

## Chapter Three

### Studies in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans

### Paul's Missionary Journeys

**The first missionary journey** involved Paul preaching in the Jewish synagogues throughout the island of Cyprus. The itinerary was to go from Salamis to Paphos (Acts 13:5-6). Paphos was on one end of the island; Salamis on the other. They were approximately 120 miles apart. The apparent intent was to stop in each city along the way to preach in the synagogues as they traveled. Paphos was the seat of the Proconsul of Rome. Sergious Paulus became a believer during Barnabas' and Paul's visit there (Acts 13:12).

From Paphos they went to Perga in Pamphylia (where John Mark left them; cts 13:13). From Perga they traveled to Antioch in Pisidia (where Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). From there they went to Iconium (14:1-5) and from there they fled for their lives to the country of Lycaonia and the city of Lystra (14:6-19). Paul was stoned and left for dead at Lystra (14:19).

Since the Jews (who had followed them from Antioch of Pisidia stirring up trouble) thought Paul was dead (he was, read Acts 14:20 below), they stopped causing trouble. Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas finally got to Derbe, they had great success.

“<sup>19</sup> And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead. <sup>20</sup> Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. <sup>21</sup> And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch, <sup>22</sup> Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:19-22).

After they appointed pastors in each of the churches which had been started during this campaign, they returned back to Antioch of Daphne, their sending Church. Here they would spend a “long time with the disciples.”

“<sup>23</sup> And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. <sup>24</sup> And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. <sup>25</sup> And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: <sup>26</sup> And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. <sup>27</sup> And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. <sup>28</sup> And there they abode long time with the disciples” (Acts 14:23-28).

Exactly how long this “long time” was we can not be sure. However Paul told the Church at Galatia that it was 14 years between the time he left Jerusalem on his first trip there (after coming from Arabia) and his third trip for the council meeting about the Jewish legalizers in Acts 15.

“Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with *me* also” (Galatians 2:1).

That would place the third trip to Jerusalem in 49 A. D. and Paul's age at 51 years old. This would also leave a five year time span for the first missionary trip and the “long time” with the disciples at Antioch of Daphne (Acts 14:28).

The council at Jerusalem was a big turning point in the history of the Church. Even though the doctrinal decision was made 1950 years ago, the battle continues to rage. The decision was essentially salvation by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone (*solo gracia, solo fide, solo Christus*). After the conclusion of this matter at Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul returned to Antioch (15:30) and delivered the letter from the Jerusalem council about the matter:

“<sup>15</sup> And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, <sup>16</sup> After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: <sup>17</sup> That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. <sup>18</sup> Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. <sup>19</sup> Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: <sup>20</sup> But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. <sup>21</sup> For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. <sup>22</sup> Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: <sup>23</sup> And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: <sup>24</sup> Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment: <sup>25</sup> It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, <sup>26</sup> Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>27</sup> We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth. <sup>28</sup> For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; <sup>29</sup> That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well” (Acts 15:15-29).

## The Second Missionary Journey of Paul

After remaining at Antioch for “some days” (15:36), Paul approaches Barnabas about a second missionary journey. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them again (Barnabas’ cousin, Colossians 4:10; Latin form is ‘Marcus’). A dispute about this arises between Paul and Barnabas and they separate company. Barnabas would take John Mark and travel to Cyprus again. This was Barnabas’ home land. This is also the last mention of Barnabas in the book of Acts.

“<sup>36</sup> And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, <sup>37</sup> Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles’ feet” (Acts 4:36-37).

Paul would take Silas with him (15:40) and travel through Syria and Cilicia, the areas around Tarsus where he had preached prior to going to Antioch of Daphne with Barnabas. When in the country of Cilicia he would again visit Derbe and go into Galatia to Lystra (16:1-2 & 6) where he would encounter a young believer named Timotheus. Timothy may very well have been saved during Paul’s first visit here and may have been one of the “disciples” that stood around his stoned body after it had been dragged from the city (14:20).

After they were “forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia” (16:6), they traveled due North through Antioch of Pisidia around Asia and then went West to Mysia taking the route South of the Marmara Sea. Once at the country of Mysia, they wanted to return back along the route they had just come to the country of Bithynia, but again the Holy Spirit restrained them (16:7).

In their journey through Mysia they came to the city of Troas. Here they received a vision of a man who bid them to come to Macedonia. So they immediately sailed across the northeast corner of the Aegean Sea stopping at the island of Samothracia over night and the “next day to Neapolis” (16:8-11). Neapolis (in Thrace) was just another stop over on the way to Philippi (which was a colony of Rome in Macedonia; 16:12). Here they met Lydia (a wealthy business women from Thyatira) who would later be their *seed family* for a Church at Thyatira.

Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned at Philippi for casting a demon out of a young slave girl. Her owners were using her to see into the future and gain profit from it. While imprisoned, Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns. At midnight God brought an earthquake which could have freed Paul and Silas, but rather was used of them to lead their jailer to Christ (16:25-29).

When they were set free, they went to Thessalonica along the coast, going through Amphipolis and Apollonia (17:1). Here they preached in the synagogue. Many people believed, but others stirred up trouble. Paul and Silas are immediately sent of the brethren at Thessalonica to Berea (17:10). They preached in the synagogue at Berea. These were people of the Scriptures (17:11) and many of them became believers. The unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea causing trouble and Paul was sent to Athens while Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea (17:14).

Athens was over 200 miles from Berea. Once Paul arrived there, he sent back to Berea to have Silas and Timothy come to him. While Paul waited at Athens, he preached in the synagogue to the Jews, and in the marketplace as opportunity arose (17:17).

When he “encountered” the Epicurian and Stoic philosophers, they brought him to Mars Hill where he addressed the multitude declaring unto them “the UNKNOWN GOD,” Jesus Christ. There was a small group of believers that came from the preaching at Mars Hill (17:34).

From Athens Paul traveled to Corinth. Here he would meet Aquila, a Jew, and his wife Priscilla. He would take up residency with them at Corinth and join with them in their work as tentmakers (18:1-3). Silas and Timothy would join Paul at Corinth (18:5). After Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, became a believer, the Lord spoke to Paul instructing him to remain at Corinth. So they stayed there, teaching believers for a year and a half (18:11).

This would essentially end Paul’s second missionary journey. However, on his return to Antioch of Daphne, he would take Aquilla and Priscilla with him on the way back to Syria. He would stop over at Ephesus and leave Aquilla and his wife there. He would then travel to Jerusalem for the “feast” of Pentecost (this was his fourth trip to Jerusalem). This would be about 54 A. D. in the summer, after which he returned to his home church at Antioch (18:22).

### **The Third Missionary Journey of Paul**

**Acts 18:23 would be the beginning of his third missionary journey in the fall of 54 A. D.** Paul is now about 56 years old. He began his third trip by re-visiting some of the Churches that had started on his other trips (18:23) in the provinces of Galatia and Phrygia. Paul would then go to Ephesus. After 3 months of preaching in the synagogue, he took those who were believers and left the synagogue. He rented the facilities of a teacher named Tyrannus (probably during the warmer hours of the day when Tyrannus was not using them) and continued teaching the doctrines of Jesus Christ there for the next two years (19:10).

Paul’s ministry at Ephesus for these two years produced tremendous results. It was so effective that the whole pagan economy, centered in the worship of Diana, was threatened. It ended with a city wide riot. After this Paul begins his fifth trip back to Jerusalem. Two years and three months have passed. It is now about 57 A. D. and Paul is about 59 years old.

He would take the long route back to Jerusalem, travelling Northwest from Ephesus going all the way around the Aegean Sea to Athens and Corinth (Acts 20:2). He stayed here for another 3 months (20:3). Instead of sailing from there to Syria, he returned back up through Macedonia and sailed from Philippi to Troas. Paul would stay at Troas for seven days until the next Sunday. This would be the instance where he was preaching and Eutychus fell out of the window and died. Paul would be used of God to bring life to him again (20:6-12).

Paul traveled to Assos by foot while the rest of the party sailed, meeting him there. Paul joined them there and sailed to Mitylene (20:13-14). They had a day's sailing from Mitylene to Chios and another day's sailing to the island of Samos where they stayed a day at the city of Trogylium. From there they went to Miletus, by passing a stop over at Ephesus because Paul wanted to be in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost (20:15-16).

While at Miletus, Paul sent for the pastors from Ephesus to come and meet with him. There he charged them with their responsibilities and informed them that he would probably not see them again (Acts 20:17-38). From there Paul would have a day's sail to the island of Coos and another day to the island of Rhodes. From there he would sail to Patara in Lycia. Then, from there take the long journey across the Mediterranean Sea to Tyre in Syria. Paul stayed here for seven days with the believers of Tyre. After these seven days, those who had accompanied Paul (20:4) returned home ((21:5-6).

The believers at Tyre had been led of the Spirit to warn Paul not to go to Jerusalem (21:4). Nonetheless, he continued to head for Jerusalem. When Paul and his remaining party left Tyre, they traveled South to Ptolemais where they stayed with believers for one day. From there they went to Caesarea to the household of Philip "the evangelist" (21:8) who was one of the original seven deacons from Acts 6:5.

While at the home of Philip, God sent the prophet Agabus to again warn Paul about what was going to happen to him once he got to Jerusalem (21:10-13). He arrives in Jerusalem in the summer of 58 A. D. He is now about 60 years old. Here, in his fifth trip to Jerusalem, Paul would be imprisoned fulfilling the prophecy of Agabus at Tyre.

The fact that Paul was a Roman citizen kept the Roman centurion from scourging him (22:24-26). After a fruitless trial before the Sanhedrin (23:1-10), Paul was taken under protective guard (23:23-24) to Caesarea to Felix the governor with a letter from the chief captain (Claudius Lysias) explaining the whole matter (23:25-30). Paul would remain imprisoned in Herod's judgment hall (23:35) for the next two years while they attempted to settle the matter (24:27). It is now 60 A. D. and Paul is about 62 years old. Festus succeeded Felix as governor in 60 A. D. When the issue is brought before Festus, Paul appeals to Caesar (25:10-12).

In the interim period king Agrippa II came to Caesaria. Paul is brought before Agrippa to once again plead his case (26:1-29). Agrippa can find nothing in what Paul had done that was worthy of death (26:31). As a result, Festus sends Paul to Rome.

On the trip to Rome from Caesaria, the ship on which Paul was traveling was wrecked (27:1-44). They came upon the island of Melita (28:1, i.e. Malta) off the coast of southern Italy near Syracuse. On this island Paul was bitten by the viper and went unharmed (28:3-6). Paul also healed the father of Publius here (28:7-10). They spent three months here waiting for winter to end (28:11) after which they sailed to Syracuse.

When Paul arrived at Rome he was allowed to stay in his own rented house, while remaining under guard (Acts 28:16). This would have been about March of 61 A. D. Paul was now about 63 years old. Paul would spend the next two years here awaiting a decision upon his case. During this time he was allowed to teach many disciples the things of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>30</sup> And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, <sup>31</sup> Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:30-31).

This would place the year when Paul is released from this first Roman imprisonment at 63 A. D. and Paul at about 65 years old. Although the book of Acts is silent about what happened after Acts 28:31, it seems highly probable that Paul was freed at this time. If Paul would have been killed at this time, it sure seems likely that Luke would have recorded it. The Pastoral Epistles seem to require some additional years after the first imprisonment. The most probable argument seems to be that Paul went to Ephesus to see Timothy (or with Timothy), left him there and went on to Macedonia.

“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine” (I Timothy 1:3).

Another argument for an additional trip to Miletus is that of II Timothy 4:20.

“Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick” (II Timothy 4:20).

Trophimus was not left at Miletus on Paul’s last trip to Jerusalem. Therefore it could not have been during that trip.

“And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus” (Acts 20:4).

“(For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple)” (Acts 21:29).

It could not refer to Paul’s journey to Rome to appear before Caesar, because they did not stop in Miletus on that journey. The words of 2 Timothy are probably the last recorded words of the Apostle Paul. They would have been written in his second imprisonment at Rome just prior to his martyrdom which may have been as early as 64 A. D. at the age of about 66 years old or as late as 69 A. D. at the age of 71 years old. I believe it was about 67 A. D. at about the age of 69 years old. This would have allowed for another three years to make one last trip around to the various churches he had been instrumental in starting. His last words sum up his life.

“<sup>1</sup> I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; <sup>2</sup> Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; <sup>4</sup> And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. <sup>5</sup> But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. <sup>6</sup> For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. <sup>7</sup> I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: <sup>8</sup> Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. <sup>9</sup> Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: <sup>10</sup> For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. <sup>11</sup> Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. <sup>12</sup> And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus” (II Timothy 4:1-12).

Needless to say, Paul was a remarkable man of God. Paul was a tenacious individual. He was zealous for whatever he deemed to be the righteous work of the Lord. His character was that of a man who diligently worked at being faithful to whatever he was convicted to be right.

He was a fearless confrontationalist; confronting everything and anyone that stood against the truth. This was true of him before and after his conversion. Yet in all this apparent hardness, there was a man of deep concern for the things of God. With that came a sincere compassion and love for people. He saw sinners as God sees them; i.e. imprisoned by their own lusts. He saw the Word of God as a vehicle to free them from that bondage through faith in the finished work of Christ on their behalf.

Paul had a genuine capacity to love people regardless of what it cost him personally. He sacrificed his life to that end. He was consumed with fulfilling the great commission. Making disciples of those won to Christ by leading them into the practical depths of the doctrines of Christ and His Word was what his ministry in life was all about.

Paul was second only to Jesus Christ as to the impact one man could have upon the world. Paul was a model of ministry and a model of what it truly means to be “a doer of the Word.” Every believer would do well to model his ministry after the life of the Apostle Paul. His life defines transformation. Paul is a living testimony to the potential that lies within every person born again of the Spirit of God. The only person keeping us from realizing that potential is ourselves.

