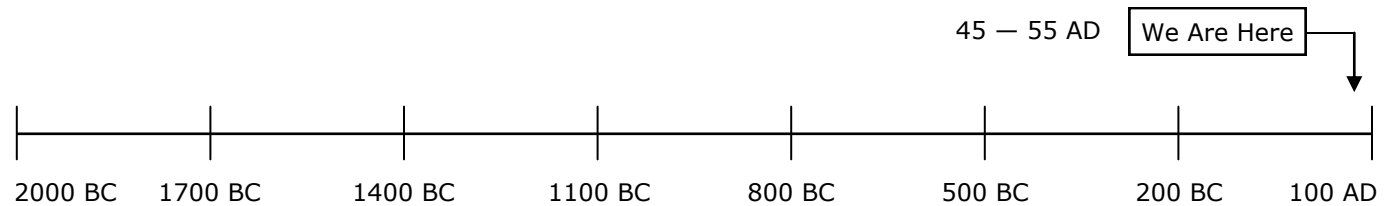


Go West Young Man

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Week 46: November 12-18 — *Acts 12-19; Galatians; 1, 2 Thess.*

88% Complete — 43 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Map of Paul's Missionary Journeys (p.121), Overview of Bible History (p.37)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

Last week we discussed the foundation of the Church, that being the ministry of Christ and the several pillars that helped get it off of the ground. While all of these pillars were vital to the success of the early church, we are going to turn our attention to the ministry of Paul. No one, other than Christ Himself, has done more to establish the Church than this converted Pharisee. Ironically, *God used the Church's greatest foe to become its greatest friend.*

First Missionary Journey (46-48 AD)

While in the city of Antioch, the Holy Spirit called out Barnabas and Paul to spread the Gospel to other places. They took with them John Mark as an assistant. This team travelled to the island of Cyprus and spent time in Asia Minor, in the region of Galatia. Many churches were established in these regions. However, the Jews there rejected the message that Christ was the Messiah. Thus, Paul and Barnabas began sharing the Gospel only with Gentiles. Also, John Mark left the others in the middle of the journey and returned home. This decision did not sit well with Paul. Shortly after their return, Paul and Barnabas travelled to Jerusalem to attend a council discussion on the topic of believers having to be circumcised (*Acts 15:1-35*). After much debate, the Apostles ruled that Christians were not bound by the Old Covenant or its regulations. The churches of Galatia struggled with this issue, so after Paul returned to Antioch (Syria), he penned a letter to the Galatian believers. Its theme was the relationship between Christians and the Mosaic Law. Today, we have that letter in our Bibles; it is the book of *Galatians*. Here is the gist of Paul's message:

1. **We were not and cannot be saved by the law** (*Gal. 2:4, 5, 11-21; 3:1-4:31; 5:1*).
If we could be saved by the law, then there was no need for Christ.
2. **The law was given so that we might recognize our sin and guilt** (*Gal. 3:19*). The law was given to show us that we are not perfect and that we need a Savior.
3. **The law was given so that it might lead us to Christ** (*Gal. 3:24, 25; 4:3-5; 5:1*).
The law made us slaves of sin but Christ has set us free, never to be slaves again.
4. **We must not deceive ourselves and think that we can earn salvation** (*Gal. 5:2-4*).
If we add anything to Christ, then salvation becomes a result of works.

Second Missionary Journey (49-51 AD)

While in the city of Antioch, Paul and Barnabas decided to revisit the churches they had started and encourage the new believers there. However, they did not agree on who should go with them. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, but Paul would not have it; remember, John Mark quit on them during the first trip. After much discussion, it was decided that they should go their separate ways (*Acts 15:36-41*). Barnabas took John Mark back to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas and returned to Galatia. While Paul intended on spending his time in Asia Minor, God had different plans. Through a vision, God called Paul and Silas to take the Gospel to Macedonia. Thus, a great deal of their time was spent in some of the major cities in that region (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea), as well as in Greece (Athens and Corinth). After leaving Greece, Paul returned to Asia Minor (Ephesus) and made his way to Caesarea and Jerusalem. Though the separation of Paul and Barnabas was unfortunate, God used it to cover more territory. Furthermore, Paul's "Macedonian Call" was key in that it spread the Gospel to a new continent (Europe). Paul wrote *First* and *Second Thessalonians* while in Corinth. He truly intended to encourage the Thessalonians with his first letter; however, he mentioned the second coming of Jesus, which intrigued everyone, so he wrote the second letter to follow up and explain that great event and the signs that would precede it.

Third Missionary Journey

We will be discussing this trip in the weeks to come.

- Personal Application
 1. **Go West Young Man:** Both trips were towards the west. Oftentimes, both historically and biblically, east and west are symbolic of good and evil, right and wrong. The east has always been linked with ungodly or backslidden living, while the west has been linked to godly and righteous living. Take, for example, two of the dominant religions of the world. Islam initially spread to the east, while Christianity initially spread to the west. The challenge here is quite simple — which way are you headed? The Spirit is calling you west, but have you been listening? Following His leadership in your life may set you up for trials and tough times, but He will lead you to His greatest blessings.
 2. **Works Don't Work:** Anytime you add something to Christ for salvation, you'll receive nothing; but when you rely on Christ alone, you will receive everything. In other words, works don't work. Since that is true, then we have just unraveled every other religion in the world, for not only are they man-made but they are works-based. Works are the only way man can conceive of earning perfection. That's why Christianity is obviously divine, because salvation is not in the hands of men but in the hands of God. Christ is all you need — nothing more, nothing less. He is sufficient to save you; trust Him fully.

The Bottom Line

God has *work* for you to do, **not** for your salvation but *because of it*.

Questions to Consider

1. What has God asked you to do for Him lately? How obedient have you been?
2. Can you think of a "Macedonian" moment in your life, a change God used for good?
3. Sometimes, works can be a trap even after one comes to Christ for salvation. How so?
4. Do you find significance in Christ alone or in your works for Him?