

The Ministry of St Paul

Objectives

To learn about the life of Saul and the spiritual struggle of St Paul and his ministry

References

- The Two Saints Peter & Paul by HH Pope Shenouda III
- Interpretation of the New Testament by Fr. Antonius Fahmy
- Interpretation of the New Testament by Fr. Antonius Fekry

Scriptural Verse

“Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?” (2 Cor.11:29)

Lesson Guidelines

A Glimpse about Saul’s life

- He was born in Tarsus of Cilicia. A Jew, from the tribe of Benjamin (Phi.3:5)
- He went to Jerusalem in the early years of his youth to complete his religious instruction, and to study the Law at the hands of “Gamaliel” (Acts 22:3)
- He was educated at the University of Tarsus and was well-known for his culture and for reading many books (Acts 26:24)
- Saul began his life with the Lord by enmity, as a persecutor of the Church and of everyone who followed Christ (Acts 9:4)
- The Lord called him in his way to Damascus to get the Christians (Acts 9: 1-4)
- His name was changed into Paul At the beginning of his call (Acts 23:11)
- After his call, he returned to the work of tent making so that he would not be a burden to the communities he served
- He was a virgin and called for the preference of virginity (1 Cor. 7:7) knowing that each one has his own gift from God, he said: “Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called” (1 Cor. 7: 7,17,20)
- He was a flame of energy and holy zeal. He preached and taught, and made considerable efforts in the ministry
- He got gifts and revelations, and ascended to the 3rd heaven (2 Cor. 12: 2 -7)
- He was beheaded with the sword and obtained the crown of martyrdom in the year 67 AD by Caesar Nero’s hands

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- He was called by the Holy Trinity; God the Father separated him from the womb (Gal.1:15), The Lord Jesus called him (Acts 9: 1-4) and the Holy Spirit called him with Barnabas for a specific work (Acts 13:2)
- After a mysterious three-year period in Arabia, he went to Jerusalem to meet with Peter, James, the brother of the Lord, and John (Gal. 1:17- 18)
- He was committed to preach to the Gentiles (Gal. 2: 7-8) as the Lord saying when He appeared to him in the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 22:21)
- He served much in Jerusalem and in Antioch. He founded the churches of Greece, as well as the Church of Rome (Acts 28: 30-31)
- He talked about theological questions like justification, renovation, Law and grace, baptism, priesthood, choice and rejection, living as Jews...
- He was filled by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:9), he spoke with tongues, made wonders and miracles even the handkerchiefs or aprons that were brought from his body healed the sick and casted out demons (Acts 19:11)
- He was firm with the sinners (1Cor. 5:3-5) & sorcerers (Acts 13:6-11) & very courageous before the governors and even he terrified them (Acts 24:25)
- He had the power to give the Holy Spirit (Acts 19: 5-6) as he received with Barnabas the right hand of fellowship (Gal.2: 8-10)
- He had many disciples two of them are the evangelists St Mark & St Luke and among them were some ladies like Phoebe and Priscilla
- Saint Paul wrote 14 epistles out of the 21 written in the Bible
- He was exposed to many tribulations and persecutions (2Cor.6:4-5). He was tired on the land and at sea, preaching in Asia and Europe. He served in many islands and founded their churches. He preached possibly in every place and in any condition.
- He was very enthusiastic, ceased every opportunity to win people for the Lord and urged his disciple Timothy to do the same (2Tim4:2)
- He was exposed to many false accusations from the Jews. He stood before governors, kings and councils. He was imprisoned and captive many times: in Philippi, Caesarea and twice in Rome. He preached while in chains ... (2Cor.11:23-33)
- He obtained Many crowns beside the martyrdom one: crown of virginity (1 Cor. 7:7), apostleship (Gal.2: 8-10), and righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8)

Conclusion

St. Paul was not among the twelve, or the seventy apostles, he did not follow Christ during His life on earth but was chosen after the Ascension. Although he was the last in his call, yet he is one of the giant capacities of ministry. He laboured more abundantly than they all" (1 Cor. 15:10). In spite of his fiery service, he was humble and always feeling unworthy & guilty for persecuting the church of God (1 Tim. 1:13) & (1 Cor. 15: 8 -9)

Activities/Discussion Points

As a group, map out the three major voyages of St. Paul using the Holy Bible.