

Acts 16

vs. 1-5

Paul and Silas arrived at the Churches at Lystra and Derbe. Paul found a young man named Timothy (well spoken of by the churches in the region). Wanting to take Timothy with them on the remainder of their journey, Paul had Timothy circumcised so that the Jews would readily accept Timothy.

The trio went delivering the decision of the leaders in Jerusalem concerning how the Old Testament law and customs applied to Gentiles. The church continued to grow in faith and number.

vs. 6-10

Paul and his companions continued to travel throughout the central region of Asia Minor. When they tried to hit the northern part of Asia Minor, the Holy Spirit prevented them and they went to Troas (in the Northwestern part of Asia Minor). During the night, Paul had a dream of a Macedonian calling for him to come over and preach. The next morning they set out by boat for the region of Macedonia.

vs. 11-15

Paul and company (including Luke-- as indicated by "we" in the text) went from Troas to Samothrace (by boat) to Neapolis (by boat) and then to Philippi (a prominent city of Macedonia). They stayed there several days. When the Sabbath came, they went out to where they expected to find some Jews gathered for prayer. There they found some women and taught them of Jesus Christ. One of the women, Lydia, believed the message along with the members of her household and they were immersed. She then invited the Paul's evangelistic team to stay with her, and they did.

vs. 16-40

On their way to a place of prayer, Paul encountered a slave girl who predicted the future by the power of Satan. After a period of her

shouting who Paul, Silas and Luke were, Paul turned around and commanded the evil spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus Christ; and it did!

Her owners saw that they had lost their means of income and had Paul and Silas arrested, falsely accusing them of causing an uproar and teaching things that were unacceptable to Romans.

Paul and Silas were stripped, beaten, flogged and then jailed. In jail, they were made secure in the innermost section of the prison and had their feet fastened in stocks. Paul and Silas sang praises and prayed to God throughout the evening. About midnight, the Lord sent an earthquake that shook the prison and caused the doors and stocks to open. The jailor woke up and was ready to kill himself (knowing the Roman authorities would because the prisoners had escaped during his watch) when Paul intervened and pleaded for the jailor not to kill himself. The jailor then inspected and found that no one had escaped.

The jailor then approached Paul and Silas and asked what he must do to be saved (there are 2 schools of thought here-- #1 thinks that the jailor was asking what he had to do to keep the prisoners from escaping and #2 thinks he was asking about salvation). Regardless of what the jailor's intent was, Paul used it as an opportunity to tell him about Christ.

The jailor and his household were then all immersed, after caring for the wounds of Paul and Silas. They then fed the men.

The next day, Paul and Silas were released. The officials tried to do it quietly but Paul protested, informing them that he was a Roman citizen and had been denied his rights (he was beaten before he was "convicted" or tried). The rulers then came and tried to settle the matter quickly and quietly and asked that Paul and Silas leave the city.

Paul and Silas went to Lydia's house, encouraged the Christians there, and then left.

Acts 17

vs. 1-9

Paul, Silas and Timothy now travelled away from Philippi in a westerly direction, going through Amphipolis and Apollonia and then coming to Thessalonica. In Thessalonica, Paul went to the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath and taught about Jesus Christ and how He was the Messiah. For 3 weeks Paul spoke to the Jews and some Jews, many Gentiles and women believed his message.

The unbelieving Jews became jealous and caused a riot in the city. They led the people to get Paul and Silas, but did not find them. Instead, they took the host of Paul and Silas and some other Christians to trial, accusing them of harboring troublemakers and rabble-rousers. Unsure what to do, they released the men (Jason and the other Christians) after they had posted bond.

vs. 10-15

Paul, Silas and Timothy left that evening for Berea (a little distance west). There they again taught of Jesus in the Jewish synagogue. The Bereans were praised for they accepted the message and sought the Scriptures to make sure that what these men were saying was in accordance with the Word of God. Again, many Jews and Gentiles accepted the message.

When the unbelievers in Thessalonica heard of what was going on, they headed over to Berea to cause for Paul and Silas there. Silas and Timothy remained in Berea, while Paul was escorted by some Christians to Athens, where he would wait for Silas and Timothy.

vs. 16-34

While Paul waited, he was amazed by all of the idols and gods of these Greeks. He began to teach in the synagogue and in the marketplace, where people would gather to talk and debate. Two groups, the Stoics (taught self-sufficiency and endurance) and the Epicureans (taught selfish indulgence) began to debate with Paul. As he continued to speak of Christ, they began to assume that he was teaching them about some new god. They then took Paul to a court (designed for such debates) that they might hear more of what he had to say.

Paul mentioned the Greeks desire to serve all the gods, even ones that they did not know about. With that thought, he began to teach them about an "unknown god" to them; the God that he served and who is the one true God. He informs them that this God had overlooked man's ignorance of Him in the past, but no longer. Now He expects all to come to believe in Him and in His Son (Jesus Christ) who was raised from the dead. This raised the interest of some, since there were varying thoughts among the Greeks about life after death.

Some invited him to return. Others accepted his message and became followers of Christ.

Acts 18

vs. 1-17

Paul now went westward a short distance to the city of Corinth. Paul met, stayed and worked with Priscilla and Aquila (a married couple who made tents-- a trade that Paul was trained in). Paul continued to go to the synagogue and teach about Christ on each Sabbath.

When Silas and Timothy finally arrived, Paul ceased his tentmaking and began to work exclusively at preaching and teaching about Jesus. When the Jews resisted, he rebuked them and then left to go to those who would listen (even the Gentiles whom the Jews had little regard for-- quite an insult to the Jewish hearers).

Paul ended up teaching in the home of the synagogue ruler and many of the Corinthians believed the message about Jesus and were immersed. God encouraged Paul in a dream to continue preaching there, and Paul remained for a year and a half.

Paul was arrested by some unbelieving Jews and taken to court. The new Roman Governor refused to hear the case of treason (it was against Roman law to introduce "new" religions-- the decision thus implied that Christianity would be viewed as a branch of the Jewish faith by the Roman authorities). Upset by the dismissal of the case, they beat the synagogue ruler there, and nothing was done to prevent it.

vs. 18-28

Paul took a Jewish vow (a part of it requiring his head to be shaved). Paul, Priscilla and Aquila then sailed for Ephesus (on the west coast of Asia Minor). There Paul taught in the Jewish synagogue about Jesus. Paul then moved quickly on (despite pleading by the Ephesians to stay) to Caesarea where he greeted the church, before heading off for Antioch. Paul then went back into the center of Asia Minor, strengthening the churches.

A Jew named Apollos, arrived during Paul's absence, in Ephesus. He taught the people more about Christ, though he was not familiar with Christian baptism. Priscilla and Aquila corrected him in this teaching. Apollos then went off to Achaia (Greece) to work with the Christian there and to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah that they had been waiting for.

STUDY GUIDE

ACTS 16

1. What did Paul and Silas do as they travelled and what resulted?
2. Where did the Holy Spirit prevent Paul and his companions from going?
3. State where Paul was when he had a vision and describe it.
4. Where in Philippi did Paul go on the sabbath and why?
5. Tell what you can about Lydia.
6. What did the fortune telling girl say about Paul and his companions, and how did Paul respond?
7. How did the girls' owners react?
8. In prison, what did Paul and Silas do?
9. What miraculous event occurred and what did it do?
10. How did the jailor respond to this event?
11. What did Paul and Silas do before leaving the city?

BONUS:

1. Research and write what you can about Timothy.
2. How does God lead people today?
3. What are the lessons that we can learn from these early Christians?

STUDY GUIDE

ACTS 17

1. What was Paul's custom?
2. Who joined Paul and Silas?
3. How did the jealous Jews respond?
4. Why is it said that the Bereans were more noble?
5. Why did Paul leave Berea and where did he go?
6. What distressed Paul in this new city?
7. What was Paul preaching?
8. How did the Athenians spend their time?
9. What was the inscription that Paul found?
10. God had overlooked man's ignorance, but what does He now command?

BONUS

1. What challenge should we receive from the Bereans?
2. How did Paul use the Athenian altars in his preaching?
3. What should all people recognize about God?

STUDY GUIDE

ACTS 18

1. Where did Paul find tentmakers and what were their names?
2. When Silas and Timothy joined Paul, what did he devote himself to?
3. Why did Paul go to the Gentiles of Corinth?
4. How long did Paul stay in Corinth?
5. What did Paul do after he left Caesarea?
6. While Paul was strengthening the disciples elsewhere, who came to Ephesus?
7. What did Priscilla and Aquilla do when they heard this man?
8. What did the brothers do when Apollos wanted to go to Achaia?
9. How was Apollos a great help at Achaia?

BONUS:

1. Do you feel that verse 6 applies to us today? Explain.
2. How does the situation with Apollos and his lack of knowledge about baptism, apply to Christians today?