



Portion:

Title:

SCRIPTURES

- Acts 16-18
- Job 13:15-16
- Numbers 6:21

A MAN ON A MISSION

- Adventures in Philippi
- Envious or Readiness
- Philosophers and Accusers

He's a man on a mission. It was not easy the first time; in fact, it almost killed him. But he's willing to do it again, and this time it will be longer and further than before. It's inspired and will be directed by visions from God. "I want to examine the fruit of my work. Was it all worth it? I want to strengthen those who've been touched by God and I want to touch many more people with the truth. I want to go whenever and wherever God directs!"

But, it almost killed him the first time. Actually, those that wanted him dead thought they had killed him. But he got right up when they were not looking, bloodied and broken, smashed and dented by stones, bruised and beaten, and he kept on going. What would be different this time? This predictably is how man reacts when you challenge his long-held beliefs. But he's a man on a mission and nothing is going to stop him. What about you?

The times have changed; a few thousand years have passed, but man, not so much. Challenge a belief system, expose lies to the truth, and man will oftentimes become violent. It's still happening today; it's all around us. Speak truth to the establishment and you will be censured and censored; lied about and attacked; charged and charged at; apprehended and incarcerated; and removed from the public square or removed from life itself.

It's a different time, but have times really changed? Has man really changed? Paul was a man on a mission and the call for each of you, in your own special way, is to be a people on a mission, even if those within the sound of your voice become violent—even if you are censured and censored; lied about and attacked; charged and charged at; apprehended and incarcerated. Yes, even if there is an attempt to remove you from the public square or remove you from life itself, will you accept the mission?

PROPHETIC SEED:

“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, **“Come over to Macedonia and help us.”** Now **after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia,** concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.” Acts 16:9-10 NKJV

“These [Bereans] were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and **searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.**” Acts 17:11 NKJV

PROPHETIC FRUIT:

“but [Paul] took leave of them, saying, “I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing.” **And he sailed from Ephesus.**” Acts 18:21 NKJV

Let's Set the Scene: Portion in a blurb

Introduction

Last week in [A Schism in the Making](#) the church faced its first internal crises. There were some Jewish believers who came from the religious class that were saying that Gentiles coming to the faith must be circumcised and, in fact, must adhere to the entirety of the law of Moses to be saved. Paul and Barnabas vehemently opposed that false doctrine. Let's be clear about what's wrong with the doctrine being espoused; there are requirements being added to what it takes to be born-again. The problem was not circumcision or the law, only that they were being required for salvation. And quite frankly, anything other than faith being required would

represent the same problem. And although Paul had not yet written what Christians understand today, about what is necessary to be saved, he already knew it! *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”*

Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to address this serious matter and a council was convened, what later became known as the Jerusalem Council. A dispute ensued and Peter was the first to speak. He reminded everyone of his testimony with the Gentiles and how they discovered that God makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles when it comes to salvation; everyone is saved by faith alone. And he also reminded them that none of their past relatives could ever get saved by the law, so how could that be a requirement for the Gentiles coming to the faith now?

Barnabas and Paul weighed in and reported the testimonies from their recent mission trip and all the Gentiles who came to Y’shua by faith alone! Then James stood up to speak. He was the leader in Jerusalem and first he affirmed what Peter had just said. Then he assured how the Gentiles coming to faith was all according to prophecy and finally he made a ruling. Here are the three categories of laws Gentiles should adhere to when they become followers of Christ. They should abstain from idolatry, sexual immorality, and unclean eating practices. Yes, they should obey God’s laws, but their ability to do so has nothing to do with

salvation. Then he reminded them that, like all those raised as Jews, they learned the Torah over an entire lifetime in the synagogues every Sabbath, and so will these new Gentile converts. It's perfectly fine that they start with these areas of law and learn more in time.

After the ruling, Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas were sent to Antioch to deliver a letter with what was officially decided. The people were understandably encouraged. Judas and Silas also had a lot to say and prophesied over the people, which was also very encouraging. Judas headed back to Jerusalem, but Silas, Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch to minister.

Paul then told Barnabas that he wanted to go on a second missionary journey to retrace the steps of their recent mission trip to check on the people in each city. Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark, but Paul did not agree, likely because John Mark could not be trusted to stick with the work required, as he had previously bolted on them in Pamphylia, before they went to Antioch in Pisidia. By leaving then, he missed all the persecution and is thus untested. Those sentiments don't sit well with Barnabas (remember, he's the son of encouragement) and the disagreement got heated. The solution was to split: Barnabas took John Mark to Cyprus; and Paul took Silas through Syria and Cilicia to strengthen the churches.

This week Paul revisits the cities of his first missionary journey to check on the new converts and he arrives in Derbe and Lystra;

that's where he meets Timothy. Paul takes Timothy with him as he intends to travel back through his previous ministry destinations. Before they leave together, Paul circumcises Timothy because he knows the disposition of the Jews in those destinations; they will know Timothy's father is Greek and Paul did not want to add to the controversy. But something extraordinary happens. As they head north, the Holy Spirit directs them to bypass the cities of Asia. These are cities where the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3 are located. On his journey, Paul has a vision of a Macedonian man who is begging him to come to Macedonia to bring help, which he naturally assumes means to bring them the gospel of salvation.

Paul and his party arrive in Philippi, the major city in the lower region of Macedonia, and that is where he meets Lydia. She's from Thyatira in central Asia, one of the cities Paul bypassed on his way to Macedonia via the Spirit's prompting, and she seems to be quite the entrepreneur. Paul shares the gospel and her whole household comes to faith and is baptized.

Paul and Silas are eventually beaten and imprisoned in Philippi after Paul delivers a slave girl from demonic possession; she is being used as the object of a lucrative fortune-telling racket. The owners of this slave-girl are furious that Paul ruined their business, by casting out the demonic spirit, and they have them tossed into the deep recesses of a Philippian prison. Paul and Silas respond by

worshipping God openly from their cell. God intervenes overnight and shakes the prison with an earthquake and looses the shackles from their feet and the prison gates are flung open. The prison warden is ready to take his own life, thinking all the prisoners have escaped, when Paul stops him, indicating he is still there. The warden's entire family comes to faith and is baptized as a result of what they witnessed.

The city judges want to secretly release them that next morning, but Paul is not happy about being part of an unjust public beating, then only to be released privately without someone being held accountable for their illegal actions. Paul makes sure the city officials are informed that both He and Silas are Roman citizens, who were treated contrary to Roman law. The officials are petrified they will be exposed to and then held accountable by Rome. So, they beg Paul and Silas to leave quietly. Paul graciously agrees and they stop to visit Lydia's household on their way out of Philippi.

They leave Philippi and come to Thessalonica. Paul teaches in the synagogue as usual and uses the scriptures to prove that Y'shua was the long-awaited Messiah. And yet again, the Jews who did not believe become jealous. They even go to the home that was hosting Paul and Silas to cause trouble and when they could not find them, they drag the homeowner in front of city officials and accuse him of breaking Roman law. He is fined and released.

The local church thought it best to have Paul and Silas leave Thessalonica and they send them off to Berea. Things are better there. Instead of reacting violently in an effort to protect their old belief systems, the Bereans are more reasonable, humble, and open-minded than the jealous Jews in Thessalonica. They listen to what Paul has to say and then they search the word of God themselves to prove or disprove what they are hearing. It is all good until Jews from Thessalonica come over to cause trouble. Silas and Timothy stay behind in Berea, and Paul leaves for Athens.

In Athens, Paul finds a city filled with philosophers who are interested in anything new that they might use to enhance their philosophy. Paul notices they are very religious, fastidious about the gods they worship and how they would not risk missing a god they don't know about, so they even have an alter to THE UNKNOWN GOD. Paul uses their religious zeal to introduce them to the ONE TRUE GOD by telling them, "I know who your unknown God is!" Paul leaves Athens and some of the philosophers join him.

From Athens Paul heads to Corinth. That is where he meets Aquila and his wife Priscilla and this is where Silas and Timothy catch up to him. It is in Corinth that Paul famously says to the Jewish people, who refuse to see the truth, that it is time to leave them and focus on the Gentiles. God tells Paul to be bold in Corinth, unafraid of persecution, because he will be protected. That

is refreshing for Paul as he had already faced quite a bit of violent persecution on his first mission. Plus he and Silas were recently flogged and imprisoned in Philippi in Macedonia. He stays in Corinth for eighteen months and even when he is accused and brought before the proconsul, nothing happens to him, just like God promised. It did not go so well for Sosthenes, however, the ruler of the synagogue who believed. He is beaten before he is released.

Paul remained in Corinth for quite some time and then heads back to Antioch in Syria. Priscilla and Aquila are with him. He stops off in Ephesus and ministers there. He leaves Priscilla and Aquila behind in Ephesus and heads back to Antioch. That is where they meet Apollos, a Jewish man born in Alexandria (Egypt) who came to Ephesus. He is well-spoken, well-versed in Scriptures, and well-instructed in the way of the Lord. He is also quite fervent. He has solid teachings about Christ, but knows only the baptism of John. Priscilla and Aquila add to his knowledge of God's ways by apparently introducing him to the Holy Spirit. He becomes a powerful tool for the kingdom as he sails to Achaia (Greece) to minister to those whom Paul had recently brought to the faith.

Acts 16

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas (Acts 16:1-5)

1. Paul wanted to revisit the cities of his first missionary journey to check on the new converts and he arrives in Derbe and Lystra.
 - (a) That is where he meets Timothy, a young man with a Jewish mother and Greek father.
 - (b) Timothy has a good reputation in Lystra and Iconium and Paul wants to take him on this mission.
 - (c) Timothy had not been circumcised, so Paul does so as he knows there are Jews whom they will encounter who know Timothy's father is not a Jew.
 - (d) They travel through the previous missionary cities and inform them about the ruling from the Jerusalem Council.
 - (e) The churches grew stronger in faith and numbers.

The Macedonian Call (Acts 16:6-10)

2. They head northwest toward Phrygia in region of Galatia, but the Holy Spirit directed them to pass through for now, to not make any ministry stops in the cities of Asia.
 - (a) They continued north and then west across the northern boarder of Asia in Mysia near Bithynia, which bypassed the cities of Asia.
 - (b) The Holy Spirit also instructed Paul to avoid entering Bithynia.

- (c) At the western edge of Mysia, they came to the city of Troas on the coast of the Aegean Sea.
- (d) That is where Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia pleading with him to come to Macedonia and help!
- (e) So, Paul concludes that God wants him to bring the gospel to Macedonia and he responds immediately by looking for a way to sail across the northwestern edge of the Aegean Sea.

Lydia Baptized at Philippi (Acts 16:11-15)

- 3. They sailed from Troas to Samothrace an Island midway to their destination on the shores of Macedonia.
 - (a) On the next day they landed in Neapolis on the coast of mainland Macedonia.
 - (b) They moved inland a bit northwest to the city of Philippi, which is the major city in that part of Macedonia. This is where the remaining events of this chapter occur!
 - (c) A few days later, on the Sabbath, they went to an area of the city where people gathered for prayer and they met with some women.
 - (d) This is where Paul meets Lydia (a dealer in purple cloth). She's from Thyatira in central Asia, a city Paul bypassed on his way to Macedonia via the Spirit's prompting.

- (e) As is the mechanism of all born-again encounters, the Lord first softens her heart and she comes to believe what Paul teaches about Y'shua!
- (f) Her entire household comes to faith and is baptized and she invites them to stay a for while in her house.

Paul and Silas Imprisoned for Ruining a Lucrative Fortune-Telling Racket (Acts 16:16-24)

- 4. In Philippi there was a slave girl who possessed a spirit of divination.
 - (a) Her owners were using her to make a lot of money by selling her services as a fortune-teller.
 - (b) She kept interrupting Paul's ministry by heckling them.
 - (c) Interestingly, it seems she was trying to irritate them, but she was actually shouting truthful things for days on end; *"These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."*
 - (d) Paul finally had enough of her and spoke to the spirit that possessed her. He commanded it to come out and it did!
 - (e) All of a sudden this massive profit-center was gone and her owners were furious.
 - (f) They apprehended Paul and Silas and brought them into an open square where city authorities could see them.

- (g) The slave-girl owners accused them of disturbing the peace by insisting Romans observe Jewish customs.
- (h) The crowds watching were stirred into an uproar and the judges were worked into a frenzy.
- (i) They ruled that Paul and Silas be flogged, so they were whipped many times and tossed into prison.
- (j) The prison warden was charged with locking them in the most secure area of the prison.
- (k) As such, he chained their feet to a wall in the deepest recesses of the facility.

The Philippian Jailer is Saved (Acts 16:25-34)

5. How do Paul and Silas react to their beating and imprisonment?
- (a) At midnight they were praying and worshipful aloud and all the other prisoners could hear them.
 - (b) Then, in a massive move of the Spirit, the earth under the prison quaked and all the prison doors flung open and every prisoner's chains fell off.
 - (c) When the prison warden woke and realized what happened, he was ready to commit suicide. He could never explain how all the prisoners escaped.
 - (d) Paul stopped him by exposing that they had not left their cell.

- (e) The prison warden secured a light to investigate and when he recognized the miracle, he shook from head to toe and wanted to know what was needed to be saved.
- (f) “It’s simple,” Paul assures. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”*
- (g) Paul and Silas, in the midst of the broken prison, in their broken bodies, ministered the word of God to the warden and his entire household.
- (h) The warden washed their wounds and then he and his family were baptized.
- (i) They shared a meal together and he praised God that his entire family was born-again.

Paul is asked to Depart Secretly (Acts 16:35-40)

- 6. The judges of the city intended to release them that day and they sent officers to bring word.
 - (a) The warden told Paul that he was “officially permitted to leave, to go in peace.”
 - (b) But, Paul is not having it. He tells the warden to deliver a message to the city judges.
 - (c) “We are Roman citizens and you openly beat us and imprisoned us without a trial. And now you want to release us without anyone knowing. That is not happening. Tell them they must come face us and release us themselves openly!”

- (d) This is a frightening moment for the Roman magistrates who violated proper legal procedures and abused Roman citizens.
- (e) They are forced to beg Paul and Silas to leave Philippi without any commotion.
- (f) Paul and Silas are gracious and do leave, first stopping back at Lydia's house before they depart Philippi.

Acts 17

Preaching in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4)

- 7. They left Philippi and came to Thessalonica.
 - (a) As Paul would do every Sabbath, he went to the synagogue (three consecutive Sabbaths).
 - (b) Each time he visited a synagogue, he used the scriptures to prove that Y'shua was the long-awaited Messiah.
 - (c) Many attendees believed Paul and Silas: some are Jews; some are Greeks; and some are important women in the city.

Assault on Jason's House (Acts 17:5-9)

- 8. Jews who do not believe become jealous.
 - (a) They assembled a mob with the intent to cause a riot.
 - (b) They descended on the house of man named Jason, likely the one who was hosting Paul and Silas and also having home-church gatherings.

- (c) The claim against Paul and Silas and their gracious host Jason is that they are breaking Roman law and declaring another man king, other than Caesar.
- (d) They could not find Paul and Silas at the house, so instead, they dragged Jason in front of the city officials who made him post some type of bail before they released him.

Ministering in Berea (Acts 17:10-15)

- 9. The local church thought it best to have Paul and Silas leave Thessalonica.
 - (a) They sent them off to Berea in the cover of darkness.
 - (b) In the daytime they went right to the synagogue, as usual.
 - (c) The Bereans turn out to be more reasonable, humble, and open-minded than the jealous Jews in Thessalonica.
 - (d) Instead of reacting violently in an effort to protect their old belief systems, they listened to what Paul had to say and then they would search the word of God themselves to prove or disprove what they were hearing.
 - (e) The results of their search proved Paul was speaking truth and there were many conversions.
 - (f) Again there were Jewish converts, along with many Greeks, and other prominent women and men.

- (g) However, the Jews from Thessalonica could not leave it alone and when they heard what was happening in Berea, they came over to cause trouble.
- (h) The local church thought it best to ship Paul to Athens, as Silas and Timothy stayed behind in Berea.
- (i) Those who accompanied Paul dropped him off and Paul sent a message back with them to Berea, instructing Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

The Philosophers in Athens (Acts 17:16-21)

10. As Paul waited in Athens for Silas and Timothy to arrive, he was stirred by all the idolatry; they had a specific god for everything.
- (a) Again, he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and non-Jewish God-fearers, and he even preached in the marketplace to anyone who would listen.
 - (b) Athens was filled with philosophers; some from the Epicurean persuasion and some from the Stoic belief system confronted Paul.
 - (c) Some accused him of speaking nonsense; others thought he was there to introduce a new god because he was speaking of this Jesus who was raised from the dead.
 - (d) That topic was interesting enough to some of them, so they invited him to the Areopagus to find out more.

- (e) Athenians and those who visited the city invested most of their time searching for new things to contemplate.
- (f) They were interested in anything new that they might use to enhance their philosophy.

Addressing the Areopagus (Acts 17:22-34)

11. Paul used their interest to his advantage.

- (a) He stood in the middle of the Areopagus and appealed to their nature. He spoke in a way they would understand, by connecting to that in which they clearly already had interest.
- (b) “You are a very religious bunch. You are so fastidious about the gods you worship that you won’t risk missing a god you don’t know about, so you even have an alter to THE UNKNOWN GOD. That is admirable.”
- (c) Paul continues... “I have great news for you. I know who your unknown God is. He is actually the only true God, so you will no longer need any of these others. He is the one who made the whole world and everything in it. And as such, He cannot be contained in a man-made building. He’s the giver of life and breath and as such He needs nothing from you.”
- (d) He further explains... “I know your philosophy does not consider this, but this One True God created all of mankind from one seed and He has determined that at the exact time

in history, He would make this known, so all would seek Him—realizing He is not at all far away, but right in their hearts, for in Him we live and move and have our being.”

- (e) Then Paul connects this truth to one of their very own philosophers... “One of your own poets said it perfectly, ‘*For we are also His offspring.*’ And if that is true, then God’s Nature is like ours, not like inanimate objects such as gold, silver or stone, or anything that can be crafted by man’s tools.”
- (f) Paul seals the deal... “All the centuries of man’s foolishness, thinking that God has the qualities of various types of inanimate objects, in His mercy He as overlooked. But now is the time for all mankind to repent of this wrong belief, because judgement against such paganism is coming. We know this to be true because He raised Christ from the grave, affirming He is the Only True God.”
- (g) This resurrection thing caused some to think Paul was mad, while others were interested in hearing more.
- (h) Paul left the area and some of the philosophers joined him.

Acts 18

Ministering in Corinth (Acts 18:1-17)

12. From Athens Paul headed to Corinth.

- (a) That is where he meets Aquila and his wife Priscilla.
- (b) They were in Corinth from Italy as Claudius Caesar told the Jews to leave Rome.
- (c) Paul and Aquila were both tentmakers, so Paul worked with him while in the region.
- (d) As usual, Paul is teaching in the synagogue every Sabbath, and again there are both Jewish and Greeks converts.
- (e) Silas and Timothy catch up with Paul in Corinth from Macedonia
- (f) The Holy Spirit inspires Paul to testify to the Jews that Y'shua is the Messiah.
- (g) Many resisted to the point of blasphemy and Paul washes his hands of them. "I did my job; all you Jews who refuse to believe, your eternity is in your own hands now, and it will not be good. I will focus on the Gentiles from here on!"
- (h) He leaves the synagogue and stays with a man named Justus, a man who believed. His house was next to the synagogue.
- (i) Crispus, who was the ruler of the local synagogue, also believed along with his whole household.
- (j) Many Corinthians citizens came to faith and were baptized.
- (k) Then Paul had a vision from God that he was to be bold and unafraid in Corinth. God showed him that He is with him

and would protect him, and that there were many faithful people in Corinth.

- (l) Paul taught the word of God in Corinth for eighteen months.
- (m) When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia (the region of Greece), the unbelieving Jews unified around accusations against Paul.
- (n) They brought him in front of Gallio and claimed Paul persuaded men to worship God, contrary to the law.
- (o) Paul could not even begin to defend himself before Gallio dismissed the claim.
- (p) Gallio was not interested in judging any alleged wrongdoing (about words, names, and laws) within Judaism. *“Deal with those yourself,”* he ruled. *“If any matter of crimes are committed according to Roman Law, then I am interested!”*
- (q) Gallio told them all to get lost, but the Greeks went ahead and beat Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue.
- (r) Gallio did not care and gave no attention to the injustice.

Paul Returns to Antioch (Acts 18:18-23)

13. Paul remained in Corinth for quite some time and then headed back to Antioch in Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were with him.

- (a) He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea on the eastern coast of Greece before he set sail across the Aegean Sea.
- (b) He arrived in Ephesus in Asia and went into the synagogue to reason with the Jews, as usual.

- (c) They wanted him to stay for some time, but he refused, citing that he had to get back to Jerusalem for the upcoming feast. But, he promised to return—God willing.
- (d) He left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus and landed at Caesarea (by the sea) in Judea.
- (e) He greeted the church and then headed north to Antioch.
- (f) He stayed a while in Antioch and then headed further north into Galatia and Phrygia to encourage the disciples.

Introducing Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)

14. Now we meet Apollos, a Jewish man born in Alexandria (Egypt) who came to Ephesus.
- (a) He was well-spoken, well-versed in Scriptures, and well-instructed in the way of the Lord. He was also quite fervent.
 - (b) He had solid teachings about Christ but knew only the baptism of John.
 - (c) He spoke boldly in the synagogue, but when Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they added to his understanding.
 - (d) He wished to sail to Achaia (Greece) to minister to those whom Paul brought to the faith.
 - (e) The church in Ephesus sent him with a note encouraging the church in Greece to receive him.

- (f) When he arrived, he helped the new believers quite a bit and he also openly contended with non-believing Jews, proving from the Scriptures that Y'shua is the Messiah.

ADVENTURES IN PHILIPPI

1. Yet Another Vision

A. Derbe and Lystra

(1) Timothy Joins Paul and Silas (**Acts 16:1-5**)

- (a) Paul wanted to revisit the cities of his first missionary journey to check on the new converts and he arrives in Derbe and Lystra.

1. "Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named **Timothy**, the **son of a certain Jewish woman** who believed, but his father was Greek. He was **well spoken of** by the brethren who were at **Lystra and Iconium**. Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he **took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek**. And as they went through the cities, they **delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem**.

So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.” Acts 16:1-5 NKJV

2. Paul meets Timothy, a young man with a Jewish mother and Greek father.
 - a) Lystra is where Paul was both extolled and stoned —Derby is where he went after that and preached again (See Acts 14:8-20)
 - b) Of these events Timothy must have had some knowledge.
 - c) Timothy has a good reputation in Lystra and Iconium and Paul wants to take him on this mission.
 - d) Timothy had not been circumcised, so Paul does so as he knows there are Jews whom they will encounter who know Timothy’s father is not a Jew.
 - e) Why would he do so in light of what we just learned in Acts 15 and the very rulings he is to deliver in writing to the churches?
 - 1) We just saw a detailed ruling in Acts 15 about the need to be circumcised. *““And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the*

custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”” (Acts 15:1)

- 2) We learned that circumcision has nothing to do with being born-again. Sure circumcision is a command and it is good, it just (like any other command) is not a prerequisite for salvation, which is by grace through faith alone...Eph. 2:8-9!)

f) Paul would later further clarify how the law and faith work together!

- 1) *“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but **he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.**” Romans 2:28-29 NKJV*

- 2) **And yet...** *“What advantage then has the Jew, or **what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.**” Romans 3:1-2 NKJV*

- 3) Knowing God’s laws and obedience to them has its advantages, but it simply has NOTHING to

do with being born-again, other than that being filled with the Holy Spirit is the only way you can actually properly obey God!

- g) Now, contrast what Paul said about Timothy to what he says later about Titus, who he does not circumcise when he takes him to Jerusalem!
- 1) Undoubtedly, Paul is referring to what we just read in Acts 15 when he writes to the Galatians. It is the exact context—and likely the main reason Titus WAS NOT circumcised, to prove a point! This born-again, filled with the Spirit man, was effective in ministry, and yes, he remained uncircumcised!
- 2) ***“Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with me. And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means I might run, or had run, in vain. Yet not even Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in***

*(who came in by stealth **to spy out our liberty** which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”*

Galatians 2:1-5 NKJV

- h) **Back to Acts 16:** Paul and Timothy travel through the previous missionary cities and inform them about the ruling from the Jerusalem Council. The churches grew stronger in faith and numbers. (Timothy having being circumcised would have disarmed the Jews who would now receive a ruling that the Law is not required for salvation—how ironic!)

3. This was the ruling in Acts 15...

- a) There are three categories of laws Gentile converts should adhere to when they come to the faith, plus one reminder (none of these are required for salvation, just for growth and obedience).
- b) They should abstain from:
 - 1) Idolatry
 - 2) Sexual Immorality
 - 3) Unclean eating practices.

- 4) Reminder: Like all of us raised as Jews, we learned the Torah over a lifetime in the synagogues every Sabbath, and so will these new Gentile converts.

B. We're Going to Macedonia

(1) The Macedonian Call (Acts 16:6-10)

(a) Come over to Macedonia...

1. "Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were **forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia**. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but **the Spirit did not permit them**. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And **a vision appeared to Paul in the night**. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "**Come over to Macedonia and help us**." Now after he had seen the vision, **immediately we sought to go** to Macedonia, **concluding that** the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them." Acts 16:6-10 NKJV
2. Following a Vision
 - a) Paul and Silas head northwest toward Phrygia in region of Galatia, but the Holy Spirit directed them

to pass through for now, to not make any stops in the cities of Asia.

- b) They continued north and then west across the northern boarder of Asia in Mysia near Bithynia, which bypassed the seven cities of Asia from Revelation 2-3:

- 1) Ephesus (Loveless Church) Rev. 2:1-7
- 2) Smyrna (Persecuted Church) Rev. 2:8-11
- 3) Pergamos (Compromising Church) Rev. 2:12-17
- 4) Thyatira (Corrupt Church) Rev. 2:18-29
- 5) Sardis (Dead Church) Rev. 3:1-6
- 6) Philadelphia (Faithful Church) Rev. 3:7-13
- 7) Laodicea (Lukewarm Church) Rev. 3:14-22

- c) The Holy Spirit also instructed Paul to avoid entering Bithynia.

- d) At the western edge of Mysia, they came to the city of Troas on the coast of the Aegean Sea.

- e) Paul has a vision of a man from Macedonia pleading with him to come to Macedonia to help!

- 1) Visions certainly play a critical prophetic role in moving God's people. Old men will dream dreams and young men will see visions! (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17)

- 2) Paul had a vision on the Road to Damascus in Acts 9 and Peter had one in Acts 10, both of which dramatically changed the course of their lives.
- f) So, Paul concludes that God wants him to bring the gospel to Macedonia and he responds immediately by looking for a way to sail across the northwestern edge of the Aegean Sea.

C. Philippi

(1) Lydia Baptized at Philippi (**Acts 16:11-15**)

(a) The Foremost City

1. “Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis, and from there to **Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia**, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. And **on the Sabbath day** we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was **a seller of purple** from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. **The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.** And when she and her

household were baptized, she begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.” Acts 16:11-15 NKJV

2. Following a Vision

- a) They sailed from Troas to Samothrace an Island midway to their destination on the shores of Macedonia.
- b) On the next day they landed in Neapolis on the coast of the mainland.
- c) They moved inland and a bit northwest to the city of Philippi, which is the major city in that part of Macedonia.
 - 1) God moves in places that will have a major impact!
 - 2) This is where the remaining events of this chapter occur!
- d) A few days later, on the Sabbath, they went to an area of the city where people gathered for prayer and they met with some women.
- e) This is where Paul meets Lydia. She’s from Thyatira in central Asia, a city Paul bypassed on his way to Macedonia via the Spirit’s prompting.

- f) She seems to be a Proverbs 31 woman, a seller of purple (a dealer in purple cloth).
 - 1) *“She makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple.”* Proverbs 31:22 NKJV
 - 2) Fine linen refers to expensive clothing, as does purple. Garments dyed with purple indicate wealth and high rank.
- g) As is the mechanism of all born-again encounters, the Lord first softens her heart and she comes to believe what Paul teaches about Y’shua!
- h) Her entire household comes to faith and is baptized and she invites them to stay a for while in her home.

D. Persecution in Philippi

- (1) Paul and Silas are Imprisoned in Philippi for Ruining a Lucrative Fortune-Telling Racket (**Acts 16:16-24**)
 - (a) Don’t Mess with My Money!
 - 1. “Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain **slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.** This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, **“These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of**

salvation.” And this she did for many days. But **Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.”** And he came out that very hour. But **when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas** and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, **“These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.”** Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. **And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.** Having received such a charge, **he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.”** Acts 16:16-24 NKJV

2. Ruining a Lucrative Fortune-Telling Racket
 - a) In Philippi there was a slave girl who possessed a spirit of divination.

- b) Her owners were using her to make a lot of money by selling her as a fortune-teller.
- c) She kept interrupting Paul's ministry by heckling them; it seems she was trying to irritate them, but what she was shouting for days on end was actually the truth!
 - 1) *"These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."*
- d) Paul finally had enough of her and spoke to the spirit that possessed her. He commanded it to come out of her and it did!
- e) All of a sudden this massive profit-center was gone and her owners were furious.
- f) They apprehended Paul and Silas and brought them into an open square where city authorities could see them.
- g) In front of the city judges, the slave-girl owners accuse these Jews of disturbing the peace by insisting Romans observe Jewish customs.
- h) The crowds watching were stirred into an uproar and the judges were worked into a frenzy and ruled that Paul and Silas be flogged.

- 1) Can you imagine, it was on Paul's first mission trip that he was nearly stoned to death in Lystra.
(See Acts 14:19-20)
- i) This time they are whipped many times and tossed into prison.
- j) The prison warden was charged with placing them in the most secure area of the facility.
- k) He chained their feet to a wall in the deepest recesses of the prison.

E. Miracle in Philippi

(1) The Philippian Jailer Saved (**Acts 16:25-34**)

- (a) How do Paul and Silas react to their beating and imprisonment?

1. "But at midnight Paul and Silas were **praying and singing hymns to God**, and the prisoners were listening to them. 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 chains were loosed**. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was **about to kill himself**. **But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do**

yourself no harm, for we are all here.” Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, **“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”** So they said, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”** Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. **And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.** Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.” Acts 16:25-34 NKJV

2. How do Paul and Silas respond? They take a page out of Job’s book! ***“Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. He also shall be my salvation, For a hypocrite could not come before Him.”*** Job 13:15-16 NKJV
 - a) At midnight they were praying and worshipping aloud and all the other prisoners could hear.
 - b) Then in a massive move of the Spirit, the earth under the prison quaked and all the prison doors flung open and every prisoner’s chains fell off.

- 1) It was a supernatural prison break, like Peter's in Acts 12:5-19, in which an Angel breaks Peter out of prison.
- c) When the prison warden woke and realized what happened he was ready to commit suicide. He could never explain how all the prisoners escaped.
- d) Paul stopped him by exposing that they had not left their cell.
- e) The prison warden secured a *light to investigate and when he recognized the miracle, he trembled from head to toe and wanted to know what was needed to be saved.
 - a) It's simple, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."*
 - b) *The important detail included in this narrative, the idea that the warden "called for a light," and then ran in, has such Messianic symbolism, as he was about to receive the Light of the world! (John 8:12)
- f) Paul and Silas, in the midst of the broken prison, in their broken bodies, ministered the word of God to the warden and his entire household.

- g) The warden washed their wounds and then he and his family were baptized.
- h) They shared a meal together and he praised God that his entire family was born-again.

F. Grace in Philippi

(1) Paul is asked to Depart Secretly (**Acts 16:35-40**)

- (a) The judges of the city intended to release Paul and Silas that day and they sent officers to bring word.

1. “And when it was day, **the magistrates sent the officers, saying, “Let those men go.”** So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, “**The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace.**” But Paul said to them, “**They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out.**” And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they **heard that they were Romans.** Then they came and **pleaded with them and brought them out, and asked them to depart from the city.** So they went out of the prison and entered the house of

Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.” Acts 16:35-40 NKJV

2. The warden told Paul that he was “officially permitted to leave, to go in peace.” (How ironic, as Paul was already free!)

a) Paul is not having it. He tells the warden to deliver a message to the city judges.

b) “We are Roman citizens and you openly beat us and imprisoned us without a trial. And now you want to release us without anyone knowing. That is not happening. Tell them they must come themselves to face us and release us openly!”

1) Pray in secret a secret place and be rewarded openly! *“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and **your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.**”* Matthew 6:6 NKJV

c) This is a frightening moment for the Roman magistrates who had violated proper Roman legal procedures and abused Roman citizens without a trial.

- d) They are forced to beg Paul and Silas to leave Philippi without any commotion.
- e) Paul and Silas are gracious beyond imagination and do leave, first stopping back at Lydia's house before they depart Philippi.

ENVIOUS OR READINESS

2. Closed Minded Open Minded

A. Thessalonica

(1) Preaching in Thessalonica (**Acts 17:1-4**)

(a) Explain and Demonstrate Christ using the Scriptures

1. "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to **Thessalonica**, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. **Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ."** And some of them were **persuaded**; and a great multitude of the **devout Greeks**, and not a few of the **leading women**, joined Paul and Silas." Acts 17:1-4 NKJV
2. They left Philippi and came to Thessalonica.

- a) As Paul would do every Sabbath, he went to the synagogue (three consecutive Sabbaths).
- b) Each time he visited a synagogue, he used the scriptures to prove that Y'shua was the long-awaited Messiah.
- c) Many attendees believed Paul and Silas: some were Jews; some were Greeks; and some were important women in the city.

(2) Assault on Jason's House (**Acts 17:5-9**)

- (a) Just as we've seen before, the Jews who did not believe became jealous.

- 1. "But the **Jews who were not persuaded**, becoming **envious**, took some of the **evil men** from the marketplace, and **gathering a mob**, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. But when they did not find them, **they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city**, crying out, "**These who have turned the world upside down** have come here too. **Jason has harbored them**, and **these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar**, saying there is **another king**—Jesus." And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these

things. So when they had **taken security** from Jason and the rest, they let them go.” Acts 17:5-9 NKJV

2. Jealousy is Ugly

a) Where have we seen this before? The Jews from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium were so jealous that they showed up in Lystra to stir up such strife, and that is what led to Paul’s stoning!

1) **In Antioch in Pisidia:** *“But when **the Jews** saw the multitudes, they were **filled with envy**; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.”* Acts 13:45 NKJV

2) **In Lystra:** *“Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and **having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul** and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.”* Acts 14:19 NKJV

b) Now the jealous Jews in Thessalonica assemble a mob with the obvious intent to cause a riot.

c) They descended on the house of man named Jason, likely the one who was hosting Paul and Silas and also having church gatherings in his home.

- d) The claim against Paul and Silas and their gracious host Jason is that they are breaking Roman law and declaring another man king other than Caesar.
- e) They could not find Paul and Silas at the home, so they dragged Jason in front of the city officials who made him post some type of bail before they released him.

B. Berea

(1) Ministering in Berea (Acts 17:10-15)

- (a) The local church thought it best to have Paul and Silas leave Thessalonica and head to Berea.

1. “Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to **Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.** These were **more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica**, in that they **received the word with all readiness**, and **searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed**, and also **not a few of the Greeks, prominent women** as well as men. But when the **Jews from Thessalonica** learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and **stirred up the crowds.** Then immediately the

brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both **Silas and Timothy remained there**. So those who conducted Paul **brought him to Athens**; and receiving a command for **Silas and Timothy to come to him** with all speed, they departed.” Acts 17:10-15 NKJV

2. Paul and Silas are sent off to Berea in the cover of darkness.
 - a) Of course, as soon as it was daytime they went right to the synagogue.
 - b) The Bereans were more reasonable, humble, and open-minded than the jealous Jews in Thessalonica.
 - c) Instead of reacting violently in an effort to protect their old belief systems, they listened to what Paul had to say and then they searched the word of God themselves to either prove or disprove what they were hearing from Paul.
 - 1) Do you do the same when you hear a message from church leaders?
 - d) The results of their search proved Paul was speaking the truth and there were many conversions.

- e) Again, converts included Jews and Greeks, as well as other prominent women and men.
- f) However, the jealous Jews from Thessalonica could not leave it alone and when they heard what was happening in Berea, they came over to cause trouble.
- g) The local church thought it best to ship Paul to Athens, as Silas and Timothy stayed behind in Berea.
- h) Those who accompanied Paul dropped him off in Athens, and Paul sent a message back with them to Berea, instructing Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

PHILOSOPHERS AND ACCUSERS

3. The Gospel Makes its Way to Greece

A. Athens

(1) The Philosophers in Athens (**Acts 17:16-21**)

(a) A City Given Over to Many Idols!

1. “Now while Paul waited for them at **Athens**, his spirit was provoked within him when **he saw that the city was given over to idols**. Therefore **he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile**

worshippers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. Then **certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him.** And some said, “What does this **babbler** want to say?” Others said, “He seems to be **a proclaimer of foreign gods,**” because he **preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.** And they took him and **brought him to the Areopagus,** saying, “**May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak?** For you are bringing some **strange things** to our ears. Therefore **we want to know what these things mean.**” For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there **spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.**” Acts 17:16-21 NKJV

2. As Paul waited for Silas and Timothy to arrive, he was stirred by all the idolatry in Athens—they had a different God for everything.
 - a) He reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and non-Jewish God-fearers, and he even preached in the marketplace to anyone who would listen.
 - b) Athens was filled with philosophers, and some from the Epicurean persuasion and some from the Stoic belief system confronted Paul.

- 1) **Epicurean:** disciple or student of the Greek philosopher Epicurus. A person devoted to sensual enjoyment, especially that which is derived from fine food and drink; hedonist, sensualist pursuits; pleasure seekers and pleasure lovers.
- 2) **Stoic:** a member of the ancient philosophical school of Stoicism; of or belonging to the Stoics or their school of philosophy; a person who can endure pain or hardship without showing their feelings or complaining.
- c) Some philosophers said Paul was just speaking nonsense; others thought he was there to introduce a new god because he was speaking of this Jesus who was raised from the dead.
- d) Athenians and those who visited the city invested most of their time searching for new things to contemplate.
- e) They were literally interested in anything new that they might use to enhance their philosophy.
- f) The topic of the resurrection was interesting enough to some, so they invited Paul to the *Areopagus to discover more.

- 1) *Areopagus: (in ancient Athens) a hill on which met the highest governmental council and later a judicial court.

(2) Addressing the Areopagus (**Acts 17:22-34**)

(a) I perceive that you you are quite religious...

1. “Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, **I perceive that in all things you are very religious;** for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, **I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.** Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, **does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands,** as though He needed anything, since **He gives to all life, breath, and all things.** And **He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth,** and has **determined** their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, **though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him**

we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' Therefore, **since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge** the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. **He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.**" And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, **some mocked**, while **others said, "We will hear you again on this matter."** So Paul departed from among them. However, **some men joined him and believed**, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them." Acts 17:22-34 NKJV

2. Paul used their intense religious interest to his advantage.
 - a) He stood in the middle of the Areopagus and appealed to their nature.

- b) He spoke in a way they would understand, by connecting to that in which they clearly already had interest.
- c) “You are a very religious bunch. You are so fastidious about the gods you worship that you won’t risk missing a god you don’t know about, so you even have an alter to THE UNKNOWN GOD. That is admirable.”
- d) Paul continues... “I have great news for you. I know who your unknown God is. He is actually the only true God, so you will no longer need any of these others. He is the one who made the whole world and everything in it. And as such, He cannot be contained in a man-made building. He’s the giver of life and breath and as such He needs nothing from you.”
- e) He further explains... “I know your philosophy does not consider this, but this One True God created all of mankind from one seed and He has determined that at the exact time in history, He would make this known, so all would seek Him—realizing He is not at all far away, but right in their

hearts, for in Him we live and move and have our being.”

- f) Then Paul connects this truth to one of their very own philosophers... “One of your own *poets said it perfectly, ‘*For we are also His offspring.*’ And if that is true, then God’s Nature is like ours, not like inanimate objects such as gold, silver or stone, or anything that can be crafted by man’s tools.”
 - 1) *Poet: **Aratus of Soli** was a Greek poet who flourished in Macedonia in the early 3rd century B.C.; Paul was quoting from what is presently his only surviving work, the *Phaenomena*, a book describing the constellations and weather signs.
- g) Paul seals the deal... “All the centuries of man’s foolishness, thinking that God has the qualities of various types of inanimate objects, in His mercy He as overlooked. But now is the time for all mankind to repent of this wrong belief, because judgement against such paganism is coming. We know this to be true because He raised Christ from the grave, affirming He is the Only True God.”

- h) This resurrection thing caused some to think Paul was mad, while others were interested in hearing more.
- i) Paul left the area and some of the philosophers joined him.

B. Corinth

(1) Ministering in Corinth (**Acts 18:1-17**)

- (a) Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.

1. “After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to **Corinth**. And he found a certain Jew named **Aquila**, born in Pontus, who had **recently come from Italy** with his wife Priscilla (**because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome**); and he came to them. So, because he was of the **same trade**, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were **tentmakers**. And **he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks**. When Silas and Timothy had **come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ**. But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, **“Your blood be upon**

your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named **Justus**, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. **Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household.** And **many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.** Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, **“Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”** And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. When **Gallio was proconsul of Achaia**, the **Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, “This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”** And when Paul was about to open his mouth, **Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; for I do not want to be a**

judge of such matters.” And he drove them from the judgment seat. Then all the **Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him** before the judgment seat. But **Gallio took no notice of these things.**” Acts 18:1-17 NKJV

2. From Athens Paul headed to Corinth.
 - a) That is where he meets Aquila and his wife Priscilla.
 - b) They were in Corinth from Italy as Claudius Caesar told the Jews to leave Rome.
 - c) Context for Claudius Caesar and his expulsion of Jews from Rome...
 - 1) The exact date is uncertain (AD 41- AD 53), some scholars agree to AD 49.
 - 2) The edict lapsed upon Claudius Caesar’s death in AD 54, and the Jews began to return.
 - 3) Paul’s letter to the Romans would have arrived in Rome somewhere around AD 57.
 - d) Paul and Aquila were both tentmakers, so Paul worked with him while in the region.
 - e) Again, Paul is teaching in the synagogue every Sabbath, and again there are both Jewish and Greeks converts.

- f) Silas and Timothy catch up with Paul in Corinth from Macedonia.
 - 1) Remember, he left them behind in Berea and instructed them to come to him as soon as possible.
 - g) The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to testify to the Jews that Y'shua is the Messiah.
 - h) Many resisted to the point of blasphemy and Paul washed his hands of them.
 - 1) "I did my job; all you Jews who refuse to believe, your eternity is in your own hands now, and it will not be good. I will focus on the Gentiles from here on!"
 - i) He left the synagogue and stayed with a man named Justus, a man who believed. His house was next to the synagogue.
 - j) Crispus, who was the ruler of the local synagogue, also believed along with his whole household.
 - k) Many Corinthians citizens came to faith and were baptized as well.
3. Yet Another Vision!
- a) Paul had yet another vision from God, this time that he was to be bold and unafraid in Corinth.

God showed Paul that He is with him and would protect him, and that there were many faithful people in Corinth.

- 1) That is refreshing for Paul as he had faced quite a bit of violent persecution on his first mission.
 - 2) Remember... on his first missionary journey the threats of persecution were constant, and at one point in Lystra he was even stoned so badly they thought he was dead.
 - 3) Plus... he and Silas, on this very mission trip, were recently flogged and imprisoned in Philippi in Macedonia.
- b) Paul taught the word of God in Corinth for eighteen months.
 - c) When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia (the region of Greece), the unbelieving Jews unified around accusations against Paul.
 - d) They brought him in front of Gallio and claimed Paul persuaded men to worship God, contrary to the law.
 - e) Paul could not even begin to defend himself before Gallio dismissed the claim.

- f) He was not interested in judging any alleged wrongdoing (about words, names, and laws) within Judaism. Deal with those yourself.
- g) Now, if it is a matter of crimes according to Rome, then I am interested!
- h) Gallio told them all to get lost, but the Greeks went ahead and beat Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue.
- i) Gallio did not care and gave no attention to the injustice.
 - 1) Note: some scholars believe Crispus from verse 8 and Sosthenes from verse 17 are one and the same (Possibly “Crispus Sosthenes.”)
 - 2) Other scholars feel Sosthenes was Crispus’ successor, as Paul was in Corinth for 18 months and it is reasonable to believe that a new president of the synagogue was installed.

C. Paul is ready to complete this mission...

- (1) Paul Returns to Antioch (**Acts 18:18-23**)
 - (a) Paul remained in Corinth for quite some time and then headed back to Antioch in Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were with him.

1. “So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and **sailed for Syria**, and **Priscilla and Aquila** were with him. **He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.** And he came to Ephesus, and **left them there**; but he himself **entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.** When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, but took leave of them, saying, **“I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem;** but I will return again to you, God willing.” **And he sailed from Ephesus. And when he had landed at Caesarea,** and gone up and greeted the church, **he went down to Antioch.** After he had spent some time there, he departed **and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.”** Acts 18:18-23 NKJV

2. Paul leaves Corinth
 - a) Paul takes a Vow and had his hair cut off at Cenchrea on the eastern coast of Greece before he set sail across the Aegean Sea.
 - b) Paul’s vow seems to be a Nazarite Vow, for which we find instructions in Numbers 6:1-21 (read it!)

- 1) ***“This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to the Lord the offering for his separation, and besides that, whatever else his hand is able to provide; according to the vow which he takes, so he must do according to the law of his separation.”*** Numbers 6:21 NKJV
- 2) Note: it also seems that this is the same type of Vow that Paul makes in Acts 21. *“Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses **so that they may shave their heads**, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.”* Acts 21:23-24 NKJV
- c) Paul arrives Ephesus in Asia and goes into the synagogue to reason with the Jews, as usual.
- d) They wanted him to stay for some time, but he refused, citing that he had to get back to Jerusalem for the upcoming feast.
- 1) Paul is still very much in agreement that the Laws of Moses apply, even though we are now

nearly 20 years after the resurrection. He wants to get back to Jerusalem (according to the law), if at all possible, for the upcoming feast.

2) ***“Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed.”*** Deuteronomy 16:16
NKJV

- e) He promised to return to Ephesus—God willing.
- f) He leaves Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus and lands at Caesarea (by the sea) in Judea.
- g) He greets the church and then heads north to Antioch.
- h) He stays a while in Antioch and then heads further north into Galatia and Phrygia to encourage the disciples.

1) The beginnings of a third missionary journey!

D. The Ministry of Apollos

(1) Introducing Apollos (**Acts 18:24-28**)

- (a) Now we meet Apollos, a Jewish man born in Alexandria (Egypt) who came to Ephesus.

1. “Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, **came to Ephesus**. This man **had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately** the things of the Lord, though **he knew only the baptism of John**. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When **Aquila and Priscilla heard him**, they took him aside and **explained to him the way of God more accurately**. And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, **he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.**” Acts 18:24-28 NKJV

2. Apollos was well-spoken, well-versed in Scriptures, and well-instructed in the way of the Lord. He was also quite fervent.

- a) He had solid teachings about Christ, but knew only the baptism of John.
- b) He spoke boldly in the synagogue about Christ, but when Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they

added to his greater understanding of Christ, teaching him about the Holy Spirit—the baptism beyond John’s.

- c) Apollos wished to sail to Achaia (Greece) to minister to those whom Paul brought to the faith.
- d) The church in Ephesus sent him with a note encouraging the church in Greece to receive him.
- e) When he arrived, he helped the new believers quite a bit and he also openly contended with non-believing Jews, proving from the Scriptures that Y’shua is the Messiah.
- f) **Point of Interest:** It’s strange that when Paul arrives in Ephesus on his third missionary Journey in Acts 19:1-3, the people still know nothing about the Holy Spirit (only the baptism of John)! It seems that ***Aquila and Priscilla** taught Apollos (when all he knew prior was the baptism of John), then Apollos left for Greece, but ***Aquila and Priscilla** did not seem to teach others.

- 1) *“And it happened, **while Apollos was at Corinth**, that **Paul**, having passed through the upper regions, **came to Ephesus**. And **finding some disciples** he said to them, “**Did you***

receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.””
Acts 19:1-3 NKJV

Summary: ADVENTURES IN PHILIPPI

1. Yet Another Vision

A. Derbe and Lystra

(1) Timothy Joins Paul and Silas (Acts 16:1-5)

(a) Paul wanted to revisit the cities of his first missionary journey to check on the new converts and he arrives in Derbe and Lystra.

1. Paul meets Timothy, a young man with a Jewish mother and Greek father.

a) Lystra is where Paul was both extolled and stoned —Derby is where he went after that and preached again (See Acts 14:8-20)

b) Of these events Timothy must have had some knowledge.

- c) Timothy has a good reputation in Lystra and Iconium and Paul wants to take him on this mission.
- d) Timothy had not been circumcised, so Paul does so as he knows there are Jews whom they will encounter who know Timothy's father is not a Jew.
- e) Why would he do so in light of what we just learned in Acts 15 and the very rulings he is to deliver in writing to the churches?
 - 1) We just saw a detailed ruling in Acts 15 about the need to be circumcised.
 - 2) We learned that circumcision has nothing to do with being born-again. Sure circumcision is a command and it is good, it just (like any other command) is not a prerequisite for salvation, which is by grace through faith alone...Eph. 2:8-9!)
- f) Paul would later further clarify how the law and faith work together!
 - 1) Knowing God's laws and obedience to them has its advantages, but it simply has NOTHING to do with being born-again, other than that being

filled with the Holy Spirit is the only way you can actually properly obey God!

g) Now, contrast what Paul said about Timothy to what he says later about Titus, who he does not circumcise when he takes him to Jerusalem!

1) Undoubtedly, Paul is referring to what we just read in Acts 15 when he writes to the Galatians. It is the exact context—and likely the main reason Titus WAS NOT circumcised, to prove a point! This born-again, filled with the Spirit man, was effective in ministry, and yes, he remained uncircumcised!

h) **Back to Acts 16:** Paul and Timothy travel through the previous missionary cities and inform them about the ruling from the Jerusalem Council. The churches grew stronger in faith and numbers. (Timothy having being circumcised would have disarmed the Jews who would now receive a ruling that the Law is not required for salvation—how ironic!)

2. This was the ruling in Acts 15...

a) There are three categories of laws Gentile converts should adhere to when they come to the faith, plus

one reminder (none of these are required for salvation, just for growth and obedience).

- b) They should abstain from:
 - 1) Idolatry
 - 2) Sexual Immorality
 - 3) Unclean eating practices.
 - 4) Reminder: Like all of us raised as Jews, we learned the Torah over a lifetime in the synagogues every Sabbath, and so will these new Gentile converts.

B. We're Going to Macedonia

(1) The Macedonian Call (Acts 16:6-10**)**

(a) Come over to Macedonia...

1. Following a Vision

- a) Paul and Silas head northwest toward Phrygia in region of Galatia, but the Holy Spirit directed them to pass through for now, to not make any stops in the cities of Asia.
- b) They continued north and then west across the northern boarder of Asia in Mysia near Bithynia, which bypassed the seven cities of Asia from Revelation 2-3:

- 1) Ephesus (Loveless Church) Rev. 2:1-7

- 2) Smyrna (Persecuted Church) Rev. 2:8-11
 - 3) Pergamos (Compromising Church) Rev. 2:12-17
 - 4) Thyatira (Corrupt Church) Rev. 2:18-29
 - 5) Sardis (Dead Church) Rev. 3:1-6
 - 6) Philadelphia (Faithful Church) Rev. 3:7-13
 - 7) Laodicea (Lukewarm Church) Rev. 3:14-22
- c) The Holy Spirit also instructed Paul to avoid entering Bithynia.
 - d) At the western edge of Mysia, they came to the city of Troas on the coast of the Aegean Sea.
 - e) Paul has a vision of a man from Macedonia pleading with him to come to Macedonia to help!
 - 1) Visions certainly play a critical prophetic role in moving God's people. Old men will dream dreams and young men will see visions! (Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17)
 - 2) Paul had a vision on the Road to Damascus in Acts 9 and Peter had one in Acts 10, both of which dramatically changed the course of their lives.
 - f) So, Paul concludes that God wants him to bring the gospel to Macedonia and he responds

immediately by looking for a way to sail across the northwestern edge of the Aegean Sea.

C. Philippi

(1) Lydia Baptized at Philippi (**Acts 16:11-15**)

(a) The Foremost City

1. Following a Vision

- a) They sailed from Troas to Samothrace an Island midway to their destination on the shores of Macedonia.
- b) On the next day they landed in Neapolis on the coast of the mainland.
- c) They moved inland and a bit northwest to the city of Philippi, which is the major city in that part of Macedonia.
 - 1) God moves in places that will have a major impact!
 - 2) This is where the remaining events of this chapter occur!
- d) A few days later, on the Sabbath, they went to an area of the city where people gathered for prayer and they met with some women.

- e) This is where Paul meets Lydia. She's from Thyatira in central Asia, a city Paul bypassed on his way to Macedonia via the Spirit's prompting.
- f) She seems to be a Proverbs 31 woman, a seller of purple (a dealer in purple cloth).
 - 1) *"She makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple."* Proverbs 31:22 NKJV
 - 2) Fine linen refers to expensive clothing, as does purple. Garments dyed with purple indicate wealth and high rank.
- g) As is the mechanism of all born-again encounters, the Lord first softens her heart and she comes to believe what Paul teaches about Y'shua!
- h) Her entire household comes to faith and is baptized and she invites them to stay a for while in her home.

D. Persecution in Philippi

- (1) Paul and Silas are Imprisoned in Philippi for Ruining a Lucrative Fortune-Telling Racket (**Acts 16:16-24**)
 - (a) Don't Mess with My Money!
 - 1. Ruining a Lucrative Fortune-Telling Racket
 - a) In Philippi there was a slave girl who possessed a spirit of divination.

- b) Her owners were using her to make a lot of money by selling her as a fortune-teller.
- c) She kept interrupting Paul's ministry by heckling them; it seems she was trying to irritate them, but what she was shouting for days on end was actually the truth!
 - 1) *"These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."*
- d) Paul finally had enough of her and spoke to the spirit that possessed her. He commanded it to come out of her and it did!
- e) All of a sudden this massive profit-center was gone and her owners were furious.
- f) They apprehended Paul and Silas and brought them into an open square where city authorities could see them.
- g) In front of the city judges, the slave-girl owners accuse these Jews of disturbing the peace by insisting Romans observe Jewish customs.
- h) The crowds watching were stirred into an uproar and the judges were worked into a frenzy and ruled that Paul and Silas be flogged.

- 1) Can you imagine, it was on Paul's first mission trip that he was nearly stoned to death in Lystra.
(See Acts 14:19-20)
- i) This time they are whipped many times and tossed into prison.
- j) The prison warden was charged with placing them in the most secure area of the facility.
- k) He chained their feet to a wall in the deepest recesses of the prison.

E. Miracle in Philippi

(1) The Philippian Jailer Saved (Acts 16:25-34)

(a) How do Paul and Silas react to their beating and imprisonment?

1. How do Paul and Silas respond? They take a page out of Job's book! ***"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."***

- a) At midnight they were praying and worshipping aloud and all the other prisoners could hear.
- b) Then in a massive move of the Spirit, the earth under the prison quaked and all the prison doors flung open and every prisoner's chains fell off.

- 1) It was a supernatural prison break, like Peter's in Acts 12:5-19, in which an Angel breaks Peter out of prison.
- c) When the prison warden woke and realized what happened he was ready to commit suicide. He could never explain how all the prisoners escaped.
- d) Paul stopped him by exposing that they had not left their cell.
- e) The prison warden secured a *light to investigate and when he recognized the miracle, he trembled from head to toe and wanted to know what was needed to be saved.
 - a) It's simple, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."*
 - b) *The important detail included in this narrative, the idea that the warden "called for a light," and then ran in, has such Messianic symbolism, as he was about to receive the Light of the world! (John 8:12)
- f) Paul and Silas, in the midst of the broken prison, in their broken bodies, ministered the word of God to the warden and his entire household.

- g) The warden washed their wounds and then he and his family were baptized.
- h) They shared a meal together and he praised God that his entire family was born-again.

F. Grace in Philippi

(1) Paul is asked to Depart Secretly (Acts 16:35-40)

- (a) The judges of the city intended to release Paul and Silas that day and they sent officers to bring word.

1. The warden told Paul that he was “officially permitted to leave, to go in peace.” (How ironic, as Paul was already free!)

- a) Paul is not having it. He tells the warden to deliver a message to the city judges.
- b) “We are Roman citizens and you openly beat us and imprisoned us without a trial. And now you want to release us without anyone knowing. That is not happening. Tell them they must come themselves to face us and release us openly!”

1) Pray in secret a secret place and be rewarded openly!

- c) This is a frightening moment for the Roman magistrates who had violated proper Roman legal

procedures and abused Roman citizens without a trial.

- d) They are forced to beg Paul and Silas to leave Philippi without any commotion.
- e) Paul and Silas are gracious beyond imagination and do leave, first stopping back at Lydia's house before they depart Philippi.

SUMMARY: ENVOIOUS OR READINESS

2. Closed Minded Open Minded

A. Thessalonica

(1) Preaching in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4)

(a) Explain and Demonstrate Christ using the Scriptures

1. They left Philippi and came to Thessalonica.

- a) As Paul would do every Sabbath, he went to the synagogue (three consecutive Sabbaths).
- b) Each time he visited a synagogue, he used the scriptures to prove that Y'shua was the long-awaited Messiah.
- c) Many attendees believed Paul and Silas: some were Jews; some were Greeks; and some were important women in the city.

(2) Assault on Jason's House (Acts 17:5-9)

(a) Just as we've seen before, the Jews who did not believe became jealous.

1. Jealousy is Ugly

a) Where have we seen this before?

1) The Jews from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium were so jealous that they showed up in Lystra to stir up such strife, and that is what led to Paul's stoning! (Acts 13:45; 14:19)

b) Now the jealous Jews in Thessalonica assemble a mob with the obvious intent to cause a riot.

c) They descended on the house of man named Jason, likely the one who was hosting Paul and Silas and also having church gatherings in his home.

d) The claim against Paul and Silas and their gracious host Jason is that they are breaking Roman law and declaring another man king other than Caesar.

e) They could not find Paul and Silas at the home, so they dragged Jason in front of the city officials who made him post some type of bail before they released him.

B. Berea

(1) Ministering in Berea (**Acts 17:10-15**)

- (a) The local church thought it best to have Paul and Silas leave Thessalonica and head to Berea.
 - 1. Paul and Silas are sent off to Berea in the cover of darkness.
 - a) Of course, as soon as it was daytime they went right to the synagogue.
 - b) The Bereans were more reasonable, humble, and open-minded than the jealous Jews in Thessalonica.
 - c) Instead of reacting violently in an effort to protect their old belief systems, they listened to what Paul had to say and then they searched the word of God themselves to either prove or disprove what they were hearing from Paul.
 - 1) Do you do the same when you hear a message from church leaders?
 - d) The results of their search proved Paul was speaking the truth and there were many conversions.
 - e) Again, converts included Jews and Greeks, as well as other prominent women and men.
 - f) However, the jealous Jews from Thessalonica could not leave it alone and when they heard what

was happening in Berea, they came over to cause trouble.

- g) The local church thought it best to ship Paul to Athens, as Silas and Timothy stayed behind in Berea.
- h) Those who accompanied Paul dropped him off in Athens, and Paul sent a message back with them to Berea, instructing Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

Summary: PHILOSOPHERS AND ACCUSERS

3. The Gospel Makes its Way to Greece

A. Athens

(1) The Philosophers in Athens (Acts 17:16-21**)**

(a) A City Given Over to Many Idols!

1. As Paul waited for Silas and Timothy to arrive, he was stirred by all the idolatry in Athens—they had a different God for everything.
- a) He reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and non-Jewish God-fearers, and he even preached in the marketplace to anyone who would listen.

- b) Athens was filled with philosophers, and some from the Epicurean persuasion and some from the Stoic belief system confronted Paul.
 - 1) **Epicurean:** disciple or student of the Greek philosopher Epicurus. A person devoted to sensual enjoyment, especially that which is derived from fine food and drink; hedonist, sensualist pursuits; pleasure seekers and pleasure lovers.
 - 2) **Stoic:** a member of the ancient philosophical school of Stoicism; of or belonging to the Stoics or their school of philosophy; a person who can endure pain or hardship without showing their feelings or complaining.
- c) Some philosophers said Paul was just speaking nonsense; others thought he was there to introduce a new god because he was speaking of this Jesus who was raised from the dead.
- d) Athenians and those who visited the city invested most of their time searching for new things to contemplate.
- e) They were literally interested in anything new that they might use to enhance their philosophy.

f) The topic of the resurrection was interesting enough to some, so they invited Paul to the *Areopagus to discover more.

1) *Areopagus: (in ancient Athens) a hill on which met the highest governmental council and later a judicial court.

(2) Addressing the Areopagus (**Acts 17:22-34**)

(a) I perceive that you you are quite religious...

1. Paul used their intense religious interest to his advantage.

a) He stood in the middle of the Areopagus and appealed to their nature.

b) He spoke in a way they would understand, by connecting to that in which they clearly already had interest.

c) "You are a very religious bunch. You are so fastidious about the gods you worship that you won't risk missing a god you don't know about, so you even have an alter to THE UNKNOWN GOD. That is admirable."

d) Paul continues... "I have great news for you. I know who your unknown God is. He is actually the only true God, so you will no longer need any

of these others. He is the one who made the whole world and everything in it. And as such, He cannot be contained in a man-made building. He's the giver of life and breath and as such He needs nothing from you."

- e) He further explains... "I know your philosophy does not consider this, but this One True God created all of mankind from one seed and He has determined that at the exact time in history, He would make this known, so all would seek Him—realizing He is not at all far away, but right in their hearts, for in Him we live and move and have our being."
- f) Then Paul connects this truth to one of their very own philosophers... "One of your own *poets said it perfectly, '*For we are also His offspring.*' And if that is true, then God's Nature is like ours, not like inanimate objects such as gold, silver or stone, or anything that can be crafted by man's tools."
- 1) *Poet: **Aratus of Soli** was a Greek poet who flourished in Macedonia in the early 3rd century B.C.; Paul was quoting from what is presently his only surviving work, the *Phaenomena*, a

book describing the constellations and weather signs.

- g) Paul seals the deal... “All the centuries of man’s foolishness, thinking that God has the qualities of various types of inanimate objects, in His mercy He as overlooked. But now is the time for all mankind to repent of this wrong belief, because judgement against such paganism is coming. We know this to be true because He raised Christ from the grave, affirming He is the Only True God.”
- h) This resurrection thing caused some to think Paul was mad, while others were interested in hearing more.
- i) Paul left the area and some of the philosophers joined him.

B. Corinth

(1) Ministering in Corinth (Acts 18:1-17)

- (a) Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.
 - 1. From Athens Paul headed to Corinth.
 - a) That is where he meets Aquila and his wife Priscilla.

- b) They were in Corinth from Italy as Claudius Caesar told the Jews to leave Rome.
- c) Context for Claudius Caesar and his expulsion of Jews from Rome...
 - 1) The exact date is uncertain (AD 41- AD 53), some scholars agree to AD 49.
 - 2) The edict lapsed upon Claudius Caesar's death in AD 54, and the Jews began to return.
 - 3) Paul's letter to the Romans would have arrived in Rome somewhere around AD 57.
- d) Paul and Aquila were both tentmakers, so Paul worked with him while in the region.
- e) Again, Paul is teaching in the synagogue every Sabbath, and again there are both Jewish and Greek converts.
- f) Silas and Timothy catch up with Paul in Corinth from Macedonia.
 - 1) Remember, he left them behind in Berea and instructed them to come to him as soon as possible.
- g) The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to testify to the Jews that Y'shua is the Messiah.

- h) Many resisted to the point of blasphemy and Paul washed his hands of them.
 - 1) “I did my job; all you Jews who refuse to believe, your eternity is in your own hands now, and it will not be good. I will focus on the Gentiles from here on!”
- i) He left the synagogue and stayed with a man named Justus, a man who believed. His house was next to the synagogue.
- j) Crispus, who was the ruler of the local synagogue, also believed along with his whole household.
- k) Many Corinthians citizens came to faith and were baptized as well.

2. Yet Another Vision!

- a) Paul had yet another vision from God, this time that he was to be bold and unafraid in Corinth. God showed Paul that He is with him and would protect him, and that there were many faithful people in Corinth.
 - 1) That is refreshing for Paul as he had faced quite a bit of violent persecution on his first mission.
 - 2) Remember... on his first missionary journey the threats of persecution were constant, and at one

point in Lystra he was even stoned so badly they thought he was dead.

- 3) Plus... he and Silas, on this very mission trip, were recently flogged and imprisoned in Philippi in Macedonia.
- b) Paul taught the word of God in Corinth for eighteen months.
- c) When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia (the region of Greece), the unbelieving Jews unified around accusations against Paul.
- d) They brought him in front of Gallio and claimed Paul persuaded men to worship God, contrary to the law.
- e) Paul could not even begin to defend himself before Gallio dismissed the claim.
- f) He was not interested in judging any alleged wrongdoing (about words, names, and laws) within Judaism. Deal with those yourself.
- g) Now, if it is a matter of crimes according to Rome, then I am interested!
- h) Gallio told them all to get lost, but the Greeks went ahead and beat Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue.

- i) Gallio did not care and gave no attention to the injustice.
- 1) Note: some scholars believe Crispus from verse 8 and Sosthenes from verse 17 are one and the same (Possibly “Crispus Sosthenes.”)
- 2) Other scholars feel Sosthenes was Crispus’ successor, as Paul was in Corinth for 18 months and it is reasonable to believe that a new president of the synagogue was installed.

C. Paul is ready to complete this mission...

(1) Paul Returns to Antioch (Acts 18:18-23)

- (a) Paul remained in Corinth for quite some time and then headed back to Antioch in Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were with him.

1. Paul leaves Corinth

- a) Paul takes a Vow and had his hair cut off at Cenchrea on the eastern coast of Greece before he set sail across the Aegean Sea.
- b) Paul’s vow seems to be a Nazarite Vow, for which we find instructions in Numbers 6:1-21 (read it!)
 - 1) Note: it also seems that this is the same type of Vow that Paul makes in Acts 21.

- c) Paul arrives Ephesus in Asia and goes into the synagogue to reason with the Jews, as usual.
- d) They wanted him to stay for some time, but he refused, citing that he had to get back to Jerusalem for the upcoming feast.
 - 1) Paul is still very much in agreement that the Laws of Moses apply, even though we are now nearly 20 years after the resurrection. He wants to get back to Jerusalem (according to the law), if at all possible, for the upcoming feast.
(Deuteronomy 16:16)
- e) He promised to return to Ephesus—God willing.
- f) He leaves Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus and lands at Caesarea (by the sea) in Judea.
- g) He greets the church and then heads north to Antioch.
- h) He stays a while in Antioch and then heads further north into Galatia and Phrygia to encourage the disciples.
 - 1) The beginnings of a third missionary journey!

D. The Ministry of Apollos

- (1) Introducing Apollos (**Acts 18:24-28**)

(a) Now we meet Apollos, a Jewish man born in Alexandria (Egypt) who came to Ephesus.

1. Apollos was well-spoken, well-versed in Scriptures, and well-instructed in the way of the Lord. He was also quite fervent.

a) He had solid teachings about Christ, but knew only the baptism of John.

b) He spoke boldly in the synagogue about Christ, but when ***Aquila and Priscilla** heard him, they added to his greater understanding of Christ, teaching him about the Holy Spirit—the baptism beyond John's.

c) Apollos wished to sail to Achaia (Greece) to minister to those whom Paul brought to the faith.

d) The church in Ephesus sent him with a note encouraging the church in Greece to receive him.

e) When he arrived, he helped the new believers quite a bit and he also openly contended with non-believing Jews, proving from the Scriptures that Y'shua is the Messiah.

f) **Point of Interest:** It's strange that when Paul arrives in Ephesus on his third missionary Journey in Acts 19:1-3, the people still know nothing about the

Holy Spirit (only the baptism of John)! It seems that ***Aquila and Priscilla** taught Apollos (when all he knew prior was the baptism of John), then Apollos left for Greece, but ***Aquila and Priscilla** did not seem to teach others.

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

1. Paul meets Timothy in Derbe and Lystra in Acts 16:1-5...

- A. What does he do with Timothy before he takes him on the mission?
- B. Why would he do such a thing considering the letter he is carrying with the ruling from Acts 15?
- C. How does this differ with how Paul treated Titus? (See Galatians 2:1-5) Why?
- D. With all that happened in Lystra in Acts 14:8-20, do you believe Timothy knew what was in store for him on a mission with Paul? Why or Why not?
- E. If so, why would he still wish to join Paul?

2. In Acts 16:6-10 Paul has a vision from the Holy Spirit?

- A. What is he told to do?
- B. He also has a vision of a man from Macedonia; what does it mean to him?

3. Paul arrives in Philippi, the most important city in the lower-eastern region of Macedonia.

- A. What important event happens in Acts 16:11-15?
- B. Describe the events of Acts 16:16-24. What gets Paul in trouble?
- C. Paul's trouble lands him and Silas in a prison cell in Acts 16:25-34. What miracles take place BECAUSE they are in prison?
- D. Paul demonstrates a very gracious attitude in Acts 16:35-40. What is the circumstance and what does he do that makes this a true statement?

4. Acts 17:1-15 shows a great diversity of approaches between two different types of people...

- A. Describe the approach of the Thessalonians in Acts 17:1-9.
- B. Describe the approach of the Bereans in Acts 17:10-15.
- C. What defines the greatest difference between the two and how can you apply that to your life?

5. Athens is an entirely different experience for Paul.

- A. What does he notice about the people of Athens in Acts 17:16-21?
- B. Paul does something brilliant to connect with the people in Acts 17:22-34. What does he do and what can you learn

from him that will help you connect with people whom are very different than you?

6. Acts 18 brings Paul's second missionary journey to an end. A lot happens in Acts 18:1-17...

- A. He heads to Corinth and he meets Aquila and his wife Priscilla. Why were they there?
- B. What is their profession and how does that help Paul?
- C. Who else arrives in Corinth to meet Paul?
- D. What convicting statement did he make to the Jews regarding the Gentiles.
- E. What specially does the Holy Spirit promise Paul and why is it such a relief considering what happened on his first missionary journey in Acts 14 and more recently in Philippi?
- F. How do we see that promise fulfilled before the end of his stay in Corinth?

7. Paul remained in Corinth for quite some time and then headed back to Antioch in Syria in Acts 18:18-23. Priscilla and Aquila were with him.

- A. What type of vow does he take? (Hint: see Numbers 6 and Acts 21)
- B. Paul stops off in Ephesus on his return to Antioch. What profound reason does he give for denying the Ephesians

request that he stay longer? How might it relate to Deuteronomy 16:16?

- C. Why is this significant to you as a Christian, considering that Paul had that belief 20 years after the resurrection?

8. In Acts 18:24-28 we are introduced to Apollos in Ephesus. It is significant that when Paul sailed for Antioch he left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus.

- A. Apollos will become a powerful influencer in the Church in the first century. What did he have to learn from Aquila and Priscilla before he could be released fully into his ministry?
- B. Can you recognize the move of the Holy Spirit that caused Paul to leave Aquila and Priscilla behind in Ephesus? How does obedience to the Holy Spirit show up in your life?
- C. What was special about Apollos regarding his character, abilities and knowledge?
- D. What was he able to do in Greece when he encountered non-believing Jews?