

LESSON 27

Early Ministries and Preparations

Objective : God has chosen Paul , the enemy of christ to carry the name of Jesus to the people of different races.

Bible Portion : Acts 13:14

Memory Verse : Rom 1: 14-16

I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

Introduction

Paul was called to preach the gospel to the cultural ones in his time. So he did three missionary journeys. This lesson will help us to

get a basic knowledge of Paul's journeys his places of visit and companions.

PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

God appointed Paul as a apostle to the gentiles. (refer, Acts 9:15, 22:17-21, Rom 11:14, Gal 2:7-10). We can read about Paul's missinary journeys in the book of Acts. The gospel was only known to the people of Palastine and its nearby places. As a result of missinary journeys gospel started spreading to distant places and new testament churches began to emerge. The perfect model of evangelistic activities can be seen here. Most of the epistles being writtern during these journeys. We also get the historical background of these writtings from the journeys.

Mainly, three cultures prevailed during those days. They were greek culture based on philosophy, roman culture based on military power and hebrew culture based on military power and hebrew culture based on guiding beacon (Torah). Greek became a world language due to Alexander's invasion. Jews had been scattered to cultured places. They built Synagogues wherever they reached. Thus they could read the old testament especially mosaic law and gentiles also could understand the bible. Roman empire made the world into a unified system of rule. So the world witnessed the protection of law and trasportation facilities. All these advancements helped paul's journeys. Initially, he preached gospel in synagogues. It helped gentiles to understant the gospel.

The centre of the missionary journey was syrian Antioch. During this time, holy spirit seperated paul and bernabas for ministry of Jesus Christ. We read that they returned to Antioch after their journeys.

FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (A.D. 47-49)

Paul and Bernabas started their first missionary journey from the church of Antioch. Mark served them in the journey.[understand the places and major events with the help of the map].

1. Cuprus (Act13:4-12)

They travelled so miles by ship to reach Cuprus, the native place of Bernabas (Act 4:36) from Seleucia, the port town of Antioch .There was a synagogue in the eastern part of the island . They proclaimed the

word of god in the jewish synagogue. They reached Pamphos and Sergius paulus , the governer accepted Jesus Christ. What was the event which helped Sergius Paulus to become a christian ? (Act 13:8-12). Elymas, the sorcerer who tried to prevent the belief of the governer became blind by the hand of the lord. Saul came to be known as Paul from here onwards.

2. Perga in Pamphylia(Act 13:13)

They sailed 170 miles to Asia Minor from cuprus. Mark left them to return to Jerusalem due to the sufferings journey and obstacles in the ministry.

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

This is not syrian Antioch.They travelled 100 miles by road and reached Antioch. Psidian Antioch was a roman military centre. Here also paul began his ministry in jewish synagogue. The people received the jewish teachers happily. Paul's speech is seen in Act 13:17-41. Paul invited people to believe in the gospel explaining the death and ascension of Jesus christ with hitorical background of Israel. Many of the jews believed. The gathering at Synagogues were only on sabbath days. Paul and Bernabas met the people who showed great intrest in gospel.

On the next sabbath day, a great multitude gathered in the synagogue. Jews began to oppose the gospel preched by paul. Thus, Paul and Bernabas were forced to leave the place. But God raised his church within a short period of time. Read the spiritual status of the people of Antioch (Act13:52).

4. Iconium (14:1-7)

After the persecution in Antioch, Paul and Bernabas travelled 35 miles south east and reached Iconium. Most of their journey was on foot. They preached gospel in jewish synsgogues. Due to the severe opposition from Jews, they had to leave Iconium.

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

They reached Lystra after travelling 40 miles. A miracle happened here. A man who lame from birth and had never walked, jumped and

began to walk. The crowd was surprised at the event and shouted that Paul and Barnabas were the gods in human form. The priest wanted to offer sacrifices to them. What was the response of Paul and Barnabas? Why? (Rev 22:8-9, Mt 4:8,9). They urged the people to turn from worthless things to living God.

The same people who considered Paul and Barnabas as gods of worship began to persecute them severely. Some Jews from Antioch and Iconium reached Lystra and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city thinking he was dead. As the disciple prayed for him at the time of persecution. The persecution was not ended in vain. God raised Timothy a great witness of Christ (Act 16:1-3, II Tim 3:11).

6. Derbe

The next day after the persecution, Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe, a nearby town. Gaius was a believer from Derbe. Paul and Barnabas revisited the places where they preached the gospel. They strengthened the disciples and encouraged them to remain true to the faith (Act 14:22). Elders were appointed for caring the church. On arriving Antioch, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them.

Paul could work in six places by travelling 500 miles by ship and 200 miles on road. It was not a time having modern transporting facilities.

QUESTIONS

1. Explain clearly the significance of Paul's missionary journey?
2. How Roman-Greek-Hebrew culture helped Paul's missionary journey?
3. What were the chief places of the journey?
4. What were their sufferings?
5. Why did Mark leave?
6. Give a brief note on Paul's speech at Antioch?
7. Point out on map the important places in the Middle East and Europe visited by Paul?

