

## Acts of the Apostles - Chapter 16



(<https://www.bible-history.com/new-testament/pauls-second-missionary-journey.html>)

### Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

**16:1** Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. **2** The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.

As Paul starts out on his second missionary journey, we are told he goes to Lystra and then to Derbe. Derbe was the last town that Paul and Barnabas went to on their first missionary journey before they turned around and retraced their path going back to Antioch. Read Acts 14:20-21. Present on this trip was Paul and Silas and not Barnabas. They added Timothy who was highly recommended in that area. His mom was a Jew but his dad was a Greek. 2 Timothy 1:5 tells us more about Timothy and his lineage. "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."

**16:3** Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. **4** As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. **5** So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

I think it was unusual for Paul to circumcise Timothy before taking him with them. But by doing so, Timothy becomes above question by the Jews. After the meeting of the in Acts 15, Paul and Silas were teaching a Gospel message approved by the Christian apostles and elders in Jerusalem. We have seen during Paul's travels thus far that just because he has the Holy Spirit in him, does not mean that he can get along with everyone. As Acts 15 closed, Barnabas and John Mark headed out without Paul. Loving someone doesn't always equal living in perfect harmony with them. God must have blessed what they were doing because we are told that their visit strengthened the churches, strengthened their faith and their numbers grew.

### ***Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia***

***16:6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.***

***8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.***

Paul, Silas and Timothy headed on their journey. We will see some of these names of the regions again in Paul's epistles or letters and the seven churches in John's Book of Revelation. This region stands out from Paul's letter to the Galatians. Phrygia, Galatia, Asia, Mysia, and Bithynia were all districts in what is now Turkey. The Holy Spirit would not let them pass into Bithynia which is in the region of Ephesus.

"It is difficult to say exactly how the Holy Spirit said no; it may have been through a word of prophecy, or by an inward speaking of the Holy Spirit, or by circumstances. One way or another, Paul and his company got the message. Ephesus would come later, not now." (Guzik)

***16:9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.***

Paul had a vision. In it, Paul was being welcomed into Macedonia. He concluded that God was calling them to Macedonia. In verse 6, Dr. Luke used the pronoun "they" and after going to Troas in verse 8, he is now using the pronoun "us" or "we". This suggests that when they went to Troas they picked up Luke.

"Now we see another reason why they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. We see another reason why the Spirit did not permit them to go into Bithynia. God wanted Paul and his team to go to Troas and pick up a doctor named Luke. Because God said "no" to Paul these two times, we have a gospel and a Book of Acts written by Doctor Luke. (Guzik)

### ***Lydia's Conversion in Philippi***

***16:11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district[a] of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.***

After picking up Luke, they headed by boat to Samothrace. According to theologians, they had perfect conditions or God was with them. This trip of about 150 miles took 2 days instead of five days as it will on their way back. Read Acts 20:6. In these verses, they visit another city that Paul will write a Letter or epistle to. It is the colony of Philippi.

*16:13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.*

On their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas had developed a plan of going to the cities, then preaching first to the Jews then to the Gentiles. This is new territory. He finds a quiet place where people are willing to listen. This scene makes me think of one of the songs our choir sings "Let's Go Down to the River to Pray". At this riverbank, they meet a woman named Lydia. She was a worshiper of God from Thyatira. We will hear of her hometown again in Revelation. It is one of the seven churches.

"Before Lydia was converted (as demonstrated by her baptism), the Lord opened her heart. This is a work God must do in all who believe because as Jesus said, no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him (John 6:44). (Guzik)

Lydia becomes the first believer in Europe. Not only did she invite them to stay at her home but she urged them until they accepted.

### ***Paul and Silas in Prison***

*16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." 18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.*

Paul and Silas ran into a demon-possessed female slave. The spirit inside her could foretell the future. She followed them around and yelled, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." Not only was this annoying but it most likely scared people away. So Paul cast out the demon and the demon left immediately.

Bruce translates the phrase "It came out there and then." He comments: "The words had scarcely left his lips when she was released from its power."

**16:19** When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. **20** They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar **21** by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

**22** The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. **23** After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. **24** When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

The female slave owners were mad because of their own greed. They realized that they had lost their only source of income. These slave owners trumped up charges saying that Paul and Silas were "teaching customs that are illegal for us Romans to practice."

"In the Roman Empire there were two very different laws: one for citizens of the Roman Empire, and one for those who were not citizens. Roman citizens had specific, zealously guarded civil rights. Non-citizens had no civil rights, and were subject to the whims of both the multitude and the magistrates." (Guzik)

What happens next is similar to what Pontius Pilate did to Jesus. If you don't know what to do with someone, give them a beating. They were thrown into prison. Specifically, they threw them into the inner cell or dungeon and their feet were put into stocks to make sure that they were most secure. Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-30.

*"23 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?*

*30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness."*

In these verses, Paul is boasting about what God or Christ has gotten him through. What he is enduring here in Philippi is just one example.

**16:25** About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. **26** Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. **27** The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. **28** But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

***29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.***

At midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. The violent earthquake caused the prison doors to fly open and everyone's chains came loose. The jailer tried to kill himself because as we learned previously if a prisoner escapes from a Roman jail, the jailer received the penalty of their escaped prisoners. Paul stopped the jailer because no one had escaped.

"This man was more affected by the love and grace demonstrated by Paul and Silas than by the earthquake. As well, this may have even been the same guard who beat them a few hours earlier."  
(Guzik)

***16:30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"***

***31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.***

The jailer's response was to ask how to be saved. Paul and Silas' reply was a God-given answer "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved: You and your household."

"This is how God wants our lives to be: Natural magnets drawing people to Him. Our Christianity should make others want what we have with God."(Guzik)

The jailer's response to salvation was to make sure his family was saved then he took care of their wounds. The jailer took them to his house and fed them. Everybody rejoiced because they all accepted the Lord.

***16:35 When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." 36 The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."***

***37 But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."***

***38 The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. 39 They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. 40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.***

In the morning, they were let go. I find it strange that after a beating and a night in prison, now Paul brings up that they are Roman citizens. Remember being a Roman citizen would have prevented the beating and kept them out of prison. All that Paul asked for was to have the magistrates escort them out of the city. They went to Lydia's house and spent time encouraging other believers. Then they left Philippi.

“It was a strange and wonderful church they left behind in Philippi: Lydia, perhaps the slave girl, the jailer and his household, and others. The use of “they” here suggests that Luke stayed behind in Philippi for at least a while, perhaps to care for this new congregation.” (Guzik)