THE BLESSING OF DAILY STUDY

“The beauty and riches of the Word have a transforming influence on mind and character.”—Christ’s Object Lessons, page 132.

“There is nothing more calculated to strengthen the intellect than the study of the Scriptures. No other book is so potent to elevate the thoughts, to give vigor to the faculties, as the broad, ennobling truths of the Bible. If God’s Word were studied as it should be, men would have a breadth of mind, a nobility of character, and a stability of purpose rarely seen in these times.”—Steps to Christ, page 90.

My Daily Lesson Study Pledge

As one who greatly desires to improve his knowledge of the Scriptures, I pledge myself to the careful and prayerful study of some portion of my Sabbath School lesson each day of the week.

Name

Lesson Titles for the Quarter

1. Paul’s First Missionary Journey; Cyprus and Pisidia
2. The Apostles in Conflict With Heathenism
3. The Council of Jerusalem Brings Harmony
4. Paul’s Second Missionary Journey
5. The Gospel in Macedonia and Greece
6. The Gospel in Corinth; Beginnings in Ephesus
7. Paul’s Three Years at Ephesus
8. Paul’s Journey to Jerusalem
9. Paul’s Imprisonment
10. Paul Before Felix and Festus
11. Paul Before King Agrippa
12. The Journey to Rome
13. Paul’s Last Years
Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS, No. 2

Lesson 1, for January 6, 1968

Paul's First Missionary Journey; Cyprus and Pisidia


MEMORY VERSE: "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Isa. 60:3.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To observe how the apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, carried on a systematic and successful evangelistic campaign among heathen people.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

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Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

1. Saul and Barnabas Selected

II. The Gospel to Cyprus

III. Resistance and Acceptance

IV. Evangelism in Antioch of Pisidia

V. A Church Established
THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: Devout prophets and teachers in Antioch were directed by the Holy Spirit to ordain Saul and Barnabas to go forth as missionaries to the Gentiles. Their first point of call was the island of Cyprus, where God gave them victory over satanic opposition, and the governor of the island as a convert. From there they went to the mainland, evangelizing both Jews and Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia, and going on to cities in the province of Lycaonia. Churches were organized and church officers elected.

Places: Antioch in Syria; Seleucia its seaport; Salamis and Paphos in Cyprus; Perga in Pamphyllia; Antioch in Pisidia.

Persons: Saul, Barnabas, Simeon Niger, Lucius, and Manaen, prophets and teachers of Antioch; John Mark, Barnabas's nephew; Elymas, the Cypriot sorcerer; the governor of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus; Jews in the synagogue; Gentiles of the cities.

Interesting Terms: “Deputy.” The original word should be translated “Proconsul,” the title of the governor of a province, serving under the political control of the Roman senate, rather than under the emperor.

“Minister.” John Mark as a “minister” was the servant or attendant of the missionaries.

Saul and Barnabas Selected

1. Who were the leading gospel workers in the church of Antioch in Syria? Acts 13:1.

Note.—The men named were “prophets” and “teachers.” Prophecy and teaching were gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:8, 10; Eph. 4:11), and these men were “spiritual” men (Gal. 6:1), men possessed of spiritual gifts for the upbuilding of the church.


Note.—“Both Paul and Barnabas had been laboring as ministers of Christ, and God had abundantly blessed their efforts; but neither of them had previously been formally ordained to the gospel ministry by prayer and the laying on of hands. They were now authorized by the church, not only to teach the truth, but to baptize, and to organize churches, being invested with full ecclesiastical authority.”—E. G. White, Sketches From the Life of Paul, page 42.

“The ceremony of the laying on of hands added no new grace or virtual qualification. It was merely setting the seal of the church upon the work of God—an acknowledged form of designation to an appointed office.

“This form was a significant one to the Jews. When a Jewish father blessed his children, he laid his hands reverently upon their heads. When an animal was devoted to sacrifice, the hand of the one invested with priestly authority was laid upon the head of the victim. Therefore, when the ministers of Antioch laid their hands upon the apostles, they, by that action, asked God to bestow His blessing upon them, in their devotion to the specific work which God had chosen them to do.”—Ibid., p. 44.

The word “apostle” comes from a Greek word meaning “sent.” Our word “missionary” comes from a Latin word having the same meaning. The words meant originally the same thing, and Saul and Barnabas now became “apostles” in the strict meaning of the word, men “sent,” or “missionaries.”

The Gospel to Cyprus


Note.—Barnabas was from Cyprus. Acts 4:36. The island was not far from the missionaries’ point of sailing. Copper
mines held a busy working population on
the island, including many Jews. The pa-
ganism was of a morally degrading char-
acter.

5. To whom did Saul and Barnabas

Note.—It was the invariable practice of
the apostle to the Gentiles to preach first
to the Jews, usually as a part of his initial
endeavors in a new place. See also Acts
17:1, 2; 18:1, 4; 19:1, 8.

6. At Paphos who was especially

Resistance and Acceptance

7. What particular resistance to the
gospel was met at Paphos? Acts 13:6,
8-11.

8. What blessing came to Sergius

9. What change of name came to

Note.—The name Saul meant “asked”
(Hebrew), and Paul meant “little” (Latin).
Various theories have been put forward to
explain the change of name: (1) That
“Paul” was a nickname from his early
youth; (2) that it was conferred upon him
by the Roman governor of Cyprus, Sergius
Paulus, Paul’s first influential convert; (3)
that since he was starting on a preaching
tour in distant lands among the Gentiles,
he adopted a Roman name. The last seems
the most reasonable explanation.

Evangelism in Antioch and Pisidia


Note.—“It was here that Mark, over-
whelmed with fear and discouragement,
waivered for a time in his purpose to give
himself wholeheartedly to the Lord’s work.
Unused to hardships, he was disheartened
by the perils and privations of the way.
He had labored with success under favor-
able circumstances; but now, amidst the
opposition and perils that so often beset
the pioneer worker, he failed to endure
hardness as a good soldier of the cross. He
had yet to learn to face danger and per-
secution and adversity with a brave heart.
As the apostles advanced, and still greater
difficulties were apprehended, Mark was
intimidated and, losing all courage, re-
fused to go farther and returned to Jeru-
salem.”—The Acts of the Apostles, pages
169, 170.

11. Where in Antioch did the mis-
ionaries start preaching? To whom?
Acts 13:14, 16, 42.

Note.—In the synagogue were “men of
Israel,” that is, Jews, and “ye that fear
God.” The “God fearers” were evidently
proselytes to Judaism from paganism, who
had received circumcision and been ad-
mitted to synagogue worship. They were
thus farther advanced into the Jewish faith
than the “devout” ones.

Antioch was an important city in Pisidia
and was called the “little Damascus.” The
populace was cosmopolitan and included,
besides natives, Greeks, Romans, and a
large Jewish segment.

12. Concerning whom did Paul
pare Acts 8:35.

Note.—Christ was always the center of
Paul’s preaching, and also of his writing.
Paul’s recorded sermons and the admoni-
tions of his epistles are filled with loving
and instructive references to Jesus. Paul’s
life and work was Christ-centered, as ours
should be.

“Before his conversion, Paul was a bit-
ter persecutor of the followers of Christ.
But at the gate of Damascus a voice spoke
to him, light from heaven shone into his
soul, and in the revelation that there came
to him, of the Crucified One, he beheld that which changed the whole current of his life. Henceforth love for the Lord of glory, whom he had so relentlessly persecuted in the person of His saints, came before all else. To him had been given the ministry of making known 'the mystery' which had been 'kept secret since the world began.' 'He is a chosen vessel unto Me,' declared the Angel who appeared to Ananias, 'to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.'

"And throughout his long term of service, Paul never faltered in his allegiance to his Saviour."—Gospel Workers, page 58.


MEMORY VERSE: "Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Acts 14:17.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To learn how the Holy Spirit succeeded in converting opposing Jews and unregenerate heathen through the instrumentality of courageous and determined men.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

| Sabbath afternoon: General survey. | Check Here | Wednesday: Questions 11-14. | Check Here |
| Sunday: Questions 1-4. | | Thursday: Read from study helps. | |
| Tuesday: Questions 8-10. | | | |

Lesson Outline:
The Setting of the Lesson
I. Success in Iconium


II. Dangers in Lystra

5. A miracle of healing. Acts 14:8-10; 16:1, 2; 2 Tim. 3:10, 11.

III. Organizing New Churches


THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: When Paul and Barnabas left Antioch in Pisidia, they entered a more remote and less cultured area. There were communities of Jews in Iconium and Lystra which furnished both converts to, and bitter opponents of, the gospel. Many of the heathen were converted. Undoubtedly dangers in this region are among those to which Paul referred in 2 Corinthians 11:26.

Places: The cities of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe in the province of Lycaonia, in the south-central part of modern Turkey. Iconium is now called Konya.

Persons: Paul and Barnabas; the Jews; a lame man; heathen priests; Timothy of Lystra; Gaius of Derbe; many Gentile believers; church elders.

Interesting Terms: “Rent their clothes.” A Jewish gesture, in which the outer garment was ripped through the lower hem, in vigorous disapproval of something occurring; usually, as here, an act of irreverence. It was unlawful for the high priest to rend his robe. See Matt. 26:65; Lev. 21:10.

“Ordained... elders.” The word “elder” comes from two Greek words: (1) episkopos, meaning “overseer,” whence come the English words “episcopacy” and “bishop”; and (2) presbuteros, whence come the English words “presbyter” (elder) and “Presbyterian.” The two words describe the same office, as in Acts 20:17, 28 and Titus 1:5-7. In the early Christian church there were no bishops in the modern sense of that term.

Success in Iconium


Note.—Shaking off the dust from the sandals was a mark of supreme repudiation for the Jew. Jesus had given instructions that “when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.” Matt. 10:23.

2. What was the spiritual condition of the believers? Acts 13:52.


Note.—“The apostles, however, were not easily turned from their work, for many were daily embracing the doctrine of Christ. They went on faithfully in the face of opposition, envy, and prejudice. Miracles were daily wrought by the disciples through the power of God; and all whose minds were open to evidence were affected by the convincing power of these things.

“This increasing popularity of the doctrine of Christ stirred the unbelieving Jews to fresh opposition... They went to the authorities, and represented their work in the most false and exaggerated light, leading the officers to fear that the entire city
was in danger of being incited to insurrection. They stated that great numbers were attaching themselves to the apostles, and suggested that it was for secret and dangerous designs.

"In consequence of these charges, the disciples were repeatedly brought before the authorities; but in every case they so ably defended themselves before the people, that, although the magistrates were prejudiced against them by the false statements they had heard, they dared not condemn them. They could but acknowledge that the teachings of the apostles were calculated to make men virtuous, law-abiding citizens."—E. G. White, Sketches From the Life of Paul, pages 52, 53.


Note.—"The rage of the Jews was worked up to such a pitch on this account that they determined to compass their ends in some manner. They stirred up the worst passions of the ignorant, noisy mob, creating a tumult which they attributed to the efforts of the apostles. They then prepared to make a false charge of telling force, and to gain the help of the magistrates in carrying out their purpose. They determined that the apostles should have no opportunity to vindicate themselves; but that mob power should interfere, and put a stop to their labors by stoning them to death.

"Friends of the apostles, although unbelievers, warned them of the designs of the malicious Jews, and urged them not to expose themselves uselessly to their fury, but to escape for their lives. They accordingly departed from Iconium in secret, and left the faithful and opposing parties to battle for themselves, trusting God to give victory to the doctrine of Christ."—Sketches From the Life of Paul, page 54.

5. What miracle took place in Lystra? Who was a noteworthy convert gained in that city? Acts 14:8-10; 16:1, 2; 2 Tim. 3:10, 11.


Note.—"These Lycaonians . . . exclaimed that the gods had again visited them in the likeness of men, that Jupiter and Mercury were again in Lycaonia, that the persuasive speaker was Mercury and his companion Jupiter. They identified Paul with Mercury, because his eloquence corresponded with one of that divinity's attributes. Paul was the 'chief speaker,' and Mercury was the god of eloquence. And if it be asked why they identified Barnabas with Jupiter, it is evidently a sufficient answer to say that these two divinities were always represented as companions in their terrestrial expeditions."—W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, page 192.


Note.—Paul presented the God of heaven as a God who is the ruler of all nature, and who supplies men's needs through nature's operations, personally supplying each of His creatures, whether or not they are serving Him. Compare Matt. 5:45.


Organizing New Churches

11. As the apostles traveled back the way they had come, how was the

NOTE.—“This is one great typical lesson taught us here by St. Paul’s return journey through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia. Preaching and evangelistic work are important; but pastoral work and church consolidation and church order are equally important, if any permanent fruits are to be garnered and preserved.”—The Expositor’s Bible (Eerdmans, 1947), Vol. 5, p. 455.

12. What was done to establish the work already begun? Acts 14:23.

NOTE.—“Churches were duly organized in the places before mentioned, elders appointed in each church, and the proper order and system established there.”—The Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 3, p. 368.


14. To what class especially had God extended His grace? Acts 14:27 (last part).

Lesson 3, for January 20, 1968

The Council of Jerusalem Brings Harmony


MEMORY VERSE: “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.” Acts 15:11.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To see how the church, through the deliberations of a council of its delegates, and through the influence of the Holy Spirit, could settle a serious point of difference as to what elements of the Mosaic ritual should be required of those converted to Jesus Christ from heathenism.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

| Sabbath afternoon: General survey. | Check Here |
| Sunday: Questions 1-3. | Check Here |
| Monday: Questions 4, 5. | Check Here |
| Tuesday: Questions 6-10. | Check Here |
| Wednesday: Questions 11-14. | Check Here |
| Thursday: Read from study helps. | Check Here |
| Friday: Review entire lesson. | Check Here |

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Controversy Over Observances


II. A Church Council Convened

III. The Elements of the Controversy

IV. Minimum Requirements Defined

THE LESSON

Introduction: Many converted Pharisees, often called Judaizers, wanted the converted heathen to observe certain rules concerning circumcision and other rituals of the Mosaic law as necessary to salvation. Paul and Barnabas considered that the Gentiles, saved by the grace of Christ, should not be thus burdened. James, the presiding officer of the council, and Simon Peter stood with the missionaries and gained victory on the side of freedom in Christ, although Peter later wavered. Gal. 2:11-21.

Places: Cities in Phoenicia and Samaria where there were churches; Jerusalem; Antioch in Syria.

Persons: Saul; Barnabas; Simon Peter; James the brother of Jesus, and president of the council of Jerusalem; church elders; the believers; Judas Barsabas; Silas.

Controversy Over Observances

Note.—"Certain Jews from Judea raised a general consternation among the believing Gentiles by agitating the question of circumcision. They asserted with great assurance, that none could be saved without being circumcised and keeping the entire ceremonial law.

"This was an important question, and one which affected the church in a very great degree. Paul and Barnabas met it with promptness, and opposed introducing the subject to the Gentiles. They were opposed in this by the believing Jews of Antioch, who favored the position of those from Judea. The matter resulted in much discussion and want of harmony in the church, until finally the church at Antioch, apprehending that a division among them would occur from any further discussion of the question, decided to send Paul and Barnabas, together with some responsible men of Antioch, to Jerusalem, to lay the matter before the apostles and elders."—E. G. White, Sketches From the Life of Paul, page 63.

2. In the controversy over the ceremonial law what relief did the apostles seek? Acts 15:2.

Note.—"There are two errors against which the children of God—particularly those who have just come to trust in His grace—especially need to guard. The first, already dwelt upon, is that of looking to their own works, trusting to anything they can do, to bring themselves into harmony with God. He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy.

"The opposite and no less dangerous error is that belief in Christ releases men from keeping the law of God; that since by faith alone we become partakers of the grace of Christ, our works have nothing to do with our redemption.

"But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love."—Steps to Christ, pages 59, 60.
3. How did the churches of Phoenicia and Samaria respond to the apostles’ testimony? Acts 15:3.

A Church Council Convened


Note.—Paul reported (1) to the church at Jerusalem; (2) to certain leading apostles privately (Gal. 2:2); (3) to the apostles and elders in council.


Note.—In chapter 12 is the record of the martyrdom of James the son of Zebedee. The James who presided at the council was a brother of Jesus, and doubtless the author of the Epistle of James.

“The council which decided this case was composed of the founders of the Jewish and Gentile Christian churches. Elders from Jerusalem, and deputies from Antioch, were present; and the most influential churches were represented. The council did not claim infallibility in their deliberations, but moved from the dictates of enlightened judgment, and with the dignity of a church established by the divine will.”—The Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 3, p. 376.

The Elements of the Controversy

6. What was insisted upon by one faction among the Christian Jews? Acts 15:5.


Note.—“Peter told of his astonishment when, in speaking the words of truth to those assembled at the home of Cornelius, he witnessed the Holy Spirit taking possession of his hearers, Gentiles as well as Jews. The same light and glory that was reflected upon the circumcised Jews shone also upon the faces of the uncircumcised Gentiles. This was God’s warning that Peter was not to regard one as inferior to the other, for the blood of Christ could cleanse from all uncleanness.”—The Acts of the Apostles, page 193.


Note.—“The conversion of the human soul is of no little consequence. It is the greatest miracle performed by divine power. Actual results are to be reached through a belief in Christ as a personal Saviour. Purified by obedience to the law of God, sanctified by a perfect observance of His holy Sabbath, trusting, believing, patiently waiting, and earnestly working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, we shall learn that it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.”—Evangelism, pages 289, 290.

Minimum Requirements Defined

11. What was the decision of the council? Acts 15:24, 20, 29.
NOTE.—(1) Foods offered to idols were deemed polluted, even if bought in the bazaars. Compare 1 Cor. 10:19-21. (2) Fornication was a very common sin among the heathen of that time; some classical writers insisted that fornication is not a sin. (3) Things strangled, because the Hebrew law required that the blood be thoroughly drained from any living creature that was to be eaten. (4) Blood, for it was not to be used (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17, et cetera); “the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Lev. 17:11). Blood dishes were a favorite food among the pagans.


13. What cheering words were sent from the council to the Gentile Christian churches? Acts 15:22, 23, 27.


Lesson 4, for January 27, 1968

Paul’s Second Missionary Journey

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Acts 15:36 to 16:40.

MEMORY VERSE: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Acts 16:30, 31.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To see how the gospel triumphs in spite of dissension, ridicule, and even the imprisonment of its ministers.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD


Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Division Among the Missionaries


II. A Journey Into New Regions

7. Same territory open to Peter. 1 Peter 1:1.

III. The Gospel to Philippi

IV. In Prison and Out

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: Paul did not meet opposition in retracing his steps over the ground of the first journey. But the restraint of the Holy Spirit, keeping him from entering the provinces of Asia and Bithynia, brought some perplexity. The Macedonian call, however, offered new fields in Europe. Imprisonment, scourging, and an earthquake gave the setting for the founding of a new church in Philippi. This was the first church to be established in Europe, except for places like Rome, where the church was evidently started by converted Jews returning from the Pentecostal experience in Jerusalem. Acts 2:10.

Places: Antioch in Syria; Cyprus; Cilicia; Lystra; Iconium; Troas; Neapolis; Philippi.

Persons: Paul; Silas; Barnabas; John Mark; Judas Barsabas; Timothy, and Eu- nice his mother (2 Tim. 1:5); Luke, the Gentile, and Paul’s “beloved physician” (Col. 4:14), and author of the book of Acts, personally present in the story wherever the pronoun “we” is used; Lydia of Thyatira; a girl with an evil spirit; her exploiters; a jailer; the prison guards; the city police; the magistrates.

Interesting Terms: “Marketplace.” The forum, or town square, where the magistrates sat to hear the people’s pleas.

“Stocks.” An instrument for locking the hands and feet of prisoners into recesses between heavy beams.

“Sergeants.” The “rod bearers” or lictors, to be seen in every Roman town and colony. They were chief police officers.

Division Among the Missionaries

1. What suggestion was made by Paul to Barnabas in Antioch? Acts 15:36.


3. How were the missionary forces divided, and in what directions did the gospel teams go? Acts 15:39-41.

A Journey Into New Regions


Note.—Timothy’s mixed parentage led Paul to take the step indicated in Acts 16:3. To the Jews, Timothy was a Gentile; to the Gentiles he was regarded as practically a Jew because he had been brought up in his mother’s religion. Paul carefully regularized Timothy’s standing, and thus avoided prejudice and hindrance to God’s work.

Timothy became a very successful minister. He was with Paul throughout the second missionary journey, and also at Rome during Paul’s first imprisonment there, when Paul wrote the epistles to the Philippians and Colossians. Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1. Timothy was overseer of the important church of Ephesus when Paul addressed to him from Rome, during his second imprisonment, the First and Second Epistles to Timothy. Paul refers to an arrest and release of Timothy in Hebrews 13:23.
5. How did Paul and his associates minister to the churches? Acts 15:41 (last part); 16:4, 5.

6. Into what regions was Paul forbidden to enter, and by whom? Acts 16:6, 7.


8. Who joined the missionary company at Troas? Acts 16:8, 10.


The Gospel to Philippi


NOTE.—“Whatever the relative proportion of Greeks and Romans at Philippi may have been, the number of Jews was small. This is sufficiently accounted for when we remember that it was a military and not a mercantile city. There was no synagogue in Philippi, but only one of those buildings called proseuchae [places of prayer], which were distinguished from the regular places of [Jewish] worship by being of a more slight and temporary structure and frequently open to the sky. For the sake of greater quietness and freedom from interruption this place of prayer was ‘outside the gate.’”—W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, Vol. 1, pp. 294, 295.


In Prison and Out


14. What blessed certainty did the apostles bring to the terrified jailer, and what then took place? Acts 16:29-34.
Norc.—The glorious fact of salvation by grace through faith is nowhere in Scripture more clearly and simply stated than in this story of the conversion of the Philippian jailer. The certainty of salvation as a gift of God, unearned by man's own works, can come to every believer as it came to Paul himself. 1 Tim. 1:12.

"If you see your sinfulness, do not wait to make yourself better. How many there are who think they are not good enough to come to Christ. Do you expect to become better through your own efforts? 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.' . . . There is help for us only in God. We must not wait for stronger persuasions, for better opportunities, or for holier tempers. We can do nothing of ourselves. We must come to Christ just as we are."—Steps to Christ, page 31.

15. Under what striking circumstances were the apostles released from prison? Acts 16:35-40.

Note.—"The apostles were Roman citizens, and it was unlawful to scourge a Roman, save for the most flagrant crime, or to deprive him of his liberty without a fair trial. Paul and Silas had been publicly imprisoned, and they now refused to be privately released without the proper explanation on the part of the magistrates."—The Acts of the Apostles, page 217.

Lesson 5, for February 3, 1968

The Gospel in Macedonia and Greece

LESSON SCRIPTURE: Acts 17.

MEMORY VERSE: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Acts 17:11.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To observe how the gospel is presented successfully in the Spirit, to men and women of influence and learning

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

| Sunday: Questions 1-6. | Thursday: Read from study helps. |
| Tuesday: Questions 9-11. | |

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Paul at Thessalonica

2. Weekday labors. 2 Thess. 3:8.

II. The Gospel to the Thessalonians

Ill. The Work in Berea
7. The more noble Jews.
   Acts 17:10-12.
8. Opposition from Thessalonica.

IV. Revelation Versus Philosophy at Athens
10. Questioned by the Athenians.

V. Man’s Need of God
11. The true God identified.
12. The oneness of the human race.
    Acts 17:26, 28 (last part).
13. The basic falsity of heathenism.
    Acts 17:29.
14. God’s appeal to men. Acts 17:
    27, 30, 31.
15. The results in Athens. Acts 17:34.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: The impact of the gospel at the hands of Paul and his helpers upon the culture, the philosophy, and the cool indifference and cynicism of old pagan Europe must always be of deep interest. Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to go into Macedonia. The group were well equipped for the task: (1) They were Spirit-filled and Spirit-empowered men; (2) they were all either Roman citizens or by blood Gentile or part Gentile; (3) they were equipped by language to meet the people; (4) they represented an aggregate of years of experience in the gospel, with Luke and Timothy full of fresh enthusiasm. On this journey Paul began to write his epistles, sending out First and Second Thessalonians from Athens, about A.D. 52.

Places: Amphipolis and Apollonia, through which Paul passed without stopping; Thessalonica, important Macedonian city on the north coast of the Aegean Sea, now the busy city of Salonika; Berea; Athens, the ancient cultural capital of Western civilization and thought, and now the political capital of the modern kingdom of Greece.

Persons: Paul and Silas, missionaries and Roman citizens; Timothy, half Jew and half Greek, and zealous worker; Jason, a Jewish convert, who stood security for Paul; Paul’s escort to Athens; city officials; believing Jews; opposing Jews; Athenian philosophers; the Athenian converts, Dionysius, a member of the high court of Athens, and a woman, Damaris. Luke remains at Philippi, and Silas and Timothy at Berea, while Paul is at Athens.


“Security.” Jason and others were required to post bond for Paul and his companions, to guarantee that they would keep the peace, the charges against them being very serious.

“Epicureans” and “Stoics.” These represented schools of philosophy. See note to question 10.

“Areopagus.” Ares was the Greek god of war, corresponding to the Roman Mars. Hence the term appears also as Mars’ Hill. Acts 17:19, 22. It describes a rocky hill directly adjoining the Acropolis or citadel of Athens, upon which met the highest court of the Athenian government.

Paul at Thessalonica


Note.—Paul sometimes labored with his hands to pay expenses in several cities where he preached: here at Thessalonica, at Corinth (Acts 18:1-3), and at Ephesus (Acts 20:33, 34).
The Gospel to the Thessalonians


(1) The certainty of the second coming;
(2) Salvation through Christ to prepare for the advent;
(3) Orderly and industrious Christian living on the part of those looking for their Lord.

The Work in Berea


NOTE.—As the Jews of Pisidian Antioch and Iconium had followed the apostles to stir up trouble at Lystra on an earlier missionary tour, so now the Jews of Thessalonica sent a deputation to Berea to repeat a hostile course of action that had been somewhat effective in Thessalonica.

Revelation Versus Philosophy at Athens


NOTE.—“As Paul looked upon the beauty and grandeur surrounding him, and saw the city wholly given to idolatry, his spirit was stirred with jealousy for God, whom he saw dishonored on every side, and his heart was drawn out in pity for the people of Athens, who, notwithstanding their intellectual culture, were ignorant of the true God.”—The Acts of the Apostles, page 234.


NOTE.—The Epicureans believed in the “good life” as a pursuit of pleasure and personal happiness, often leading to self-indulgence and fleshly gratification. The
Stoics believed in the "good life" to be achieved through doing one's duty. Some efficient Roman emperors of the second century were Stoics. Like many others, these philosophers were always looking for "some new thing," but never finding satisfaction.


**Man's Need of God**

12. How did the apostle express the close kinship of all men and their relationship to God? Acts 17:26, 28 (last part).

**Note.**—"The method of St. Paul's teaching is one from which modern preachers might well learn a lesson. He does not begin by telling men that they have thought too highly of themselves, that they are vile worms, creatures of the dust, children of the devil. The fault which he finds in them is that they have taken too low an estimate of their position. They too had forgotten that they were God's offspring, and had counted themselves, even as the unbelieving Jews had done (ch. xiii. 46), "unworthy of eternal life." The truth set before us in the text is that of the fatherly relation of God to all men, and the answering child-relation of all men to God."


**Note.**—"The second commandment forbids the worship of the true God by images or similitudes. Many heathen nations claimed that their images were mere figures or symbols by which the Deity was worshiped, but God has declared such worship to be sin. The attempt to represent the Eternal One by material objects would lower man's conception of God. The mind, turned away from the infinite perfection of Jehovah, would be attracted to the creature rather than to the Creator. And as his conceptions of God were lowered, so would man become degraded."—*Patriarchs and Prophets,* page 306.


15. What were the direct results of Paul's preaching in Athens? Acts 17:34. Compare 1 Cor. 1:20-30.

**Note.**—"The labors of Paul in Athens were not wholly in vain. Dionysius, one of the most prominent citizens, and some others, became converts to Christianity, and joined themselves to him. The words of the apostle, and the description of his attitude and surroundings, as traced by the pen of inspiration, were to be handed down through all coming generations, bearing witness of his unshaken confidence, his courage in loneliness and adversity, and the victory he gained for Christianity, even in the very heart of paganism. . . .

"The words of Paul become a memorial of the occasion, and give a treasure of knowledge to the church. He was in a position where he might easily have spoken that which would irritate his proud listeners, and bring himself into difficulty. Had his oration been a direct attack upon their gods, and the great men of the city who were before him, he would have been in danger of meeting the fate of Socrates. But he carefully drew their minds away from heathen deities, by revealing to them the true God, whom they were endeavoring to worship, but who was to them unknown, as they themselves confessed by a public inscription."—E. G. White, *Sketches From the Life of Paul,* pages 96, 97.

"Where there is no active labor for others, love wanes, and faith grows dim."—*The Desire of Ages,* page 825.
Lesson 6, for February 10, 1968

The Gospel in Corinth; Beginnings in Ephesus


MEMORY VERSE: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." 1 Cor. 2:2.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To observe the results of Paul’s wisdom, courage, and industry in giving the gospel under adverse conditions and in the face of severe opposition, and to show that similar results always follow when God’s people are filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

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Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Paul’s Labors at Corinth

II. Opposition and Assurance

III. The Close of the Second Journey

IV. The Third Journey Begun


THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: The city of Corinth had recovered fully from its destruction by the Romans in 142 B.C., and was now a busy and wealthy seaport. Its sinfulness was commonly known as “Corinthianism.” During Paul’s eighteen months of ministry there he worked at his trade of tentmaking, and preached on the Sabbaths. A vision of God encouraged him to continue, even in the face of bitter opposition. Here Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans. At the conclusion of his work he went to Cenchrea, to embark for Ephesus. He visited Jerusalem and returned to Antioch, from which place he set out on his third missionary journey, spending a long time at Ephesus.

Places: Corinth, the important commercial city of southern Greece; Cenchrea on the eastern side of the Corinthian penin-
sula; Ephesus; Caesarea; Antioch in Syria; Jerusalem; Galatia and Phrygia.

Persons: Paul; Aquila and Priscilla, Jewish tentmakers from Rome with whom Paul lived; Silas and Timothy arriving from Berea; Justin, a proselyte converted to Christianity, in whose house the infant church worshiped; Crispus, a president of the Jewish synagogue, a convert and one of the few men Paul baptized (1 Cor. 1:14); Gallio, the proconsul, a brother of Seneca, a Roman philosopher and minister of the emperor Nero; opposing Jews; one Sosthenes, a president of the Jewish synagogue; believers; Apollos of Alexandria, a disciple of John the Baptist; twelve men, also disciples of John the Baptist.

Interesting Terms: “Tentmakers.” Aquila, Priscilla, and Paul were either tentmakers, or weavers of the cloth from which tents and sails were made. This cloth was of goat's hair, black in color, very tough and sturdy, and was named, after Paul's home province, cilicium.

“Vow.” The vow Paul made at Cenchrea was probably the temporary vow of the Nazirite (Num. 6:1-21), perhaps in gratitude for God's deliverance from repeated dangers.

Paul's Labors at Corinth

1. Whom did Paul closely associate with himself at Corinth? What basis did this fellowship have? Acts 18:1-3.


Note.—Paul arrived at Corinth in the autumn of A.D. 52 and found Aquila and Priscilla very recently arrived there, they having been expelled from Rome with other Jews by the emperor Claudius in the spring of that year. They went with Paul to Ephesus when he left Corinth (Acts 18:18, 19), and remained there. Later they are mentioned as being in Rome again. Rom. 16:3.

Opposition and Assurance


4. Who are mentioned as having accepted the gospel? Acts 18:8.


6. What charges against Paul were brought before the governor? Acts 18:12, 13.


Note.—"The proconsul, disgusted with the bigotry and self-righteousness of the accusing Jews, refused to take notice of the charge. As Paul prepared to speak in self-defense, Gallio informed him that it was not necessary."—Sketches From the Life of Paul, page 107.

The Close of the Second Journey


Note.—The expression "gone up" in verse 22 refers to the ascent from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

The Third Journey Begun

10. At the beginning of Paul's third missionary tour where did he first go? Acts 18:23.

Note.—At the beginning of his second (Acts 16:1) and third (Acts 18:23) missionary journeys, Paul retraced part of his first journey (Acts 14:1, 6, 21), but each time he went farther into new territory.


Note.—Nothing is known of Apollos except the notation concerning him here, and the references in 1 Corinthians 3:4-6 and 4:6, 7. He was evidently a successful worker for Christ. There is no reason to suppose there was any personal friction between Paul and Apollos.


Note.—"When they received baptism at the hand of John they did not fully comprehend the mission of Jesus as the Sin Bearer. They were holding serious errors. But with clearer light, they gladly accepted Christ as their Redeemer, and with this step of advance came a change in their obligations. As they received a purer faith, there was a corresponding change in their life. In token of this change, and as an acknowledgment of their faith in Christ, they were rebaptized in the name of Jesus."—The Acts of the Apostles, page 285.

"Many whom God has qualified to do excellent work accomplish very little, because they attempt little. Thousands pass through life as if they had no definite object for which to live, no standard to reach. Such will obtain a reward proportionate to their works."—Christ's Object Lessons, page 331.
Lesson 7, for February 17, 1968

Paul’s Three Years at Ephesus

LESSON SCRIPTURES: Acts 19:8 to 20:5.

MEMORY VERSE: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” Eph. 2:8, 9.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To show the triumph of the gospel over the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

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Sunday: Questions 1-4. Thursday: Read from study helps.


Tuesday: Questions 8-10.

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. From Synagogue to Public Hall


II. Victory Over Magicians and Sorcerers


III. The Riot in Ephesus


THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: “One of the two characteristics of the people of Ephesus comes prominently into view. This city was renowned throughout the world for the worship of Diana and the practice of magic. . . . The enemy which Paul had to oppose was not a vaunting philosophy, as at Corinth, but a dark . . . superstition. The worship of Diana and the practice of magic were closely connected together. . . . “We are not to suppose that the apostles were always able to work miracles at will. An influx of supernatural power was given to them at the time and according to the circumstances that required it. And the character of the miracles was not always the same. They were accommodated to the peculiar forms of sin, superstition,
and ignorance they were required to oppose."—W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Vol. 2, pp. 21, 22.

Places: Ephesus; Macedonia; Greece; Troas.

Persons: Paul, Timothy, and Erastus; Gaius and Aristarchus; Sopater of Berea; Secundus of Thessalonica; Trophimus; Luke; repentant workers of magic; chief men of Asia; the city recorder in Ephesus; Alexander, a Jew; Jewish exorcists; sons of Sceva; Demetrius, a silversmith.

Interesting Terms: "Exorcists." Men who claim to have power over evil spirits. "Curious arts." The practice of men who claimed to use magic and incantations. "Diana." The goddess Artemis (Roman name, Diana) was usually pictured as a graceful goddess. "The image may have been intended to represent Diana in one of her customary characters as the deity of fountains, but it reminds us rather . . . of the religions which love to represent the life of all animated beings as fed and supported by the many breasts of Nature. The figure which assumed this emblematic form above was terminated below in a shapeless block. The material was wood. A bar of metal was in each hand. The dress was covered with mystic devices, and the small shrine where it stood within the temple was concealed by a curtain in front. Yet, rude as the image was, it was the object of the utmost veneration."—W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Vol. 2, p. 77.

"Town clerk." The secretary or recorder in the city of Ephesus.

From Synagogue to Public Hall

1. On this tour how long was Paul in Ephesus? Acts 19:8, 10, 22.

Note.—There are various periods of time indicated for Paul's stay at Ephesus: (1) the time spent with the twelve men when Paul first came, Acts 19:1-5; (2) three months in the synagogue, Acts 19:8; (3) two years in the school of Tyranus, Acts 19:10; (4) a "season" in Asia, Acts 19:22; (5) the time consumed in the trouble with the silversmiths, Acts 19:23-41. The total could not have been less than three years.


Note.—The kingdom of God is mentioned as Paul's theme, along with the "Way" to the kingdom. This is a reminder of the Jews' challenge to Paul for his teaching that Christ is King, Acts 17:6-8, in Thessalonica, where Paul stressed the second coming of Christ.

3. How extensively was the gospel proclaimed in Asia? Acts 19:10.

Note.—Ephesus was the capital city of the Roman province of Asia, which occupied an important and prosperous area in the western third of what is now Turkey. The gospel was preached not only in Ephesus, but throughout its large and prosperous province.

4. In his ministry at Ephesus, how was Paul supported? Acts 20:34.

Victory Over Magicians and Sorcerers

5. What miracles were wrought at Paul's hands in Ephesus? Acts 19:11, 12.

Note.—The Revised Standard Version renders these verses in this way: "And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them."

On these mighty works of divine power compare Mark 5:27; 6:56; Acts 5:15.

6. What blasphemous use was made of Jesus' name, and with what results? Acts 19:13-17 (first part).
7. What spiritual results were attained in Ephesus? Acts 19:17, 18.

Note.—Confession is a vitally important step in the remission of sins. "True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins."—Steps to Christ, page 38. See chapter, "Confession." See 1 John 1:9.


Note.—"Facts which had previously been concealed were now brought to light. In accepting Christianity, some of the brethren had not fully renounced their heathen superstitions. The practice of magic was still to some extent continued among them. Convinced of their error by the events which had recently occurred, they came and made a full confession to Paul, and publicly acknowledged their secret arts to be deceptive and satanic. Many sorcerers also abjured the practice of magic, and received Christ as their Saviour. They brought together the costly books containing the mysterious 'Ephesian letters,' and the secrets of their art, and burned them in the presence of all the people. When the books had been consumed, they proceeded to reckon up the value of the sacrifice. It was estimated at fifty thousand pieces of silver, equal to about ten thousand dollars."—E. G. White, Sketches From the Life of Paul, page 137. The purchasing value in today's terms might well be much higher.


10. How was the preaching of the gospel affecting pagan worship? Acts 19:26, 27.

The Riot in Ephesus


Note.—As at Philippi, when the gospel was applied to receptive hearts with resulting changes in life, business losses activated serious opposition.


13. What steps were taken to quell the tumult? Acts 19:35-41.


Note.—"Paul's labors in Ephesus were concluded. His ministry there had been a season of incessant labor, of many trials, and of deep anguish. He had taught the people in public and from house to house, with many tears instructing and warning them. Continually he had been opposed by the Jews, who lost no opportunity to stir up the popular feeling against him.

"And while thus battling against opposition, pushing forward with untiring zeal the gospel work, and guarding the interests of a church yet young in the faith, Paul was bearing upon his soul a heavy burden for all the churches."—The Acts of the Apostles, page 296.
Lesson 8, for February 24, 1968

Paul's Journey to Jerusalem


MEMORY VERSE: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Acts 20:32.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: This lesson is intended to show Paul's earnestness in preaching the gospel, and the responsibility resting upon church officers, particularly in the face of apostasy.

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Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. The Meeting at Troas

II. A Journey Resumed

III. With the Ephesian Elders

IV. Farewell Admonitions
   8. Paul's hardships at Ephesus. Acts 20:18, 19; 1 Cor. 15:32.

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: Paul left Philippi after observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread. At Troas he spent seven days and on the last day of his stay had an informal farewell meeting. It was evidently Saturday night, the dark part of "the first day of the week." Next day Paul went on foot to Assos, where he joined his companions in a ship. At Miletus Paul had a farewell meeting with the elders of Ephesus, warning them of threatening dangers, and then proceeding to Caesarea, where he was warned of dangers threatening him.

Places: Philippi in Macedonia, Europe;
Troas in Asia (modern Turkey); Assos; Miletus; the Aegean Islands; Tyre; Ptolemais; Caesarea.

**Persons:** Paul; Sopater; Aristarchus; Secundus; Gaius; Timothy; Tychicus; Trophimus; Luke; the believers met en route; Eutychus; the elders of Ephesus; Philip the deacon-evangelist; Agabus the prophet.

**Interesting Terms:** "The days of unleavened bread." This was the first of the annual festivals of the Hebrew religious year. It lasted from the fifteenth day to the twenty-first day of the first month, called Abib or Nisan. The first and last days of the feast were sabbath days, celebrated annually, regardless of the day of the week upon which they might fall in the rotation of the calendar. The Passover lamb was slain on the fourteenth, just before sunset, and eaten the night which immediately followed, which was the dark part of the fifteenth. The typical significance of the annual Hebrew feasts ceased in succession as the plan of salvation unfolded in history. The necessity of celebrating the feasts ceased at the cross. Col. 2:14-16. Paul kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread with the beloved Philippian believers. See *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 390.

"To break bread." In connection with the meeting at Troas, this term was applied to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. See *Ibid.*, p. 391.

"Elders," or "presbyters." In New Testament times, these were the same officers as the bishops or overseers. See Acts 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:5-7. They were the leading elected officers in the New Testament congregations, corresponding to the presidents in the Jewish synagogues.

"Carriages." An old English expression for "baggage."

**The Meeting at Troas**


2. On which day, and at what time, did Paul hold his farewell service and breaking of bread? Acts 20:7, 8, 11.

**Note.**—Paul preached until midnight at this informal farewell service, and after midnight had the breaking of bread. He then preached until his departure at dawn. Verses 7, 11. Responsible Bible students who observe Sunday recognize that this informal meeting began when the lights were on, hence, from the evidence, Saturday night.

"On the Sunday morning the vessel was about to sail. The Christians of Troas were gathered together at this solemn time to celebrate that feast of love which the last commandment of Christ has enjoined on all His followers."—W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Vol. 2, p. 206.

"The meeting was held on what we should call Saturday evening; but we must remember that the Jewish first day began from sundown on Saturday or the Sabbath."—*The Expositor's Bible* (Eerdmans, 1947), Vol. 5, p. 494.

"Apparently they met on our Saturday evening, so that the Communion loaf was broken before daylight on our Sunday morning."—Stifler, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 201.

The record of this incident gives no authority for the observance of Sunday, and no precedent for religious services to be held week after week on Sundays.

**A Journey Resumed**

3. During this all-night meeting, what tragedy occurred? By what means was the young man restored? Acts 20:9-12.

**Note.**—"The youth was taken up dead, and many gathered about him with cries and mourning. But Paul, passing through the affrighted company, clasped him in his arms, and sent up an earnest prayer that God would restore the dead to life. The prayer was granted."—E. G. White, *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, page 197.


**Note.**—Paul walked the twenty miles to Assos, a full day's journey on foot, using
for it the daylight hours of that first day of the week, or Sunday.

5. To what town did the ship, which Paul boarded at Assos, bring him and his companions? Acts 20:14, 15.

With the Ephesian Elders


Note.—There is no record of how many elders served in the Ephesian congregations. There may have been upwards of a dozen. They gladly traveled the necessary distance to hear Paul’s farewell admonitions.

8. What did Paul say regarding the trials he endured during the sojourn as a missionary at Ephesus? Acts 20:18, 19; 1 Cor. 15:32.

Note.—The wild beasts were evidently the maddened men who had planned to take Paul’s life in the theater at Ephesus.


Note.—Paul, the tireless evangelist, understood the value of house-to-house labor. While he conducted public meetings for the crowds, he labored also in a personal way for individuals, even as did his Lord. As a faithful watchman he had warned all he could reach, and was “pure from the blood of all men.” Acts 20:26. See Ezek. 33:3-6.

Farewell Admonitions


Note.—The dangers of which Paul warned were already present in the church and soon produced the evils of apostasy. There followed the great apostasy of the 1260 years, so clearly described in Revelation, chapters 17 and 18, and that parent apostasy has produced many daughter apostasies. In the face of these apostasies there have been repeated attempts at reform, including the Great Reformation of the sixteenth century. The movement symbolized by the three angels of Revelation, chapter 14, of which the Seventh-day Adventist work is the organized expression, is God’s final endeavor to bring about an effective revival and reformation before the second advent of Christ. Those who know from the Bible what this means in purity of living and resolute evangelism in the face of bitter opposition, dare not fail their Lord.

12. Into what spiritual experiences were the elders of Ephesus to lead their people? Acts 20:32, 35.


“Shrinking from hardship, complaining under tribulation, makes the servants of God weak and inefficient.”
—Gospel Workers, page 266.
Lesson 9, for March 2, 1968

Paul's Imprisonment


MEMORY VERSE: “For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” Eph. 2:14.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To show how serious are mistakes among the best of men, and how God can use even opposers of His truth and His cause.

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Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Interview With the Brethren

II. The Riot

III. Paul's Defense

IV. Removal to Caesarea

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: At Jerusalem the church leaders erred in persuading Paul to go through a purification ceremony in the temple. He was set upon by Jews from Asia, and a riot resulted, from which Paul was rescued by Roman soldiers. When his life was threatened, the commander had Paul removed to Caesarea, the Roman capital of the province, where Felix was governor.

Places: Jerusalem; the temple and the tower of Antonia adjoining it; Antipatris; Caesarea and Roman government headquarters there.

Persons: Paul; Luke; James, the brother of the Lord; Jewish Christians with a vow; Trophimus; the Jewish multitude;
Lysias, the Roman commander of the garrison, and his soldiers; Ananias, the Jewish high priest; Sadducees and Pharisees; Paul's nephew; Jewish plotters; Felix, the Roman governor.

**Interesting Terms:** "Chief captain of the band." The original word means the commander of a thousand men, the sixth part of a legion, corresponding approximately in rank to a major in a modern army.

"The castle." A stronghold adjoining the temple, built by Herod the Great to keep the restless Jews under guard, and named in honor of Mark Antony.

"Murderers." The word in the original means "dagger men," designating bands of Jews who organized themselves into groups pledged to assassination whenever they thought this might help to break Roman control of Palestine.

"Scourging." A brutal punishment common in the past, and used by the Romans upon non-Roman culprits. The scourge was a whip made of several leather thongs attached to a wooden handle, with bits of metal or bone fastened in the thongs.

"Council." The Jewish Sanhedrin, or senate, numbering approximately seventy men, with the high priest presiding.

**Interview With the Brethren**


**Note.**—"The Jewish Christians living within sight of the temple naturally allowed their minds to revert to the peculiar privileges of the Jews as a nation. When they saw the Christian church departing from the ceremonies and traditions of Judaism, and perceived that the peculiar sacredness with which the Jewish customs had been invested would soon be lost sight of in the light of the new faith, many grew indignant with Paul as the one who had, in a large measure, caused this change. Even the disciples were not all prepared to accept willingly the decision of the council. Some were zealous for the ceremonial law, and they regarded Paul with disfavor because they thought that his principles in regard to the obligations of the Jewish law were lax."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 197.


**Note.**—"He felt that if he could by any lawful concession on his part win them to the truth, he would remove a very great obstacle to the success of the gospel in other places. But he was not authorized of God to concede so much as they had asked. This concession was not in harmony with his teachings, nor with the firm integrity of his character. His advisers were not infallible. Though some of these men wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, yet when not under its direct influence they sometimes erred. It will be remembered that on one occasion Paul withstood Peter to the face because he was acting a double part. . . .

"Instead of accomplishing the desired object, these efforts for conciliation only precipitated the crisis, hastened the predicted sufferings of Paul, separated him from his brethren in his labors, deprived the church of one of its strongest pillars, and brought sorrow to Christian hearts in every land."—E. G. White, *Sketches From the Life of Paul*, pages 213, 214.

**The Riot**


**Note.**—"With the fury of demons they rushed upon him, crying, 'Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place.' And as the people responded to the call for help, another accusation was added—'and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.'

"By the Jewish law it was a crime punishable with death for an uncircumcised person to enter the inner courts of the
sacred edifice. Paul had been seen in the city in company with Trophimus, an Ephesian, and it was conjectured that he had brought him into the temple. This he had not done; and being himself a Jew, his act in entering the temple was no violation of the law. But though the charge was wholly false, it served to arouse the popular prejudice.”—The Acts of the Apostles, pages 406, 407.


Note.—Tarsus was the most important city in all Cilicia. “The boast was quite a legitimate one. In addition to all its fame for culture, the town of Tarsus bore on its coins the word METROPOLIS-AUTONOMOS (Independent).”—C. J. Ellicott, Commentary, on Acts 21:39.


Note.—Paul’s defense was a recital of his wonderful conversion experience, already studied in Acts 9. Additional information in Paul’s own account, given to the Jewish crowd, concerns the vision he had in the temple. Acts 22:17-21. Paul probably spoke to the Jews in Aramaic, an important tongue of the Hebrew-Syriac family of languages and used commonly among Palestinian Jews since the return from Babylonian exile.


Note.—The “examination” would not be an oral inquiry, but a brutal scourging to compel Paul to confess to some wrongdoing.


Note.—“The magic of the Roman law produced its effect in a moment. The centurion immediately reported the words to his commanding officers, and said significantly, ‘Take heed what thou doest, for this man is a Roman citizen.’ Lysias was both astonished and alarmed. He knew full well that no man would dare assume the right of citizenship if it did not really belong to him; and he hastened in person to his prisoner. A hurried dialogue took place, from which it appeared not only that Paul was indeed a Roman citizen, but that he had held this privilege under circumstances far more honorable than his interrogator; for while Claudius Lysias had purchased the right for ‘a great sum,’ Paul was ‘free-born.’ Orders were instantly given for the removal of the instruments of torture, and those who had been about to conduct the examination retired.”—W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, Vol. 2, pp. 259, 260.


Note.—The Pharisees believed in the supernatural, in angels, and in a bodily resurrection. The Sadducees rejected these fundamental truths.

Removal to Caesarea


Note.—There is no information concerning any of Paul’s relatives, except this one bare reference to a nephew.


**Note.**—Felix was the Roman procurator or governor. He was in office from about A.D. 52 to 60. He was succeeded by Porcius Festus. Acts 24:27. A Roman historian says of Felix, "With all manner of cruelty and lust he exercised royal functions in the spirit of a slave."

"Felix accepted jurisdiction of the case. The accusers did not reach Caesarea until five more days had passed (ch. 24:1)."—S.D.A. Bible Commentary, on Acts 23:35.

"To show a liberal, self-deny- ing spirit for the success of foreign missions is a sure way to advance home missionary work; for the prosperity of the home work depends largely, under God, upon the reflex influence of the evangelical work done in countries afar off."—Councils on Sabbath School Work, page 136.

Lesson 10, for March 9, 1968

**Paul Before Felix and Festus**

**Lesson Scriptures:** Acts 24:1 to 25:12.

**Memory Verse:** "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." Acts 24:14.

**Study Helps:** "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 419-432; "S.D.A. Bible Commentary."

**Purpose of the Lesson:** To show how the gospel message through Paul reached the ruling classes of his day.

**Daily Study Assignment and Record**

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**Lesson Outline:**

**The Setting of the Lesson**

1. The Charges Against Paul


II. Paul's Careful Defense

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: Before Jewish accusers, come down to Caesarea, Paul defended himself, showing that the gospel he proclaimed was in full accord with Old Testament truth. When a new governor, Festus, took Felix's place, Paul again bore his testimony, and when it looked as though he might be returned to Jerusalem for trial, appealed as a Roman citizen to Caesar in Rome.

Place: Caesarea.

Persons: Paul; Felix the governor; Drusilla, his Jewish wife, a descendant of the famous Jewish royal family of the Hasmonaeans or Maccabees; Porcius Festus, Felix's successor; Ananias, the high priest; the Jewish elders, members of the Sanhedrin; Tertullus, a hired prosecutor.

The Charges Against Paul


Note.—"In his speech against Paul, Tertullus charged that he was a pestilent fellow, who created sedition among the Jews throughout the world, and who was consequently guilty of treason against the emperor; that he was a leader of the sect of Nazarenes, and chargeable with heresy against the law of Moses; and that he had profaned the temple, virtually an offense not only against the Jewish but the Roman law, which protected the Jews in their religious worship."—E. G. White, Sketches From the Life of Paul, page 237.

2. Of what movement was Paul called "a ringleader"? Acts 24:5.

Note.—Although the word "sect" has a contemptuous flavor, the basic meaning of the Greek word from which it is translated is a group which follows a "choice," and hence a separated party with certain opinions different from others. The Greek word is the same as that translated "heresy" in Acts 24:14. The term "Nazarene" was used for followers of Christ, because Jesus had grown up in Nazareth.


Paul's Careful Defense

4. What authority did Paul have for the "way" in which he was walking? Acts 24:14.

Note.—The word "way" occurs often in the book of Acts, and is frequently capitalized by Bible commentators as being as meaningful as the word "Christian." It describes the road walked by those who fellowship with Christ, who is the "Way," John 14:6. It has been no uncommon thing for a man of faith and conscience, who lives according to the law and the prophets, to be called a heretic.

6. In contrast to the accusations against him, for what good purpose had Paul come to Jerusalem? Acts 24:17, 18.


NOTE.—To have a conscience void of offense "means something more than the avoidance of the darker sins and the greater crimes, of those misdeeds which stamp a man as a sinner and a criminal in the eyes of the world. It means (1) righteousness in the sight of the Supreme; the being counted righteous by God, and the attainment of positive righteousness like His own; so that a man is living in a state of abiding acceptance with God, and is also walking before Him in uprightness and integrity of heart and life. It means also (2) recognition of the claims of men on our regard, and the consequent shaping of our life in purity, honesty, truthfulness, helpfulness; so that a man has not to reproach himself either with acts of injury or with negligence and inconsiderateness; he has a 'conscience void of offense' toward men as well as toward God."—The Pulpit Commentary, "The Acts of the Apostles," Vol. 2, p. 236.


Paul Before Felix


10. What was Felix's reaction to this? Acts 24:25 (last part), 26.

Note.—Felix preferred bribes to salvation.

Paul Appeals to Caesar


NOTE.—The pagan Roman Festus was fairer and more open to guidance from the Spirit of God than the biased and bitter Jews.


NOTE.—The right of appeal to the emperor's judgment seat belonged to Roman citizenship, and even the most depraved emperor was likely in such cases of appeal to attempt an honorable judgment.

15. What was Festus's decision concerning Paul? Acts 25:12.

Lesson 11, for March 16, 1968

Paul Before King Agrippa


MEMORY VERSE: “Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.” Acts 26:19.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To show the effects of the impact of the gospel upon royal Jewish minds.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

| Sunday: Questions 1-4. | Thursday: Read from study helps. |
| Tuesday: Questions 8-11. | |

Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. A Royal Interview

II. Paul’s Defense

III. From Persecutor to Gospel Witness

IV. Agrippa’s Decision

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: Paul was held at Caesarea to be interviewed by King Herod Agrippa II and his sister Bernice. He told his story to Herod, and appealed to the king, though in vain, to accept the gospel. He was ordered to Rome.

Place: Caesarea.

Persons: Paul; Porcius Festus, the governor; King Herod Agrippa II and his sister Bernice, children of King Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12), and great-grandchildren of King Herod the Great; the chief men of the Roman garrison and of the city of Caesarea.

A Royal Interview


Note.—King Herod Agrippa II was the last of the famous Jewish Hasmonaean or Maccabean royal family to exercise rulership.


3. Who were present when Paul appeared before the royal visitors? Acts 25:22, 23.

Note.—“What a contrast was there presented! Agrippa and Bernice were destitute of the traits of character which God esteems. They were transgressors of His law, corrupt in heart and in life. God and angels abhorred their course of sin. But because they possessed, in a limited degree, power and position, they were the favorites of the world. That aged prisoner, standing chained to his soldier guard, presented nothing imposing or attractive in his dress or appearance, that the world should pay him homage. Yet this man, apparently without friends or wealth or position, had an escort that worldlings could not see. Angels of heaven were his attendants. Had the glory of one of those shining messengers flashed forth, the pomp and pride of royalty would have paled before it.”—E. G. White, Sketches From the Life of Paul, page 254.


Paul’s Defense


Note.—Paul insisted always, and truthfully, that his teachings were not new and strange, but in complete harmony with the inspired truths of the Hebrew faith as set forth in the Scriptures. Compare Luke 24:27, 44. The Christian of today, seeking to obey God as evidence of his love for Him, must be able to point out that he also believes and practices all that is taught in the Scriptures of truth.

Note.—"Why, he asked, should it appear incredible that Christ should rise from the dead? It had once been so to himself; but how could he disbelieve what he had himself seen and heard in that noonday vision? He could bear witness to the resurrection of the dead; for he had looked upon the crucified and risen Christ,—the same who walked the streets of Jerusalem, who died on Calvary, who broke the bands of death, and ascended to heaven from Olivet. He had seen Him and had talked with Him as verily as had Cephas, James, John, or any other of the disciples. And how could he be disobedient when the Voice from heaven sent him forth to open the eyes of Jews and Gentiles, that they might turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified? In Damascus, in Jerusalem, and throughout all Judea, and to the Gentiles, he had preached repentance toward God, faith in Christ, and a life consistent therewith."—Sketches From the Life of Paul, pages 257, 258.

From Persecutor to Gospel Witness


Note.—Whether or not a man has a supernatural vision of his God, he is under obligation, when God grants him by the Spirit a spiritual perception of truth, to obey as immediately and unselfishly as did Paul when he received his Damascus call.


Note.—"The apostle was dwelling upon his favorite theme, in that solemn, earnest, impassioned manner which had been so powerful an agent in his mission, in the all-absorbing interest of his subject, he lost sight of kings and governors and chief captains, of wealth, rank, and titles. He was bearing the testimony which was the object of his life, and he could speak with the assurance of long familiarity and the fire of intense conviction. None who heard him could doubt his sincerity. But in the full tide of his eloquence he was suddenly stopped short. The facts related were new to Festus, as to nearly all present. The whole audience had listened spellbound to Paul's account of wonderful experiences and visions, of revelations and ancient prophecies, and of a Jewish prophet who had been rejected and crucified, yet who had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven; and who only could forgive sins and lighten the darkness of Jews and Gentiles."—Sketches From the Life of Paul, page 258.

Agrippa's Decision

12. How was Paul interrupted, and how did he respond? Acts 26:24-27.

Note.—The original for "much learning" might be translated "the many writings," as a reference to the sacred writings of the Jews of which Paul was so ardent a student.


Note.—"Deeply affected, Agrippa for the moment lost sight of his surroundings and the dignity of his position. Conscious only of the truths which he had heard, seeing only the humble prisoner standing before him as God's ambassador, he answered involuntarily, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'"—The Acts of the Apostles, page 438.

15. What was the king's final opinion concerning Paul's case? Acts 26:32.

Note.—"As the assembly dispersed, the case of Paul was freely discussed, and all agreed that, while he might be an enthusiast or a fanatic, he could not in any sense be regarded as a legal criminal; he had done nothing worthy of death or imprisonment.

"Though Agrippa was a Jew, he did not share the bigoted zeal and blind prejudice of the Pharisees. He had no desire to see freedom of thought suppressed by violence. 'This man,' he said, 'might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.' But now that the case had been referred to that higher tribunal, it was beyond the jurisdiction of Festus or Agrippa. Yet, two years afterward, the result of that day's proceedings saved the life so precious to the cause of God."—Sketches From the Life of Paul, pages 260, 261.

"Let the world see that we are not selfishly narrowed up to our own exclusive interests and religious joys, but that we are liberal and desire them to share our blessings and privileges through the sanctification of the truth."—Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 59.

Lesson 12, for March 23, 1968

The Journey to Rome


MEMORY VERSE: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Ps. 46:1.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To show how God, in working out His will, can overcome the most adverse circumstances.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

Sunday: Questions 1-3. ☐ Thursday: Read from study helps. ☐
Tuesday: Questions 8-11. ☐

Lesson Outline:
The Setting of the Lesson
I. Sailing for Rome

II. Effects of the Storm

III. The Landing at Malta


IV. The Departure for Rome

THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: The voyage of Paul the prisoner to Rome was fraught with danger. The ship, storm-tossed day after day, finally broke up on the shore of the island of Malta. Paul's courage and endurance had been an example to all on shipboard throughout the voyage, and when the shipwrecked passengers and crew were forced to make their way ashore, Paul's wisdom and heaven-inspired counsel enabled them to land safely. From Malta, Paul eventually made his way to Rome where he was held a prisoner under very liberal rules.

Places: Caesarea; Sidon; Myra; Fair Havens in Crete; Malta; Syracuse in Sicily; Reggio, Puteoli, Rome, in Italy.

Persons: Paul; Luke; Aristarchus; Julius, a centurion, and his soldiers; the ship's passengers and crew; an angel; the people of Malta; Publius the governor, and his father; Christian believers in Italy; the Jews of Rome; a Roman army officer, and soldiers.

Interesting Terms: "Euroclydon." A northeast wind, a troublesome weather breeder in the eastern Mediterranean in the winter season.

"The fast." Probably the Day of Atonement, on the tenth day of the seventh month of the Hebrew religious year, coming in the latter part of October, when based on the barley-harvest reckoning.

"Boat." A small boat carried by the larger ship.

"Quicksands." The shores of modern Tunis, in North Africa.

"Adria." The Adriatic Sea, east of Italy.

"Meat." Old English translation of an original word meaning food in general.

Sailing for Rome


Note.—"The voyage began prosperously, and the day after they started, they cast anchor in the harbor of Sidon. Here Julius, the centurion who had listened to the apostle's address before Agrippa, and had thus been favorably disposed toward him, 'courteously entreated Paul,' and being informed that there were Christians in the place, he 'gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.' The favor was highly appreciated by the apostle, who was in feeble health, and but scantily provided with comforts for the long journey. His brief stay in Sidon was like an oasis in his barren and dreary path, and proved a comfort and encouragement to him during the anxious, storm-tossed weeks upon the sea."—E. G. White, Sketches From the Life of Paul, page 263.


3. After Paul's counsel was rejected, in what was the ship caught? Acts 27:10-20.

Note.—"All night the tempest raged, and the ship leaked. The next day, all on board—soldiers, sailors, passengers, and prisoners
—united in throwing overboard everything that could be spared. Night came again, but the wind did not abate. The storm-beaten ship, with its shattered mast and rent sails, was tossed hither and thither by the fury of the gale. Every moment it seemed that the groaning timbers must give way as the vessel reeled and quivered under the tempest's shock. The leak rapidly increased, and passengers and crew worked constantly at the pumps. There was not a moment's rest for one on board.”

Sketches From the Life of Paul, page 265.

The Effects of the Storm


NOTE.—"At these words, hope revived. Passengers and crew roused from their apathy. There was much yet to be done, and every effort within their power must be put forth to avert destruction."—The Acts of the Apostles, page 443.


NOTE.—"Huge ships sailed the Mediterranean in Paul's day, especially for the grain trade between Egypt and Rome. Ships of lengths up to 200 feet with fifty-foot beam are noted, with 150 to 200 oarsmen, and sails to supplement the oars.

The Landing at Malta


NOTE.—"Paul was among the most active in collecting fuel. As he was placing a bundle of sticks upon the fire, a viper that had been suddenly revived from its torpor by the heat, darted from the fagots and fastened upon his hand. The bystanders were horror-struck, and seeing by his chain that Paul was a prisoner, they said to one another, 'No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.' But Paul shook off the creature into the fire, and suffered no harm. Knowing its venomous nature, they watched him closely for some time, expecting every moment to see him fall down, writhing in terrible agony. But as no unpleasant results followed, they changed their minds, and, like the people of Lystra, said that he was a god. By this circumstance Paul gained a strong influence over the islanders, and he sought faithfully to employ it in leading them to accept the truths of the gospel."—Sketches From the Life of Paul, pages 270, 271.

10. What kind of reception was accorded them on the island, and at whose hands? Acts 28:7.

NOTE.—"The chief [or "first"] man of the island" is probably an official title, for it has been found on Maltese inscriptions. Publius was one of this man's names, no doubt the one most commonly used. His courtesy to strangers brought him in contact with the power of God.

"We are to be courteous toward all men, tenderhearted and sympathetic; for this was the character Christ manifested when on earth. The more closely we are united with Jesus Christ, the more tender and affectionate will be our conduct toward one another."—Testimonies to Ministers, page 377.

The Departure for Rome


13. For how long did they remain on the island, and in what vessel did they depart? Acts 28:11.


Note.—Puteoli (Pozzuoli) was in the Bay of Naples. They had covered some 180 nautical miles in under two days, and were now in the principal port of southern Italy, the great grain emporium for the Alexandrian wheat ships. Jews and Christians were found in this seaport.

"In this place there were a few Christians, and they entreated the apostle to remain with them for seven days, a privilege kindly granted by the centurion. Since receiving Paul's epistle to the Romans, the Christians of Italy had eagerly looked forward to a visit from the apostle."—The Acts of the Apostles, page 447.

"Every principle in the Word of God has its place, every fact its bearing. And the complete structure, in design and execution, bears testimony to its Author. Such a structure no mind but that of the Infinite could conceive or fashion."—Education, page 124.

Lesson 13, for March 30, 1968

Paul's Last Years


MEMORY VERSE: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." 2 Tim. 1:12.


PURPOSE OF THE LESSON: To witness Paul's faith and activity during imprisonment, and his evangelistic fervor to the end of his long and arduous career for Christ.

DAILY STUDY ASSIGNMENT AND RECORD

Check Here

Sunday: Questions 1-3. ❑ Thursday: Read from study helps. ❑
Tuesday: Questions 7-9. ❑
Lesson Outline:

The Setting of the Lesson

I. Paul in Rome


II. Paul and the Jews in Rome


III. Paul and the Gentile World


IV. The Everlasting Gospel to the Whole World


THE LESSON

The Setting of the Lesson

Introduction: Paul reached the Roman mainland, and a touching meeting is recorded with a deputation of Christians who had traveled forty miles to meet him. Though chained to a guard, Paul enjoyed a large measure of freedom and spent two profitable years in meeting Jews and Gentiles, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and writing certain epistles to the churches. Converts were made and the church immensely strengthened under the apostle’s courage and care.

Place: Rome.

Persons: Paul; Luke; Timothy; Titus; Demas; Nero.

Paul in Rome


Note.—A group of Christians set out from Rome along the famous military road, the Appian Way, so called because it was planned during the censorship of Appius Claudius, 312 B.C. The Three Taverns was a stopping place about forty miles from Rome, and here the brethren met the apostle.

“They came to meet us”... was almost a technical term for the official welcome of a visiting dignitary. ... Compare the same use in Matt. 25:6; 1 Thess. 4:17.” —F. F. Bruce, The Book of the Acts, page 527.

Paul’s long-cherished desire to visit Rome (Rom. 1:9-12) was now gratified, and he took courage on meeting the brethren. Read The Acts of the Apostles, pages 448, 449, on this meeting.

2. What unusual favor was granted to Paul when he arrived in Rome? Acts 28:16.

Note.—“The good account which he [Julius I] gave of Paul, together with the letter from Festus, caused the apostle to be favorably regarded by the chief captain, and, instead of being thrown into prison, he was permitted to live in his own hired house. Although still constantly chained to a soldier, he was at liberty to receive his friends and to labor for the advancement of the cause of Christ.”—The Acts of the Apostles, pages 449, 450.
3. What was Paul's first significant recorded action after he arrived in Rome? Acts 28:17-20 (first part).

Note.—"Many of the Jews who had been banished from Rome some years previously, had been allowed to return, so that large numbers were now to be found there. To these, first of all, Paul determined to present the facts concerning himself and his work, before his enemies should have opportunity to embitter them against him. Three days after his arrival in Rome, therefore, he called together their leading men and in a simple, direct manner stated why he had come to Rome as a prisoner."

"He said nothing of the abuse which he had suffered at the hands of the Jews, or of their repeated plots to assassinate him. His words were marked with caution and kindness. He was not seeking to win personal attention or sympathy, but to defend the truth and to maintain the honor of the gospel."—Ibid.

Paul and the Jews in Rome


Note.—Paul was at pains to make it clear that he was in Rome, not to appeal to Rome over the head of the Jewish authorities, but "for the hope of Israel." That would imply the Messianic hope.

"It was a principle with the Jews not to invoke Gentile authority against their own people. Similarly Paul held (1 Cor. vi. 1) that Christians ought not to go to law before heathen tribunals. Hence he was anxious that these Jews should not think that in appealing he had any thought of bringing a charge against his countrymen."—W. M. Furneaux, The Acts of the Apostles, pages 410, 411.

5. What were the two main points in the reply of the Jews to Paul's statement? Acts 28:21, 22.

Note.—They diplomatically answered that no reports from Judea had preceded him, but they admitted knowledge of the widespread hostility to "this sect." Nero, one of the worst of Roman emperors, scarcely over twenty-five years old, was on the throne, and he was already feared for his bloodthirstiness. Both Jews and Christians needed to be careful. Perhaps the edict of Acts 18:2 made them still more cautious in discussing Christianity.


Note.—"He expounded and testified the kingdom of God," and he persuaded "them concerning Jesus." These things are the basis of all successful preaching. Compare Acts 18:4.

"As Paul spoke of what he knew, and testified of what he had seen, concerning Jesus of Nazareth as the hope of Israel, those who were honestly seeking for truth were convinced. Upon some minds, at least, his words made an impression that was never effaced. But others stubbornly refused to accept the plain testimony of the Scriptures, even when presented to them by one who had the special illumination of the Holy Spirit. They could not refute his arguments, but they refused to accept his conclusions."—The Acts of the Apostles, pages 452, 453.

Paul and the Gentile World


Note.—This is the last instance of rejection recorded in the book, and it is fitting to note that Paul's use of Isaiah 6:9 recalls the warning to the newly called Isaiah that he would not meet with a favorable response from his people. Note how Jesus used the same words of Isaiah in Matthew 13:14, 15. The Jewish rejection of Jesus was also stated tersely by John: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." John 1:11.


"The word of Paul in Rome was the final word. Ere very many years had gone, after a period of oppression, tyranny, and suffering, the Roman eagles were carried through Jerusalem, and the nation was swept out. It was the occasion of the last and solemn abandonment of the people, this word spoken by Paul to the Hebrew rulers in that city of Rome, the central city of the world."—G. Campbell Morgan, The Acts of the Apostles, page 542.


Note.—"Filled with envy, . . . contradicting and blaspheming." Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, despite this rejection, and replied: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Acts 13:46. They then quoted Isaiah 42:6 as fulfilled in the Christian gospel: "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Acts 13:47.

The Everlasting Gospel to the Whole World


Note.—"In Matthew 13, in the parables of the kingdom, Jesus used the same words of Isaiah as were used by Paul to the Jews in Rome. John quoted the same words about the unbelieving Jews. John 12:40. Many years later, John wrote: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Rev. 14:6.

11. How long did Paul spend in Rome at this time, and how was his time occupied? Acts 28:30.

Note.—"In the providence of God this delay resulted in the furtherance of the gospel. Through the favor of those who had Paul in charge, he was permitted to dwell in a commodious house, where he could meet freely with his friends and also present the truth daily to those who came to hear. . . .

"During this time the churches that he had established in many lands were not forgotten. Realizing the dangers that threatened the converts to the new faith, the apostle sought so far as possible to meet their needs by letters of warning and practical instruction. And from Rome he sent out consecrated workers to labor not only for these churches, but in fields that he himself had not visited. These workers, as wise shepherds, strengthened the work so well begun by Paul; and the apostle, kept informed of the condition and dangers of the churches by constant communication with them, was enabled to exercise a wise supervision over all."—The Acts of the Apostles, pages 453, 454.

The letters Paul wrote from Rome are known as the "Prison Epistles," and their identity is suggested in Philippians 1:13; Colossians 1:24; Ephesians 3:13; and Philemon 1.


Note.—"Preaching the kingdom of God . . . with all confidence." That is a grand
conclusion to events which began in Jerusalem and had now spread abroad to Rome, the center of the world.

13. What touching story of conversion at this time did Paul record? Philemon 1, 10.

**Note.**—"Among those who gave their hearts to God through the labors of Paul in Rome was Onesimus, a pagan slave who had wronged his master, Philemon, a Christian believer in Colosse, and had escaped to Rome. In the kindness of his heart, Paul sought to relieve the poverty and distress of the wretched fugitive and then endeavored to shed the light of truth into his darkened mind. . . .

"Onesimus endeared himself to Paul by his piety and sincerity, no less than by his tender care for the apostle's comfort, and his zeal in promoting the work of the gospel. Paul saw in him traits of character that would render him a useful helper in missionary labor, and he counseled him to return without delay to Philemon, beg his forgiveness, and plan for the future."

"Paul voluntarily proposed to assume the debt of Onesimus in order that the guilty one might be spared the disgrace of punishment, and might again enjoy the privileges he had forfeited. 'If thou count me therefore a partner,' he wrote to Philemon, 'receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.'

"How fitting an illustration of the love of Christ for the repentant sinner!"—Ibid., p. 458.

"One passage studied until its significance is clear to the mind and its relation to the plan of salvation is evident, is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained."—Steps to Christ, page 90.

"The springs of heavenly peace and joy unsealed in the soul by the words of Inspiration will become a mighty river of influence to bless all who come within its reach."
---Education, page 192.


**Note.**—After two years' imprisonment Paul was tried and declared guiltless by Nero, and he was again free to visit the churches. But after a time he was imprisoned again, and in his second trial before Nero he was sentenced to be beheaded.

"The apostle was looking into the great beyond, not with uncertainty or dread, but with joyous hope and longing expectation. As he stands at the place of martyrdom he sees not the sword of the executioner or the earth so soon to receive his blood; he looks up through the calm blue heaven of that summer day to the throne of the Eternal."---The Acts of the Apostles, page 511, 512.

"Well-nigh a score of centuries have passed since Paul the aged poured out his blood as a witness for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. No faithful hand recorded for the generations to come the last scenes in the life of this holy man, but Inspiration has preserved for us his dying testimony. Like a trumpet peal his voice has rung out through all the ages since, nerving with his own courage thousands of witnesses for Christ and awakening in thousands of sorrow-stricken hearts the echo of his own triumphant joy: 'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.'"---Ibid., p. 513.
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by Ellen G. White

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The Outstanding Lesson Help for This Quarter
The Southern European Division is to benefit once more from a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering overflow the first quarter of 1968.

The offering received at the end of the third quarter of 1965 amounted to $88,198.16, of which 13 percent has been employed to purchase land and build the first building for a new mission station in Abong-Mbang in Cameroun, and 37 percent has been applied to establish new work among the Bamileke tribe, who also inhabit Cameroun. The other half of the offering is being invested with other funds in a new dormitory for the girls attending the French Adventist Seminary at Collonges, France.

This last offering, and others in the past as well, have been a great blessing and have meant much to the various projects that have benefited in Africa and certain parts of Europe, and we thank you for each of them.

This year’s offering is to go in full to Spain, and will be applied wholly toward the construction of chapels. The time has now come when a greater measure of liberty is being felt, and the golden opportunity is here when God’s people should consolidate their position in that country.

The work in Spain was organized in 1903 and has grown but slowly. Civil war and many difficulties have retarded the glorious march of God’s servants with their message for this time. But in spite of so many obstacles the work has progressed nicely during the past few years.

Spain has a population of about thirty-two million. There are twenty-one organized churches, and thank God they are all open and have government permission. There are approximately 30,000 Protestants in Spain, and Seventh-day Adventists are recognized as occupying third place among the non-Catholic Christians.

Spain has produced a very respectable and fruitful ministry with a total of seventy-six active workers, including literature evangelists who are busy bringing the message to its millions. Today thousands of Spaniards are listening eagerly to the spoken word of our evangelists, but it is a great problem to accommodate the people. As yet no public halls can be used, and the whole evangelistic program may be carried out only in properly authorized chapels. Therefore church buildings are a must, and the more we can build the more the membership will grow.

Now is the time to help Spain to erect these buildings, and hundreds, yes, even thousands, will find their way into the ranks of God’s remnant people.

Are you seeking to invest your means profitably? Then do it with a glad heart and in a generous way by helping Spain to build its projected churches, and we thank you for it.
Lessons for the Second Quarter, 1968

Sabbath School members who have not received a senior Lesson Quarterly for the second quarter of 1968 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first lesson. The title of the series is "Faith and the Promises of God." The title of the first lesson is "Faith Is Indispensable." The memory verse is Hebrews 11:6. The texts to be studied are:

Ques. 1. Heb. 11:1.  
Ques. 3. 2 Cor. 5:7.  
Ques. 4. Rom. 10:17.  
Ques. 5. Gal. 5:6.  
Ques. 7. Heb. 11:3; 2 Peter 3:13.  
Ques. 9. Rom. 15:13.  
Ques. 10. Mark 9:23.  
Ques. 11. 2 Chron. 20:20.  