

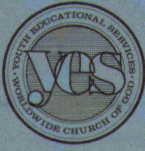
YOUTH



LEVEL 9

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 4



The Life of Paul—Part 2

THE LIFE OF PAUL

PART 2

We learned of the conversion of the apostle Paul and followed Paul and Barnabas on their first lengthy trip to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the Gentile world. Maybe you noticed as you read through the book of Acts that in many ways we might call it the book of “*firsts*.”

In the early chapters we read of the *first* Christians who became members of the New Testament Church Jesus Christ founded. Then about the *first* miracle God performed through the apostle Peter. We read about the *first* time the Holy Spirit was sent to those God called into His Church. And then there was the account of Stephen, the *first* of God’s servants in the New Testament Church who was martyred. We also read about the *first* Gentiles to be called and converted by God.

GROWTH OF THE EARLY CHURCH

In the previous lesson, we also learned how rapidly the Church grew as God called many through the inspired preaching of His servants. Now to get an idea of how God’s Church grew, look up each of the following scriptures and write each one on the lines provided.

(Acts 1:15) _____

(Acts 2:41) _____

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

The city of Antioch in Syria, with Mt. Silpius in the background, was a major center for the early Church and a base from which Paul began his journeys.

Courtesy Matson Photo Service

(Acts 2:47) _____

(Acts 4:4) _____

(Acts 5:14) _____

(Acts 6:7) _____

These scriptures clearly illustrate how rapidly God’s Church grew. Thousands of people were called into the Church. But did you notice the major growth was still in Jerusalem? All the members of the Church in the first few years were Jews or Jewish Proselytes (converts to Judaism). They had either grown up in or had adopted the Jewish religion and its traditions.

These new converts to God’s Church still had many of their *own* previous ideas and customs. And part of the Jewish customs were traditions which had been developed over the centuries. Some customs were very much a part of God’s Law and God’s original instruction to His people, Israel. However, the Jewish religious leaders had *added* many do’s and don’ts and distances and measurements which God never intended.

Still other practices were part of the sacrificial law that God intended to be observed for a period of time only. The sacrificial offerings pictured the time when Jesus Christ would come as the Passover Lamb

to be sacrificed for the sins of the world. After Christ's sacrifice it was no longer necessary to keep the sacrificial law of animal sacrifices which could not forgive sin, but were reminders of sin and a *physical substitute* for the then future sacrifice of Christ.

Thus when Christ died, animal sacrifices were no longer necessary. But many whom God called into the New Testament Church of God from this Jewish background did not understand that. They thought sacrifices were still necessary. They had new truth to learn and they also had to "unlearn" some long-standing ideas. Even today most of those called into God's Church have many things to "unlearn," while at the same time learning many new Bible truths. One new truth the New Testament Church learned about concerned circumcision.

CONTROVERSY OVER CIRCUMCISION

As a result of Paul's preaching the Word of God in Asia Minor—in Lystra, Iconium, Derby and other cities where he and Barnabas traveled—God called hundreds into His Church. Most of these were Gentiles—non-Israelites—and they did not practice circumcision.

When the Jewish brethren realized God was calling Gentiles into His Church, they thought the Gentiles should be circumcised. Turn to Acts 15:1 and, in your own words, write down what the men from Judea did. _____

At first you might not think this would become a problem in the Church. But read



Photo by Z. Kluger

Jerusalem, headquarters of the early New Testament Church. It was here that the first ministerial conference was held.

verse 2 and fill in the following blanks. "Paul and Barnabas had no small _____ and _____ with them. . . ."

So what course of action was taken to solve this doctrinal problem? Acts 15:2 (write down the last part of the verse) _____

Paul and Barnabas, along with a few others, traveled to Jerusalem—headquarters of the New Testament Church—to discuss this problem with Peter and the other apostles.

Actually there were several aspects to the question of circumcision. Was circumcision a spiritual law for all men? Was it necessary for salvation? Was it merely a personal matter? Would all adult Gentile males have to be circumcised at the time they became members of God's Church? And would all male children born into the families of members of the Church have to be circumcised?

Certainly in Old Testament times it was required for all Israel. Let's take a brief look into history to see why it was so important to the Jewish people and therefore why this controversy was so great.

When did God first give instructions for circumcision to one of His servants? Read Genesis 17:9-14 (you need to write out only verse 10) _____

This token of the covenant God made with Abraham was given over 1900 years before Christ. All of Abraham's male descendants were commanded to be circumcised.

At the time of Moses, what instruction was given concerning newborn males? (Leviticus 12:3) _____

Can you now see why, in the time of Paul, the Jews felt so strongly about the necessity of this practice? For centuries and centuries it had been a way of life!

However, Paul and Barnabas had seen God

call many Gentiles. They had been baptized, received the Holy Spirit, and become stable members of God's Church. Among them elders had been ordained. Yet practically none of them had been circumcised.

Thus Paul and Barnabas strongly felt that circumcision was not necessary for salvation. But most of the Jewish brethren felt that Gentiles absolutely had to be circumcised. So about 49 A.D., the ministers including Paul, whom God selected to go to the Gentiles and used to preach the Gospel to thousands of people, gathered together to discuss whether or not Gentile converts needed to be circumcised. This was the very *first* ministerial conference held in the early Church of God.

After much discussion at the meeting of the apostles and evangelists in Jerusalem, who was it that settled the question, making the final decision? (Acts 15:7) _____. Peter had been chosen by Christ as the chief apostle. It was Peter whom Christ chose of all the apostles to first carry the message of salvation to the Gentiles. And it was now Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, who made the binding decision that Gentiles need not be circumcised as a requirement for salvation (verses 8-11). Then James, pastor of the headquarters Church at Jerusalem, who was acting as chairman of the meeting, confirmed Peter's decision, thus making it an official teaching of the Church.

What kind of "circumcision" is now necessary in the New Testament Church? (Rom. 2:28-29) _____

God revealed that it was no longer necessary to be physically circumcised *as a sign* of being one of His people. Instead, circumcision is now to be of the "heart." Having been begotten by the Spirit of God is now the *sign* of being one of God's people. But even though physical circumcision is not necessary for salvation, it is



Map by Bill Wilson

Paul's Second Journey

still practiced by most of God's people today for health reasons.

God revealed new truth to His Church just as Christ promised He would (John 16:13). However, He did not do it all at once. Likewise today, God continues to reveal new truth to His Church through His chosen apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, as He has for more than 50 years! And God will continue to lead His Church into new truth through His apostle—just as He did in the days of Peter and Paul.

PAUL BEGINS HIS SECOND JOURNEY

After returning to Antioch from Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas decided to go back through the very same areas where they had been previously. They wanted to see how the churches were doing and to bring the news of the Jerusalem conference to them.

Remember that in the last lesson we talked

about a young ministerial assistant named John Mark who left his responsibility with Paul and Barnabas and returned home. Paul had been very unhappy with John Mark for leaving, but Barnabas once again wanted to take his nephew with him on their second trip (Acts 15:36-38).

So what happened? (Acts 15:39-40) _____

From this point on, there is little record of the ministry of Barnabas. Instead, the book of Acts gives special emphasis to the ministry of Paul and the powerful way God used him to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God throughout the Gentile world.

Paul had been called by God into the ministry about 15 years before the Jerusalem

conference. And he was given about 15 more years after the conference to proclaim God's Word before his life ended.

Paul powerfully proclaimed God's message to the Gentile world. During the last 15 years of his ministry, he preached throughout much of the Roman world as it then existed. He raised up many Churches, ordained elders, and during that time wrote 14 letters, or epistles, which are recorded in the Bible. Paul wrote more pages of the Bible than any other man, except perhaps for Moses or David.

After Paul and Barnabas decided to go their separate ways, Paul asked Silas to travel with him. First, they visited the Churches in Syria and Cilicia where Paul had been about a year before. Where did Paul and Silas then go? (Acts 16:1) _____ and _____

(Find these cities on the map on page 5, then trace the route of Paul's second journey as you learn each new city he visits.)

Thus began Paul's second trip. This trip would take him to places he had never dreamed of going. And of course this provided some of the most interesting experiences of his life.

PAUL MEETS TIMOTHY

In the city of Lystra, Paul became acquainted with a young man. What was his name? (Acts 16:1) _____. He was probably in his late teens at this time. And he was to become a very close personal companion of Paul.

Because of Timothy's Jewish grandmother and mother (his father was Greek) Timothy had known _____ from the time he was just a child (II Timothy 3:15). Timothy had been taught the Scriptures by his mother and grandmother (II Timothy 1:5) just like many of you who are studying this Y.E.S. lesson have grown up in God's Church. Like Timothy, you may be very familiar with many of the doctrines and truths revealed in the Bible and taught by the Church. He did not treat them lightly and neither should you.

As a young man, not even 20, Timothy began to travel with the apostle Paul. And later Timothy became an _____ (II Timothy 4:5). He was also like a _____ to Paul (I Timothy 1:2).

But interestingly enough, when Paul took Timothy to begin training him for the ministry, he felt Timothy should be circumcised. (Since his father was Greek, this had not been done.) Paul had this done—even though he had just come from Jerusalem where Peter in that first ministerial conference decided, through God's inspiration, that circumcision was not necessary for salvation! Why, then, did Paul have Timothy circumcised?

There is an important spiritual principle that Christ had given the apostles earlier. Paul must have known it well and applied it in the case of Timothy. Following this principle will help you in many ways throughout the rest of your life. It is found in Matthew 10:16. Write it down and remember it. _____

Paul knew that he and Timothy would be traveling among Jews. Had Timothy not been circumcised, this fact might have become known and caused some of the Jews who felt strongly about circumcision to become upset and stumble spiritually. It would simply be much easier for Paul to teach the Gospel if he were not always having to explain the question of circumcision. So Timothy was circumcised so it would never be a problem to the Jewish community.

How did Paul conduct himself in dealing with people? (I Corinthians 9:22) _____

_____. Paul made it a point not to offend others. He observed the customs of the people he came in contact with, provided it was not a sin. For this reason he was

respected and was able to more effectively preach God's Word.

THE GOSPEL GOES TO EUROPE

Now look at the map on page 5 and notice again how Paul's second journey began. He visited the Churches which had been established on the first trip and then went north to _____ (Acts 16:7). From there Paul and Silas wanted to go to _____ (same verse), but God did not want them to go there.

Write out I Peter 1:1 for a clue as to why Paul did not go eastward on this journey to continue his preaching. _____

Christ had given each apostle an area of responsibility. Paul, as we have seen, was to preach the Word of God throughout the Gentile world. God intended Paul to go to places the other apostles had not gone to.

Remember, the original apostles were sent by Christ to preach to the lost sheep of the House of Israel (Matthew 10:6). Peter was primarily to preach to the Israelites—even

those who had left Judea and were now living in other areas of the Roman Empire. Bithynia was an area God wanted Peter to reach as we read in I Peter 1:1.

The Bible doesn't say how Paul was prevented from going to Bithynia—it just didn't work out. So Paul went on to the city of Troas where God revealed what he wanted him to do next. How did God reveal this to Paul? (Acts 16:9) _____

By this vision Paul knew that God wanted him to preach the Gospel in Macedonia (located in northern Greece) which is on the continent of Europe. It would be the *first* time as recorded in the book of Acts that the Gospel was preached in Europe.

So Paul and his party caught a boat crossing the Aegean Sea at a place about 100 miles wide. They then went to the chief city in the northern part of Macedonia called _____ (Acts 16:12). Notice also in verse 12 that they waited a few days before anything happened.

We are told that God opens doors to His



Photo by P. Termes

A barren valley is all that remains of Lystra, the city where Paul became acquainted with Timothy.

servants to preach the Gospel (II Corinthians 2:12). But God didn't open a door right away in Philippi. There was an important reason why. God was doing things on a time schedule. Now read verse 13 of Acts 16 and write the verse here. _____

"On the Sabbath" could just as well be translated, "on the day of Weeks" or "on the day of Pentecost," which is seven weeks after the Sabbath which comes during the days of Unleavened Bread.

So Paul began to preach in Europe on the day of Pentecost. The year was 50 A.D. Now let's do some quick calculation. Recall that the New Testament Church began on the day of Pentecost in 31 A.D. Since Paul was in Philippi on Pentecost in the year 50 A.D., how many years had gone by? _____

What we have been studying in the book of Acts up to this point was the preaching of the Gospel on the continent of Asia (throughout the Middle East). Exactly 19 years after the start of the New Testament Church in Jerusalem, the Gospel began to be preached on the continent of Europe. But what is the significance of all this?

A nineteen year time cycle happens to be one of several time cycles in the universe. Every 19 years the sun, moon, and earth come into approximately the same alignment as they were 19 years before.

The Philadelphia era of the end-time Work of God which He began through His apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, bears some interesting similarities. Mr. Armstrong began to broadcast on a regular basis the first Sunday in January of 1934 in Eugene, Oregon, in the United States. Over the years since then God's Work grew. Additional stations were added—but they only reached the North American continent.

Then, on the first Sunday in January of

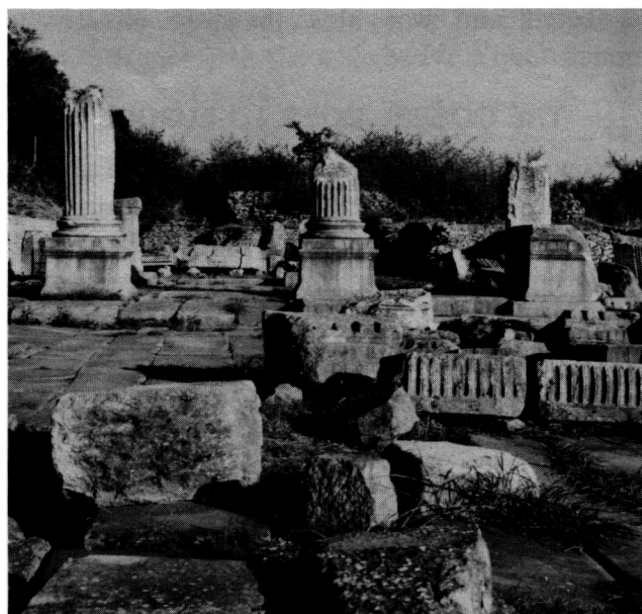


Photo by Dimitri

Ruins at Philippi in northern Greece today. It was in this city that the Gospel was first preached in Europe.

1953, the World Tomorrow radio program began on Radio Luxembourg on the continent of . . . ? You guessed it—*Europe*. How many years had gone by since that first Sunday in 1934? _____

God obviously planned that His modern-day Work reach Europe exactly one 19-year time cycle after beginning to reach the United States!

SATAN ATTEMPTS TO HINDER PAUL

Soon after beginning God's Work in Philippi, Paul and his party began to be followed about by a young woman who was possessed by a demon. We do not have space in this lesson to explain the subject of the devil and demons in great detail, but it is important to understand some basic facts. There is a real spirit world. Sometimes evil spirits, or demons as they are called, can take control of the minds of people if allowed by those people.

In Philippi, where God's Work was taking a giant leap forward, Satan was there to stir up trouble through this young lady. Satan tried to use her to upset the Work of God being done through Paul in this city.

What did this demon possessed woman do for her masters? (Acts 16:16) _____

_____.

A “soothsayer” is a person who foretells the future. There are many people today who claim to be able to foretell the future. We call them fortunetellers or mediums. Fortunetellers will sometimes charge money to “read palms,” “read tea leaves,” or “divine the future” in many strange ways.

Many people today who try to tell the future believe it is foretold in the stars—they practice what is called astrology. God tells us all fortunetelling should be avoided! (Deuteronomy 18:10-14.)

The demon in the young lady who followed Paul knew that he was a servant of God. After enduring this problem for several days, what did Paul do? (Acts 16:18) _____

_____.

Notice that the casting out of demons is a power and responsibility God has given His ministry. Paul did not use this authority lightly. He permitted this woman to spend several days troubling him before he took any action. But when it became obvious the demon was trying to upset the work Paul had to do, he used the power of the Holy Spirit to cast out the demon, ordering it to leave by the authority of Jesus Christ.

But with the demon gone from the girl, she could no longer foretell the future. Apparently many people in this town had gone to her. She had brought much wealth to those men who utilized her “powers” to tell the future.

So what did these men, who must have had some influence in the city, cause to have done to Paul and Silas? (Acts 16:23) _____

_____.

Sometimes God allows His servants to undergo many trials. A true Christian may have to sometimes suffer—and sometimes suffer wrongfully — for obeying God! Paul had done nothing wrong by casting out the demon. Everyone ought to have rejoiced that this girl

had been freed from the shackles of an evil spirit. But because she could no longer tell the future, the men who used her for profit were angry. Not only were Paul and Silas put in prison, they were beaten with whips, and thrown into what we would call solitary confinement (verse 24). And all of this without a hearing or a trial!

In jail, Paul and Silas set a tremendous example. They knew they had been sent to do God’s Work—and they knew God could turn this apparent disaster into an advantage.

What would you do if you were thrown in jail for similar reasons? _____

Most of you probably wrote down that you would pray—probably pray harder than you had ever prayed before. That would be the right thing to do. Paul and Silas did just that. But what else did they do? (Acts 16:25) _____

What happened after they had prayed and sung praises to God? (Acts 16:26) _____

_____.

Can you imagine what all the prisoners and the guards must have thought? Here these two “Jewish trouble-makers” were thrown into jail. And rather than being asleep in the middle of the night like everyone else, they had the audacity to stay awake in their cells to pray and sing praises to God.

Suddenly a great earthquake occurred. Every prison door was broken open and every prisoner’s shackles fell off!

Imagine the reaction of the chief jailer. What was he going to do to himself? (Acts 16:27) _____

_____.

Paul shouted at him not to hurt himself—that the prisoners were still in their cells.

What did the jailer then ask Paul and Silas? (Acts 16:30) _____

Many people think that this jailer was “instantly saved.” But we only have a condensed form of the story here. This man used the word “saved” which certainly was not a phrase out of his pagan Greek religion. He must have heard the preaching of Paul previous to the apostles’ imprisonment.

The jailer knew Paul had preached a message of salvation—the resurrection of the dead, the Kingdom of God, etc. Of course, he had not believed the message. But he must have heard it! Now, with the miracle he had just witnessed, his mind was opened. He was prepared to believe the truth when it was taught to him.

What did Paul and Silas do next? (Acts 16:31-32) _____

After they had taken time to explain the truth of who Jesus was and what it meant to obey Him, to surrender to Him, to count the cost—then the jailer and his adult household were baptized (Acts 16:33).

The next day, since there were obviously no charges to be brought against Paul and Silas, the magistrates (officials of the city) wanted to let them go. But Paul was not willing to let this unlawful beating and jailing go without letting them know they had made a very serious mistake.

Remember in the last lesson we learned that Paul had been born into a Jewish family who had purchased Roman citizenship. That automatically made Paul a Roman citizen. He had all the rights due a citizen of the Roman Empire.

But who would have guessed that Paul was a Roman citizen?

One thing the Romans did was protect the rights of their citizens. They had the right to a trial and could not be beaten. Yet Paul had been whipped and thrown into jail without a trial.

When the magistrates heard that they had violated the rights of a Roman citizen, they must have been fearful that the Roman government might find out and have them

punished. They wanted to let Paul and Silas go as though nothing had happened. To emphasize the seriousness of their mistake, Paul told the jailer to inform the magistrates that they themselves would have to personally escort Paul and Silas out of prison. This the magistrates did and pleaded with them to quietly leave town.

ON TO THESSALONICA AND BEREA

After leaving Philippi, Paul and his party journeyed on to _____ (Acts 17:1). What did he do there? (Verse 2) _____

Wherever Paul went to preach, he always went first to the Jewish community in the city. Remember, Paul had been a rabbinical student. Perhaps for this reason he was often invited to speak in the synagogues. Since Paul was called to minister to the Gentiles, speaking in the synagogues served as a starting point for later preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the Gentiles as word spread around town.

You should note here that nearly 20 years had gone by since the establishment of the New Testament Church in Jerusalem and Paul was still observing the Sabbath day—“as his manner was.” Certainly Paul could have preached the Gospel in many different ways. But he almost always launched the beginning of his ministry in a new area on the Sabbath day. As a result of Paul’s preaching, how many of the Jews and Greeks believed in Thessalonica? (Verse 4) _____

As was always the case, of course, many more did not believe Paul than believed him. God was not calling everyone at this time—just a few. But in many cases there were enough called to form congregations in the cities where Paul preached. In the case of Thessalonica, a large number of Gentiles became Christians.

In Thessalonica we find an interesting

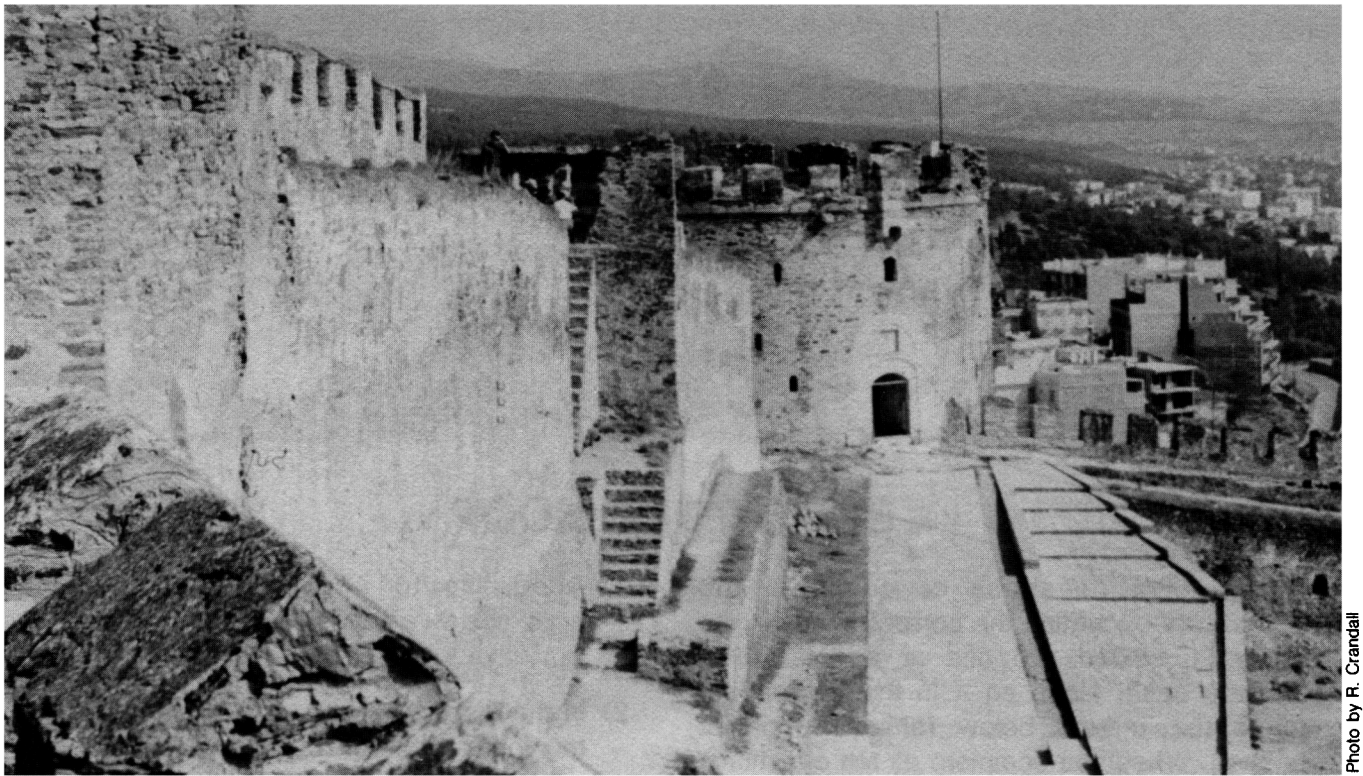


Photo by R. Crandall

Ancient wall in the city of Thessalonica. Many Gentiles were converted in this city as a result of Paul's preaching.

example of how human beings can react. Read verse 5 and then write out. _____

People will sometimes stoop very low when moved by jealousy and anger. These religionists even used liars and cheats to fulfill their own purposes.

As a result of the uproar caused by Paul's preaching, what did Paul and Silas have to do? (Acts 17:10) _____

_____. Note at the end of the verse their continuing custom to preach first to the Jews in their synagogues.

We need to notice a very important example set by the Bereans who heard Paul. What was their attitude toward what Paul preached? (Acts 17:11) _____

And what was the result? (Verse 12) _____

God wants you to have the same attitude the Bereans had toward Paul's preaching of God's truth. You should always search the Scriptures to prove whether the things you hear in sermons or read in the Church's literature *are so*. The negative approach—trying to disprove—is not the right approach at all. Study with an open mind, always remembering what Paul said in I Thessalonians 5:21: _____

After preaching in Berea, Paul left some of his companions to continue preaching there while he went on to _____ (Acts 17:15).

We will continue the study of Paul's second journey in the next lesson. In addition, we'll begin the story of Paul's third journey.

BIBLE MEMORY

Acts 2:38

Acts 3:19-21

SHOOT THE HOOP

Answer the questions or complete the statements by writing the correct words in the spaces provided. Do one at a time. After finishing each, place an X in the appropriate circle (basketball) below for each correct answer. When you complete all ten questions, you will have scored a basket!



- 1) Daily
2) Jews and Jewish Proselytes
3) Physical substitute
4) Circumcision
5) Peter
6) John Mark
7) Lystra
8) Silas
9) Earthquake
10) Roman

ANSWERS

- 1) According to Acts 2:47, how often was God adding to His Church?

- 2) In the first few years of the Church, most members were _____ and _____.
- 3) Animal sacrifices were reminders of sin, and were only a _____ pointing to Christ.
- 4) What was the subject of the controversy mentioned in Acts 15? _____
- 5) Who was the chief apostle who settled the controversy? _____
- 6) Paul and Barnabas disputed over _____ in Acts 15:39-40.
- 7) In what city did Paul become acquainted with Timothy? _____
- 8) Who was the minister that accompanied Paul on His second journey?

- 9) An _____ occurred when Paul and Silas began praying and singing in prison.
- 10) After beating Paul, the magistrates were fearful when they learned that he was a _____ citizen.