

LESSON 29

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

PART 2

Reference : Act. 17 - 18 Chapters

Memory Verse : Rom. 17 : 19 - 20

Objective : To learn that all who believe in the Gospel will be saved, regardless of caste or colour. But they must be detached to the world and attached to the Church.

Introduction : This is the continuation of the previous lesson. In this lesson we will learn about the places further visited during the second missionary journey. The special events and achievements during the Journey are noteworthy. We will study also details about the epistles written during this period.

Let's study about 4 main centres of work during the second missionary journey.

1. PAUL AT THESSALONICA (17:1-9) :

Thessalonica was the second place in Macedonia. This city situated about 100 miles away from Philippi was the capital of Macedonia. It was formerly known as 'Therme'. The city was renamed as Thessalonica after the name of the wife of Cassander who was one of the Generals of Alexander. There were a lot of Jews there. Paul preached in their synagogues on three Sabbaths continually. He proved the Messiah-ship of Jesus quoting and explaining the scriptures. As the result, some of the Jews were convinced and they joined Paul and Silas. So did many of the leading women and a large group of Greeks.

But the Jews were jealous and set the whole city in uproar. They brought false accusation against Paul and Silas saying that they were trouble - makers everywhere(17:7). Since Paul and Silas found it difficult to continue working there, they left Thessalonica by night itself. Timothy stayed behind.

THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA :

As the result of the work during a short stay at Thessalonica, a Church arose there. From the book of Thessalonians we get details of Paul's manner of work there, and their reception of the Gospel and the experiences they had (1 Thess. 1,2,3). The first and second Thessalonians are the two epistles written to this Church.

2. Paul at Beroea : (17:10-15)

Paul and Silas reached Beroea situated about 50 miles west of Thessalonica. They preached in the synagogue. The Jewish group here were notable for their open minded study of the scriptures (17:11). But they could not continue here either. The Jews in Thessalonica heard about Paul's preaching at Beroea, they came there and stirred up the mob. The Jews became constant opponents of the Gospel (1 Thess. 2:15,16). Where God works Satan fights strongly there. From here, Paul leaves Macedonia and proceeds to Achaia (Greece).

3. Paul At Athens :

From Beroea, he came to Athens in Achaia, a city with 1000 years of history and glory of ancient greatness. It was about 250 miles away from Beroea. Paul came here alone. Being one of the wonders of the world, Athens was world famous from 5th Century B.C. It was the home of the notable philosophers like Socrates, Aristotle and Plato. In pursuit of wisdom, people from all over the world would reach there.

But the city of Athens was a centre of idols too. Petronius, a Roman historian wrote about this city: "It is easier to find an idol in Athens than a man. " Even philosophies failed to put an end to idolatry and superstitions.

At Athens Paul preached in synagogue first. He was greatly upset when he noticed how full of idols the city was. He held discussions with various people including philosophers.

EPICUREANS AND STOICS :

There were two philosophies prevailing in Athens. Epicureans were the followers of the Philosopher Epicurus (B.C... 34-270). They were materialists whose teaching was to pursue pleasure in the temporal world. The life beyond death and judgement were ridiculous to them. Stoics were the followers of Seno. (B.C. 362-260) whose teaching was that all is God; everything stays the same as ever and happiness or sorrow is only our imagination. They were rationalist, to whom repentance, judgement, resurrection etc. were just mockery. It was these people who took Paul to the Areopagus, or Mar's hill, where scholars and philosophers used to meet and Courts of law were conducted.

PAUL ON MAR'S HILL (Act. 17:22-31)

Study this famous sermon of Paul. This lays a pattern of evangelistic approach to the unreached people. Notice the following important outlines.

- 1) He appreciated their religious zeal or devotion.
- 2) Mentioning their altar of unknown God, he said that the unknown God is the Creator of the whole universe.
- 3) Then he factfully stated " Idol worship and offerings to idols are meaningless."
- 4) All owe their existence to God.
- 5) Repent from all such worthless things.
- 6) Judgement is sure, Jesus Christ is the Judge.
- 7) Jesus is Saviour for those who repent. It is interesting to note the responses of the people in three different ways:
 - 1) Some mocked and made fun of him.
 - 2) Some others said they would hear again.
 - 3) A few people believed. Paul was not persecuted by Athenians. But the work there didn't bring much results .

4. Paul in Corinth (18:1-17) :

If Athens was the centre of learning in Greece ;Corinth was the centre of the trade and commerce. Cenchrea was the capital city of

Corinth (Rom. 16:1). It would take only one day's voyage to reach Corinth from Athens. Though very rich and prosperous, this city was grossly immoral: The very name 'Corinthian' in Paul's day was synonymous with immorality. The notorious temple of the Greek goddess Affrodeit was situated here. One thousand maids devoted to the goddess lived in the temple. Paul came to this immoral and sinful city.

When Paul arrived here, his decision was to present the crucified Christ to them in the simplest form of speech. Paul preached the message of the cross with power to the people at Cornith the message which seemed foolishness to the learned men of Athens (1 Cori. 2:1-5).

AQUILAS AND PRISCILLA :

This couple who became Paul's associate later happened to come to Cornith incidentally. The Roman Emperor Claudius ventured to revive the pagan worhsip in the city of Rome. All other religions were banned and people of other faiths had been thrown out. As the result, all the Jews had to go out of the city. Thus Aquilas and Priscilla reached Corinth. Their coming to Corinth was greatly beneficial to the Gospel work (Rom. 16:3, 1Cori. 16;19, 2 Tim. 4:19 Acts. 18:18,26). Their house was a place prepared by God for Paul in this immoral city. Their trade tent making put them in good company.

GOD'S WORK IN CORINTH :

Paul at first preached in the synagogue. Meanwhile, Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia and Joined him. As they came they saw Paul very busy preaching the Word of God. The Jews, however, opposed him as usual. So Paul left the Jews and turned over to the Gentiles. The Lord began to work there. The leader of the synagogue named Crispus believed in the Lord. Many of the Gentiles got converted; most of them were of low social status (1.Cori. 1:26). On this context, the Lord encouraged Paul in a vision. Paul stayed in Corinth about a year and a half teaching the people the Word of God.

THE CHURCH AT CORINTH :

A blessed Church with spiritual gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit arose there. God Himself managed the Jewish opposition. Gallio, the Roman Governor did not heed to the allurements of the Jews. He replied that he was not willing to be a judge of matters regarding their law rather than of cases of crime or wrong.

THE FIRST EPISTLES OF PAUL

The first epistles of Paul were the two written to Thessalonians. They were written at Corinth. After hearing about the Church at Thessalonica from Timothy, he wrote to them. The main theme of these epistles is the second coming of Christ plus the apostle's admonition for the Church.

THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY ENDS :

After spending one and a half year in Corinth, Paul took Aquilas couple and started back. On the returning way, they touched Ephesus, Caesarea, Jerusalem and finally reached Syrian Antioch. During this journey of a period of about 3 years, Paul travelled 2800 miles by land and sea.

EXERCISE - 29

Answer the following questions

1. How many epistles did Paul write to the Thessalonians?
2. What was notable about the Jewish group of Beroea?
3. Which were the two philosophies prevailing in Athens?
What were their teachings?
4. What was the response of the people of Athens?
5. Which couple's arrival at Corinth, was beneficial to the Gospel work ?
6. Who got converted in Corinth ?
7. How long did Paul stay in Corinth?
8. Which were the first epistles of Paul ? From where did he write those epistles ? To whom did he write that ?
9. What is the main theme of these epistles ?
10. To which places did Paul go during his 2nd missionary Journey ?
11. How much distance did he cover during that journey ? How many miles did he travel ?
12. Draw a map of middle east and eastern Europe and mark in it the route taken and the places visited by Paul during the second missionary journey ?