

## Aristarchus

Of the ten Saints we know Paul had eye to eye contact with during his two years of imprisonment here at Rome, we have now spent much time talking about five: two fellow Church Apostles, Timothy and Epaphroditus, two men from Colosse, Onesimus and Epaphras, and John Mark another man whose life demonstrated what it takes to be a New Testament full overcomer. Sixth on our list is a man of Macedonia named Aristarchus, whom we have studied some things about previously. (If you can't remember much about him, don't worry, we will review what we know of Aristarchus now.) As we consider Aristarchus, make special note of the things his life also teaches us about what it takes to be a New Testament full overcomer.

Let's begin studying Aristarchus by noting that Aristarchus is mentioned five (GRACE) times in scripture, all five references in association with the Apostle Paul. Just given this information we see a big hint that Aristarchus was a GRACE Saint, and close follower of the Apostle Paul. Aristarchus probably was a product of Paul's second missionary journey, but he had really taken a hold of Paul's gospel during Paul's third missionary journey, where we first read of him after Paul had preached in Ephesus the word of God's grace the better part of three years. Here is what was said about Aristarchus the very first time we read of him: ACTS 19:29 *And the whole city (Ephesus) was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.* There is a couple of points to note here.

First, Aristarchus is noted to be from Macedonia. Macedonia is always mentioned in scripture in some kind of connection with the Apostle Paul. Macedonia means "extended land," and it lies just north of Greece. Macedonia is found mentioned twenty-six times in scripture. Twenty-six is the number that has to do with GOOD NEWS, or the GOSPEL. It was the Apostle Paul who first preached the GOOD NEWS of the GOSPEL unto the Macedonians. Recall how it was that the Apostle Paul came unto Macedonia in the first place. The following scriptural events took place after Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways. Paul saw a Macedonian in a vision in ACTS 16:9 who said: "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." And help them he did, for many were saved by the preaching of Paul. And as time went on they supported the ministry of the Apostle Paul. In 2 CORINTHIANS 11:9 Paul acknowledged the support he received from those of Macedonia stating: *And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied:...* Here in his Roman prison cell Paul writes of the help and support he has received from the Macedonians. PHILIPPIANS 4:10 *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. 14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. 15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. 18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.*

The second point we want to highlight here in ACTS 19:29 *And the whole city (Ephesus) was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel,...* is that Aristarchus here is already noted to be one of "Paul's companions in travel." This really is an important point to note as it emphasizes Aristarchus' status with Paul. A companion in travel is summarized in one Greek word: sunekdemos {soon-ek'-day-mos} (number 4898 in The Strong's Greek Concordance). Recall that the Greek word sun {soon} is a primary preposition denoting close union, and in simplest terms means: with or together. When sun {soon} is found

used with another word it brings completeness to that word. The Greek word combined with sun {soon} here is ekdemeo {ek-day-meh'-o}, which means: to go abroad. Thus sunekdemos {soon-ek'-day-mos} equates to fellow traveler going abroad from one country to another. Aristarchus forsook his own ambitions, left his old dreams, and followed the Apostle Paul, traveling where Paul traveled, just to learn more about Jesus! That is why we find him, a man of Macedonia in Ephesus, Asia in ACTS 19:29. The Apostle Paul encourages each and every one of us to follow him also. Note these scriptures written by Paul: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.* 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.*

Obviously Aristarchus had spent much time in Ephesus being one of the many who studied hard, and with an open heart full of the Holy Ghost, really learned Paul's gospel during Paul's time in Ephesus. Yet Aristarchus remained quietly in the background. We didn't even know Aristarchus was in Ephesus until ACTS 19:29. Then we find Aristarchus a pillar in this Ephesian assembly, and of great assistance in getting this Ephesian Church established. We are not told what he did, per say, yet we know he must have spent hours in prayer with the Apostle Paul, and praying for the Apostle Paul, and praying for all the Saints that they were in touch with, and may have individually spent untold hours helping those new Saints of Ephesus get established in Paul's gospel, which they had spent much time learning from the Apostle Paul himself. Aristarchus is noted in ACTS 19:29 to have been one of Paul's close traveling companions. We will also find him traveling with Paul as he heads for Rome in ACTS 27:2. This means Aristarchus stuck with Paul through the good times, and the bad. He was a true workfellow, and fellow labourer with the Apostle Paul. One of the kind you don't hear much about, but one of the ones who was a pillar in the ministry of the Apostle Paul. One who accomplished much behind the scenes, so to speak, even if it was only being a prayer warrior. Back in ACTS 19:23-41 we read of the uproar in Ephesus against Paul's teaching, yet we find in these verses Aristarchus as being one of the few who stood in defence of Paul's gospel. Perhaps Paul also had Aristarchus in mind when he wrote: *But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel...* PHILIPPIANS 1:17.

Aristarchus name means: "the best prince," or "best ruler," or "the chief of princes," or "the prince of chiefs," and as such he points us to having the best place that a church age Christian can have, that being one of the ones found in that small company of believers known as the Bride of Christ. Aristarchus is found mentioned with Paul most of the rest of Paul's life, as we will see, and is one the people Paul had in mind when he wrote *...mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample...* in PHILIPPIANS 3:17 above. Look for Aristarchus in heaven as one of the ones ruling and reigning with Christ Jesus!

So in this one verse of ACTS 19:29 we have learned that Aristarchus is a man of Macedonia, and a close traveling companion of the Apostle Paul. This fellow traveler concept is further brought out in the following scriptures concerning Aristarchus. ACTS 20:4 *And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.* Recall that Brother Copley called these men of ACTS 20:4 "the faithful seven." Here we get a third point of interest concerning Aristarchus, and that being he was from Thessalonica, the second big city Paul visited after arriving in Macedonia. Thessalonica means: "victory over the tossing of law, or falsity." Any full overcomer must have this kind of victory. Brother Copley writes that "such a victory is required to become an overcoming assembly as the Saints in Thessalonica grew to be." It was to those Saints in Thessalonica that Paul wrote his first two epistles of 1 and 2 THESSALONIANS. Thus we get a little better idea of the kind of Saints that Paul established there, which was overcoming type Saints, who were instructed to look of the soon coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Aristarchus was this kind of Saint.

Aristarchus continued traveling on to Jerusalem with Paul, and stayed near by him after Paul's arrest as is evident in next scripture we read of him, which is ACTS 27:2. ACTS 27:1 *And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.* 2 And

entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. Here again in ACTS 27:2 we find that Aristarchus is identified as being ...a Macedonian of Thessalonica... . This also means that Aristarchus had spent at least three years with Paul, or closely following Paul. No doubt Aristarchus was one of the acquaintances of Paul allowed by governor Felix to visit Paul while he was held prisoner in Caesarea. Obviously Aristarchus was close enough to Paul to know when he was being sent to Rome by King Agrippa, and to get on the same ship as Paul. Aristarchus chose to follow Paul on the treacherous journey from Caesarea to Rome willing to suffer the very same things Paul suffered on this journey, which in fact he did! Obviously Aristarchus could have left Paul at any point along the way, but he didn't, because he loved Paul, and he loved Jesus, and he loved the gospel message Paul preached. He remained Paul's companion in travel, and is next found still with Paul during the two years Paul was preaching in Rome as a prisoner in his own hired house.

A quick note before we move on from our thoughts of Aristarchus in ACTS 27. We mentioned above that Aristarchus is found listed by name in five scriptures total, showing us that he was a true GRACE Saint! Interestingly Aristarchus is also one of five (GRACE) individuals named in ACTS 27.

The final two records of Aristarchus in scripture are written by Paul during these two years he was prisoner here at Rome. In COLOSSIANS 4:10 Paul writes: *Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you,...* . How Aristarchus became Paul's "fellowprisoner" here at Rome with Paul we are not told. Was he a prisoner of the Roman Empire, or was he a prisoner with Paul by choice? Perhaps not willing to leave Paul's side, Aristarchus agreed to be "arrested" and serve time with Paul. In PHILEMON 1:24 Paul names Aristarchus a "fellowlabourer." Certainly being a "fellowprisoner," and a "fellowlabourer" of Paul's are impressive credentials worthy of a New Testament full overcomer. "Fellowlabourer" comes from the same Greek word that also translates into our English as helper, fellowhelper, fellow worker, workfellow, labourer together with, and companion in labour. From such men, and women, followers of the Apostle Paul, will come those who will rule and reign with Christ, and that is of course, those who will be in the Bride of Christ. 2 TIMOTHY 2:11 *It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: 12 If we suffer, (with Him) we shall also reign with him:...* . Certainly Aristarchus met such qualifications. May we too be found of such character! Such will be the make up of those found in that small group of Saints from this church age know as the Bride of Christ. So we see that Aristarchus was a close companion of the Apostle Paul, and an associate of Paul in the ministry, and no doubt one of the ones referenced as "...a pillar in the temple of my God..." in REVELATION 3:12! Though Aristarchus remained quietly in the background in the ministry of the Apostle Paul, according to the record we have of him, yet he leaves us this testimony, that he was ...*strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,...* (EPHESIANS 6:10). Thus he lived up to his name: "the best prince," or "best ruler," or "the chief of princes," or "the prince of chiefs." Let's look for him among that bridal company!

## Demas

Mentioned with Aristarchus in PHILEMON 1:24 is Demas, who is also here noted to be another of Paul's "fellowlabourers." We know that in order for Demas to be a fellowlabourer with Paul, Demas would of had Jesus as top priority in his life at this time in his life. Demas obviously followed Paul, and would have gone through considerable effort to look up Paul here in Rome. We are not told when Demas got to Rome, or how long he stayed with Paul. Certainly Demas was with Paul when Paul penned his letter to PHILEMON. Also Demas was with Paul when he wrote his epistle to the COLOSSIANS, for Paul writes in COLOSSIANS 4:14 ....*and Demas, greet you.* The Greek word used in COLOSSIANS 4:14 for greeting means: to pay respects to a distinguished person by visiting him, which shows us what Demas thought of Paul.

Paul wasn't shy in describing those he knew at this time in his life, and the kind of help, and comfort they were unto him, and he seems to add a little tidbit about these