Pastor's Papers | Ronald H. Gann
Bible/Apologetics

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

A Survey Of The Life & Ministry Of The Apostle Paul (Part 5)
(Extracted From *A Hebrew Of Hebrews*; Ronald H. Gann [Aventine Press, 2008])

182 Rockingham Road
Londonderry, NH 03053
(603) 759-7120 | office@bridgewaychristianchurch.org

www.bridgewaychristianchurch.org

"By the time we got to the Teheran conference, one noticed that things were changing," said Ian Jacob, a political advisor to Winston Churchill. The British assistant secretary solemnly recalled the events surrounding the tripartite talks of Teheran in 1943 that fractured the bond of friendship between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill. At the conference, Roosevelt openly teased Churchill, ruled against him on strategic decisions, and deferred to Joseph Stalin, whom he thought would play a more prominent role in the postwar world. Recalling the unexpected friction between Great Britain and the United States, Jacob continued: "From that moment on we were nothing like so close as we had been."

Convened in the capital of Iran on November 28, 1943, the Teheran conference was the first three-power war summit of World War II. Together for the first time were the Allied leaders—President Franklin Roosevelt of the United States, Prime Minister Winston Churchill of Great Britain, and Premier Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union. The purpose of the landmark symposium was to strengthen international resolve against Germany, Italy, and Japan; to coordinate military strategy in the European Theater of Operations and to conjure up the political plan for a postwar Europe.[1] The meeting of the 'Big Three' brought together into one room, as Churchill commented at the time, the largest concentration of world power in human history.

After four days of intense deliberation, the historic summit produced the linchpin strategy that would ultimately lead to an Allied victory against the Germans. The plan called for the invasion of Normandy, France, by an unprecedented show of force, tentatively titled Operation Overlord (or D-Day). The Soviet Union agreed to launch a military offensive against German-occupied France on the eastern front, flanking the amphibious assault from the west by the United States and Great Britain.

To the watching world, the conference was a resounding display of diplomacy. In the joint statement issued afterwards, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin renewed their commitment to broker victory in Europe:

> We the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and the Premier of the Soviet Union, have met these four days past … and have shaped and confirmed our common policy … We expressed our determination that our nations shall work together in war and in the peace that will follow … We came here with hope and determination. We leave here, friends in fact, in spirit and in purpose.[2]

What appeared publicly as a political achievement at Teheran was, in private, a personal disappointment for Winston Churchill. Something was amiss in his relationship with Roosevelt. No sooner had the Prime Minister arrived at his quarters in Teheran did he feel an unsettling sense of disconnect with the President.

Churchill sent a cable to Roosevelt inviting him to join him at the British embassy for his stay. Churchill was surprised when his trusted friend declined, opting instead to lodge at the Russian consulate, to be near Stalin.

Roosevelt made it clear to his friend that he wanted to meet with Stalin alone—*without* Churchill—convinced he could establish an immediate rapport with the Soviet dictator. The only means to achieve that end, the President confessed later, was to reside at the Soviet compound away from British meddling. Roosevelt feared that Churchill's longwinded speeches were sure to misfire in translation, possibly alienating Stalin. He also was apprehensive that the voluble Churchill would ignore discretion on certain subject matters that were sensitive to the Premier.[3] Understandably, the Prime Minister was offended by the President's snub.

The events that transpired during the four-day conference at the Russian embassy only exacerbated Churchill's disillusionment. Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin came together with Roosevelt presiding as the chairman. Each leader saluted the other for their contributions to the war effort and put on an exhibition of manners before an international press corps. The men dressed famously—Stalin in his military garb, Roosevelt in a black pinstriped suit, and Churchill in his British Air-Commodore's uniform. The meeting began with quirky charm as Roosevelt introduced himself as the youngest of the three, inciting polite laugher from the staff. However, despite the veneer of political protocol, a storm was brewing.

Getting down to business, the three world leaders turned to the weightier matters of the war. At issue on the agenda was the exact date as to when Operation Overlord should take place. Stalin was adamant that massive, coordinated attacks upon occupied France should begin in the spring, no later than May. Convinced that such a tight deadline was cavalier, Churchill voiced his objection. The Prime Minister insisted that Great Britain be allowed some flexibility in the timing in order to muster the necessary forces, safeguard other battlefronts, and replenish their armory. Stalin saw Churchill's reservations as a sign of timidity.

"I wish to pose a very direct question to the Prime Minister about 'Overlord'," Stalin said, scrutinizing Churchill. "Do the Prime Minister and the British staff *really* believe in 'Overlord'?"

A red-faced Churchill was irked by the pointed question. He defended his reluctance by suggesting that if the Allied forces enlisted Turkey's assistance, then miniature combative missions could be carried out with comparatively fewer casualties. As it was, the popular plan for a cross-Channel invasion would require some thirty-five British-American divisions combined with an estimated sixty-eight landing craft. To facilitate a battle-ready force of that magnitude would require a British delay of at least a month or two beyond the firm date that Stalin was insisting upon.

Churchill's argument failed to persuade Stalin, putting the two heads of state at an impasse. They turned to Roosevelt as mediator. To Churchill's astonishment, his loyal ally sided with the Soviet dictator. Stalin was gratified by the President's endorsement, whereas the normally verbose Prime Minister sat silent and dejected.

The initial meeting between the Heads of State could not end fast enough for Churchill. He hoped to reconnect with Roosevelt in private before their second plenary meeting, eager to discuss strategies important to the British-American alliance. Additionally, he hoped to salvage his timeline proposal for D-Day and plead Great Britain's case one more time. However, when he sent a message to Roosevelt to arrange a one-on-one meeting, the Prime Minister was rebuffed a second time in as many days. Roosevelt refused his friend's invitation, maintaining that they should not meet alone for fear that they might arouse Stalin's suspicion. The President's missive stung Churchill yet again. "It's not like him," he bemoaned to a British confidant.

The growing chasm between Roosevelt and Churchill reached its climax at a state dinner hosted by the Premier at the Russian embassy. What began as a ceremonial dinner adorned with Soviet trappings and formal decorum, quickly turned caustic. Pitted against one another were Stalin and Churchill.

Stalin attacked every remark of the Prime Minister with biting sarcasm. It did not go unnoticed by staffers that, when the President spoke, Stalin was deferential and attentive. On the other hand, he did not hesitate to interrupt or heckle when Churchill held the floor. What the Soviet dictator meant as lighthearted banter, Churchill interpreted as blatant disrespect. Meanwhile, President Roosevelt looked on, seemingly indifferent to his friend's discomfort.

Stalin's antics to needle Churchill finally came to a head midway through dinner. Masking offensive allegations with a smile, Stalin implied that Churchill—the very leader who had convinced the world of the dangers of Nazism and who preached an aggressive military posture toward the Third Reich—now seemed inexplicably passive. By refusing to endorse the May debut of Operation Overlord, Churchill frustrated the Soviet leader. The Premier spoke cruelly, wondering aloud if Churchill was "nursing some secret affection for the Germans" and "wanted soft peace." He further suggested that perhaps the Prime Minister had become weak in the interval between the two world wars. To a military mind like Churchill's, the very idea of capitulation or cowardice in a time of national calamity was reprehensible. Looking to President Roosevelt for support, Churchill was disappointed to find his friend smirking alongside Stalin with a cocked eyebrow.

President Roosevelt explained later that he succeeded in establishing a personal relationship with Stalin by refusing to come to Churchill's defense on numerous occasions—even going so far as to collude with Stalin in teasing the Englishman. He confessed to ridiculing his friend "about his Britishness, about John Bull, about his cigars, about his habits"[4] in order to win Stalin's favor. Roosevelt's tactics were an apparent success. With Churchill unwittingly playing the whipping boy to Roosevelt's cunning and Stalin's acerbic wit, the President later gloated, "From that time on our relations were personal … The ice was broken and [Stalin and I] talked like men and brothers."

In spite of the noble intentions of his American ally to befriend Stalin, Churchill found Roosevelt's ways to be ignoble:

> I realized at Teheran for the first time what a small nation we are. There I sat with the great Russian bear on one side of me, with paws outstretched, and on the other side sat the great American buffalo, and between the two

> sat the poor little English donkey who was the only one, the only one of the three, who knew the right way home.

The hilarity at Churchill's expense soon turned sober. It was no secret that, in view of Hitler's breach of the Soviet non-aggression pact two years earlier, Joseph Stalin held a grudge against Germany. It gave the Premier a sinister pleasure to make light of the deaths of German officers at Allied hands. In a veiled jest, Stalin suggested that fifty thousand Nazi stormtroopers should be "rounded up and shot." Churchill sat appalled at the sardonic smile on Stalin's face. Playing to Stalin's ego, however, was President Roosevelt who flippantly countered that only forty-nine thousand should be shot, not fifty. Stalin chuckled at the crafty grin on Roosevelt's face.

Churchill sat uneasily quiet. The Prime Minister suspected that Stalin's light-hearted approach was in fact a ploy to gauge the temperature of the two western leaders. Because Nazi contravention of the Soviet pact was still a festering wound for the Russians, Churchill feared that the dictator was masking genuine intentions with humor. It was inexcusable to the Prime Minister that Stalin would even jest of such reprehensible conduct.

Finally, Churchill could no longer contain his frustration over the evening's atmosphere. All the ridiculing, all the belittling, all the sarcasm and, worst of all, all the perfidy by Roosevelt had finally crossed the line with the refined leader. "The British Parliament and public will never tolerate mass executions," Churchill barked, with the pitch in his voice elevating noticeably. "Even if in war passion they allowed them to begin, they would turn violently against those responsible after the first butchery had taken place. The Soviets must be under no delusion on this point."

Stalin refused to submit to Churchill. "Fifty thousand," he said, "must be shot."

With still no support coming from Roosevelt, Churchill was beside himself. "I would rather be taken out into the garden here and now and be shot myself than sully my own and my country's honor by such infamy."

Roosevelt sat quietly, apparently amused by the debate. That the President refused to come to his aid about a policy obviously shared between their two countries sent Churchill into a fury. Expressing his mounting resentment toward the man he thought was his friend, he stormed out of the dining hall into an adjacent room to gather his composure. The dinner table was left stunned. Jon Meacham notes:

> That Churchill was so upset he bolted from the company of his allies suggests the scope of the emotional storm raging at Teheran and the degree to which Roosevelt had successfully distanced himself from Churchill. If Roosevelt sympathized with Churchill's feelings, he did not show it. He rather enjoyed the spectacle. "Joe teased the P.M. like a boy," Roosevelt reported to his cabinet, "and it was very amusing."[5]

After an awkward recess, Premier Stalin left his seat at the table and went to Churchill to make amends, assuring the Prime Minister that he was only speaking in jest. Always the statesman, Churchill accepted Stalin's gesture and calmly returned to the banquet. The noxious atmosphere eventually turned civil and the three Allied leaders put the issue behind them, helped by many shots of Russian vodka. By the end

of the conference two days later on December 1, 1943, the Big Three had arrived at a consensus over D-Day strategy as well as post war policy concerning Europe. They were prepared to return to their respective homes to address the hard work which lay ahead for their nations.

Despite the conference's political success, however, a lasting dent was made in the friendship between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill—a blemish not soon forgotten by Churchill. He had repeatedly felt slighted, embarrassed, disrespected and contradicted by his trusted friend, merely because of an attempt to win over a Soviet ally. Churchill's daughter, Mary Soams, reflected years later, "My father was awfully wounded at Teheran. For reasons of state, it seems to me President Roosevelt was out to charm Stalin, and my father was the odd man out. He felt that very keenly." After a moment's pause, she added: "My father was very hurt, I think."[6]

During the weekend of the Teheran conference, the Allied leaders resolved a number of important issues. Although it was successful in achieving its objectives, the process of achieving them forever altered the dynamics between the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the President of the United States. While Adolf Hitler had brought Roosevelt and Churchill together in a seemingly unbreakable alliance, Joseph Stalin, the Premier of the Soviet Union, had driven a wedge between them.

The emotional blisters that arise from discord between friends are never easily healed. Like Roosevelt and Churchill, whose affection for one another was tested at Teheran, the Bible is not short on bleak portrayals of faltered relationships. Many broken friendships depicted in Scripture owe their erosion to irreconcilable disagreements, duplicity, common rancor, or political intrigue borne from the sinful heart of man. The fickleness of friendship gave occasion for the prophet Jeremiah to lament, "Beware of your friends; do not trust your brothers. For every brother is a deceiver, and every friend a slanderer. Friend deceives friend" (Jer. 9:4–5a).

David and Joab are a prima-facie proof of such erosion. The two friends grew to be both warriors and leaders together as Israel matured as a nation alongside them. They partnered in the same military conquests, joined forces with each other to transform Israel from a community of transients into a world powerhouse, and withstood coup attempts that sought to overthrow David's government. Apart from Jonathan (in his youth) and the prophet Nathan (in his old age), the king had no greater partner in life than Joab, the son of Zeruiah.

Although Joab was subject to King David as his army commandant, the two friends stood shoulder-to-shoulder in their purpose to secure their nation's standing in the world, even chiding one another harshly in times of hazard as men of nobility often do (2 Sam. 3:28–31; 14:30). They were a committed team whose partnership, though disagreeable on occasion, was used by God to establish the eternality of the Davidic throne. Like Moses and his brother Aaron before them, their four-decade tenure of the two highest offices in Israel is a benchmark in the nation's history.

Not all biblical friendships retain their bliss, however. After years of fidelity to David, Joab was spurned by the king for his failure to back David's named successor, Solomon. Opting instead to endorse Adonijah as the heir-apparent, Joab sullied his place in David's heart, forever blemishing the legacy that was once their friendship. When David lay bedridden by old age, Joab's collusion with Adonijah against Solomon was tantamount to a coup d'état, compelling the king to order the execution of his one-

time closest political confidant (1 Kings 2:28–34). His decades of service as the commander of David's forces did little to save Joab from his day of reckoning. Theirs was a long-lasting alliance that ended abruptly in acrimony and disturbing violence.

For the apostle Paul and his co-laborer Barnabas, similar rancor triggered the demise of their partnership. Both men ministered together and were, no doubt, familiar with the proverbs, "a righteous man is cautious in friendship" (Prov. 12:26) and "wounds from a friend can be trusted" (Prov. 27:6). But neither anticipated the events that brought about the disbanding of their coalition. Whereas God brought Paul and Barnabas to Antioch in their mutual calling to advance the gospel, John Mark drove them apart. It was a breakup of significant importance.

Paul & Barnabas's Falling Out

After an indeterminate amount of time in Antioch, Paul was compelled to return to the provinces of Phrygia, Galatia, and Lycaonia to appraise the churches. It was in each of these districts on their previous expedition that Paul and Barnabas had advanced the gospel and pioneered congregations. As over two years had passed, Paul was naturally concerned with how the Gentiles were progressing. The parental responsibility that was theirs as shepherds compelled Paul to assess firsthand the spiritual vitality of the flock and to tend to any theological or humanitarian needs that might have stockpiled in their absence.

In addition to inspecting the fruit of their earlier labors, Paul was convinced that their visit would inspire confidence in the believers and revitalize the elders. The apostle also supposed that the trek, from a tactical perspective, would likely serve as an opening to preach the gospel in locations where it had not yet been heard. To Paul's way of thinking, once they completed their return-rounds through Galatia and Lycaonia the two missionaries could then cross over into the western regions of Asia Minor, Bithynia, Thrace, Macedonia, and perhaps Achaia, expanding the gospel's reach even further.

Proposing the concept to Barnabas, who heartily agreed, the two evangelists began making travel preparations. But what started out as shared enthusiasm at the prospect of a reunion tour soon deteriorated into rancor. An irreparable rift developed between Paul and Barnabas that derailed their joint labors permanently. Their "sharp disagreement," as Luke put it, centered on the person of Mark—Barnabas's cousin (Acts 15:39a).

At issue was whether or not Mark, who had abandoned the missionaries in Perga (Acts 13:13), should accompany them on their second missionary enterprise. Whereas Barnabas insisted that his cousin should be given a second chance to make amends for his desertion, Paul was dismissive. He was adamant that Mark had forfeited any privilege to serve alongside them since his earlier defection clearly meant that he could not be depended upon in times of peril. Barnabas, on the other hand, was more forgiving toward his cousin, undoubtedly because of familial duty and his disposition as a "Son of Encouragement" (Acts 4:36). The two missionaries found themselves pitted against one another over someone with faltering courage and perseverance.

While biblical history paints a gallant picture of Mark as a co-laborer for the gospel, his start as an evangelist in the missionary field was anything but heroic. In the midst of harassment in Perga, Mark mysteriously withdrew from the apostles and returned to the safe haven of Jerusalem. Although more than two years had passed since then, Paul regarded the young man's conduct as unpardonable, if not treacherous. Richard L. Longnecker writes most succinctly: "The scar tissue of the wounds Paul suffered in establishing his missionary policy was still too tender for him to look favorably on Mark's being with them."[7]

The battle-hardened apostle had no confidence in Mark. Without mincing words, he expressed his opposition to Mark tagging along with them. At the same time, the congenial Barnabas pleaded on behalf of his cousin for a second chance—arguing that the Lord was a God of second chances, as Paul's own testimony readily revealed. To that end, Barnabas likely appealed to Paul's shadowy past as proof of God's mercy, insisting that Paul reconsider his position. But Paul remained unmoved, refusing to allow his friend to play to his sentimentality.

It is not difficult to imagine the banter exchanged between the two friends as they each argued their cases forcefully. Paul's argument was committed to principle. In his stubborn refusal to look beyond Mark's failure, the apostle almost certainly hurled an index of Scripture at Barnabas: "Putting confidence in an unreliable person in times of trouble is like chewing with a broken tooth or walking on a lame foot" (Prov. 25:19, NLT). Barnabas's argument focused on Mark's potential. He silenced the preacher of grace in all likelihood with his rejoinder: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us … because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Ps. 103:12, NIV; Lam. 3:22b–23, KJV). It was futile, but each man armed himself with a repertoire of biblical poetry in his effort to win over the other.

Theologians continue to debate which man was right. While most schools of thought maintain that Paul was in the right based on his inspired ministry and apostolic credentials, others suggest that Barnabas's behavior depicted the gospel in action. Although the Scriptures do not render a verdict, its internal evidence seems to favor Paul. He was an apostle, Barnabas was not. As one scholar notes, "Barnabas should have submitted to Paul's apostolic authority. Also, Paul and Silas, but not Barnabas and Mark, were commended by the church … it would have been unwise … to have Mark along if Paul did not trust him."[8] Still, others suggest that *both* men were equally *wrong*. Citing Proverbs 13:10, "pride only breeds quarrels," it is theoretical that both men fell victim to vanity.

Deadlocked over Mark and unable to reconcile their philosophical differences, Paul and Barnabas eventually "parted company" (Acts 15:39b). It was a heartrending breakup not unlike other accounts in Scripture (cf. Matt. 26:14–16; 45–50; Mark 14:10–11; Luke 22:3–6; 47–48). They did not end their partnership amicably, but rather with emotions so vehement that both men needed an indefinite separation.

Some view the divorce of Paul and Barnabas as a blemish on the otherwise untainted record of apostolic cooperation in the New Testament.[9] Yet far from letting the disagreement harm the outreach of the gospel, God providentially used it to double the missionary force in the first century. What Satan sought to undermine, "God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives"

(Gen. 50:20). Instead of allowing their dispute to encumber the Lord's work, He used their difference of opinion to further it. As a result, two distinct ministry teams were launched in opposite directions to share the gospel: Barnabas taking Mark to Cyprus and Paul taking Silas to the northern-Mediterranean provinces. As Chuck Swindoll put it, their disaffection saw Christian outreach "multiplying through division!"[10]

Although they apparently never again ministered together, the implication from Scripture is that Paul and Barnabas reconciled their differences later. Only four or five years after the episode, Paul wrote cordially of Barnabas's ministry in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:6). Even Mark, the cause of all the trouble, eventually grew to be a valued co-laborer of Paul's (Col. 4:10; Phm. v. 24).

That Mark rehabilitated his reputation as an evangelist and as a trusted companion to the team of apostles is evident in Paul's testimony later and, more specifically, by the gospel that bears his name. Near the end of his life, the incarcerated apostle instructed Timothy, "Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry" (2 Tim. 4:11). Beyond that, Mark was providentially used by the Holy Spirit to record the Gospel of Mark, a biography of Christ compiled from the transcribed sermons of Peter whom Mark accompanied throughout "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Pet. 1:1).[11] By the end of his life, Mark's restored character served as a glowing illustration of fidelity, proving Barnabas's point years earlier that God is indeed a God of second chances.

Opting to go his own way, Paul selected Silas, one of the leaders of the Jerusalem church, to be his ministry partner. Silas, also known as Silvanus (1 Pet. 5:12), was in every respect a suitable man to escort Paul on the second leg of his missionary work. As a prophet, he was adept at proclaiming and teaching the Word of God (Acts 15:32). As a Jew, he had entrance into the synagogues. As a Roman citizen, he enjoyed the same protection and benefits as did Paul (Acts 16:37). And his reputation in Jerusalem as a respected leader, together with his role as a scribe for Peter in his first epistle (1 Pet. 5:12), further enhanced Paul's missionary arsenal.

Introducing Timothy

While Barnabas departed Antioch with Mark for his home-island of Cyprus, Paul and his new partner, Silas, set out for Syria and Cilicia. It was Paul's intent, similar to Barnabas and Mark, to form indigenous churches and to strengthen existing ones. Syria was the region around Antioch, and Cilicia, its neighbor, was home to Paul's former residence in Tarsus. Paul had certainly founded many of its churches earlier, presumably during the ten-year period of preparation that preceded his summons to Antioch. Paul and Silas traversed the apostle's old stomping grounds with great fanfare, rejoicing in Paul's homecoming and taking delight in introducing Silas to the congregations. Together they "went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches" (Acts 26:41).

From Cilicia, Paul and Silas made their way to Derbe and Lystra. It is likely that Paul entered Lystra warily and with some trepidation given his past experience with the locals. Lystra had been the scene of some dramatic events. It was there that Paul had

healed a lame man—a misinterpreted miracle that resulted in his stoning (Acts 14:8–19). Recalling with unease the wounds he incurred for his denunciation of the Lycaonian gods, Hermes and Zeus, it is likely the apostle found his return to the city to be somewhat eerie.

Lost in the pandemonium of his attack during his earlier stint in Lystra was the conversion of a young man named Timothy. While only a teenager, Timothy had responded to Paul's preaching with great zeal. But it was only upon Paul's return to Lystra with Silas that the apostle was formally introduced to his convert. The middle-aged apostle and the youthful Timothy—who later became known as the "angel of the church of Ephesus"[12]—immediately bonded as surrogate father and son.

The degree to which God used Paul in replicating believers is exemplary. While many of his ministry companions, such as Barnabas, Silas, Mark, Apollos, Aquila, Priscilla, and Luke apparently came to faith through the work of others, most of his later entourage was the direct result of *his* personal preaching. Dionysius, Damaris, Gaius, Sopater, Tychicus, Trophimus, Stephanas, Clement, and Epaphras led the list among those counted as the first fruits of the apostle's evangelistic efforts (1 Cor. 4:15 cf. Rom. ch.16). These converts were faithful to Paul, often lending their services to him.

Of those converted by Paul, the apostle refers to only two with exceptional terms of endearment. Referring to both Titus and Timothy as "my true son in our common faith" (Tit. 1:4 cf. 1 Tim. 2:3), each had earned the special privilege of sonship in the apostle's heart. Paul was impressed with how they took seriously his command to "imitate me" (1 Cor. 4:16). Between the two, it was Timothy who most reflected the apostle. He was Paul's protégé. The apostle wrote endearingly of him:

> I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel … For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church (Php. 2:19–22; 1 Cor. 4:17).

Timothy was of mixed decent. Although taught the Scriptures by his Jewish mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, from an early age (2 Tim. 3:15), his father was a Greek. Because he had access to both cultures as a half-breed, Paul was well aware that Timothy's potential for service was an untapped commodity.

Paul was equally impressed with the young man's character. It was common knowledge that the Lycaonian Christians "at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him" (Acts 16:2). Moreover, Paul apparently concluded from interviewing him personally that he was "above reproach" (1 Tim. 3:2, 10), something the apostle certainly found impressive for someone still incapable of growing a beard. Having formed a high opinion of him, Paul arranged that he become his companion and promoted him to the office of an evangelist "to take him along on the journey" (Acts 16:3 cf. 1 Tim. 4:14). After being commissioned by the elders of the local assembly of believers (1 Tim. 4:14; 2

Tim. 1:6), Timothy was circumcised by Paul as a gesture meant to conciliate the Jews to whom he would be preaching.

With Timothy officially on board, Paul and Silas bid farewell to the church in Lystra. The two missionaries, together with Timothy, traveled from town to town, most likely stopping at neighboring Iconium and Pisidian Antioch to take on necessary provisions. The trio traveled next through the provinces of Galatia, Phrygia, and Mysia and eventually to the cities Troas, Philippi, and Berea working in concert "so the churches were strengthened in the faith" (Acts 16:5). In addition to preaching, the three evangelists delivered "to the churches the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem" at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 16:4 cf. 15:22–30).

Troas, Samothrace, & Neopolis

Continuing on in their return-expedition, it was Paul's hope to cross into the ethnic region of Mysia, a Roman province of Asia Minor. After arriving at the provincial border, however, the Holy Spirit inexplicably prevented him and his team from preaching in the area. They intended therefore to vacate the region immediately and extend their tour east into Bithynia. Yet in like manner as Mysia, "the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to" (Acts 16:7). Bewildered by the divine blockade, Troas became the default destination for the missionary team.

While enjoying his first night of sleep in Troas, Paul had a dream that directed him to his next stop on his missionary tour. He envisioned a Macedonian patron imploring him to come to the region to preach the gospel. Given that the province of Macedonia was home to two important cities—Philippi and Thessalonica—located strategically on the continent of Europe, Paul interpreted the dream as a divine summons. Eager to leave Troas, Paul set out for Macedonia across the Aegean Sea the next morning (Acts 16:8–10). Rather than moving toward the northern part of Asia Minor, as Paul originally desired, the gospel had now been pointed toward the western world.

The missionary team traveled by ship at daybreak to Samothrace and then on to the port city of Neapolis, where Luke, a confidant and biographer of the apostle, joined them. From the port city of Neapolis, Paul's entourage traveled west along the Via Egnatia—a 530-mile Roman road stretched along the Adriatic Sea—to Philippi. It was at this eastern Macedonian township that Paul and Silas, as well as Timothy and Luke, endured their greatest hardship.

Philippi

Founded in 356 BC by King Philip II (the father of Alexander the Great), Philippi was relatively isolated on the provincial border of Macedonia and Thracia, at the summit of Mt. Orbelos, ten miles from the Aegean Sea. The city was an army settlement made up of mostly retired Roman legionnaires and military dependents. It

was considered a miniature facsimile of Rome and home to a modest population of just two thousand. Despite its small populace, Luke describes Philippi as "the leading city of [the] district of Macedonia" (Acts 16:12). When Paul arrived at Philippi, the smallest municipality in his tour, little did he know that it would be his largest challenge.

As a colony that was geographically removed from the empire (v. 12), Philippi enjoyed autonomy from neighboring legislative systems, adopting instead the Roman penal, bureaucratic, and tax system. Its residents were natural beneficiaries of a highly coveted status rarely conferred outside Italy—Roman citizenship (v. 21). With a scant Jewish community and no synagogue (v. 13), the town was steeped in paganism. They were obsessed with Greek hero worship,[13] including the practices of divination and sorcery, and possessed a peculiar affinity for the gods of Egypt. Located in the heart of the city sat an austere temple where the Philippians practiced their religious rites.

As the church took root in Philippi, Satan moved to attack both it and its founder. As was his pattern every morning, Paul and his team went to a solitary place alongside the river for morning prayers and supplication. Stalking them day after day was a young slave girl reputed to have "a spirit by which she predicted the future" (v. 16). It was clear to the apostle that the girl was a medium, a channel of communication between the earthly world and the demonic hosts. She badgered Paul and his companions everywhere they went, constantly bellowing the refrain, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved" (v. 17).

Most disturbing to the apostle was the girl's biblical vocabulary. The term "Most High God" was an Old Testament title ascribed to the God of Israel (Ps. 78:35; Dan. 5:18). Similarly, "the way to be saved" was a colloquialism coined by Christians. By speaking in religious parlance, Paul feared that the demoniac was in a position to mislead the Philippians about the source of her oracles—counterfeiting the holy with the satanic. Her verbal gymnastics, as Paul saw it, was an assault on Scripture that carried with it the potential to impede his ministry in Philippi. Her antics surely called to mind Satan's misuse of Scripture when tempting the incarnate Lord (Matt. 4:5–6; Luke 4:9–11). While the demoniac's ranting was truthful, the origin from which it came was deceptively evil.

The apostle was all too familiar with the demoniac's *modus operandi* in misappropriating biblical language. One commentator rightly deduces the danger she posed: "Since the demon-possessed girl was agreeing with the Christian preachers, the natural assumption would be that she was part of their group. She would then have been in a position to do unspeakable harm to the cause of Christ."[14]

Paul neither wanted publicity from Satan's emissary nor wanted the enslaved girl's spiritual state to go unrelieved. Moreover, unlike what occurred at the borders of Mysia or Bithynia, Paul refused to retreat from Macedonia because of demonic bullying, especially since he had been summoned there by God through a prophetic dream.

Provoked to action by her disorderly taunts, the apostle exorcised the demon from the slave girl: "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her" (v. 18). At once the evil spirit released its grip from the girl and shrieked away into the void.

But all was not well in Philippi. Paul's willingness to relieve the slave girl of her suffering came at a cost to him and Silas. Her omens and divinations afforded her owners a lucrative income; copious Philippians eager to procure her skills were never in

short supply. For that reason, her masters did not take kindly to Paul putting an end to their booming trade. John B. Polhill writes:

> Greeks and Romans put great stock on augury and divination. No commander would set out on a major military campaign nor would an emperor make an important decree without first consulting an oracle to see how things might turn out. A slave girl with a clairvoyant gift was thus a veritable gold mine for her owners.[15]

Luke records nothing further about the perplexing miracle, except to note that the slave girl's deliverance infuriated her owners. In exorcising the demon, Paul had exorcised their source of income. Because of his interference with what the slave owners claimed were their property rights, "they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities" (v. 19).

The tranquil setting in Philippi was soon plunged into an anti-Semitic frenzy. The charges brought against the two missionaries alleged that they had advocated a religious rebellion and thus disturbed the commerce in Philippi. Coercing the mob for support were the slave owners who demanded that Paul and Silas be punished and they, as proprietors of the girl, receive monetary damages for their loss. The animated crowd easily persuaded the Philippian court.

The magistrate did not investigate the charges, conduct a proper hearing, or subpoena the testimony of the slave girl. Instead, Paul and Barnabas were arraigned on the word of the slave owners without any opportunity to present their defense.

The two missionaries were disrobed before a watching public while Timothy and Luke took sanctuary. The police specialist, or *lictor*,[16] who served under the command of the magistrates, administered the beating. As part of his issued uniform, the lictor carried a bundle of rods tied together—an instrument of force symbolizing the intertwining of Roman law and justice. It was an irony not lost on Paul and Silas since justice was conspicuously absent from their trial. As ordered by the authorities, the lictor carried out the harsh sentence of flogging on their naked backsides.

With little time to recover, Paul and Silas were thrown into the Philippian stockade; placed in the inner-cell for careful observation. Their feet were fixed firmly in stocks with their legs spread as wide as possible, designed to induce painful cramping. In spite of their predicament, they maintained a positive attitude. Remarkably, as the day gave over to the night, Luke records that the two battered evangelists' were "praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them" (Acts 16:25).

As they worshipped the Lord, suddenly a violent earthquake enveloped the city. The seismic shock undermined the city's foundation, in particular the jail, bringing its columns to a wobbling slant. So powerful was the earthquake that the prison doors were flung open and all the prisoners were freed from their chains. Paul and Silas saw the opportunity for a prison break, similar to Peter's miraculous release from Herod's prison years earlier (cf. Acts 12:7ff), but did not act on it. Unlike Peter's circumstances—whose escape was angelically facilitated for the purpose of saving his life—Paul and Silas's experience was meant as a divine show of force to authenticate their authority to the Philippian leaders. There was still work for them to do in the city.

When the warden awoke from the violent tremor, he saw the cell doors open and surmised the worst. According to Roman law, a guard who allowed his prisoner to escape was liable for the same penalty the prisoner would have suffered. Aware that some of his inmates were subject to execution, the jailer drew his sword in desperation to take his own life, believing the inmates had all fled. But Paul saw him in the doorway and shouted out from within his cell, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here" (v. 28).

The befuddled jailer called for torches. He then dashed to Paul and Silas and immediately fell to his trembling knees before them, no doubt convinced that the two men were some kind of miracle-workers. If he had not heard the shouts of the possessed slave girl proclaiming the men as messengers of God, he certainly received the court report as to why they were under his lock and key. On his knees before the missionaries, he cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (v. 30).

To the jailer's simple and direct question the missionaries gave an equally simple and direct answer: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household" (v. 31). They instructed the jailer in the way of salvation, contending passionately that true deliverance from condemnation was wrought only through believing in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Not unlike Paul, who experienced a remarkable manifestation of God's power that brought about his conversion on the road to Damascus (cf. Acts 9:1ff), the jailer was stripped of his defenses.

In his gratitude to the men, the jailer brought Paul and Silas to his home, introduced them to his household, prepared a meal for them, and dressed their wounds. The message of salvation was preached not only to the jailer, but also to the rest of his household. His family, servants, and perhaps relatives or guests who were staying with him all heard the gospel and believed (vv. 15, 34 cf. Acts 11:14; 18:8).

The next morning the community leaders surveyed the quake's wreckage. In an ironic twist, the warden received word from the magistrates following their inspection that Paul and Silas were to be released from their stocks. But Paul did not take the news as gratefully as the jailer had expected:

> "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out" (Acts 16:37).

What the Philippian officials had overlooked in their kangaroo court was that both Paul and Silas could have invoked their Roman citizenship if given the chance. To apply penalty to a Roman citizen without a formal trial was a serious breach of judicial statute. In Roman law, a citizen of Rome could freely travel anywhere within Roman territory under an umbrella of protection from Caesar. A validated citizen was not subject to foreign prosecution unless he consented, and he could appeal to Rome, foregoing providential jurisprudence when implicated in difficult legal matters abroad.

Paul benefited from his Roman citizenship, appealing to it when necessary (Acts 22:25–28). Not surprisingly, when the earthquake triggered the magistrates' decision to order his release, along with Silas, Paul was affronted. He refused to be dealt with so summarily. Claiming the rights of Roman citizenship for himself and Silas, he demanded that they not only be given a full pardon but formally apologized to, as due a citizen of Rome, and personally escorted out of the prison by the magistrates.

Philippi's judicial leaders found themselves in a precarious, if not regrettable, legal quandary. When learning that Paul and Silas held dual citizenship, they sought to defuse the situation at once. They humbly came before the prisoners to recant the charges and to express regret for any illegal adjudication that might have occurred. Having taken them for vagabonds, they had failed to follow the simplest of legal protocols and feloniously beat and incarcerated men who held proper credentials. They agreed to escort Paul and Silas to the city border, with the court's deepest apologies, on condition they evacuate the city immediately. The missionaries accepted the terms.

Thessalonica, Berea, & Athens

Paul and his ministry troop—Silas, Timothy, and Luke—departed Philippi on route for southwest Macedonia. Allowing for rest stops at Amphipolis and Apollonia, the group clocked an impressive 100-mile journey in just three days,[17] eventually arriving at Thessalonica, the capital of Macedonia.

As a large commercial city of perhaps two hundred thousand residents, Thessalonica attracted a diverse group of people, including a sizeable Jewish constituency. The apostle was eager to befriend the Thessalonians and establish a church there, well aware that its strategic locality provided a potential gateway for spreading the gospel through the Balkan Peninsula (1 Thess. 1:7–8).

Paul's Thessalonian ministry did not go according to plan, however. Having spoken in the synagogue on three consecutive Sabbaths, he was berated mercilessly, chastised, mocked, and the gospel consequentially stymied by his detractors. Their view of the Messiah pictured a conquering political ruler who would restore Israel's affluence, defeat the nation's enemies, and usher in the kingdom. That the Messiah was purported to have come in humility, not splendor, and to have *died* at the hands of his *own people* was beyond their comprehension.

Here, as in Philippi, Paul and Silas were accused of stirring up turmoil among the Thessalonians. The indictment alleged that the two missionaries defied "Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus" (Acts 17:7). Although innocent of the charge, the missionaries were incarcerated for a short time before eventually posting bond (v. 9). The opposition in Thessalonica proved formidable, just as it had at Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra on his first journey, convincing Paul that it was in the best interest of his team to simply move on.

The apostle's next destination was Berea, a city of non-repute, both historically and politically, situated in the foothills of southern Macedonia. The missionaries found a more amenable audience in the Jewish Bereans than those in northern Philippi and Thessalonica. Luke stipulates that the Bereans "were of more noble character" since they responded to Paul's preaching with "great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11).

When the evangelists were expelled from Thessalonica, the opposition to the gospel followed them (1 Thess. 2:14–16). On word of their success in Berea, Paul's opponents from Thessalonica dispatched emissaries to agitate and stir up the Berean crowds against him. Hoping to deflect his Thessalonian opponents, Paul assigned Silas

and Timothy to remain in Berea while he and Luke moved south to Athens—the Greco-Roman depot of philosophical thought in Achaia.

As soon as he arrived in Athens, Paul was dismayed by what he saw. Rampant idolatry surrounded him on every street corner. Known for its pantheon of gods, colorful literature, sciences, and philosophical rhetoric, Athens attracted intellectuals from all over the world, including a smorgasbord of religious persuasions. He toured the famous city by himself carefully observing its pagan milieu.

Athens was the Mediterranean axis for learning and philosophy and was considered the greatest city in antiquity, churning out such prolific thinkers as Socrates, his brilliant student Plato, and Plato's pupil Aristotle. Luke's characterization of the Athenians in Acts 17:21 as a people who "spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas" is a fitting portrayal. The city was located five miles inland on an arm connected to the Aegean Sea, stretching fifty miles to the southern peninsula in Greece. In Paul's day, Corinth had supplanted Athens as the most important political and commercial center in Achaia. Yet Athens had lost none of its cultural appeal, and was still the epicenter of erudition, hosting the world's most reputable university.

The paganism of Athens struck a dual-chord in Paul; it encouraged and distressed him simultaneously. It assured him that the Greeks, as a people, were overtly religious and therefore obviously open to spiritual ideas. At the same time, they appeared to be so open-minded—embracing any and every so-called god—that he feared they would not accept the gospel's uncompromising monotheism. His curiosity was piqued further when he stumbled across an altar dedicated to an unknown god.

In spite of not wanting to begin an evangelistic crusade in Athens until Silas and Timothy arrived from Berea, Paul could not keep silent when he attended the synagogue on the Sabbath. As with Jeremiah, "the word of God" burned within the apostle like a fire in his bones, and he could not keep silent (cf. Jer. 20:9). There he "reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks" (Acts 17:17a). He also was relentless in preaching in the "marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there" (v. 17b).

After capturing the ears of the pedestrians by his earnest preaching, the astute Epicureans and Stoic philosophers (two groups who prided themselves on their contrasting philosophies regarding the plight of humanity) invited Paul to expound on his revelatory teaching before the Areopagus: "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean" (Acts 17:19b–20).

The Areopagus was both a physical colonnade in Athens as well as a title ascribed to an aristocratic council of Athenian dignitaries. Its geographical location in Athens earned it the moniker 'Mars hill' due to its 370-foot perch above the Agora (marketplace), northwest of the Acropolis (citadel). The open-air Areopagus was unquestionably the landmark of Greek democracy. It was at this forum that a column of luminaries presided over weighty legal matters in Athens, in particular federal-related crimes.

Paul took center-stage in the Areopagus in full view of his distinguished audience. It was widely known that the fame of Athens rested on its intellectual ferment and on the interplay of competing philosophies. To be given an audience before this famed

council was a privilege rarely bestowed upon anonymous journeymen. Paul, however, was not intimidated. The city fathers respected varying religious concepts, even in spite of what they considered to be intellectually feeble superstitions, and the apostle was confident that his Greek rhetorical skills were sufficient to articulate the gospel. His invitation to appear before the Athenian council was for the purpose of learning from him, but Paul suspected it might also be a canvas by which to paint him as a buffoon for his "strange ideas" (v. 20). The apostle was unyielding:

> "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: To An Unknown God. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.
>
> The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'
>
> Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts. 17:22–31).

Paul's passionate sermon stirred the audience. Though he quoted two maxims from Greek poets—specifically the Cretan poet Epimenides ("For in him we live and move and have our being": c. 600 BC) and the Cilician poet Aratus ("for we are his offspring": 315–240 BC)—his allusion to the resurrection of the dead provoked sneers from some. Likewise, his impeachment of idols offended others.

While the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was the convincing proof for many early Christians, to the majority of Athenians it was the height of folly. The Grecian poet Aeschylus (524–456 BC), for example, suggested that the god Apollo taught, "When the dust has soaked up a man's blood, once he is dead, there is no resurrection."[18] Paul's sermon therefore contradicted the very dogmatism of their mythology, making for a resistant audience. Yet to a select few his words struck a chord. Luke records that "a few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others" (Acts 17:34).

Corinth & Ephesus

Having brought to a close his evangelistic crusade in Greece, an experience that produced dissatisfying results, Paul headed toward Corinth where he eventually reconnected with Silas and Timothy. But the 53-mile walk from Athens to Corinth was a hapless one for the apostle as he probably thought back to his beating in Philippi; his internment and expulsion from that city, the persecution he endured in Thessalonica and Berea, and the lackluster outcome of his preaching in Athens. With his second missionary journey drawing to an end after nearly five years abroad, the lonely walk forced the discouraged apostle to dwell on his disappointments.

Everett F. Harrison remarks: "The combination of only limited success at Athens, loneliness, and the prospect of facing [pagan Corinth], with its commerce and vice, accounts for the weakness and fear that gripped the apostle as he arrived to begin his work."[19] Indeed, years later Paul recalled his beleaguered morale in his first letter to the Corinthians: "I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling" (1 Cor. 2:3).

Corinth, the capital of the Roman province of Achaia with a population exceeding well over two hundred thousand, was located on a plateau connecting central Greece to the north. To the east was the port of Cenchrea leading out to the Aegean Sea, and to the west, the port of Lechaeum opening to the Adriatic Sea. Its favorable land and sea location was an economic boom for Achaia, allowing the city to capitalize on intersecting tourism and trade.

While fiscally prosperous from port traffic, Corinthian culture was ethically destitute. The city paraded over one thousand temple prostitutes eager to apply their trade in tribute to the goddess Aphrodite. Similarly, shrines dedicated to Melicertes (the god of sailors), Asclepius (the god of healing), and Apollo were advertised prominently and readily accessible. So widely known was their immersion in sexual immorality that the Greek author Aristophanes (450–385 BC) coined a Greek verb unique to them—to *Corinthianize*—meaning, "to practice sexual immorality." Furthermore, one ancient proverb went as far as to quip: "Not every man is man enough to go to Corinth."[20]

It was in this lair of sensual iniquity and pagan promiscuity that Paul met Aquila and Priscilla, two Jewish Christians and refugees who were victim of Emperor Claudius' eviction of Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2). Paul joined the pair, and worked as a tent maker to earn his keep, while also ministering in the Corinthian synagogue every Sabbath. Generally, the Jews resisted his preaching and made no secret of their distaste for him or his team of missionaries—including Aquila and Priscilla.

The attempts by Paul's opponents to frustrate his teaching proved successful. Consequently, as he had on his first journey in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:44–46), Paul reprimanded the Corinthian Jews for their rejection of the gospel and abandoned his outreach to them: "Your blood be on your own heads!" he testified. "I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6).

The constant rejection by his kinsmen did not go without effect on the apostle. At one point, when Paul was feeling vulnerable and apparently fearful, the Lord appeared to him in a vision to bolster his spirits: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be

silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:9–10).

With renewed confidence, Paul preached boldly in Corinth while operating out of the home of Titius Justus, a recent convert whose residence was located conveniently next to the Corinthian synagogue (Acts 18:7). Through his preaching, Paul fostered a substantial revival as "many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

Paul's success in Corinth goaded his opponents all the more. Having watched as more and more Corinthians came to faith in Christ, the Jews were desperate to have him arrested, accusing him of religious flagrancy. On one occasion, they seized the apostle and brought him before the Corinthian proconsul, Gallio, making the spurious charge that his preaching was tantamount to civil disobedience, and therefore a violation of Roman law.

The proconsul was not easily moved by the Jewish arraignment. Gallio was the adopted son of a distinguished Roman rhetorician, Junius Gallio. On coming to Rome with his father during the reign of Emperor Claudius (41–54 AD), he received royal treatment with all the pomp and pageantry due a prodigy of the state. Although his reign as proconsul in Corinth was brief, all regional authority was vested in him on July 1, c. 51 AD, eight or nine months after Paul had already been preaching in the city. The Jews had hoped to capitalize on Gallio's inexperience when they brought Paul before him, but the proconsul was not to be easily duped.

Gallio's responsibly as the chief Roman authority was to judge civil and criminal cases, not to arbitrate religious disputes. After hearing an excerpt of the circumstantial evidence presented to him by leaders of the Jewish community, he halted the proceedings. He quickly concluded that their grievance with Paul amounted to nothing more than a squabble over religious semantics. Perturbed, he threw the court case out with the sarcastic jibe, "I will not be a judge of such things" (Acts 18:15b). Both parties were ejected from the forum.

Because Gallio issued a summary ruling that appeared to exonerate Paul's ministry, it had far-reaching and profound implications. No Roman authority had yet repudiated the legality of Christianity—including Sergius Paullus, the governor of Paphos who came to Christ on the heels of Elymas' blinding (Acts 13:7–11). Had either man ruled in the Jews' favor, legal precedent would have been established to ban Paul from preaching throughout the empire.

With his license to preach unimpeded, Paul stayed in Corinth longer than he probably planned, given the obvious frailty of an upstart church there. He likely thought it prudent to personally coach the believers in proper Christian conduct in preparation for his eventual departure. They would then have to learn to sustain themselves without his presence and live godly lives amid a society steeped in perversity. It was eventually seven or eight months later that the apostle finally felt it relatively safe to leave.

At some point during his year-and-a-half stint in Corinth, the apostle Paul assumed the mysterious Nazirite vow—an Old Testament pledge of separation and devotion to God (Num. 6:2–5 cf. Judg. 13:4–5; 1 Sam. 1:11). The specifics of the vow required that he abstain from wine and strong drink, refrain from cutting his hair, and avoid contact with any physical remains of the dead. For reasons that Luke does not clarify, Paul had apparently completed his vow and thus shaved his head, intending to

make the required pilgrimage to Jerusalem to present the cut hair as an offering in the temple (Num. 6:2–5). Because Paul had only thirty days to complete the rite,[21] he bid farewell to the Corinthians and set sail for Jerusalem, by way of Syria and Ephesus, taking along with him Aquila and Priscilla.

Paul had a brief layover at Ephesus where he labored extensively in the synagogue proclaiming the gospel. Short-circuiting his visit, however, was his pressing need to return to Jerusalem to fulfill his Nazirite vow. The tired apostle soon relinquished the mantle of leadership in Ephesus to Apollos, a native of Alexandria, who was respected for his "thorough knowledge of the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24b). Luke notes that through Aquila and Priscilla's polishing, who "explained to him the way of God more adequately" (v. 26), Apollos "spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately" (v. 25) in Paul's stead.

With the Ephesian church in the capable hands of Apollos, Priscilla, and Aquila, Paul continued onward to Caesarea where he "went up and greeted the church"—the influential Jerusalem church (Acts 18:22). After having fulfilled his Nazirite vow at the temple sometime thereafter, the apostle made the journey back to his home base in Antioch, putting the final stamp of completion on his second missionary journey.

Beleaguered by the taunting of his closest friend at the tripartite talks in Tehran, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin Roosevelt failed to come to terms over Joseph Stalin. Most unsettling to Churchill was Roosevelt's sarcasm. His besmirching of the English during a dinner at the Russian consulate was a breach of friendship, perhaps even betrayal, not soon forgotten by the British leader. But whereas Roosevelt and Churchill were able to finally surrender their misunderstanding for the good of their nations, as well as for the fate of western civilization, the apostle Paul and his one-time ministry partner, Barnabas, could not. Mark's earlier desertion in Perga on their first missionary journey and Barnabas's campaign that his cousin rejoin them on their second—a notion wholly unacceptable to Paul—spoke volumes about how the two men divided over deeply-held principles. Sadly, it was a celebrated partnership that dissolved in rancor.

Not to be undone, the work of God throughout the Mediterranean world—particularly in Cyprus, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia Minor—was multiplied in force by the launch of two ministry teams: Paul and Silas, as well as Barnabas and Mark. Each squad embarked independently upon the Great Commission. For Paul and Silas the adventure was wearisome but successful, while the work of Barnabas and Mark remains untold in biblical history.

Paul and Silas, together with Luke and Timothy, withstood verbal assaults among the Gentiles, physical attacks from the Grecian Jews, legal injustices perpetrated in Philippi, incarceration at Thessalonica, the rejection of the Athenians on Mars Hill, and a faulty arraignment in Corinth. Through all of this harassment, though tiring and daunting, the apostle Paul cemented his legacy.

—Ronald H. Gann

[1] Eastern Europe's postwar borders, including Poland's postwar status, and a postwar international organization—the United Nations—were the political topics discussed at the Teheran Conference.
[2] Pamphlet No. 4, *Pillars of Peace*; January 1941–February 1946; (Published by the Book Department, Army Information School, Carlisle Barracks, Pa. May 1946).
[3] Among other things, Churchill and Stalin disagreed over France and India. Whereas the Prime Minister was an admirer of French General Charles de Gaulle, Stalin was adverse to his leadership and saw a revival of France as an obstacle to the future of the Soviet Union. Conversely, Stalin took issue with Great Britain's refusal to give independence to the subcontinent of India.
[4] Perkins, Francis. *The Roosevelt I Knew* (New York: Viking, 1946), 83.
[5] Meacham, Jon. *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship* (Random House: New York, 2003).
[6] Ibid. Meacham, Jon.
[7] Longnecker, Richard L. *Acts of the Apostles; The NIV Bible Commentary, vol. 2: The New Testament*, Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III, eds., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 467.
[8] MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 13–28*, (Moody Press, 1996), 82.
[9] The only other account of disputation between the apostles is recalled in Galatians 2:11–13 when Paul rebuked Peter and Barnabas in Antioch for having succumbed to Jewish peer pressure. Their fear of the Judaizers caused the two men to sinfully separate themselves from the Gentiles, which Paul did not tolerate.
[10] Swindoll, Charles R. *A Man of Grace and Grit: Paul* (Insight for Living, 2003), 100.
[11] Paul W. Downey writes, "The earliest quotations from Mark's Gospel are found in the second-century writings of Justin Martyr, who identified his source as 'the memoirs of Peter.' Mark was apparently a successful aide to Peter" (Downey, Paul W. *Training Leadership: Lessons from the Example of Barnabas*, [Frontline, July/August, 2005], 10).
[12] *The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume I (*New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907) as cited at www.newadvent.org.
[13] Greek hero worship was the specific veneration of a *dead* man at his tomb on account of his heroic fame during life or unusual manner of death, which was thought to give him power over the living.
[14] MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 13–28*, (Moody Press, 1996), 97.
[15] Polhill, John B. *The New American Commentary: Acts* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 351 as cited in MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 13–28* (Moody Press, 1996), 96.
[16] A *lictor* was an ancient Roman officer who bore the fasces as the insignia of his office and whose duties included accompanying the chief magistrates in public appearances.
[17] Many commentators speculate that Paul, Luke, Silas, and Timothy traveled on horseback, as it is unlikely that Paul and Silas, weakened by their beating at Philippi, could have reached Thessalonica in 72-hours by foot, an average of 30 miles per day.
[18] Longnecker, 478.
[19] Harrison, Everett F. *Interpreting Acts: The Expanding Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 292 as cited in John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Acts 13–28*, (Moody Press, 1996), 146.
[20] Cited at www.cresourcei.org
[21] Samson (Judges. 16:17), Samuel (1 Sam. 1:11), and John the Baptist (Luke 1:15) were Nazirites for life.