

Called to Ministry Class 9

Call of Saul/Paul to the Gentiles

The Call of the Apostle Paul to the Gentiles is often misunderstood. 1) It is misunderstood as a rejection by God of the Jewish People. 2) It is misunderstood as a backup plan. 3) It is misunderstood as a separate covenant distinct and unrelated to the Old Covenant.

Saul had been trained by Gamaliel, the grandson of the great Rabbi Hillel. His credentials in Judaism were without equal. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, a Pharisee of Pharisees, was of the tribe of Benjamin...but came through his remarkable call on the road to Damascus and its aftermath with Ananias to understand that he did not, in fact, understand the Bible at all. We read in Acts 9:23-30 of Paul's new understanding and preaching based on that new understanding in Damascus and later in Jerusalem. We read of the backlash and his evacuation from both cities and retreat to his home town of Tarsus. Paul also relates his years of preparation for the mission.

Tarsus:

Gal 1:21f

2 Cor 11:23-37

Acts 13:1ff We read of Barnabas and Paul being sent out by the church at Antioch...a resource church...to the first evangelistic missionary journey to the Gentiles.

Cyprus, Barnabas' home, ministry to Sergius Paulus, Roman Proconsul and immediate and direct confrontation with representative of the Evil One in Paphos.

Attalia, Perge and Pisidian Antioch.

Opposition and Opportunity, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe and back.

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Controversy over proper application of Torah Acts 15 in relation to mission to the nations. Argument and resolution on the basis of the Bible, especially Amos 9:11, 12 and Jer 12:15 and the call to turn from idols.

Paul came to understand that the ministry to the Gentiles or nations was always God's plan. Gen 12:1-3; Is 43:7; 49:6, 22, etc. Gal 3:6ff

Second Missionary Journey Acts 16

Revisit churches already planted, gathering new leadership from those new churches, see 16:1ff.

Macedonian Call 16:6ff and ministry at Philippi

Notice the strategic implementation of Paul's missionary strategy, goes to strategic cities, despite their built in resistance, notice Paul's willingness to engage their culture and learn to preach the one and only Gospel across cultural lines to influence the world.

Third Missionary Journey Acts 18ff

Revisits the churches planted on the First Journey and then the churches planted on the Second Journey, collection and return to Jerusalem.

Fulfillment of ancient prophecy Is 60:5; 61:6 The wealth of Gentiles would enrich and sustain Israel.

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Paul's obedience to take the Gospel, the rule and reign of Yahweh over all the earth to the nations was born of love for his own people, not rejection. It was done in faith that God's promises were true and could be trusted. It was done in the rock solid belief that God knew what he was doing when he called Paul and sent him out...and that God had already gone before him to provide, protect, and prosper his work. Paul could see that his life had been designed by God, for God's glory, and for the blessing of Israel and the nations. Our lives have been designed by the same God for the same purpose, and we too have been sent on a related mission to accomplish the advancement of the same kingdom.

Because Paul answered his call, Timothy, Silas, Lydia, Priscilla and Aquila, Epaphroditus, Clement, Phoebe, etc., all experienced their calls, and life by life, story by story, the world was and continues to be changed. You are sitting here studying Paul's calling because of Paul's calling. You and I have a calling that is directly related to Paul's calling...and also directly related to the callings of others whom God will use to change the world.

**Answering God's call does not mean safety...remember the Cross.
Answering God's call does not mean prosperity, remember the Cross.
Answering God's call does not mean ease, remember the Cross. But answering God's call will be the most satisfying, authenticating and fulfilling life one can have...because we have been designed by an intelligent designer, for a purpose...and as St. Augustine said, "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."**