

PAUL'S FIVE POSSIBLE VISITS INTO JUDEA

(When did he visit and preach throughout all Judea, Ac.26:19,20?)

Ed Dye

1. His first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, Ac.9:26-30. Cf. Gal.1:18-20.
 - a. Was confined to Jerusalem and lasted only 15 days.
 - b. He did not go into all Judea at this time.
 - c. See J.W. McGarvey, New Com. On Acts, pg. 187-189
 - d. Also, Gareth L. Reese, N.T. History, Book of Acts, College Press, pp.366,367.
2. His second visit, Ac.11:27-12:25.
 - a. The time benevolence was taken "to the brethren that dwelt in Judea"
 - b. Apparently lasted over a period of several months.
3. His third visit, Ac.15:1-30. Cf. Gal.2:1-10.
 - a. This involved the matter of the circumcision controversy at the "Jerusalem conference," lasted only a few days.
 - b. In Jerusalem on business; attended to the business; returned immediately with Barnabas, Judas, and Silas to Antioch. Cf. Vv.22-30, didn't tarry in Jerusalem.
4. His fourth visit, Ac.18:21,22 (possible visit)
 - a. This was at the end of his second preaching tour.
 - B The briefest visit of all, in indeed he even reached Judea.
 - c. There is more than a little question as to whether Paul even set foot on Judean soil at this time. See McGarvey, New Com. On Acts, pp.14,145, his note on "went up and saluted the church."
5. His fifth visit, Ac.21:4-27:2 (see 21:15)
 - a. The longest visit of all.
 - b. But all except the first two days Paul was confined to a prison cell.

During which of his five possible visits into Judea did he preach "throughout all the coasts (country) of Judea" as he affirms he did in Ac.26:19,20?

1. Not Visit #1, for it lasted only 15 days, and following that visit he "came into the regions of Syria and Celicia," and "was (still) unknown by face unto the churches of Judea," Gal.1:21,22.
2. Not Visit #5, for he was imprisoned the next day after visiting Jerusalem and had come directly from Caesarea to that city.
3. Not Visit #3, for the record not only does not suggest it, but does not even permit the possibility of an extended journey at that time.
4. Not Visit #4 in Ac.18:21,22 (only a possible visit?)
 - a. This was the briefest visit of all to Jerusalem, if indeed it even took place.
 - b. McGarvey, Acts, pp.144,145, denies it.
5. That leaves only one possibility so far as the inspired record is concerned that he could have preached "throughout all the coasts of Judea. That's Visit #2, Ac.11:27-12:25.
 - a. That he did preach "throughout all the country of Judea" is declared in his own words, Ac.26:19,20.
 - b. That such preaching would make him "known by face to the churches in Judea" is undeniable.
 - c. Now, when did he do it? Visit #2 is the only possibility!

Paul's Five Possible Visits Into Judea, cont'd. (Ed Dye)

Paul's statement that he was "unknown by face" to the churches in Judea clearly and obviously was limited to the eight or nine years he was preaching in Celicia and Antioch, and did not remain true of him indefinitely.

All of this is a vital point in answering those who argue that Jerusalem operated as the Sponsoring Church for the benevolent work, or the relief sent to brethren which dwelt in Judea, and sent from Antioch, which the Sponsoring Church advocates erroneously claim was sent only to the elders of the church in Jerusalem, Ac.11:29,30.

For further so-called proof they claim that Ac.12:25 means that since Paul and Barnabas "returned from Jerusalem, when they had finished their ministry" means that they had gone only to Jerusalem to deliver this benevolent aid, or this relief, for the needy brethren which dwelt in Judea. That they went only to Jerusalem with the relief; that they delivered all of it to the Jerusalem elders who then operated as the Sponsoring Church for its oversight and distribution to the brethren who dwelt in all of Judea.

Their claim is that since Paul left from Jerusalem when "they had finished their ministry" (Ac.12:25) that he had gone only to Jerusalem in this ministry, not to Judea, and that he thus remained "unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ" even after this trip involving this ministry. However, leaving from Jerusalem at the end of his ministry does mean that he had gone only to Jerusalem.

Visit #2 denies their claim. It proves that this was the time and the trip when he became know "by face" to the churches of Judea which were in Christ. Therefore, neither Ac.11:29,30 nor Ac.12:25 is even remotely akin to Bible authority for the Sponsoring Church arrangement in Benevolence or in Evangelism!