaders had no real argument against the Gospel message but feared the message could diminish their power of religious authority over society. They sought to discredit the message and messenger but had no real argument to accomplish that objective. Therefore, they resorted to persecuting Paul and Barnabas, the messengers, in an attempt to suppress the Gospel message. Their earlier attempt to suppress the Gospel, when Peter and John healed a lame man in Jerusalem, had not been successful.

## **Strategy to Suppress Gospel**

The religious leadership feared that the Gospel was a potential source of power and authority available to ordinary people. Therefore, they adopted a strategy of suppressing the Gospel by inciting division in society, instigating hostility against the apostles, and banishing or killing the apostles. Their strategy can be understood through examples based on events in Jerusalem when Peter and John healed a lame man; and events in Pisidian Antioch and Iconium, directed against Paul and Barnabas during the first missionary journey.

## **Suppressing the Gospel in Jerusalem**

In Jerusalem, Peter and John healed a lame man and the Jewish religious leaders warned them to stop preaching the Gospel [Acts 4:16–17]: “‘What are we going to do with these men?’ they asked. ‘Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.’”

## **Suppressing the Gospel in Pisidian Antioch**

Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel at a synagogue in Pisidian Antioch and were invited to preach the message again on the next Sabbath. Almost the entire city turned up to hear the message. The Jewish leaders became apprehensive of the message and sowed division among the people, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and had them expelled from the region [Acts 13:50]: “But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.”

## **Suppressing the Gospel in Iconium and Lystra**

In Iconium and the city of Lystra, Jewish leaders opposed to the Gospel implemented a strategy of sowing division among the people, banishing the apostles or killing them. Paul and Barnabas had gone to Iconium after they were expelled from Pisidian Antioch.

At Iconium they preached the Gospel at the Jewish synagogue, so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks accepted the message. But those that did not accept the message stirred up the population and poisoned their minds against Paul and Barnabas [Acts 14:4–6]: “The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country.”

Jewish persecutors from Antioch and Iconium followed Paul and Barnabas to Lystra, where they incited a mob that tried to kill Paul by stoning [Acts 14:19–20]: “Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.”

## **Anti-Gospel Strategy Against Democracy**

The strategy of the Jewish leadership for suppressing the Gospel included discrediting the message and apostles, sowing division among the people to divert their attention from seeking the truth, instigating hostility against the apostles, making laws or rulings against spreading the Gospel, and banishing or killing the apostles.

Their strategy of seeking to retain power by subverting legitimate evolution of society appears to have been adopted by modern-day political organizations that face waning capability to win power by voluntary persuasion. They find the population growing increasingly diverse and away from their views of society. As a result, they doubt their capability to win political power by free and fair elections.

Instead, they seek to retain power by making new laws and interpreting existing laws to suppress and subvert democracy. They sow divisions among the people and instigate internal hostility to divert their focus from seeking the truth. They seek to preserve their power the same way the early religious leadership sought to cling to power: by killing the truth.

## Summary of What We Learned

A powerful elite during the early periods of the Gospel sought to preserve their power over society by suppressing the message. They had no real argument against the Gospel but feared the Gospel message of human relationship with God could undermine their authority as religious experts and leadership. They sought to suppress the Gospel by inciting division in society, instigating hostility against the apostles, and banishing or killing the apostles; because they feared the Gospel promise of independent relationship with God was a potential source of power and authority available to ordinary people.

Similar to modern-day experience where holders of political power fear a population increasingly diverse and away from their views of society, doubt their capability to continue to win power by voluntary persuasion, and seek to retain power by suppressing and subverting democracy. They seek to preserve their power the same way the early religious leadership sought to cling to power: by killing the truth.

**Key Words:** Barnabas, Democracy, Gospel, Killing Truth, Paul, Persecution, Power, Religious Leadership