

# STUDIES IN THE BIBLE



## Paul's Missionary Journeys

### Lesson 19

Probably no individual, save the son of God Himself, has more influenced the cause of Christ than the Apostle Paul. It was he who firmly planted the church among the Gentiles. It was he who wrote half the books of the New Testament. And it is he who is the predominant figure in chapters 8 through 28 of Acts which we shall study in this lesson. The student will benefit from reading the entire account.

After the stoning of Stephen a great persecution scattered the Jerusalem church throughout Judea and Samaria. This was a blessing in disguise since those scattered went everywhere preaching the word of God. Philip the evangelist converted many in the city of Samaria, among them a magician named Simon. Philip was then led by the Spirit of God to a desert road between Jerusalem and Gaza. Here he met and converted a eunuch who was treasurer for the queen of Ethiopia. Doubtless the man returned home to preach to his people.

The persecution was partially directed by a young man named Saul. He received a commission to go to Damascus to arrest Christians. On the way a bright light shining from heaven caused him to fall to the ground. He heard the voice of Jesus instructing him to continue to Damascus where he would be told what he must do. Saul obeyed the command and for three days prayed and fasted until a disciple named Ananias came to lead him to Christ. Saul became a Christian, and now known as Paul, began to proclaim the message he had once denounced.



Our story now shifts to the activities of Peter. At Lydda he healed a palsied man named Aeneas and at Joppa raised Tabitha from the dead. These events caused many to turn to Christ. While at Joppa Peter received a request from a Roman centurion Cornelius to visit him in Caesarea. The Lord instructed Peter to obey the call and he did so. As a result Cornelius and his household became the first Gentile (non-Jew) Christians. Some Jewish disciples questioned Peter's right to preach to Gentiles, but when he explained the circumstances they rejoiced in Cornelius' salvation. Persecutions against the church continued.

### First Missionary Journey

In the meantime, Paul and Barnabas, another gospel preacher, worked with the church in Antioch of Syria. From this city they set out on their first

missionary journey. They sailed to Asia Minor (Turkey) by way of the island of Cyprus, and landed at Perga. Here John Mark, Barnabas' nephew who had accompanied them, turned back. They continued into the interior where they established churches in Antioch of Pisidia, Lystra, Iconium, and Derbe. They encountered much opposition and at Lystra Paul was stoned. Retracing their steps, they appointed elders in every church and returned to their starting point of Antioch in Syria.

Soon Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to help settle a dispute over the attempt of some to force the Jewish rite of circumcision on Gentile Christians. The decision against the Judaizers showed that the Law of Moses, of which circumcision was a part, is not included in the gospel of Christ.

### Second Missionary Journey

Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch determined to revisit the newly established congregations. However, they disagreed on whether they should take Mark since he had previously deserted them. Barnabas therefore sailed to Cyprus with Mark while Paul took Silas and journeyed overland to visit the new churches in Asia Minor. From thence, accompanied by a young convert named Timothy, they traveled to Troas. Here in a vision Paul saw a man of Macedonia entreating him, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." Heeding the call he crossed into Macedonia to preach in Philippi, perhaps the first European city to receive the gospel. There he converted a businesswoman named Lydia and her household, and when he and Silas were cast into prison they converted their jailor and his family. After their release, they went to Thessalonica and Berea where they planted churches. Because of Jewish opposition in these cities Paul left for Athens where he preached his famous sermon on Mars' Hill. Next he went to Corinth where he established a congregation and remained preaching the gospel for a year and a half. Finally, he sailed for Judea by way of Ephesus, visited briefly in Jerusalem, and returned once more to Antioch.

### Third Missionary Journey

Paul's third missionary journey took him through the Asia Minor provinces of Galatia and Phrygia. He arrived at Ephesus and here stayed three years while he taught in the school of Tyrannus. As in other places he met much opposition. He finally left to visit the churches he had established in Macedonia and Achaia. Having done so, he came back through Troas, met briefly with the Ephesian elders, and sailed for Judea to be present for the Jewish Feast of Pentecost.

### Paul's Imprisonment

Everywhere Paul went he excited Jewish opposition. Soon after arriving in Jerusalem he was taken into custody by Roman authorities to protect him from a mob intent on killing him. He remained in prison in Judea for two years, being tried before the Jewish council, two governors (Felix and Festus) and a king (Agrippa), all without being sentenced. Finally, he exercised his right as a Roman citizen and appealed to the emperor. His voyage to Rome for his trial was interrupted by a severe storm which wrecked the ship and cast the party on the island of Melita or Malta. All were saved, and three months later Paul again sailed for Rome. The book of Acts closes with Paul a prisoner





in Rome, but from Paul's writings we learn that he was later released and then rearrested. Tradition states that this great man of God was beheaded about 67 A. D. in the city of Rome.

### Paul's Message – The Gospel

Paul once declared, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (I Cor. 9:16.) He knew that what had been his means of salvation must be taken to others. The word "gospel" means "good news". Paul tells us it is the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (I Cor. 15:1-4.) This is good news because it is through the death and resurrection of our Lord that forgiveness of sins is made possible. Thus Paul states, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Rom. 1:16.)

In a broader sense the gospel encompasses the whole story of Christ and His church. It has been said that it includes facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be enjoyed. Peter speaks of those who "obey not the gospel". (I Peter 4:17.) We therefore know that before we can avail ourselves of the good things of salvation through Christ that we must obey His commands. How the lost "obeyed" the gospel under the direction of the apostles will be studied next.

## *"Seek and Ye Shall Find"*

### True – False:

- ..... 1. Among those converted by Philip in Samaria was a magician named Timothy.
- ..... 2. Saul of Tarsus later was called Paul.
- ..... 3. Peter raised Tabitha from the dead at Lydda.
- ..... 4. The first Gentile converts were Cornelius and his household.
- ..... 5. Barnabas accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey.
- ..... 6. On this trip they went to the island of Melita.
- ..... 7. Paul's companion on his second journey was also Barnabas.
- ..... 8. At Troas Paul saw in a vision a man who said, "Come over into Italy and help us."
- ..... 9. Paul worked in Ephesus for three years on his third missionary journey.
- ..... 10. On his way to Rome Paul's ship was wrecked and they were cast on the island of Cyprus.

### Read Acts 14 (part of the first missionary journey) and fill in the blanks:

While Paul and Barnabas were in Iconium, some unbelieving Jews stirred up the..... against the brethren. The multitude of the city was divided and part held with the..... and part with the apostles. When Paul and Barnabas were aware of the plot to stone them, they fled to the cities of ..... and ....., in the province of Lycaonia. At Lystra they healed a crippled man. When the people saw the miracle they thought Paul and Barnabas were gods and called Barnabas

..... and Paul they called ..... When Paul and Barnabas saw that the people were going to worship them, they tore their clothes and said, "Sirs, why do you these ....."? Then they proceeded to preach to the people. Some Jews from Antioch and Iconium followed Paul to Lystra and ..... him, leaving him for dead. He was not dead, however, and the next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe. After they had preached the gospel there they returned to the cities in which they had previously preached. In every church they ordained ..... They then came to the province of Pamphylia and preached the word in the city of ..... before sailing for Antioch.

Each of these statements tells us something about the gospel which we learn in the following scripture locations. Match by writing the correct scripture before each statement: Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 15:3, 4; Mark 16:15; Eph. 1:13; II Thess. 1:8; Gal. 1:7; II Thess. 2:14; Eph. 6:15; I Cor. 15:2; Gal. 1:8.

- ..... 1. The **GOSPEL** is the power of God unto salvation.
- ..... 2. A curse is pronounced on those who preach another **GOSPEL**.
- ..... 3. Christians are saved by the **GOSPEL**.
- ..... 4. Vengeance will be brought on those who obey not the **GOSPEL**.
- ..... 5. The **GOSPEL** is the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
- ..... 6. Christians are called by the **GOSPEL**.
- ..... 7. The feet of Christians should be shod with the **GOSPEL** of peace.
- ..... 8. Some would pervert the **GOSPEL**.
- ..... 9. The word of truth is the **GOSPEL** of salvation.
- ..... 10. The **GOSPEL** should be preached in all the world.

Name..... Grade.....

Address..... Date.....

City..... By.....