



Acts: The Power of the Gospel



Acts Chapter 16: The Second Missionary Journey Begins

Acts Chapter 16, actually begins with the Jerusalem Council in Acts chapter 15. Because of the great contention that was taking place in the city of Antioch, the Judaizers taught a different Gospel, to the Greek and Gentile believers. They taught faith in Jesus was not enough for "Salvation" but the laws of Moses were also needed for salvation. Non-Jewish believers were confused, and Jewish believers also, was Paul teaching in agreement with Peter, James and John, leaders of the Church in Jerusalem? This is what led the Jerusalem Council, everyone needed to know, was the Gospel Paul was presenting was the same as the Apostles in Jerusalem; *Salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone*. After Paul and Barnabas

presented their case; they were given the following proclamation

With the declaration of the Jerusalem Council;

Acts 15:23-29

23 with the following letter: "The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings.

24 Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions,

25 it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth.

28 For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements:

29 that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."

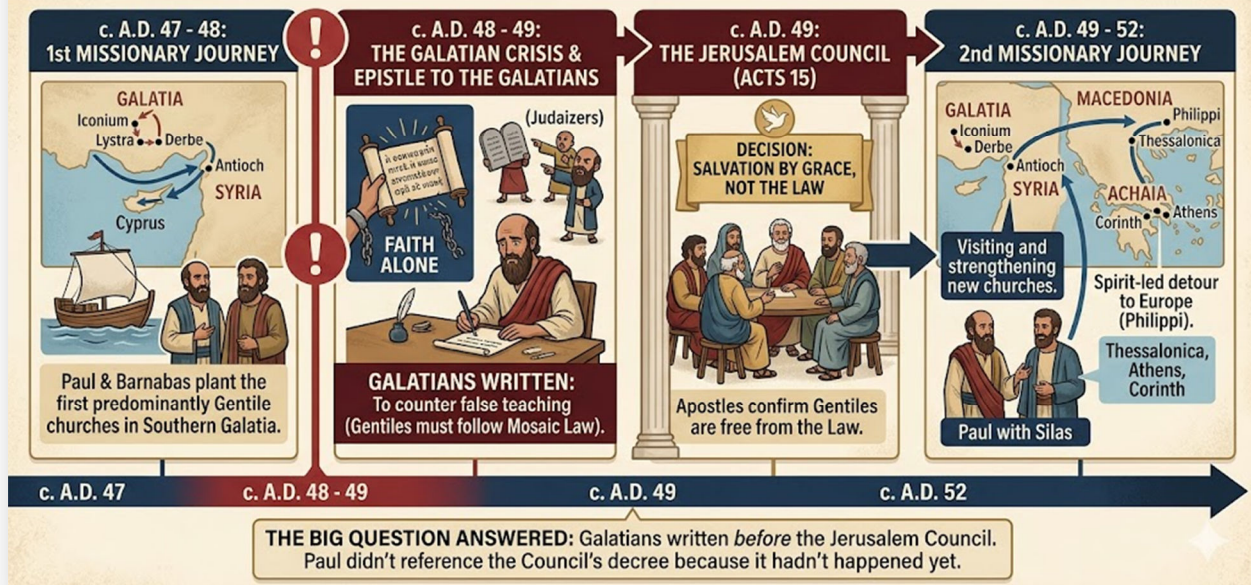
Jewish believers in Jesus, who wanted to keep the Laws of Moses, were following Paul's outreaches both into Antioch and in Galatia (Antioch Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra

and Derbe), so Paul wanted move forward and deliver the affirmation of the Jerusalem Church to these growing Gentile and Jewish Churches. Earlier he wrote to them the Epistle to the Galatians, but now he wanted them to know the Church was unified on this position.

Also at this point, Paul and Barnabas take different path, Barnabas heads off with John Mark, back to the Island of Cyprus to affirm the church there, while Paul teams up with Silas from Jerusalem to go via the land route from Antioch, through Cilicia and to Derby.



PAUL'S EARLY JOURNEYS & THE GENTILE MISSION (A.D. 47-52)



Paul along with Silas, his new missionary partner, start off by first going to the churches in Cilicia and Syria, where Paul had spent his silent years, before coming to Antioch to teach the new believers with Barnabas (Acts 11:25-26). Antioch along with Jerusalem were the two hubs of Christianity, this was base of the first and second Missionary Journey.

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

Acts 16:1-40

- 1 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.
- 2 He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium.
- 3 Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.
- 4 As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem.
- 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

After, first strengthening and affirming the churches in Syria and Cilicia, they set off for Derbe, this was the last city on Paul's First Missionary Journey (Acts 13-14), two to three years before. Paul had now returned with Silas, during original mission, a family had to come to salvation, Timothy, his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (2 Timothy 1:15). Eunice was a Jew, who married a Greek, their son was Timothy, half Jewish, half Greek and uncircumcised, though he was Jewish. This would have caused the Jews to reject him, so Paul had him circumcised, so it would not cause an hindrance to people hearing the Gospel. Paul was opposed Gentile circumcision, such as that of Titus (Galatians 2:3), but Timothy had a Jewish mother, so he was considered Jewish, but would have rejected by the Jews as pagan. The most important issue being, people hearing the Gospel and not letting minor things get in the way, so Paul acted accordingly, like he said "To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak".

1 Corinthians 9:20-22

- 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law.

- 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law.
22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some.

Copies of the Jerusalem Council's decision was delivered to the Churches along the way, affirming the unity of Paul's Gospel message, with the Peter, James (brother of Jesus) and John.



The Macedonian Call

- 6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the **Holy Spirit** to speak the word in Asia.
7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the **Spirit of Jesus** did not allow them.
8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to **Troas**.
9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: **a man of Macedonia** was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."
10 And when Paul had seen **the vision**, immediately **we sought** to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Sometimes God plans are beyond our understanding, Paul was God's chosen Apostle to the Gentiles, the **Holy Spirit**, also called the **Spirit of Jesus**, restricted Paul's work in Asia, (modern day Turkey), after the earlier churches were strengthened. This affirms the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus wanted to move the Gospel forward to Greece and Europe, since the Gospel had already been planted in Asia, earlier by Paul (Acts 13-14). **Troas** was the port city, it was also considered the site of the ancient city of Troy, later Paul will raise Eutychus from the dead when he falls to his death (Acts 20:5-12).

People yearn for the truth, when you know Jesus Christ and the Salvation He offers, you have the most valuable thing in the world, eternal life through the "Blood" of Christ (Romans 5:9, 3:24-26, Hebrews 9:22). Today, just like then, people are calling out, God show yourself to me, who are you? In Troas, Paul has the vision of **a man of Macedonia**, saying "*Come to Macedonia and help us*". This may very well have been, the plea of the Philippian jailer, calling out in his heart to know the one true God. Paul sent without delay, bypassing Asia to get to the city of Philippi in Macedonia, setting the Church forward in Europe. Paul did not question **the vision**, he knew immediately it was from God, God had confirmed to Paul where he was to go next.

Macedonia was the homeland of Alexander the Great, it was now part of Rome after it was conquered through a series of wars ending in 146 BC, and Corinth was sacked, the mighty kingdom of Greece was now a province of the Roman Empire.

We sought: This is the first time, Luke refers to himself being in the company with Paul, speculation is that maybe Luke was a doctor in Troas, who worked on a ship, since he is not shocked by any of the travel or issues Paul is going to face going forward, so he was acquainted with travel.

The Conversion of Lydia

- 11 So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to **Samothrace**, and the following day to **Neapolis**,
12 and from there to **Philippi**, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and **a Roman colony**. We remained in this city some days.
13 And on **the Sabbath day** we went outside the gate to the riverside, where **we supposed** there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and **spoke to the women** who had come together.
14 **One who heard** us was a woman named **Lydia**, from the city of Thyatira, **a seller of purple goods**, who was a **worshiper of God**. **The Lord opened her heart to pay attention** to what was said by Paul.
15 And after she was **baptized**, and **her household** as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful

to the Lord, **come to my house** and stay." And she prevailed upon us.



From Troas, to **Samothrace**, an island in the Aegean Sea, the island is 20 miles in circumference, it was an asylum for fugitives and criminals, it was populated by inhabitants from Samos and Thrace, hence where it got the name. Next they sailed to **Neapolis (New City)**; this was the port city of Philippi about 10 miles away, this is first time Paul steps in Europe, here is where the Gospel first reaches Europe in this verse.

Philippi; This was a proudly Roman City, it was a "Mini Rome", it was named after the father of Alexander the Great, Philip II

of Macedon, who repaired it. Here in 42 BC, was the famous battle of Philippi, where Marc Anthony (Anthony and Cleopatra) and Augustus defeat Brutus and Cassius for the control of Rome. Brutus the assassin of Julius Ceaser later commits suicide. Philippi was rewarded as a **Roman Colony**, given a high position by Augustus, it was under Roman laws. Augustus packed it with retired military veterans, loyal soldiers, who were given Roman citizenship. The city was designated as *Ius Italicum* (Italian Law), it functioned legally as if its soil were a part of Italy.

The large Roman presence in the city, also was demonstrated by the lack of a Jewish synagogue, since by Jewish Law, it required 10 men to make a synagogue. This is the reason we see Lydia by the river, there is no Synagogue or large Jewish population in the city.

Sabbath Day; Paul strategically sought out to find people to share the Gospel, he knew Jews gather by the river when there is no Synagogue, we see Daniel walking along the river Tigris (Dan 10:4). Today in Jewish tradition, Tashlich¹, where stones or breadcrumbs are tossed on the Jewish Newyear. Paul heard about the gathering and intentionally went to meet those them, he tells us, "**We supposed**" so he was looking for people to share the Gospel with, Jewish people who were familiar with God's prophets and plans. His job was to connect them with the Messiah, who they did not hear about yet.

The Woman: These were independent woman who gathered, they were either Jewish or devoted woman who gathered to worship, but there was no synagogue, since 10 men were required. Notice, Paul makes the first move, he looked for some common connections, after he finds them, he next was not shy about speaking **to the women**.

One who heard: We don't know how many people were at the river, but we do know **the Lord opened** the heart of one woman, **Lydia** who house would become the base of the Church at Philippi. We need to understand, God opened her heart to **pay attention**, and accept the Gospel. The Gospel then spread to her family, and she and her household was baptized. Then she opened up her house for Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke to stay. Probably later when we read the Epistle to the Philippians, the church may very well have been in the house of Lydia.

Seller of Purple: Lydia was unique in many ways, one was that she was the head of her own household, which was rare, also she was very wealthy, since "Purple" was worth its weight in silver and later in gold. The people who could wear Purple were limited to the upper echelons of society, so she was well connected to the elite within the city, including those who make garments and those who wear the garments. Tyrian Purple is even where the name Phoenicia comes from; meaning Purple, since the city

¹ **Tashlich**: Perced on the afternoon of Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year), communities walk to a flowing river, lake, or ocean to recite prayers and symbolically cast their sins into the water. While historical tradition often involved tossing breadcrumbs, many modern communities use alternatives (like throwing stones or birdseed) to avoid polluting the water. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

of Tyre was known for its harvesting of snails called Murex, where the purple dye was obtained.

Paul and Silas in Prison

16 As we were going to the **place of prayer**, we were met by a **slave girl** who had a **spirit of divination** and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling.

17 **She followed Paul** and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."

18 And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you **in the name of Jesus Christ** to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.



19 But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

20 And when they had brought them to the **magistrates**, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city.

21 They advocate customs that are **not lawful for us as Romans** to accept or practice."

22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them **with rods**.

23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely.

24 Having received this order, he put them into **the inner prison** and **fastened their feet** in the stocks.

Place of prayer: Paul had found the meeting place of those seeking God, earlier he had met Lydia, her house became a base of operation. Satan tried to stop the Gospel's advance through a **slave girl**, who was demonically possessed. Why did she proclaim Paul's mission?

What was the demonic strategy? Maybe, She tried to give Paul unwanted attention, and link herself to the Gospel by announcing Paul's message. She did this for day after day, so it was a concerted effort in the spiritual realms.

The owners of the demon possessed girl, used her to extract money from via demonic utterances.

In the name of Jesus: Through the name of Jesus, we have authority over the demonic realms, Paul demonstrates the "Power" of the name of Jesus. The demon possessing the girl was subject to the name of Jesus.

The magistrates: Since Phillippi was a military colony, it had military officers also serving as praetors. The owners of the slave girl, were appealing to Roman nationalism, when they said, "they advocate customs that are not lawful for us Romans".

With rods: These officials had individuals known as Lictors, bodyguards, who accompanied them with bundles of birchwood rods, bound together around an ax. The ax was for executing prisoners. So Paul and Silas were stripped, and beaten with the Rods before they were thrown into the inner prison.

Inner prison: They were within the walls of the walls of the facility, and in their cells they were confined to stocks, meaning they had no freedom of movement after they were beaten with these rods. Things were not looking good for Paul and Silas.

The Philippian Jailer Converted

25 About **midnight Paul and Silas** were **praying and singing hymns to God**, and the prisoners were listening to them, 26 and suddenly there was a **great earthquake**, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all **the doors were opened**, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

27 When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to **kill himself**, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

28 But **Paul cried** with a loud voice, "**Do not harm yourself**, for we are all here."

29 And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas.

30 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 And they said, "**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.**"

32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.
 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.
 34 Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And **he rejoiced along** with his entire household that he had believed in God.
 35 But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go."
 36 And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace."
 37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out."
 38 The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens.
 39 So **they came and apologized** to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city.
 40 So they went out of the prison and **visited Lydia**. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.



Midnight: Many people at this point, might question and even be angry with God for allowing this to happen. Here we see the spiritual underpinnings of Paul and Silas, they were just beaten, charged falsely, mistreated and locked away inside the prison and put in stocks, yet they

were **praying and singing** psalms to God. Paul knew God was in charge, and not one thing could happen to him without God's knowledge. Paul looked at the "End Game" not his current circumstances.

Prisoners were listening: Wherever we are, whatever our circumstances we reflect God in our lives to those around us. Here Paul sets an example for all of us. He had every reason to be sad and to be angry for what just happened to him. But Paul was aware of those around him. Paul was aware of their eternity. And he wanted to reflect the hope that he had in Jesus Christ, despite his circumstances. So here we see other prisoners, and even the jailer himself would all be hearing, and wondering why are these men singing and praising God? What's different about them?

Great earthquake: Now to demonstrate the power behind the message. There's a great earthquake, and in this great earthquake all the prisoners' iron shackles fall off. you're hearing these two guys singing and praising God. What do you think? You want to know the God of Paul? Do you run? No. You're part of the miracle; the iron fastens fasteners just came off your body.

The Jailer: In Roman law, the jailer would be executed after a trial for letting his prisoner's escape **Would have killed himself** - This was done in the midst of agitation and alarm. He supposed that the prisoners had fled. He presumed that their escape would be charged on him. It was customary to hold a jailor responsible for the safe keeping of prisoners, and to subject him to the punishment due them if he suffered them to escape. See Act 12:19. It should be added that it was common and approved among the Greeks and Romans for a man to commit suicide when he was encompassed with dangers from which he could not escape. Thus, Cato was guilty of self-murder in Utica; and thus, at this very place - Philippi - Brutus and Cassius, and many of their friends, fell on their own swords, and ended their lives by suicide. The custom was thus sanctioned by the authority and example of the great; and we are not to wonder that the jailor, in a moment of alarm, should also attempt to destroy his own life. It is not one of the least benefits of Christianity that it has proclaimed the evil of self-murder, and has done so much to drive it from the world.

Do not harm yourself - This is the solemn command of religion in his case, and in all others. It enjoins upon people to do themselves no harm by self-murder, whether by the sword, the pistol, the halter; by intemperance, by lust, or by dissipation. In all cases, Christianity seeks the true welfare of man. In all cases, if it were obeyed, people would do themselves no harm. They would promote their own best interests here, and their eternal welfare hereafter.

What must I do to be saved? Was this the man in the vision at Troas, he wants to know what he must do to be saved?

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."