

LIGHT AND MOMENTARY TROUBLES

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all” (2 Cor. 4:17).

The following represent about 3 to 4 years of troubles in the life of Paul. These, however, may have been among his most productive years of his life in advancing the cause of Christ.

- Around A.D. 58 Paul was returning to Jerusalem with offerings for the poor saints in Judea. He wasn't sure, however, that the Jews would accept this offering (Rom. 15:30,31).
- Because the Jews plotted to kill him he didn't sail to Syria but went by land instead (Acts 20:3).
- The bad news continued as the Holy Spirit warned him in every city that prison and hardship were waiting on him in Jerusalem (Acts 20:22-24).
- Then at Caesarea the prophet Agabus bound Paul with his own belt and predicted that the Jews in Jerusalem would bind Paul and hand him over to the Gentiles (Acts 21:10,11).
- To show the believing Jews in Jerusalem that he was living in obedience to the Law, Paul joined in the purification rites of four men who had taken a vow (Acts 21:20-26).
- When Jews from Asia, however, saw Paul in the Temple they falsely accused him of taking Trophimus the Ephesian into the Temple area (Acts 21:27-29). See also Acts 19:31-34.
- When the Jews tried to kill Paul he was arrested by the Romans (Acts 21:30-36).
- After appearing before the Sanhedrin the Lord stood near Paul and said: **“Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome” (Acts 23:11).**
- The next morning more than 40 Jews took a vow to not eat or drink until they killed Paul (Acts 23:12,13). They even sought the help of the chief priests and elders to kill Paul.
- Paul's sister's son, however, overheard this plot, advised a centurion, and 470 soldiers were assigned to escort Paul at night to safety in Caesarea (Acts 23:23,24).
- Paul preached to the Governor Felix, and his wife Drusilla, about righteousness, self control, and judgement to come. Felix kept Paul in prison hoping to receive a bribe (Acts 24:24-26)
- When the new governor, Festus, threatened to send Paul back to Jerusalem, he appealed as a Roman citizen to stand before Caesar's court (Acts 25:1-12).
- Later Paul learned that if he had not appealed to Rome he would have been set free (Acts 26:32)
- On his journey to Rome as a prisoner their ship was beset by a storm and everyone went without eating for 14 days (Acts 27:13-44).
- Their ship wrecked on the Island of Malta and Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake (Acts 28:3)
- When he finally arrived in Rome **“For two years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 28:30,31).**
- During this time it became clear to the whole palace guard that Paul was in chains for Christ (Phil. 1:13). He also made converts in Caesar's household (Phil. 4:22).
- The fact that Paul could preach while chained emboldened most of the brethren (Phil. 1:14).
- During this time Paul led many to Christ, included Onesimus, a runaway slave (Phile. 8-11).
- During this time he was also surrounded by fellow workers like Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Epaphras, Luke, Demas, and others (Col. 4:7-15).
- It was also during this time that Paul wrote 4 inspired letters that are now a part of our Bible (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon).
- Instead of being a tragedy, the things that happened to Paul actually served to advance the Gospel (Phil. 1:12).
- Perhaps someone reading these words is going through a time of testing as did Paul. Please consider that your “light and momentary troubles” might also be used by God to advance the Gospel.