

YOUTH



LEVEL 9

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 5



The Life of Paul — Part 3

THE LIFE OF PAUL

PART 3

We will conclude the exciting story of Paul's second journey in this lesson. Then we'll begin his third and final journey before his arrest and imprisonment in Jerusalem. We will continue to learn about the beginnings of the early Church, the people God called into it, and more about basic Church teachings.

PAUL AT ATHENS

We can only imagine how Paul must have felt during his first visit to Athens, Greece. Even today, Athens is one of the most interesting cities in the world. Some three hundred years before the Apostle Paul walked the streets of this huge metropolis, Athens was the capital of the Grecian Empire. Though the empire had crumbled long before Paul's time, it still must have been quite an experience for Paul to visit this ancient city—a city which has left its mark on western culture to this very day.

A visit to Athens is a trip into the past splendor and glory of the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great who had conquered most of the known world by the time he was 30 years of age. The Greeks left their mark on education and the philosophies. In fact, the basic form of education followed in western cultures today stems from the methods employed in Classical Greece.

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

Mt. Parnassos in the area of Greece today. The Apostle Paul travelled near this area on his way to Corinth and Athens.

Y.E.S. Photo

Paul's trip to Athens was very enlightening because he saw firsthand how totally astray from God's truth societies can become. Paul knew how paganized the ancients were. The stories of Zeus and the many gods and goddesses of that pagan society Paul knew well. But to be in Athens and actually see how completely the society had rejected the true God and worshipped false gods was shocking to him!

How completely were the Athenians given over to worshipping false gods? (Acts 17:16)

What best sums up the mentality of the men and women of Athens in the days of Paul? (Verse 21) _____

On his tour throughout Athens, Paul was amazed at the scores of pagan deities the people worshipped. The Greeks had a god for almost everything—the sun, moon, fire, earth, the underworld, snakes, rivers. You name it, they probably had a god for it. But just in case there was a god they had overlooked (they didn't want to "offend" any of the gods), they had even erected a "just-in-case-we-didn't-know-you-existed" god! Paul noticed this statue while passing through the city and referred to it. Read the story in verses 22-31 and write out just verse 23. _____

A few points should be emphasized from this account. First, Paul made it plain that all men are created by God with a certain sameness—yet obvious differences exist. Read verse 26 again and write the verse here. _____

All men and women on earth have come from Adam and Eve. And all of us have descended from Noah through his three sons and their wives from the time of the Flood. All men are of *one* blood. No one is better than anyone else.

God is the Designer of the ethnic and racial stocks that exist on earth. Undoubtedly it was through the wives of Shem, Ham and Japheth that the racial groups God designed were preserved through the Flood.

Beginning with the tower of Babel, God caused the nations to migrate out of the regions He intended for them. The descendants of Japheth primarily migrated to the eastern part of the world called the Orient. The descendants of Ham are the black peoples who settled in



Courtesy Agora Excavations

Mars Hill in Athens (foreground), is where Paul preached to the curious Greek philosophers.

Africa. The descendants of Shem moved to Europe and, many centuries later, to the United States, Canada, Australia and other parts of the world. So even though all men are of one blood, the origins of nations and races was designed by the Eternal God.

Spiritually speaking, in Christ we are all *one* regardless of whether we are Jew or Greek, Gentile or Israelite, male or female (Galatians 3:28). Under the coming government of God on earth, however, national boundaries of the ethnic groups will be determined by God for the best possible benefit of all mankind.

Paul preached a very powerful message to those curious Greek philosophers on Mars Hill that day. Can you pick out the three main points of his message from verses 28 through 31? _____

As is the case even today among the people of this world, the truth of God did not make much sense to those who heard Paul in Athens. Therefore did many, or just a few of them believe? (Verses 32-34) _____. Those interested in his message were mainly the curiosity seekers and debaters, some of whom mocked him. So Paul departed Athens and went to Corinth.

IMMORAL CORINTH YIELDS MANY BELIEVERS

Corinth was a seacoast town with less of a cultural and educational background than Athens. It was a city filled with immorality. The pagan religious system in Corinth included prostitution and other immorality as part of their religious worship. But God was going to reach into that sinful society and call many to His way of life.

How long did Paul stay in Corinth, and to how many people did he minister? (Acts 18:9-11) _____

Very often when Paul went to a new city

where there was no Church of God already established, he had to support himself financially. Later, when a Church was established and the members had grown in knowledge, they learned about tithing and could help support the Work of God which Paul was doing—preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the gentile world. So what did Paul do to support himself in those early months at Corinth? (Acts 18:3) _____

_____. And what did he do every Sabbath? (Verse 4) _____

Notice that in this predominantly gentile city of Corinth, Paul continued (as he always did) to teach and preach on God's Sabbath day.

As was so often the case throughout Paul's ministry, he was persecuted by Jews who did not believe his message. So what did he do when the Jews in Corinth rejected his teaching? (Verses 5-6) _____

During the 18 months Paul spent raising up and strengthening the Church he established in Corinth, he wrote the first letters or epistles that have been preserved for us in the Bible. They were I and II Thessalonians. (Remember that the Church in Thessalonica was the first one raised up in Europe.) These letters were written about 51 A.D. This form of communication was to become common with Paul. Much of the New Testament is made up of the epistles which Paul wrote to Churches and ministers of God.

While Paul was doing God's Work in Corinth, a number of Jews tried to have him arrested and thrown in jail. But it was not God's will for Paul to be jailed or beaten this time. In fact, in this case the tables were turned! What did the Greeks do to the chief ruler of the Jewish synagogue? (Verse 17) _____

While in Corinth, Paul became acquainted with a zealous Jewish couple who had served in the New Testament Church for many years.

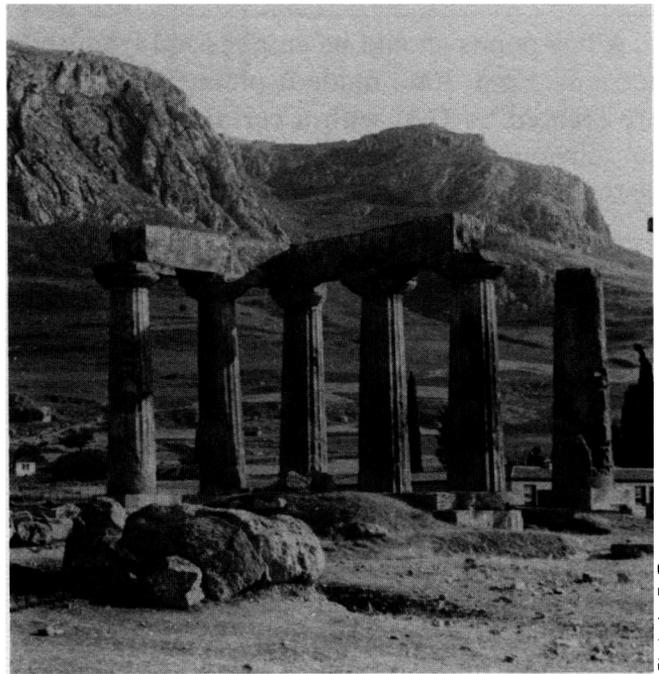


Photo by P. Termes

Ruins at Corinth in southern Greece today. Paul wrote the epistles of I and II Thessalonians during his 18-month stay in Corinth.

They were _____ and _____ (Acts 18:2). They had previously been in Rome where a fairly large number of Jewish people lived. But in the late 40s or early 50s A.D., there was a persecution of the Jewish people in Rome. The Roman Emperor Claudius had _____ (verse 2).

When Paul decided to leave Corinth and return to Jerusalem for a short visit, he took Priscilla and Aquila with him as far as Ephesus, then traveled on to Jerusalem. Why did Paul go to Jerusalem? (Verse 21) _____

The time was probably the fall of 52 A.D. So Paul, most likely, was able to keep the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem that autumn. When not able to keep the Feast in Jerusalem, he kept it with a congregation somewhere in the gentile world. On a few occasions, however, Paul was able to go up to Jerusalem and keep the Feast with Peter, James and other ministers of God

who might have been in Jerusalem. Thus ended Paul's second journey.

PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY BEGINS

After keeping the Feast of Tabernacles at Jerusalem in 52 A.D., Paul set out on yet another long journey. He spent the winter of 52-53 A.D. in Antioch, the same city where he began to preach about ten years earlier. It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called _____ (Acts 11:26). (Find this city on the map on page 7, then trace the route of Paul's third journey as you learn the name of each new city he visits.)

Paul continued traveling through Galatia, visiting the Churches he and Barnabas raised up on their first journey. After visiting with the brethren and traveling on, he wrote them a letter which has been preserved for us in the Bible—the book of Galatians.

Having strengthened the Churches in Galatia and other parts of Asia Minor, Paul then journeyed to Ephesus. There he met a young man with great speaking ability. This young man had come to a knowledge of God's way as a result of the teaching of those who followed John the Baptist.

These disciples of John had continued preaching John's message long after his death and long after Christ's death, resurrection and ascension to heaven. Christ began His ministry after John was put in prison by the Roman ruler of Judea, whose name was _____ (Luke 3:19-20). After a short time in prison what happened to John? (Mark 6:27) _____

APOLLOS LEARNS MORE TRUTH

John the Baptist reached many people during his brief ministry. Jews came to Jerusalem from all over Judea and surrounding areas to keep the annual festivals. When those who believed John returned to their homes, they taught others what they learned from him. This eloquent Jewish speaker, named _____ (Acts 18:24),

had been so instructed. But he had not yet learned about the life and ministry of Christ. He apparently had not heard of the Holy Spirit which was sent on the day of Pentecost over 20 years earlier. (Travel and communications were slow in that day and age, and word did not always get to every area of the world.)

Apollos came from Alexandria, a large city in Egypt. He just had not heard all of God's truth. But he was ready to learn more truth. He already believed the message of John the Baptist who had prepared the way for Christ. Since he was a Jew and knew the existing Scriptures, Apollos would visit and preach in the synagogues when he traveled, teaching what John had taught (verses 24-25).

When an elder in God's Church and his wife heard Apollos preaching in a synagogue, they invited him into their home and _____ (verse 26).

Apollos was such an effective speaker that some members of the Church chose him as a favorite in a *wrong* way. This caused a severe problem in the Church. Read about it in I Corinthians 1:10-13 and I Corinthians 3:4-7. Copy down the highlights of this Church problem. _____

Apparently Apollos continued to effectively preach in the New Testament Church and was a great help in backing Paul, though he never was one of Paul's close companions as were Timothy, Titus and Luke.

BAPTISM AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the first part of Acts 19, we learn about more people who had heard the teaching of John the Baptist, but had not yet learned of Christ and the Holy Spirit. In fact, the people in Ephesus to whom Paul preached had not yet even _____ (verse 2, last part of verse).

Paul explained to these people that John's baptism was the baptism of _____

(verse 4), and that its purpose was to prepare them to believe on one who would come after John, namely Jesus Christ. After Paul thoroughly explained who Christ was and His message of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, they were _____ (verse 5). What did Paul do after they were baptized? (Verse 6)

What did they receive? (Same verse)

Notice that God gave the Holy Spirit to these people *after* they were baptized—not before or during the baptism. They received it only after the laying on of Paul’s hands and prayer. Read Acts 8:12-17 and notice that the Holy Spirit is given by God *only* after baptism, prayer and the laying on of the hands of one of God’s ministers.

You should also understand that when you have grown to maturity and God calls you, you can also be baptized and have hands laid on you for the receipt of God’s Holy Spirit—if you accept God’s call and want to follow His way.

When Christ was on earth He trained the disciples. But they did not receive the Holy Spirit until *after* He was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven. It was on the day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit was first sent to Christ’s chosen disciples—His Church. What did Christ tell them about the Holy Spirit while he was yet with them? (John 14:17) _____

This verse shows us that even before receiving the Holy Spirit *in* us, we can have God’s Spirit working *with* us and have a certain amount of understanding of spiritual things—just as the disciples did. Young people with at least one of their parents in God’s Church, have God’s Holy Spirit working *with* them before they are called by God. They are not “cut off” from God like the rest of humanity.

What was the message Paul continued to preach? (Acts 19:8, last few words) _____

_____. All the apostles preached the *good news* of the Kingdom of God, just as Jesus did while He was on earth.

How long did Paul stay in Ephesus? (Verse 10) _____. While in Ephesus, Paul wrote a letter to the members at Corinth, which is now the book of I Corinthians.

SPECIAL MIRACLES THROUGH PAUL

Paul and all the other apostles had been instructed by Christ regarding the healing of the sick. What does the apostle James, the physical brother of Christ, tell us to do when we are ill? (James 5:14-15) _____

But what could Paul do if someone was ill many miles away? Traveling in Paul’s time was totally different from our age of swift transportation. Travel by walking, donkey, camel caravan, or by boat were the only means of transportation available. For a minister to travel and visit each person who needed anointing and prayer would have been time consuming and difficult, if not impossible!

So what did Paul do? (Acts 19:11-12) _____

God inspired Paul to anoint and pray over pieces of cloth which were then taken to the sick and they were healed. These people had the _____ to be healed (Acts 14:9).

When a sick person asks to be anointed and prayed for by a minister of God for his healing, this shows that person’s desire to follow God’s instructions as given in James 5:14-15, as well as his faith in God’s healing power. There is no “magic” in the oil or in the minister that causes a person to be healed. It is God who heals. The minister is merely a representative of God who is carrying out God’s instructions and showing faith also, when anointing and praying for the



Paul's Third Journey

sick. Since it was not possible for Paul to respond personally to all the requests of the sick, he sent anointed cloths to them.

Today, one of God's ministers can usually visit a sick person who seeks to follow the instructions in James 5:14-15. But when the minister can't come personally, an anointed cloth is sent in the mail and in most cases arrives within two or three days, especially in the United States and most parts of the Western World. During Paul's time it often took much longer for an anointed cloth to be delivered to the sick. But God honored the faith of the sick and healed them, often before the cloth arrived. Many times today we hear of people being healed even *before* the cloth can be sent!

IDOLATRY AND THE OCCULT

During Paul's day, just as in our time, there were people who believed in strange superstitions. They often dabbled in spiritism. There also were certain people called exorcists, who thought they had power to cast out demon

spirits (Acts 19:13). Get a dictionary and look up the word "exorcise" and copy down the meaning. _____

From time to time you may hear about a movie or book that promises to entertain you with a strange and weird story, which is in reality about "ghosts" or demon spirits. God does not want us to see such movies or read such books, or to "toy around" with the spirit world *in any way!* Ouija boards and other similar games have long been party entertainment, but those who participate in these do not realize they are dabbling with the demon spirit world of Satan the devil!

What happened to the seven men who tried to cast out a demon? (Verse 16) _____

This incident shows that those who have no authority to deal with wicked spirits should not attempt to do so, even out of curiosity. God has given only His ministers the authority to cast

out evil spirits. Paul had that power and authority.

As a result of this incident, many in Ephesus who dealt with such things as astrology, fortune telling and palm reading turned to God. They came to see that these practices were ungodly. They repented of having disobeyed God. What else did they do? (Verse 19, first part of verse) _____

Notice that the things they used in connection with their occult practices were not even fit to sell as a way of disposing them! They were *destroyed* so that others could not use them. What was the value of the books and other items they burned? (Verse 19, last part)

_____. Bible scholars differ as to the actual value, but they were probably worth at least 10 to 20 thousand U.S. dollars today.

CHURCH GROWS AT EPHESUS

As a result of Paul's preaching and accompanying miracles, God's Church grew rapidly in Ephesus. But Ephesus was a very pagan city. The temple of Diana, one of the famous seven wonders of the ancient world, existed at Ephesus during the time of Paul. The entire city worshipped the pagan idols of the Greeks and Romans, but they especially worshipped the goddess Diana.

Paul faced many trials and dangers while he was in Asia Minor (II Corinthians 1:8). But he saw God's hand in opening the way for the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to be preached. So Paul went ahead and did God's Work courageously regardless of the obstacles and resulting threats to his life (I Corinthians 16:8-9).

Paul angered many in Ephesus by teaching that there is only *one* true God, and by preaching about the coming Kingdom of God which, under Jesus Christ, is soon to rule the entire earth from Jerusalem. So what happened

in the city? (Acts 19:23) _____

Paul had turned so many from their pagan ways in Ephesus and throughout Asia Minor that sales of silver and brass replicas of the great temple of Diana dropped dramatically! Merchants, priests, workmen and artists were furious with Paul. His encounter with the Diana worshippers is recorded in Acts 19:23-41.

As you read through this account, notice how easily human beings can be swayed to believe in absolute lies and become stirred up emotionally. Had it not been for a town clerk who intervened, there might have been many trampled to death in a riot that day!

PAUL SAILS FOR GREECE

Picking up the story in Acts 20, it is now time for Paul to leave Ephesus. Sometime during the fall of 55 A.D., he and his companions departed for the region called Macedonia (Greece), and spent the winter there. This is when he wrote the letters (books) of II Corinthians and Romans. What did Paul do in the spring of 56 A.D.? (Acts 20:6) _____

At this point in time, Paul had been converted about 20 years. He had traveled mostly through the gentile world. Notice that mention is made of God's festivals as Paul traveled through these gentile cities. Certainly, if God's Holy Days had been done away, Paul would not still be keeping them in this gentile region 20 years after his conversion. Nor would he have continued to keep them faithfully year in and year out throughout the rest of his life.

A GREAT MIRACLE

After crossing from Europe (Greece) back to Asia Minor, Paul and his party spent a week at Troas. Paul, as one would expect, always assembled with the brethren on the Sabbath day. Here at Troas one of the great miracles of

the Bible occurred.

After the sermon on the Sabbath day, Paul and the disciples came together to _____ (Acts 20:7, middle part of verse) on *Saturday night*. Remember, the days then were considered to begin and end at sundown. (This is the way God originally determined the beginning and ending of days—Leviticus 23:32.) Days did not begin and end at midnight as the world counts time today. So when you read Acts 20:7, you should understand that the “first day of the week” mentioned here is actually what we would call Saturday night.

The Church undoubtedly had a large dinner after the Sabbath (they “broke bread”) so they could continue fellowshiping with Paul. Then after dinner Paul continued to speak to them. In fact, he continued his preaching until midnight. (Remember that Paul spoke to some of these congregations only once in many years!) This sequence of events shows that Paul’s preaching had to have been on a Saturday night—or the *night portion* of the first day of the week. It definitely was *not* a Sunday morning church service!

A young man named Eutychus became a rather famous Biblical personality as a result of falling asleep while the Apostle Paul preached that night. What happened to Eutychus? (Verse 9) _____

What did Paul immediately do? (Verse 10) _____

_____. It is apparent that the young man died! Everyone was relieved and excited that he was miraculously restored to life.

TRIALS OF THE CHURCH

Not long after leaving Troas, Paul had planned to visit Ephesus again (Acts 20:16). But since he did not really have time to stop by the Church at Ephesus and still get to Jerusalem in time for the Day of Pentecost, he sent word ahead for the elders of the Church to

come down to the city of _____ (verse 17) to meet him.

As we’ve already noted, the Church of God had been in existence for almost 25 years now, and Paul had been in the ministry over 15 years. As the Gospel of the Kingdom of God was preached to the world, those who became true Christians experienced many trials. They often suffered persecution from their own families and friends. In many cities where large Jewish congregations existed, the Jewish believers were also persecuted by their own countrymen for rejecting much of the humanly devised traditions of the Jewish religion they had grown up keeping.

Most of the Jewish people in Christ’s day and up to our time have never accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah. In addition to persecution from the Jews in the gentile cities where Paul raised up churches, members were persecuted by civil magistrates for rejecting their former Jewish and/or pagan ways.

There were even trials from *within* the Church! People who were not truly converted church members led astray some of the weaker members of the Church. False ministers crept in and led away congregations to themselves. A false religious system, masquerading under the name of Christianity, had already begun and was growing—perhaps as much or more, in some areas, than the true Church of God. As you read through the rest of Acts 20, take special note of the love, warmth and emotion Paul expressed as he implored the ministers of God’s Church to remain faithful and to serve the needs of the people whom God had called.

Take the time here to copy down three key verses in the middle of this chapter. They contain an important warning to all God’s people and especially to all of God’s ministers. (Verses 28-30) _____

An insight into Paul's character, drive and determination can be found in verses 33-34. Write these verses on the following lines. _____

You may remember that in an earlier lesson we talked about Paul having a trade. All Jewish boys learned a manual trade while they were growing up. Through many months of Paul's ministry, he had to support himself before the Church learned the truth about tithing to God's New Testament ministry. At Ephesus, Paul worked with his own hands providing a living not only for himself, but also for those who accompanied him.

LEARNING HOW TO "GIVE"

Paul, through his example and teaching, left us one of the greatest principles of true Christianity. He followed the words of Jesus Christ who said (Acts 20:35, last part of the verse) _____

This is not a direct quote from Matthew, Mark, Luke or John who wrote the biographies of Jesus. Yet Paul plainly says these words were spoken by Jesus Christ. In an earlier lesson we learned that Paul spent three years in Arabia, during which time he was personally taught by Jesus Christ. Even though the above mentioned biographers did not include these words of Christ, they are nevertheless a part of God's inspired Word, the Bible.

These words state what appears to be a simple principle. But very few people have discovered the real joy of living by this most basic Christian principle. If you have not yet experienced this living principle in action in your own life, we hope you will soon start to learn this precious truth.

When we are young, we are often on the receiving or "getting" side of things. In society today, the "get" way or philosophy of life is practiced in the holidays and customs that are

observed. Young children *receive* presents at Christmas time. They expect and are *given* presents on their birthdays. They *get* valentines from their friends. They *receive* new clothes for Easter. Most people don't realize how these customs actually instill a wrong way of life—the way of "get." Thus people grow up generally wanting to be on the *receiving* end.

Of course it is fine to receive gifts, but certainly not on pagan holidays! Under the proper circumstances, everyone can enjoy receiving nice things at any time of the year from those who love them. But since Christ said, "It is more blessed to GIVE than to receive," someone also has to be on the giving end. If there is a receiver, there must be a giver.

The wrong principle so often taught in connection with pagan holidays or other social customs—especially to the very young—is the principle of receiving without learning how to give. But anyone who has experienced the real joy of giving, especially when he or she is not expecting to receive something in return, has truly learned an important spiritual lesson.

Often, the greatest gift we have to give is our time. When we help another person and expect nothing in return, we are on the way to learning what Christ truly meant. If you have ever experienced the fact that "It is more blessed to give than to receive," you already know what a *blessing* it really is!

PAUL RETURNS TO JERUSALEM

After leaving Miletus and the elders from Ephesus, Paul and his party island-hopped across the Mediterranean Sea on their way back to Jerusalem. But the times were not easy. The Church in Jerusalem was being persecuted. Because he had made such an impact throughout the gentile world, Paul would not be welcomed by the Romans—and certainly not by the Jews. While visiting church members in the city of Tyre, what did they try to persuade Paul *not* to do? (Acts 21:4) _____

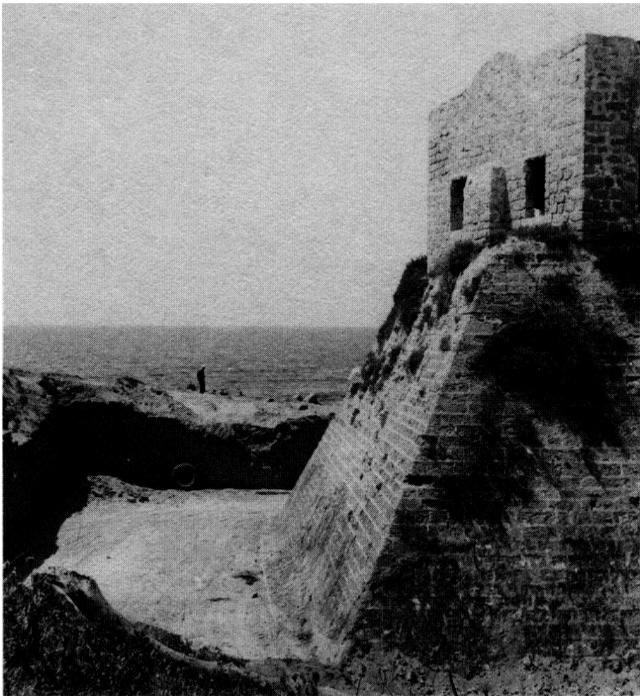


Photo by N. Ben-Haim

An excavated portion of a moat is part of an old fortification at Caesarea. Paul stopped by this seacoast city on his return trip home to Jerusalem.

On the trip to Jerusalem, Paul and his party stopped at the seacoast city of Caesarea. There they were able to stay for many days in the home of _____

_____ (verse 8). You may remember reading in Acts 7 about the first deacons being ordained after the Church began to grow. These deacons were ordained to help take care of certain physical responsibilities, thus giving the ministers more time for their spiritual duties. Some of these deacons eventually became ordained ministers.

One of the original deacons was Stephen, who became the first martyr of the New Testament Church. Philip, whom we read about here, was also one of the first seven deacons to be ordained. He had grown spiritually through the years and eventually became an evangelist in the service of God's Church. What are we told about Philip's daughters? (Verse 9) _____

The New Testament does not give us details of how God revealed special messages to those who served him. But here we have just a passing comment about four young ladies (they must have been between 16 to 25 years of age) whom God used to prophesy (relate) certain messages from Him. However, through Paul God shows that women do not serve in the ministry. Read and copy down what Paul said in I Corinthians 14:34. _____

Though women are not to be ministers or preach in church, there were prophetesses who faithfully served God.

In addition to prophetesses, there were also prophets in the early New Testament Church. While Paul stayed with Philip, the evangelist, one of these prophets named _____ (Acts 21:10) came from Judea to see Paul. What was his message to the apostle Paul? (Verse 11) _____

God's message to Paul, spoken by Agabus, alerted him to the fact he would be arrested and bound in Jerusalem. Paul felt strongly that it was God's will for him to go to Jerusalem, even though he now knew what his fate would be. Paul even speculated that he might have to die in Jerusalem (verse 13). But he was ready for whatever might happen and did not change his mind about going on to Jerusalem!

In the next lesson we will cover Paul's stay in Jerusalem and, just as the prophet Agabus predicted, his arrest and imprisonment. It was through these events that God had Paul eventually appear before the Emperor at Rome. There's more excitement ahead as we continue to learn about the early years of God's Church and about those He called into it!

