**Truth Sowers Life Group**

February 3, 2013

**Who Was the Apostle Paul?**

**Paul Returns**

**Introduction:**

Paul and Barnabus are ministering together and John Mark had gone with them but he has gone back to Jerusalem, being home sick. Paul are Barnabus are in Iconium and move to the area of Turkey called Lycaonia. They go to the cities of Lystra and Derbe.

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.*

1. God chose Paul as a **Vessel** to Bring Much of His Teaching of **Grace to the Church**.
   1. We are in the Dispensation of GRACE.
   2. We are saved by FAITH because of God’s GRACE. **Ephesians 2:8,9**
   3. Because of this, God in His infinite wisdom and love did not want Paul to become puffed up in pride or get the big head.
   4. To keep this from happening because of all the revelations, God gave Paul a “messenger of Satan”.
   5. The Greek tells us this is a fallen angel or “angelos”.

**2 Corinthians 12:1-10**

*~~It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:~~ ~~2~~~~I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven.~~ ~~3~~~~And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—~~ ~~4~~~~how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.~~ ~~5~~~~Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my~~* ***~~infirmities~~******(Grk “asthenia” moral frailty, inability to do what you should – not sickness)****. ~~6~~~~For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.~~*

### The Thorn in the Flesh

*7And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

c. God allowed this fallen angel to follow Paul everywhere he went and if you go back to 2 Corinthians 11 you see examples of the turmoil this angel caused in Paul’s life. **2 Cor 11:22-33**.

d. Some people will use this out of context saying God does not heal.

e. Never a mention of an eye problem. The thorn in the flesh was an angel from Satan sent to cause havoc to keep Paul from being puffed up in pride and possibly losing his salvation.

2. Now Paul and Barnabus have traveled to Iconium.

**Acts 14:1-7**

*Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a* ***great multitude*** *both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.*

* Bear in mind that Paul and Barnabus were going places where people knew NOTHING about Jesus. The Apostle has to get them saved, then pastor them, teach them, be a prophet to them, and be all of the ministry gifts to them until God raises up all of the ministry gifts. **Ephesians 4:11-13**

*2But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles* **(could it be that Angel from Satan stirring them up?)** *and poisoned their minds against the brethren. 3Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. 4But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. 5And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, 6they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. 7And they were preaching the gospel there.* **(Remember Paul had already had two attempts on his life before this!)**

1. Once again the Jews opposed Paul and Barnabus. They poisoned the Gentiles’ minds.
   1. The Lord was there with them bearing witness to the gospel with great miracles.
   2. Lame man healed.

**Acts 14:8-28**

*8And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked. 9This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and* ***seeing that he had faith to be healed****, 10said with a loud voice, “Stand up straight on your feet!” And he leaped and walked. 11Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” 12And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. ~~13~~~~Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.~~~~14~~~~But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out~~ ~~15~~~~and saying, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,~~ ~~16~~~~who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.~~ ~~17~~~~Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”~~ ~~18~~~~And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.~~*

* 1. The people thought Paul and Barnabus were gods.
  2. Paul and Barnabus tore their clothing and tried to convince the people that they were men just like them.
  3. They still could barely keep them from sacrificing animals to them.

**Stoning, Escape to Derbe**

*19Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there* **(Lystra)** *; and having persuaded the multitudes* **(Probably having been stirred up by this Satanic angel again)** *, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.*

- Many Bible scholars believe Paul was actually killed here and this is when he had his vision of Heaven that he mentions in 2 Corinthians 12.

a. What is the purpose of stoning?

b. It is Capital Punishment.

c. The people throwing the stones do not stop until the person is pronounced dead.

*20However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.*

**Strengthening the Converts**

*21And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”*  **(This is something Paul knew much about)** *23So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. ~~24~~~~And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.~~ ~~25~~~~Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.~~ ~~26~~~~From there they sailed to~~* ***Antioch****~~, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.~~*

*27Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. 28So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.*

1. Everywhere Paul went he was opposed but the HOLY SPIRIT followed right along with Him and Barnabus in everything they did.
2. The Holy Spirit will follow you as you do what He has called you to do!