

## LESSON 27

# PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

**References** : Acts. Chapter 13, 14

**Memory Verse** : Rom. 1 : 14-16

**Objective:** To realise that Lord chooses even his enemies and transforms them to be worthy vessels to bear His name before many nations.

**Introduction:** Paul was chosen to take the gospel to the then civilized world. In order to fulfil the task, Paul made three missionary journeys. In the following lessons we will learn about his three mission toures, the places visited and the persons who accompanied him.

### PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS:

Gods specific will in calling Paul was that the gospel might be taken to the Gentiles. He was appointed by God to be the 'Apostle for the Gentiles' (Act. 9:15, 22:17-21; Rom 11:14, Gal, 2:7-10). We read in Acts about three different tours of Paul for the mission he was entrusted. By these missionary journeys the gospel was taken for and wide and churches were planted wherever the gospel was preached. From these accounts we get to perfect pattern for evangelistic work. Most of the epistles in the New Testament were written during these Journeys. We get the historical background of the epistles from the accounts of these journeys.

In those days there were three cultures in the world- Greek, Roman and Hebrew. Greek culture was known for philosophy, Roman culture was known for military power and Herew culture was known for religion. With Alexanders conquest of the world his language Greek became the world language. The Jewish poeple were scattered across the civilized world. Wherever they went and settled they built synagogues

(Jewish Churches) These synagogues not only served the purpose of scriptural instructions for the Jews but they helped a large number of Gentiles to gain scriptural knowledge. Meanwhile, the Roman empire brought the entire world under their dominion. The construction of roads connecting important cities of the then known world and protection from pirates by the Roman government made extensive and safe journey possible. All these were contributing factors to the success of Paul in his world wide mission. At first, Paul preached the gospel in the Jewish synagogues. It happened that the Gentiles also could benefit by that.

### **1ST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (A. D. 47-49)**

The missionary journeys centered on Antioch in Syria. We read that the Holy Spirit separated Saul and Barnabas when they were serving the Lord in Antioch. They started from Antioch and returned there itself.

Sent off by the Church at Antioch, Paul and Barnabas started out on their first journey. John - Marks, the author of mark Gospel, also accompanied them as assisant. Now look at the map and understand the main events and the places visited during this Journey.

#### **1 Cyprus (Act. 13; 4-12):**

From Seleucia, the sea port of Antioch, they set sail to Cyprus a voyage of 80 miles. Cyprus was the native place of Barnabas (Act. 4:36) They preached in a synagogue at Salamis on the eastern part of the island. From there they travelled 100 miles across the island and reached Paphos, its capital city. There the proconsul (governor) showed great interest to hear the word of God. But a certain Jewish false prophet named **Elymas** opposed the missionaries and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Then Paul filled with the Holy Spirit looked straight at him and rebuked him, and struck him with blindness. This incident led the proconsul immediately into the faith. It is from here that Saul came to be known as Paul.

#### **2. At Perga (Pamphylia) - (Act. 13:13):**

Sailing about 170 miles in the mediterranean, they landed in Perga and entered the vast Asia Minor. John Mark returned home from there probably because of weariness of the journey and the hardships faced in the work.

#### **3. Pisidian Antioch (Act, 13: 14- 52)**

This Antioch is not to be confused with the Syrian Antioch.

From Perga they reached Antioch in Pisidian Province travelling 100 miles by land. This was a Roman military centre. Here too, Paul began his ministry in synagogues as his usual practice was. They gave a warm welcome to these Jewish Rabbi who arrived from Jerusalem. There Paul made his first reported sermon (13:17-41). He presented the gospel of Jesus Christ with the history of Israel can called on the people to believe on Jesus Christ. Many of the Jews and Gentiles believed. As a matter of fact, the synagogue gatherings usually fell on Saturdays (Sabbath) only. But Paul and Barnabas used to meet the people individually and attract them to the Lord.

A large crowd gathered in the Synagogue the next Sabbath day. In the meantime, the Jews opposed the gospel preached by Paul and created upraor in the city stirring up men and women. They caused hinderance to their work there. So they had to leave the city. By this time, a Church had already come up there. About them we read, And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy spirit (Act. 13; 52)

#### **4. Iconium (Act. 14:1-7):**

Because of the persecution in Antioch, the apostles left the place and reached Iconium travelling 85 miles south east ward. All the jounreys by land were on foot. There also he preached in the synagoues. Many believed there. The Jews of Iconium also turned violent and created troubles. Paul and Barnabas fled from there.

#### **5. Lystra (Act. 14: 8-20)**

They travelled 40 miles southeast from Iconium and reached Lystra. There a miracle took place. A man crippled in feet and was lame from birth was made whole and walked leaping. The crowd that gathered there were astonished and they began to cry out that Paul and Barnabas were Gods come down in human form. A gentile priest and a large crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. How did Paul and Barnabas react to this? They tore thier clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting, "Men why are you doing this? We too are human like you" (Act. 14:14-18). Do you know why they prevented the crowd from offering sacrifices to them? Offering sacrifices to them as to gods was not tolerated by the apostles. Worship is a prerogative of God, Which nobody must claim (see Rev. 22:8, Mtt, 4:8, 9). Paul and Barnabas preached to them that they must turn from such worthless things to the living God.

Meanwhile, the trouble creators of Antioch and Iconium came to Lystra and instigated the people to make an uproar there. They turned to treat the apostles cruelly dragging them to and fro and stoning them. It seems inconsistent that the same people who treated Paul & Barnabas like gods in no time, turned violent and began to throw stones at them. It was Paul who was more open to their attacks. They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him and prayed the Holy Spirit came mightily upon him and he got up. The Lord who sent Paul to the ministry of the gospel saw him through this troublous time. The persecution at Lystra, however was not in vain. The conversion of Timothy who became an asset to the Church as a whole, especially to Paul himself was the fruit of this persecuton. (Act. 16:1:3, 2 Tim. 3:11)

#### **6) Derbe (16:20-21):**

The following day of that great persecution, Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe, a nearby city, Gaius was a convert from Derbe (Act. 20:4).

From Derbe they returned paying follow up visits to all the towns where they had preached the Gospel in Asia Minor. As they went along, they appointed elders in each of the new churches and exhorted the believers to be steadfast inspite or tribulations (Act. 14:22). From Attalia in Asia Minor, they set sail backward to Antioch (Syria.) and upon arrival, gathered all the believers. They shared the Lords doings in their mission and glorified God.

What Paul could achieve was immense in those primitive days without any of our modern facilities. He travelled 500 miles in the sea and 700 miles on land and worked mainley in 6 places.

### **EXCERCISE -27**

#### **Answer the following questions**

1. What was God's specific will in calling Paul?
2. What purpose was served by the synagogues?
3. Who were separated by the Holy Spirit for serving the Lord when the saints at Antioch were praying.
4. Who accompanied Paul in his first missionary journey?

5. Make a list of the places where Paul went during his first missionary Journey?
6. Name the Jewish false prophet who opposed the missionaries?
7. At Paphos, what led the proconsul into faith?
8. Which miracle took place at Lystra? What followed this?
9. What was the fruit of Paul's persecution at Lystra?
10. How much distance did Paul travel during his first missionary journey?
11. Draw a map of Middle East and mark in it the places Paul visited during the first missionary journey and also the route?

