

Paul's Journey To Rome



Background Reading

Acts 9:15-16; 21:4; 28:16-24;
30-31; Romans 1:9-10

Devotional Reading

Acts 23:23-35



Central Verse

“And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, ‘Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.’”

Acts 23:11, KJV

“That night the Lord appeared to Paul and said, ‘Be encouraged, Paul. Just as you have been a witness to me in Jerusalem, you must preach the Good News in Rome as well.’”

Acts 23:11, NIV

Key Terms

Appealed—To make an earnest request: a legal proceeding by which a case is brought to a higher court for review.

Plot—A secret plan for accomplishing a usually evil or unlawful end.

Poisonous—A secret plan for accomplishing a usually evil or unlawful end.

Introduction

After Paul's conversion on the Damascus Road, his life became one of dedication, commitment, and sacrifice to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He learned that his life was not his own because it belonged entirely to the Lord. He discovered that decisions about his life had to be guided by the Lord. The believers must know and accept that he cannot direct his own steps, but the Lord orders the steps of a good man.

Jeremiah chapter ten and verse twenty-three says, “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps.” “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: And he delighteth in his way.” (Psalms 37:23).

Discussion

God had called Paul into a new life, a much better life; he was no longer a murderer; he was called to a life of God's purpose, filled with God's significance, marked by unexplainable joy and peace. This life had a different meaning for Paul, as he could no longer abide by his thoughts or educational pursuits. God wanted him to be bold, yet gentle; strong, yet vulnerable; judgmental, yet filled with mercy. Paul's allegiance was to God, and he could not afford to allow it to sway. God had told him from the beginning that he would endure suffering for the sake of the kingdom. Saints of God, when you accept Jesus as the Lord of your life, you are in a position where you will sometimes be lied on, mistreated, misunderstood, overlooked, talked about, judged wrongly, and hated. Those are some of the things believers need to be prepared for. God is faithful and He will direct and order the believer's steps. However, the believer must put their trust in God, as Paul did, and God will lead and guide them where He wants them to go.

By the time Paul was preparing to go to Rome, he had made two Missionary Journeys and was on his third one. He loved the saints in Rome, and he sent them word that he was constantly remembering them in his prayers. He told them that it was God's will for him to come and that God had opened the door for him to do so. What Paul didn't know then was that he would go to Rome, but God's method of getting him there would be as a prisoner in chains.

God's way is so different from our ways, but believers learn to say, "not my will but thy will be done." Paul wanted to go to Jerusalem because he had heard how the saints were being persecuted. He wanted to see what he could do to help them and encourage them. Some warned him not to go to the saints, as they knew the hazards it would create.

But Paul insisted that he was not only willing to be bound, but to die in Jerusalem for the name of his Lord Jesus Christ. Each believer must love Jesus enough that, if necessary, they would be willing to die for their walk with Him. Paul's journey to Rome is a significant event in the New Testament. It marks the Apostle Paul's transition from his missionary endeavors to his role as a prisoner for the sake of the gospel.

When Paul went to Jerusalem, he was arrested because of the riot in the temple and kept in the Roman barracks. His teaching stirred the Jews up and caused much havoc in the religious community. The Jewish leaders falsely accused him of defiling the temple.

The Romans transferred Paul to Caesarea for trial after a plot was discovered against his life. Believers don't ever forget, the devil is out to kill you because he does not want any of you to be productive; he would rather see you dead. Remember, the weapon may be formed, but it cannot prosper against the chosen believers.

During his trial before the Sanhedrin, Governor Felix increased his jail time, and later, Governor Festus suggested that Paul return to Jerusalem to stand trial. Paul recognized the danger that would put him in, so he asserted his rights as a Roman citizen by appealing to Caesar for a fair trial (Acts 25:10-12). As a result of this appeal, he was sent to Rome.

Conclusion

His trip to Rome was filled with many problems, for they journeyed during a time which was not good for sea travel. A great storm, a wind of hurricane force called a Northeaster, came upon them. Eventually, they were all cast off the ship by it, swimming, holding on to broken pieces of the ship, or whatever they could use to survive.

All 276 passengers, including Paul, made it to an island named Malta, where Paul was bitten by a snake on his hand while gathering sticks to make a fire. The snake was poisonous, but Paul shook it off into the fire. The natives of the island thought that Paul would die, but God allowed him to live. Because Paul didn't swell up and die from the snake bite, the natives of the island changed their opinion of him. At first, they thought that he was a bad person, and the snake was sent to kill him. But when he didn't swell up and die, they changed their minds and began to see him as a god. It became clear to the people that God's hand was upon Paul, for the people of Malta saw the glory of God and heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul and the other passengers stayed in Malta for three months.

They finally arrived in Rome, where Paul was granted the privilege of living by himself, accompanied by a Roman guard for his protection. For two years, he stayed in his own rented house and was able to minister to the people. God will take care of each believer who trusts and obeys, and Paul did. He kept His promise and allowed him to make it to Rome.

Questions

1. Why did Paul feel such an urgency to go to Rome?
2. What brought the change in Paul that made him willing to die for the gospel of Jesus Christ?
3. Why was Paul arrested in Jerusalem?
4. Why did he appeal to Caesar?
5. What happened on the island of Malta?
6. What happened to Paul after he arrived in Rome?

Essential Thought

God wants to give each of his children the desires of their hearts,
but they must line up with his will.