

New Testament Foundation 5

Paul's Third Journey

Paul's third missionary journey took him to the Roman Province of Asia where he spent nearly three years in the city of Ephesus, the fourth largest in the Roman Empire. (Acts 20:31) This was the longest recorded stay for Paul in one mission location. It was while Paul was in Ephesus that he learned about problems in the church at Corinth, a church he had established on his second journey. Paul wrote several letters to Corinth from Ephesus. The first was a short letter (Corinthians A now lost) written late A.D. 54 or early 55 to address immorality taking place in the church. (1 Cor. 5:9) When he learned that his letter was not well received and there were further problems, Paul wrote a second letter (Corinthians B) which is New Testament 1 Corinthians. The theme of that letter was "correction for an immature church" which Paul sent with his young assistant Timothy.

When Timothy returned, he brought news that the situation had gotten worse, so Paul decided to make a personal visit to confront the church. This visit proved to be very painful for both Paul and the church. (2 Cor. 2:1, 12:14&21) There was one man who openly defied Paul and questioned his authority; none of the other Believers came to his defense. Paul left Corinth deeply humiliated and with a feeling of betrayal by the church he loved. As their spiritual parent, he chose not to turn his back on them but instead got to work to restore the broken relationship.

He wrote a third letter (Corinthians C also lost) referred to as the "severe and sorrowful" letter. (2 Cor. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:8) This time he sent the letter with Titus, a stronger personality than Timothy. Paul planned to meet up with Titus in Troas. But when Titus did not return as planned, Paul moved on to Macedonia hoping to intercept him there. (2 Cor. 2:12, 13) Paul was fearful for Titus' safety and for what he would learn about the situation in Corinth. (2 Cor. 7:5)

The two eventually met in Macedonia and Titus had good news; (2 Cor. 7:6) the severe letter had been effective, the majority had repented and they were concerned about Paul. In fact, they had gone to the other extreme and were punishing the man who had led the rebellion. With this news Paul wrote his fourth letter (Corinthians D) from Macedonia the New Testament 2 Corinthians.

When studying this letter it is helpful to keep in mind that Paul was addressing two audiences: he praised those who had repented but also warned those who remained in rebellion. 2 Corinthians reveals Paul's heart and its theme is a "second chance for a corrected church."

Another letter to the church at Corinth - 2 Corinthians

1. What reason did Paul give for writing the severe letter? (2 Cor. 2:4)

2. As their spiritual father, what counsel did Paul give to those who had taken on disciplining this individual? (2 Cor. 2:6-8)

3. Ancient travelers carried letter of commendation to identify and authenticate themselves. One of the challenges to Paul's authority was that he did not carry the proper letter. How did he answer that charge? (2 Cor. 3:2-3)

4. One distinguishing mark of the early ministers of the Gospel was their confidence and boldness in the face of opposition. Where did Paul say his confidence came from? (2 Cor. 3:4-5)

Notice Paul did not refer to himself as an "apostle" but as a minister of a new covenant. The first century apostles understood that God had called them to minister the new covenant.

5. In response to the leader who questioned Paul's authority and lack of commendation letter, Paul explained that the Corinthian Believers were his living letters and that he ministers a new covenant. This new covenant in Christ is far greater than the old covenant given through Moses. Under the old covenant, when Moses ministered to the people he did so with his face veiled. How is that different under the new covenant? (2 Cor. 3:8, 18)

The moment someone comes to faith in Jesus Christ, the veil is removed, all sin is forgiven and the Believer is made right with God. The Holy Spirit comes into that life as God's deposit or seal as a guarantee of our relationship with Him. (2 Cor. 5:5) The face of the Believer should reflect the glory (the presence of the Lord) from within as the Believer, with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, becomes more and more like Jesus each day. In this way all Believers become "living letters" evidence of God's presence to the world.

6. Paul said he was confident that in death he would be with the Lord. What did he say was his goal while alive? (2 Cor. 5:9)

7. The Believer is said to be "in Christ." What are three realities that Paul mentions for those "in Christ?"
 - 2 Cor. 5:17
 - 2 Cor. 5:19a
 - 2 Cor. 5:19b
8. In 2 Corinthians 6:3-10, Paul gave his resume' as a first century servant of God; pick out a couple key words or phrase from Paul's life in ministry and comment.
9. With the relationship between Paul and the church restored, he reminded them of their promise to make a contribution to the poor Believers (saints) in Jerusalem. Who would Paul be sending to make sure the collection was ready when he arrived? (2 Cor. 8:6,7)
10. In the Old Testament a tithe to the Lord was set at 10%. (Deut. 14:22) According to Paul, how should one determine what to give to the Lord under the new covenant? (2 Cor. 8:10-12)
11. What personal information did Paul give the Corinthians just before closing this letter? (2 Cor. 12:14)
12. What final warning did Paul add to those still in rebellion? (2 Cor. 13:2-3a)
13. Another charge against Paul was that his written letters were weighty and forceful but in person he was unimpressive and that his speaking amounted to nothing. (2 Cor. 10:10) What did Paul say in response to that accusation? (2 Cor. 13:10)

By late fall, A.D. 57, Paul did leave Macedonia and traveled to Greece (Corinth) where he spent the three winter months. (Acts 20:2, 3) With Paul's presence, the church seemed to settle down which gave him time to reflect upon the past 10 years of ministry. He had made three journeys proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ "from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum" (Rm. 15:19) and Paul felt there was no place else in the region for him to preach. His work was done; the Believers in each region would continue to proclaim the Gospel so his heart began to turn toward his next journey.

Letter to the church at Rome – Romans

14. What was the criterion for where Paul would preach the Gospel? (Rm. 15:20)

15. Where was his heart being drawn for the next journey? (Rm. 15:24a)

16. What reason did Paul give the Romans for this letter? (Rm. 1:7 & 15:24b)

Paul had never been to Rome but in chapter 16 he gave a list of friends from his journeys that now resided in the capital city. With relative calm in Corinth, Paul used the time to write to the church at Rome. This letter is referred to as "Paul's Gospel" and his theme is "The Righteousness of God." **Righteousness** is a legal term and refers to the very nature of God as holy and just. Everyone, all people will stand before God and be judged based upon His righteous standards. In Romans, Paul laid out the Gospel as he preached it.

It is helpful when studying this letter to know the background of the Roman church. Exactly how it began is unknown but Dr. Luke was very specific in his details of the early church. In writing about Pentecost, and the birth of the church, (Acts 2:10) he mentions there were men from Rome at the Temple in Jerusalem at that time. It is quite possible that these Jews heard Peter's sermon, became Believers and brought the Gospel back to Rome with them. That would date the church to around A.D. 30.

When these new Believers began to present the Gospel in the synagogues, the unbelieving Jews began to cause riots in the city. This so infuriated Emperor Claudius that he made a decree in A.D. 49 to expelled all Jews (Believers and non-Believers) from Rome leaving only the Gentiles in the church. (Acts 18:2) In A.D. 54 Claudius died, the edict was lifted and the Jews returned. This resulted in a church that was now about 80% Gentile Believers and only about 20% Jewish Believers; a new tension began to rise.

17. What were some of the Jewish Believers doing? (Rm. 2:17)

18. What did Paul remind them of? (Rm. 2:28, 29)

In his Gospel, Paul started with the fact that God is righteous and then reminded them that it doesn't matter whether you are a Jew with God's Law or a Gentile without the Law, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rm. 3:23) In other words, no one can earn their own righteousness, even by keeping the Law or through circumcision.

19. What did Paul say sin earns for us? (Rm. 6:23a)
20. Thankfully Paul didn't end with that bad news; what is the good news for sinners? (Rm. 6:23b)
21. What an incredible gift God is offering. Paul began to list some of the things that Christ has already done for those who received this gift of God. Using Romans 6, what is the new reality for the Believer?
 - (vs. 2) We _____ to sin.
 - (vs. 6) Our old self _____ with Him.
 - (vs. 11) We are _____ to sin, but _____ to God.
 - (vs. 13) We _____ brought from death to _____.
 - (vs. 14) Sin is not your _____.
 - (vs. 18) We _____ set free from _____.
 - (vs. 18) We have become _____ to _____.
22. What is the responsibility of the Believer?
 - (vs. 12) Do not let _____.
 - (vs. 13) Do not offer your _____ to sin.
 - (vs. 13) Rather, offer yourself to _____.
 - (vs. 19) If you do this, it will lead to _____.
23. This gift is called "salvation." How does someone receive this incredible gift? (Rm. 10:9)

- Who can receive this gift? (Rm. 10:13)

In this letter Paul explains this gift of salvation in terms that they understood.

Atoned (sacrificial)

Christ became the sin offering as the final sacrifice for sin. As our substitute he removed our guilt and we will never experience the wrath of God. The Believer is saved from God's wrath and to eternal life. (Rm. 3:25; 5:11)

Justified (legal)

In Christ we will be declared "not guilty" or "just-as-if-I-never sinned." (Rm. 5:1; 8:1)

Redeemed (slave)

Christ paid the price to set us free from sin; sin is no longer our master. (Rm. 6:18, 22)

Sanctified (sacrificial)

In Christ the Believer is already sanctified, set apart as holy to God. Sanctification is also a life-long process of working with the Holy Spirit to become like our new Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. This change is reflected inwardly through the heart and mind and reflected outwardly by a lifestyle that reflects our relationship with Him. (Rm. 15:16)

24. To help the Believer, God gives to each one His own Spirit. (Rm. 5:5) Can someone be assured of their salvation? (Rm. 8:38, 39)

Paul laid out his Gospel message in chapters 1 – 11 then in chapters 12 – 15 he gave instructions on how the Believer is to live in right relationship with God, with one another and in the world.

25. In relationship to God, what did Paul urge the Believer to do? (Rm. 12:1)

- How is that possible? (Rm. 12:2)

26. In relationship to other Believers, Paul reminds them that "none of us lives to himself alone." (Rm. 14:7) God places the Believer into a community of faith that Paul described as "The Body of Christ" or the church. Like the physical body, the church is made up of many individual parts; all of them are important and must work together if the body, the church, is to function properly. (Rm. 12:5,6) What one or two key words did Paul use to describe what the relationship of the Believer is to one another?

- Rm. 12:9a
- Rm. 12:10a
- Rm. 12:10b
- Rm. 12:16a

27. In relationship to the world, what is to be the Believer's attitude? (Rm. 12:14, 17-20a)

Verse 20 is a quote from Proverbs 25:22 and ends with "In doing this, you will help burning coals on his head." This is from an ancient Egyptian tradition where one who was repentant would make a public declaration of that change of heart by walking around with a pot of burning coals on their head. Paul's teaching was that in treating the world as Jesus did, you may bring them to repentance and to God.

28. At the end of chapter 15 Paul wrote of his travel plans saying that first he must return to Jerusalem to bring the offering from the Gentile churches. He asked that the Roman church struggle with him in prayer. What were his three prayer requests? (Rm. 15:31, 32)

29. Who carried this letter to Rome? (Rm. 16:1)

Paul closed the letter with a benediction in 16:25-27. While reflecting on his ministry to the Gentiles he was overflowing with praise and gratitude to God. God's plan of salvation always included all people, Jews and Gentiles and God foretold of this through His prophets. But until Jesus came, this remained a mystery, it was unclear. But now, through Jesus, God's glory has been made plain to all people. To that thought Paul wrote what a wise and wonderful God - - to Him alone all praise belongs!

After sending this letter to the Romans, Paul was ready to head to Jerusalem to complete his third missionary journey. He had asked that these Roman Believers pray for him. He had some concerns about returning to Jerusalem. As the story continues to unfold, we will see that Paul had reason for concern.

The Roman Road To Salvation

When sharing the good news of Christ, Paul's clear presentation of the Gospel message as given in Romans is very helpful. These verses have been referred to as the "Roman Road to Salvation."

Why is salvation necessary?

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God

What is the consequence of sin?

Romans 6:23a For the wages of sin is death

But there is good news!

Romans 6:23b But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

What must I do to be saved?

Romans 10:9 If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you WILL BE SAVED.

Romans 10:13 For EVERYONE who calls on the name of the Lord WILL BE SAVED.

What is the result of this salvation?

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The assurance of salvation

Romans 8:38, 39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.