



UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

LESSON 8

THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD

Memory Verse: ACTS 20:24

Please memorize the above verse and be prepared to write it out at the end of this lesson.

It has been said that before God makes a ministry, He makes a man (or a woman) of God. For example, Israel's great prophet Moses grew up in Pharaoh's court in Egypt. At age 40, however, he was sent by the plan of God to the deserts of Midian where he undoubtedly grew in his knowledge and awareness of God. At age 80 God called him, speaking from the burning bush, and sent him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

Paul likewise was seasoned and prepared for his great ministry as the one through whom God would reveal the truths for the Body of Christ. In this final lesson we will see Paul complete this mission and briefly consider the books of scripture which he wrote along the way. It is these writings of Paul which detail the great truths and blessings which belong to the Body of Christ.

In our last lesson we saw Paul in Tarsus and the regions of Syria and Cilicia. Now we will see him begin his most important preaching and writing ministry.

1. Please read carefully Acts 11:19-30. _____ (Check)
2. (Acts 11:19-22) Describe how the church in Antioch got started. _____

3. Name the man who the Jerusalem leaders sent to investigate. _____
4. (vv. 25-26) What did this man do after he saw the work and encouraged the people there? _____

(Thus the church in Syrian Antioch became Paul's home church.)

5. What new name did believers receive in Antioch? _____

6. In your own words describe the events of Acts 11:27-30. _____

7. This visit by Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem is sometimes referred to as the “famine visit.” It was probably the trip referred to in Galatians 2:1-10. Please read Galatians 2:1-10. _____ (Check)

8. Acts chapter 12 records an incident that happened to Peter at about this same time. What was this event and what was its significance? (Use your own words.) _____

(Acts 12:25) Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch. Who went back with them? _____

PAUL’S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

9. Please read carefully Acts 13 and 14. _____ (Check) These chapters tell the exciting story of Paul's first missionary journey.

10. According to Acts 13:1-3, what did the Holy Spirit say to the church at Antioch? _____

11. From Acts 13:4-12 answer the following questions.

Where were Paul and his companions during this time? _____

Name the individual who believed in Christ. _____

Name the man who tried to keep him from believing and was judged by God. _____

The next stop was a city in the province of Pisidia which was also named Antioch (Pisidian Antioch - not the same as in Syria). In Acts 13:16-41 Paul preached a sermon in the synagogue there.

12. From vs. 38,39 what message did Paul give to the people?

13. (vv. 42-43) What happened after this sermon? _____

14. (vv. 44-45) What happened on the next Sabbath? _____

15. (v. 46) What did Paul say to these unbelieving Jews? _____

As Paul continued to travel, essentially the same thing happened in every city. Some believed, both Jews and Gentiles, but soon unbelieving Jews stirred up trouble and Paul was driven out. This pattern illustrates the fact that Israel as a nation was blinded, or hardened against the truth of the gospel.

16. (Acts 14:8-10) In the city of Lystra, Paul healed a man who had been lame since birth.
What was the response of the people in Lystra when they saw this? (Acts 14:11-13) _____

17. (Acts 14:19-20) Describe what finally happened to Paul in Lystra. _____

Paul and Barnabas went on to Derbe. Then they turned around and went back through the cities they had just visited preaching the gospel (v. 21), strengthening the souls of the disciples (v. 22) and appointing elders in every church. (v. 22)

In Acts 14:26-28 they returned to their home church in Antioch of Syria. The first missionary journey was complete.

THE BOOK OF GALATIANS

The churches which Paul founded on his first missionary journey were in the Roman province of Galatia. After Paul left, false teachers had visited those same churches and were teaching false doctrines, primarily that believers in Christ were also required to be circumcised and observe the law of Moses. The Book of Galatians was written as a circular letter, meant to be read in all of the churches to counteract the false teachers. It is felt by many that Galatians was written by Paul from Antioch during the "long time" (Acts 14:28) when Paul remained in Antioch.

18. We cannot at this point study each of Paul's letters completely. However, please read Galatians 1:1-12 for a sense of the content of the book. _____ (Check)

19. (v. 7) What were the false teachers doing? _____

(vv. 9-10) What did Paul say about them? _____

(vs. 12) Whose words were the Galatians to follow? _____

20. The same problem, which was happening in the Galatian churches, also affected Paul's home church in Antioch. Read Acts 15:1-5. _____ (Check)

(vv. 1,5) What were the false teachers saying? _____

21. Acts 15 continues and tells the story of how this question was finally settled. Please read Acts 15:6-29. _____ (Check)

The council determined that it was not necessary for Gentile believers to obey the law of Moses. They did ask that the Gentile believers voluntarily observe certain restrictions in order to avoid offending Jewish believers. (See vv. 19-21)

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

22. Please read Acts 15:36-18:22 for the story of this second journey. _____ (Check)

23. (Acts 15:36-41) Why did Paul and Barnabas disagree and finally split up? _____

Who did go with Paul? _____

24. (Acts 16:1-5) Name the young man who joined with Paul? _____
25. When Paul reached Troas, a port on the Aegean Sea, he intended to turn back to the east and travel through Asia Minor.
(Acts 16:9,10) What happened that caused him to change his plans? _____

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26. Acts 16:11-40 tells the story of the founding of the church in Philippi.
(Acts 16:14-15) Name the first person who believed in Philippi. _____
What was her occupation? _____

27. This portion also describes Paul and Silas' miraculous escape from Jail.
(Acts 16:25) What were they doing while still in jail? _____

(v. 26) How did they get loose? _____

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28. (v. 30) What question did the jailer ask? _____
(v. 31) What answer did Paul give? _____

Later on Paul wrote the book of Philippians as a letter back to this church.

29. Please read again Acts 17:1-9. _____ (Check) This passage tells the story of the founding of the church at Thessalonica.
30. (Acts 17:11) Paul stopped next in Berea. What good report is given concerning the Berean's? _____

Paul then traveled to Athens and finally to Corinth where he settled for an extended period of time. During Paul's time in Corinth he wrote 1 & 2 Thessalonians back to the church at Thessalonica.

31. Please read 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 to get a sense of its content. _____ (Check)
32. One important passage in 1 Thessalonians has to do with the rapture of the church.
Read 1 Thess. 4:13-18. _____ (Check)

(vv. 16-17) Describe what will happen to Christians when Christ returns at the rapture. _____

The term “rapture” is not actually used in scripture, but is the name given for the event in this passage.

- 33. Please read 2 Thessalonians 1:1-2:2. _____ (Check)
- 34. Now return to Acts 18. We noted previously that Paul wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians while he was ministering in Corinth.
(Acts 18:1,2) Name the couple, who Paul met in Corinth. _____
What craft did they and Paul pursue? _____

Paul lived and ministered in Corinth for over a year and a half. Then a persecution was instigated against him and he left. He visited briefly in Cenchrea and Ephesus, then returned to Antioch. This concluded his second missionary journey. Later in his travels Paul wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians back to the church at Corinth.

PAUL’S MISSIONARY JOURNEY

- 35. Please read Acts 18:23-21:26 for the story of Paul’s third missionary journey. _____ (Check)
- 36. Much of Paul's ministry on his third journey was in the city of Ephesus (Acts 19:8-12).
(v. 8) Where did Paul first teach in Ephesus? _____
(v. 9) What happened after 3 months? _____

(v. 9) Where did Paul then begin to teach? _____
(v. 10) What was the result of Paul's ministry? _____

During this time in Ephesus Paul wrote 1 Corinthians back to the church in Corinth.

- 37. Please carefully read 1 Corinthians 1:1-17. _____ (Check)
- 38. Towards the end of Paul's time in Ephesus a riot took place. This is recorded in Acts 19:23 and following.
(vv. 23-24) Who was the leader of this riot and what was his occupation? _____

(vv. 25-27) What was his complaint against Paul? _____

In Acts 20:1, Paul departed from Ephesus and headed for Macedonia. It was during this time that he wrote 2 Corinthians.

39. Please read 2 Corinthians 1:1-11. _____ (Check)

In Acts 20:2, Paul traveled south from Macedonia into Greece. It was at this time that the Book of Romans was written.

40. Please read Romans 1:1-15. _____ (Check)

41. Return to Acts 20:3. How long did Paul spend in Greece this time? _____
Why did he decide to leave? _____

Paul began his trip back to Jerusalem. He returned overland to Philippi, then he traveled by ship stopping at Miletus where he summoned the elders of the Ephesian church for a meeting.

42. Please read again Acts 20:17-35. This was Paul's message to the elders of the Ephesian church. ____ (Check)

43. (v. 24) For what was Paul willing to give up his life? _____

44. From verses 28-30, what warning did Paul give these men? _____

In the narrative of Acts, Paul left the elders at Miletus and continued his journey to Jerusalem, thus ending his third missionary journey.

PAUL'S ARREST AND TRANSPORT TO ROME

45. The story of Paul's arrest, imprisonment and travel to Rome for trial before Caesar, is recorded in Acts 21:27-28:31. Please read this section. You will find it to be an exciting story. _____ (Check)

46. While he was in Rome, Paul was under house arrest awaiting trial. Refer to Acts 28:30-31. How long did he remain in this situation and what was he doing? _____

Most Bible scholars believe that during this two-year house arrest in Rome, Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

47. To get a sense of each of these books please read the following:

- Ephesians 1:1-14 _____ (Check)
- Philippians 1:1-11 _____ (Check)
- Colossians 1:1-14 _____ (Check)
- Philemon 1-14 _____ (Check)

Paul was released from his house arrest in Rome, probably because his accusers never came from Jerusalem. He began to travel and minister again, making what amounts to a fourth missionary journey. During this time Paul wrote 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus.

48. Please read the following:

- 1 Timothy 1:1-10. _____ (Check)
- 2 Timothy 1:1-12. _____ (Check)
- Titus 1:1-9. _____ (Check)

Although there are other books in the New Testament and these are valuable to us, Paul's letters are of special importance to the church, the Body of Christ. As we have seen in previous lessons, it was Paul who was saved and given special revelation, then sent out to preach and teach concerning the Church, the Body of Christ and the dispensation of the Grace of God. This is the age in which we now live.

This comment by Dr. C. I. Scofield in his well-known study Bible is very appropriate:

“In Paul's writings alone we find the doctrine, position, walk and destiny of the Church.”

While all scripture is for us and we study it, it is the writings of Paul which are most directly to us as members of the Body of Christ.

The book of 2 Timothy was Paul's last known letter. According to church history, Paul was beheaded outside of Rome shortly after writing it. Timothy was a young pastor who represented the next generation of Bible teachers and all succeeding generations until Christ's return. Refer to 2 Timothy 1:13-14.

49. What was to be Timothy's standard of sound doctrine?

In order to properly understand the scriptures, it is necessary to follow the flow of events and to recognize the unique ministry of Paul and the importance of his writings.

50. (2 Timothy 1:6-8) In the letters to Timothy and Titus, what were the special instructions for pastors? _____

(vs. 8) What did he instruct Timothy not to do? _____

51. Please read 2 Timothy 2:1,2. _____ (Check)

(v. 1) From where will Timothy draw his strength? _____

Verse two is a very important one for Christian teachers. What instructions does Paul give Timothy here? _

52. (2 Timothy 3:1-14) Paul warns Timothy of dangers he will face later in his ministry. What important instruction does he give Timothy? _____

53. (Refer to 2 Timothy 4:1-2) What "solemn charge" does Paul give to Timothy? _____

54. Memory Verse. Please write the memory verse for this lesson in the space below.

Use the space below for any questions or comments:

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