**Truth Sowers Life Group**

September 8, 2013

**Who Was the Apostle Paul?**

**Paul Third Missionary Journey**

Our key scripture for this study is:

**1 Thess 5:12, 13**

*12And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.*

**Acts 21:15-25**

15After this we packed our things and left for Jerusalem. 16Some believers from Caesarea accompanied us, and they took us to the home of Mnason, a man originally from Cyprus and one of the early believers. 17When we arrived, the brothers and sisters in Jerusalem welcomed us warmly.

18The next day Paul went with us to meet with James, and all the elders of the Jerusalem church were present. 19After greeting them, Paul gave a detailed account of the things God had accomplished among the Gentiles through his ministry.

20After hearing this, they praised God. And then they said, “You know, dear brother, how many thousands of Jews have also believed, and they all follow the law of Moses very seriously. 21But the Jewish believers here in Jerusalem have been told that you are teaching all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn their backs on the laws of Moses. They’ve heard that you teach them not to circumcise their children or follow other Jewish customs. 22What should we do? They will certainly hear that you have come.

23“Here’s what we want you to do. We have four men here who have completed their vow. 24Go with them to the Temple and join them in the purification ceremony, paying for them to have their heads ritually shaved. Then everyone will know that the rumors are all false and that you yourself observe the Jewish laws.

25“As for the Gentile believers, they should do what we already told them in a letter: They should abstain from eating food offered to idols, from consuming blood or the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality.”

And perhaps they urged Christ’s being *made under the law,* and observing it (which was designed to be our deliverance from the law), as a reason for their continuance under it. **This was a great weakness and mistake, to be so fond of the shadows when the substance was come, to keep their necks under a yoke of bondage when Christ had come to make them free.** Matthew Henry Commentary

**Mixing law and the gospel makes a corrupt form of Christianity. Judaism and Christianity cannot work together for they are opposite.** At this time God had not completely abolished all sacrifices and all the law in Israel as a national program. He tolerated the Jews continuing with all their rituals until the destruction of Jerusalem. From that time on it was impossible for them to observe these things. Thus He abolished the Mosaic dispensation by rendering the observance of the law impossible, fulfilling [Dan. 9:26](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Da+9%3A26); [Hos. 3:4-5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Hos+3%3A4-5); [Mt. 23:36-39](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Mt+23%3A36-39); [Lk. 19:41-48](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+19%3A41-48).
Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

Three main points of misinformation:

1. Teaching Jews to apostatize ([Acts 21:21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+21%3A21)). There is nothing of this nature in any of Paul's sermons to the Jews. On the contrary he repeatedly emphasized turning back to their God by accepting the very Christ Moses and the prophets said would come ([Acts 9:20-22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+9%3A20-22); [13:16-41](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+13%3A16-41),[46-49](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+13%3A46-49); [14:21-22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+14%3A21-22); [15:1-2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+15%3A1-2); [16:4-5](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+16%3A4-5); [17:2-3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+17%3A2-3),[22-32](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+17%3A22-32); [19:8-20](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+19%3A8-20)). **His contention was that the Gentiles were not to be brought under the law and this is what the whole church agreed** ([Acts 15:1-35](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+15%3A1-35)).

2. Teaching Jews not to be circumcised ([Acts 21:21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+21%3A21)). This he did not do. He even had Timothy circumcised to please the Jews ([Acts 16:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+16%3A2)). **It was only the Gentiles that He contended were not required to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses** ([Acts 15:1-35](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+15%3A1-35)). He only **taught in his epistles**, some of which were written before this time, **that circumcision did not save the soul** and by the **deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified** ([Rom. 3:24-31](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ro+3%3A24-31); [4:1-21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ro+4%3A1-21); [Gal. 3:19-25](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Gal+3%3A19-25)).

3. Teaching Jews to forsake the customs ([Acts 21:21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+21%3A21)). Greek: *ethos* (GSN-[<G1485>](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?strongs=G1485)), rites, customs, habits, manners. Translated "custom" ([Lk. 1:9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+1%3A9); [2:42](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+2%3A42); [Acts 6:14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+6%3A14); [16:21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+16%3A21); [21:21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+21%3A21); [26:3](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+26%3A3); [28:17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+28%3A17)); "manner" ([Jn. 19:40](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jn+19%3A40); [Acts 15:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+15%3A1); [25:16](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+25%3A16); [Heb. 10:25](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+10%3A25)); and "as one is wont" ([Lk. 22:39](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+22%3A39)). Paul never advocated the Jews should become different in customs. He **made it clear that they were mere forms and not destructive, unless one depended upon them for salvation** ([Rom. 3:24](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ro+3%3A24); [Eph. 1:7](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Eph+1%3A7); [2:8-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Eph+2%3A8-9); [Col. 1:20](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Col+1%3A20); [2:14-17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Col+2%3A14-17)).

**Colossians 2:14-17 (KJV)**
14  Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;
15  *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.
16  Let no man therefore **judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:**  17  Which are a **shadow of things to come**; but the body *is* of Christ.

**It is okay to keep these Jewish holy days and practices but YOU MUST REALIZE THAT THEY ARE BUT A TYPE AND SHADOW THAT POINT TO A REAL THING.**

In 70AD, God finally allowed Jerusalem to be destroyed along with the temple so there would be no more animal sacrifice and all of that. He did not want all of that mixed with true worship any longer.

Paul went to Jerusalem and the Jews were stirred up by the evil spirit that was assigned to him. They accused him of telling them they didn’t have to fulfill the Jewish vows. They had Paul arrested by the Romans. (Acts 21:33)

Paul asked to speak to the crowds. He shared his testimony of how Jesus had blinded him and how Ananias had been sent to pray for his sight to be restored. Then, when he shared how God told him he would be sent to the Gentiles with the gospel, the Jews went crazy. (Acts 22:21) The Roman soldiers had to get Paul out of the mess before the mob killed him there.

The soldiers were going to punish Paul but when the Romans found out that he was a Roman citizen by birth, they would not punish him. Being a Roman citizen carried a lot of clout with it. You were either a Roman citizen by birth or by purchasing Roman citizenship. (Acts 22:28)

When Paul began to speak at the Jewish High Council, he realized that some of the men were Pharisees and some were Sadducees (Acts 23:6) and he used this to his advantage. He announced that he was a Pharisee and he believed in the resurrection of the dead.

**Acts 23:6***Paul realized that some members of the high council were Sadducees and some were Pharisees, so he shouted, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, as were my ancestors! And I am on trial because my hope is in the resurrection of the dead!”*

Paul’s nephew found out there was a plan by 40 Jews to kill Paul when he would be taken back to see the Jewish High Council again.

**Acts 23:12***The next morning a group of Jews got together and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. 13There were more than forty of them in the conspiracy. 14They went to the leading priests and elders and told them, “We have bound ourselves with an oath to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15So you and the high council should ask the commander to bring Paul back to the council again. Pretend you want to examine his case more fully. We will kill him on the way.”*

When the Roman commander found out about the conspiracy, he called on 470 Roman troops to take Paul by night to Governor Felix in Caesarea.

Five days later, Ananias, the High Priest and some Jewish elders and Tertullus, a lawyer came before the Governor where Tertullus presented their case against Paul.

They brought Paul in.

**Acts 24:2-9**

*2When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented the charges against Paul in the following address to the governor:*

*“You have provided a long period of peace for us Jews and with foresight have enacted reforms for us. 3For all of this, Your Excellency, we are very grateful to you. 4But I don’t want to bore you, so please give me your attention for only a moment. 5We have found this man to be a troublemaker who is constantly stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the cult known as the Nazarenes. 6Furthermore, he was trying to desecrate the Temple when we arrested him. 8You can find out the truth of our accusations by examining him yourself.” 9Then the other Jews chimed in, declaring that everything Tertullus said was true.*

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When you are doing things for God, people are going to lie about you. They may treat you wrongly. In fact, **YOU WILL BE PERSECUTED** for believing in Jesus Christ!

**2 Timothy 3:12 NLT**

*In fact,* ***everyone*** *who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,*

Paul was persecuted, not only because he was a believer but because of the abundance of revelations he had received (for our benefit).

**2 Corinthians 12:7 (KJV)**
*7  And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh,* ***the messenger of Satan*** *to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.*

**1 Cor. 11:22-28** tells of many of the things this “messenger of Satan” caused.

**John 15:18 (KJV)**
*18  If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

**1 John 3:13 (KJV)**
*13  Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*

**1 Peter 4:12-19**

*12Dear friends, don’t be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. 13Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world.*

*14So be happy when you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you. 15If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people’s affairs. 16But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his name! 17For the time has come for judgment, and it must begin with God’s household. And if judgment begins with us, what terrible fate awaits those who have never obeyed God’s Good News? 18And also,*

*“If the righteous are barely saved,
    what will happen to godless sinners?”*

*19So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for he will never fail you.*

**2 Corinthians 4:8-12 ESV**

*We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.*

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Paul was brought into the courtroom and Felix asked him to speak.

Paul denied all of the charges against him and then said,

**Acts 24:14-21**

*14 “But I admit that I follow the Way, which they call a cult. I worship the God of our ancestors, and I firmly believe the Jewish law and everything written in the prophets. 15 I have the same hope in God that these men have, that he will raise both the righteous and the unrighteous. 16 Because of this, I always try to maintain a clear conscience before God and all people. 17 “After several years away, I returned to Jerusalem with money to aid my people and to offer sacrifices to God. 18 My accusers saw me in the Temple as I was completing a purification ceremony. There was no crowd around me and no rioting. 19 But some Jews from the province of Asia were there—and they ought to be here to bring charges if they have anything against me! 20 Ask these men here what crime the Jewish high council[c] found me guilty of, 21 except for the one time I shouted out, ‘I am on trial before you today because I believe in the resurrection of the dead!’”*

**Then Felix adjourned Court.**

**Later Felix brought his wife, Drusilla, a Jew, to visit more with Paul and learn about Jesus. He did this for two years and he also dragged it out hoping Paul would BRIBE HIM! (Acts 24:26).**

**Felix wanted to gain favor with the Jewish people so he left Paul in prison.**

**Felix was replaced by Porcius Festus.**

After taking over, Festus went to Jerusalem for a few days. Paul’s accusers asked if Paul could be tried in Jerusalem rather than Caesarea. Festus refused and told the men that they could accompany him back to Caesarea and try Paul there.

When Festus returned to Caesarea, he asked Paul if he would consider having a change of venue to Jerusalem.

I believe Paul knew he would NOT get a fair trial in Jerusalem!

**Acts 25:10-12**

*10But Paul replied, “No! This is the official Roman court, so I ought to be tried right here. You know very well I am not guilty of harming the Jews. 11If I have done something worthy of death, I don’t refuse to die. But if I am innocent, no one has a right to turn me over to these men to kill me.* ***I appeal to Caesar!****”*

*12Festus conferred with his advisers and then replied,* ***“Very well! You have appealed to Caesar, and to Caesar you will go!”***

A few days later, King Agrippa, the grandson of King Herod who wanted to kill Jesus when he was a baby, and his sister, Bernice came to pay their respects to Festus.

Festus told Agrippa about Paul and Agrippa wanted to hear the case.

Festus didn’t want to send Paul to stand before Caesar **without any specific charges.** He was hoping that King Agrippa could help him decide what charges to press. (Acts 25:23-27)

Paul was brought before Festus and Agrippa. Paul gave his testimony to Agrippa.

We were given the job to take the gospel to **OUR WORLD!** BUT, we are NEVER given the responsibility to make sure they are saved. **That is the job of the Holy Spirit.**

**Acts 26:26-32**

24Suddenly, Festus shouted, “Paul, you are insane. Too much study has made you crazy!”

25But Paul replied, “I am not insane, Most Excellent Festus. What I am saying is the sober truth. 26And King Agrippa knows about these things. I speak boldly, for I am sure these events are all familiar to him, for they were not done in a corner! 27King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do—”

28Agrippa interrupted him. “Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so quickly?”

29Paul replied, “Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that both you and everyone here in this audience might become the same as I am, except for these chains.”

30Then the king, the governor, Bernice, and all the others stood and left. 31As they went out, they talked it over and agreed, “This man hasn’t done anything to deserve death or imprisonment.”

32And Agrippa said to Festus, **“He could have been set free if he hadn’t appealed to Caesar.”**

**Always do what is right and what God has called you to EVEN if it looks like the other way might be the easiest way out.**

**Perhaps Paul could have changed his mind about going before Caesar and may have been released right there in Caesarea.**

**Revelation 3:15, 16**

*15“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,[[g](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+3&version=NKJV" \l "fen-NKJV-30763g" \o "See footnote g)] I will vomit you out of My mouth.*

Following God’s will for your life **may not always be popular** with your family and friends. It may not even be popular with other believers.

In the end, you will stand before God and answer ONLY to Him for what you have done.

**James 1:2-8**

*2My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.* ***5If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God****, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6But let him* ***ask in faith, with no doubting****, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

**Ask God to speak to you**

**Isaiah 30:21**

*Your own ears will hear him.
    Right behind you a voice will say,
“This is the way you should go,”
    whether to the right or to the left.*

Realize that God will never speak anything that is in direct conflict with the written Word of God.