

ACTS TWENTY AND MISSIONS

An outline study.

1A. Paul's Burden.

1B. What was it?

- 1C. A great compulsion of his (human) spirit (v. 22) described in Romans 9:2 as a great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart.
- 2C. A longing to complete his ministry (v. 24).
- 3C. A consciousness of his responsibility to lost men (v. 26).
- 4C. A deep concern for the believers (v. 29).
- 5C. A willingness to help meet the needs posed by poverty and weakness (vs. 34, 35).

2B. Why was he burdened?

- 1C. Because of his commission from the Lord (v. 24).
- 2C. Because of the lost condition of the unsaved (v. 26 and Rom. 10:1 -- particularly, here, his own people, Israel).
- 3C. Because he knew how the church would be attacked by false teachers (vs. 29, 30).

3B. How great was his burden? Great enough to be willing to face:

- 1C. Testings (v. 19; 2 Cor. 11:23 - 28).
- 2C. Labor (vs. 20, 31, 34, 35).
- 3C. Bonds and afflictions (v. 23).
- 4C. Death (v. 24 -- even being lost, if it were possible -- Rom. 9:3).

4B. What evidence did he give of the burden?

- 1C. His tears (vs. 19, 31).
- 2C. His constant service and ministry (v. 19).
- 3C. His trip to Jerusalem (v. 22).
- 4C. His intercession (v. 36 & Rom. 10:1).

5B. What did his burden lead him to do?

- 1C. Conduct evangelism (vs. 21, 24 - 26, 31).
- 2C. Teach (vs. 20, 27, 31).
- 3C. Follow up his converts (the whole section). As a matter of fact, all of his church epistles were follow-up letters!
- 4C. Support his own ministry by working with his hands (vs. 33, 34).
- 5C. Go to Jerusalem at the risk of his life (vs. 22, 23, 24-a, 25).
- 6C. Take an offering to the poor saints in Jerusalem (v. 35).
- 7C. Pray (v. 36 with Rom. 10:1 -- and many other passages).

2A. Paul's message.

- 1B. The whole word of God (vs. 20, 27).
- 2B. Repentance and faith (v. 21).
- 3B. The gospel of grace -- the word of His grace (vs. 24, 31).
- 4B. The blood of Christ in redemption (v. 28).
- 5B. The kingdom of **God** (not the "kingdom of the Heavens," or the kingdom gospel -- compare Acts 28:31) -- (v. 25).

- 6B. Warning against false teachers and false doctrine (vs. 29 - 31).
- 7B. Exhortation to believers (vs. 28, 35).

3A. Paul's methods.

- 1B. Personal testimony (v. 21). To Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2, 3), Caesar's household (Phil. 4:22), Onesimus (Philemon 10), Agrippa (Acts 26:24 - 29), and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:25 - 32).
- 2B. House to house evangelism (v. 29).
- 3B. Public evangelism (v. 20).
- 4B. Organization of assemblies (v. 28).
- 5B. Periods of extended teaching when needed (v. 31).
- 6B. Dependence on God for the welfare of his converts (v. 32 & compare Phil. 1:6).
- 7B. Freedom from a profit motive in his ministry (v. 33).
- 8B. Willingness to support his own ministry by working with his hands (v. 34).
- 9B. Extensive follow-up (vs. 17, 28 - 31, 35).

4A. Consideration of differences between the situation faced by Paul and that faced by missionaries today.

- 1B. Paul, speaking Greek and Hebrew, could be understood wherever he went. He did not have to spend time in "language school."
- 2B. Paul worked under one over-all government. He had no problem with passports, visas, and greatly varying laws and customs. Missionary work today is under various, and often widely different, governments.
- 3B. Paul had no modern helps such as books, tracts, visual aids, radio, television, public address systems, newspapers, modern transportation, etc. He also had no human organization to back him -- or limit him.
- 4B. He was an **inspired Apostle** with the **authority** of an apostle. See 1 Cor. 9:1, 2; 14:37, 38; 2 Cor. 12:11; 1 Thess. 2:6, 13. We are **not** inspired and do not have his kind of authority.
- 5B. His work was purely pioneer work (Rom. 15:20). Ours seldom, if ever, is this type of ministry.
 - 1C. He faced (among Jews) a pure monotheism, based on a God given revelation, which could be the basis for presenting Christ as the promised Messiah. Today both Jews and Mohammedans (while monotheistic) are already **very strongly** anti-Christian, even before they are approached. Very seldom do Jews take the view of the Bereans (Acts 17:11) today -- or even give a hearing to the gospel as did the Jews in Rome (Acts 28:21, 22).
 - 2C. He faced (among the Gentiles) raw heathenism -- not apostate Christianity." Cults" followed him, but did not precede him -- nor were they as numerous or well organized as they are today. Even today, outright pagans are often easier to reach than those who have a religion which is a corruption of Christianity or true Judaism. Compare how **much** easier it has been to convert pagan Africans than the Africans who have been previously reached by either Catholicism or Mohammedanism.

6B. We cannot completely follow the details of Paul's missionary service due to the different circumstances -- but we **can**, and **must**, gather valuable **principles** from him that we can use today.

5A. Topics for discussion -- both in Acts twenty and elsewhere in the Scriptural record:

1B. Why did Paul always go to the synagogues of the Jews first during the Acts ministry?

1C. The gospel was to the Jew **first**.

1D. Rom. 1:16; 2:9, 10 (first in **time**).

2D. Compare Rom. 3:22, 23; 10:11 - 13. "No difference" in **message!**

3D. God was recognizing the **individual** Jews as God's covenant people (**nationally** they had already been set aside by God).

2C. Because they were Paul's relatives. Rom. 9:2, 3; 10:1.

3C. They were his "contacts," a starting place, in the new areas where he worked.

4C. Gentiles would find it difficult to reach Jews -- but Jews could more easily reach Gentiles. They already had a "head start" in being prepared to preach and teach since they knew the Old Testament Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15).

2B. Why did Paul do all his work in the cities instead of in the "barrios" (villages)?

1C. There was a need for reaching **all** of the Gentiles. If he had gone to the barrios he could have spent his whole life in a very small part of the empire.

2C. The cities could reach the barrios around them. See how the Thessalonians reached out with their testimony (1 Thess. 1:8).

3C. There was a need to make an impact on the Roman Empire and on world-wide Judaism.

4C. If he went to the barrios first, city people would think they didn't need the message because **they** were not uneducated and poor like the **barrio people**.

3B. Why didn't Paul organize a "Mission" to carry on the work?

1C. With **Apostolic authority** he didn't need to be under the authority of a Mission Board. We do not have that kind of authority. **And we must act as if we do.**

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2C. God's order is -- **first** a **MAN**, **then** an organization.¹

3C. Mission organizations do for the missionary what he cannot do for himself -- in areas where Paul had no need for help.

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1D. Obtaining visas, dealing with foreign governments, etc.

2D. Arranging tax exempt status for gifts from the supporters of the

work.

1. Note -- Almost every mission began with a **MAN** who had a great burden for the lost and a vision of what could be done to reach them. The organization followed. C. T. Studd could find no Mission to send him to Africa. Finally, he went anyway and said, "My Board has three members: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." But, later, he founded a Mission to

help him and carry on the work after him. When William Carey proposed sending missionaries to the heathen, his pastor said, "Young man, sit down. When God pleases to convert the heathen He will do it without your aid or mine." (See page 147 in the book "Understanding Christian Missions" by J. Herbert Kane, published by Baker Book House in Grand Rapids, Michigan). Later an organization was raised up to carry on the work and Carey became the "father of modern missions."

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- 3D.** Handling the missionary's "State-side" business for him.
- 4D.** They are the "go-between" group -- linking the missionary with the home churches and individual backers of the work.
- 4B.** How did Paul finance his work? He evidently had no finances of his own.
- 1C.** He worked with his hands, when necessary, to support himself and his co-workers. In many countries, today, the governments involved would not allow this.
- 2C.** He received offerings from churches -- particularly from Philippi. See 2 Cor. 11:7 - 9.
- 3C.** He did not take up offerings in **evangelistic** meetings, where **unbelievers** were being reached with the message of a **free gift** of life (2 Cor. 11:7; 12:13; 1 Thess. 2:9).
- 4C.** But he did encourage assemblies of believers to support his ministry (Rom. 15:24).

----- William P Heath.

Bible Study # 45. (Now incorporated into Class Notes on Acts -- Appendix # 4)

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