

LESSON 24

The Life of Paul

Childhood, Education

- Objective** : Choosing a person is the pre plan of God. God appoints a person in a right place, and right content.
- Bible Portion** : Phili. 3
- Memory Verse** : Eph. 3:8,9

Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me; to preach to the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

Introduction :

Christ is the centre of the church. But Paul's position in church formation is great. He used his knowledge and ability for serving the Lord. Saul was a rich Jew. Let us learn how God used his religious enthusiasm and education for the benefit of the church.

As we learn Paul's life we may conclude that the enemy of the gospel became the lover of it. The persecutor of the gospel became the preacher of it. The uniqueness of Christianity is seen in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the repentance experience of Paul. New Testament teachings we get mainly from the writings of Paul. The mystery of the church is also seen in his writing Eph. 3:11 The Gospel for all races in the universe. Paul, accepted this fact and reached the cultured lands with the Gospel. It was his wish that who didn't hear of the Lord must hear him, who didn't hear him must hear (Rom. 15:19-21). As Paul is the follower of Christ, he calls us to be his followers (1 Cori. 11:1). The life and history of Paul plays an important role in the New Testament.

Place of Birth

Paul was born in Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, which is situated in the north east of Asia-Minor. Roman empire had three major universities. They were Athens in Europe, Alexandria in Africa and Tarsus in Asia. Tarsus was a place of knowledge and a famous city (Act. 21:39). People from many countries visit Tarsus for learning philosophy and literature.

Parents

Paul's parents were migrated from Palestine to Cilicia. As Paul was a Roman citizen, his father might have served in Roman Army. Majority of the people living under Roman empire were slaves and they did not have citizenship. A few of the people acquired this position as a payment for serving the country long or by giving more money is the treasury [Acts 22;25-29; 25-29].

They receive the protection by law wherever they travel. If one commits a crime he will be punished only after the trial (Act 16;37-39). Paul was born in a family which had Roman citizenship. They were religious. As a strong follower of Judaism, Paul's father taught his son how to become a teacher. His father was a strong Pharisee. Thus Paul also became Pharisee. Acts 23;6-9, Although they stayed outside Palestine they speak Hebrew and follow religious practices. So he said about himself that he is Hebrew born out of a Hebrew (Philip 3;5-6) Paul belongs to the tribe of Benjamin

Name

The Jews staying outside Palestine were having two names. One is religious and other is familiar ones which can be easily understood by the people of their living places. Saul was a Hebrew name, while Paul is a name familiar to the gentiles. The meaning of the term Paul is the least. Saul came to be known as Paul in the first missionary journey (Acts 13;9) We read about his sister and relatives (Act. 23;16, Rom 16:7,11).

Education

Even though Paul was brought up in a gentile center, he was disciplined in religious matters, thus he learnt the Old Testament law in

a near by synagogue. If might have learnt the Septugint, the Greek translation of Old Testament. He had deep knowladge both in Hebrew and Greek. In his epistles, we can come across certain saying by Greek litarary figures Act.17:28,1Cori.15:33. Like all jewish children he could also get trained in a handicraft. Tarsus was famous for tent making and its clothes. Paul learnt tent making when he was very young. His work of tent making useful for himself and his companions during the missionary journey especially at the time of need Act 19:2, 20:33, 35 2Tim 3:8 -10

But, the high education he recieved was notable. His perents sent him to Jerusalem to study to became a jewish rabbi . He was then thirteen. He completed his education under the guidance of the resepected pharisee, Gamaliel. That was a great position a jewish boy recieved (Act 5:33-40,20:3). The word of God and the teachings Jewish rabbis in the form of Hallel, were being learnt by Paul. Thus he beacames a perfect pharisee and the scholar of the law.

Pauls birth is more or less near to the birth of Jesus. As Jesus was brought up in Jerusalem, the enemy of gospel, Paul was under religious training in Jerusalem

Questions

1. What is significant role of Paul in the New Testment history ?
2. Why it is said that his birth place is a famous city ?
3. Write briefly about Roman citizenship ?
4. How Paul's family helped him in his growth ?
5. How Paul was influenced by his education in later years ?

