

-- Characteristics of.

1. Joy - Ac 16:25 2Co 6:10 7:4 Php 4:4
2. Courage - Ac 16:36,37 22:25 24:25
3. Steadfastness - Ac 20:24
4. Earnestness - Ac 20:31 Ro 9:3 Php 3:18
5. Industry - Ac 20:34 1Th 2:9
6. Entire consecration - Ac 21:13 Php 3:7-14
7. Tact - 1Co 9:19-22
8. Self-sacrifice - 2Co 11:24-33
9. Faithfulness - 2Ti 4:7,8
10. Endurance - 2Ti 2:10
11. Patience - 2Co 12:12
12. Love - 1Co 16:24 2Co 2:4

PAUL A MAN OF VISION

Tuesday, August 10, 2010

Text: Acts 7:58

- Paul's Life Prior To Conversion
- The Conversion Of Paul (36 A.D.)
- Paul's Early Years Of Service (36-45 A.D.)
- First Missionary Journey, And Residence In Antioch (45-49 A.D.)
- Conference In Jerusalem, And Return To Antioch (50 A.D.)
- Second Missionary Journey (51-54 A.D.)
- Third Missionary Journey (54-58 A.D.)
- Arrest In Jerusalem (58 A.D.)
- Imprisonment In Caesarea (58-60 A.D.)
- The Voyage To Rome (60-61 A.D.)
- First Roman Captivity (61-63 A.D.)
- Between The First And Second Roman Captivity (63-67 A.D.)
- Second Roman Captivity And Death (68 A.D.)

INTRODUCTION

1. One cannot deny the powerful impact the apostle Paul had on the growth and development of the early church...
 - a. His conversion provided powerful testimony to the resurrection of Christ.
 - b. His missionary journeys led to the establishment of churches throughout the Mediterranean world --As “the apostle to the Gentiles”, he helped widen the door to the church first opened by the apostle Peter.
2. He left a large imprint on the scriptures of the early church...
 - a. Authoring thirteen (fourteen, counting Hebrews) books of the New Testament.
 - b. In the only available history of the early church, Luke devotes the majority of his book to the life and journeys of Paul -- Evidently the Holy Spirit saw fit to emphasize the life and teachings of Paul as an example and source for learning about true discipleship to Jesus Christ.
3. In this study, we shall harmonize Paul’s writings with Luke’s record of his life and travels...
 - a. Examining Paul’s life in chronological order.

And of course, his conversion would serve as a wonderful example of God’s mercy:

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.”
(1 Ti 1:15-16)

1. The vision of Christ: Ac 9:3-6 / 26:13-15

2. The Missionary Vision: Ac 16:9

3. The vision of Testimony: Ac 18:9

4. The vision of Warning: Ac 22:18

5. The vision of Work in the capital of the world: Ac 23:11

6. The vision of Encouragement in the storm: Ac 27:23

7. The vision of Paradise: 2Co 12:1-4

-- Obedience to these visions the explanation of his wonderful career: Ac 26:19

- d. Pursuing them to foreign cities (such as Damascus) - cf. Ac 9:1-2.

C. HIS LATER CONFESSION...

1. Admits he persecuted the church “beyond measure” in an attempt to destroy it - Ga 1:13.
2. It was due to his great zeal - Ph 3:6.
3. Though ignorant, he was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent man - 1 Ti 1:13.
4. For such reasons, he considered himself the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle - 1 Co 15:9.

CONCLUSION

1. From being the worst foe of the church, he was about to become one of its best friends...
 - a. Saul the persecutor would soon become Paul the preacher - Ga 1:22-24.
 - b. Paul attributed it to the grace and mercy of God - 1 Co 15:9-10; 1 Ti 1:12-14.
2. Every aspect of Paul's life prior to his conversion prepared him for the task the Lord would give him...
 - a. His Jewish heritage and Roman citizenship suited him for preaching to both Jews and Gentiles.
 - b. His training by Gamaliel would serve him well in his writings on the Law.
 - c. His skill as a tentmaker would assist him in his travels.

- b. Collating various scriptural references relating to each period of Paul's life.

- c. Noting at which points in his life Paul wrote his different epistles.
- d. Briefly outlining and noticing the theme or highlights of each epistle in its historical setting.
- e. Putting together a possible itinerary and events leading up to his final years and martyrdom.

4. The objective of this study will be to...

- a. Gain a better understanding of the growth and nature of the early church.
- b. Note the influence of Paul's life and journeys on his epistles.
- c. Acquire insight into Paul as a servant of the Lord, that his life and work might inspire our own service to Jesus Christ.

I. EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING:

A. HIS ANCESTRY AND YOUTH...

1. Born in Tarsus of Cilicia - Ac 21:39; 22:3; 23:34.
 - a. Cilicia was a Roman province in SE Asia Minor (modern Turkey)
 - b. Tarsus was the capital (“no mean city”), known for its school of literature and philosophy (said to exceed even those of Athens and Alexandria).

2. Born of Jewish ancestry
 - a. A Hebrew, or Israelite, of the seed of Abraham - 2 Co 11:22
 - b. Of the tribe of Benjamin - Ro 11:1
 - c. A Hebrew of the Hebrews (both parents Hebrews?) - Ph 3:3-4 this study, we shall harmonize Paul's writings with Luke's record of his life and travels...
3. Born a Roman citizen - Ac 22:25-29
 - a. Some think because Tarsus was a free city, but such a designation did not automatically impart citizenship.
 - b. Evidently one of Paul's ancestors either purchased or was rewarded citizenship--We do not know the date of his birth, some place it around the time of Jesus' birth.

B. HIS EDUCATION...

1. Taught in Jerusalem by Gamaliel, a Pharisee and respected teacher of the Law - Ac 22:3; cf. 5:34-40.
2. A son of a Pharisee, he became a strict Pharisee - Ac 23:6; 26:4-5; Ph 3:5.
3. He excelled above his contemporaries in Judaism - Ga 1:13-14 4. Was also trained as tentmaker - Ac 18:1-3.

C. HIS CHARACTER...

1. He was zealous in persecuting the church, concerning the Law blameless - Ph 3:6.
2. He served God with a pure conscience - 2 Ti 1:3; Ac 23:1.

3. Thus he was ignorant of his blasphemy and persecution - 1 Ti 1:12-13.

[His early life and training certainly put Saul of Tarsus on the "fast track" when it came to his religious faith. It was zeal in defending his faith that led to his brief but fervent career as...]

II. PERSECUTOR OF THE CHURCH:

A. AT THE DEATH OF STEPHEN...

1. Saul was present at the death of the first Christian martyr - Ac 7:57-58.
2. He consented to the death of Stephen - Ac 8:1; 22:20.

B. MAKING HAVOC OF THE CHURCH..

1. Entering homes, dragging men and women to prison - Ac 8:3; 22:4.
2. Entering synagogues, imprisoning and beating those who believed in Jesus - Ac 22:19.
3. He believed it necessary to do things contrary to the name of Jesus - Ac 26:9-11
 - a. Imprisoning believers by the authority of the chief priests.
 - b. Casting his vote against them as they were put to death.
 - c. Compelling them to blaspheme.