

# Bible Stories

## 2<sup>nd</sup> MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Acts 16:6-10

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### Prologue

Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch. After a period of time, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they "go back and visit all the brothers in the towns where we preached the Word of God and see how they are doing." Barnabas agreed that this was a good idea, but then the partners came to a roadblock. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, but Paul did not because he had deserted them once before. Their disagreement was so heated that Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways. Barnabas took John Mark and went to Cyprus and Paul chose Silas as his new partner. They went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey Begins

Paul and Silas made their way to Derbe and then to Lystra. In Lystra they met Timothy. His mother was Jewish and his father was Greek. All the believers spoke highly of Timothy, so Paul and Silas decided to take him with them. Before starting out, Timothy was circumcised in order not to create a stumbling block for the Jewish converts.

- Acts 16:5 - *So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.*

They traveled through Phrygia and Galatia because the Holy Spirit had forbidden them to go to Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to go to Bithynia, but the Holy Spirit would not allow them to do so, so they bypassed Mysia and went to Troas. In the night, Paul had a dream – He saw a man standing before him pleading: "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

The next day the group set sail for Samothrace and then on to Neapolis. From Neapolis they traveled to Philippi.

### Philippi

There were not enough Jewish men {12 were needed to establish a Synagogue} in Philippi, so there was no Synagogue. Instead, Paul and his group went to the river to pray. There they met a group of women, including Lydia, a wealthy textile merchant from Thyatira, who specialized in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God and after listening to Paul, she and her household were baptized.

There was a slave girl in the city who had a spirit of divination. She made lots of money for her masters by telling fortunes. Day after day she followed Paul's group around shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God. They are proclaiming the way to salvation."

- Ellen White {AA 212.3-4}: *This woman was a special agent of Satan .... The words of recommendation uttered by this woman were an injury to the cause of truth, distracting the minds of the people from the teachings of the apostles and bringing disrepute upon the gospel, and by them many were led to believe that the men who spoke with the Spirit and power of God were actuated by the same spirit as this emissary of Satan.*

Finally, Paul had had enough. He turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" Immediately the spirit came out of the girl. When her owners realized that they had lost their income, they went to the authorities to complain. "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice," they said.

The crowd joined in on the attack and the authorities ordered that Paul and Silas be flogged and thrown in prison. The jailer was ordered to guard them carefully, so he placed them in the center cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

**At about midnight, while Paul and Silas were singing hymns of praise to God, there was an earthquake so violent that the foundations of the jail were shaken, the cell doors flew open and every prisoner's chains fell off. When the jailer saw the doors were open, he drew his sword to kill himself, thinking all the prisoners had escaped. Paul stopped him: "Don't kill yourself! We are all here!"**

**That night, the jailer and his entire family were saved.**

**When the sun rose, the authorities ordered the jailer to release Paul and Silas: "You are free. Go in peace." He said.**

**Not so fast!!**

**Paul: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. Now they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out of the city." (Roman Citizens had legal rights that other groups did not have.)**

**The jailer reported this to the authorities. When the authorities realized Paul and Silas were Roman Citizens, they turned white and a few shades of grey all at the same time. They were so afraid that they went and personally escorted Paul and Silas out of the prison and begged them to leave the city.**

**Paul and Silas went to Lydia's, said good-bye to the believers and left Philippi.**

## **Thessalonica**

**They passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia and finally arrived at Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As was his custom, on Sabbath, Paul went to Synagogue. After preaching about Jesus, some of the Jews and great many God-fearing Greeks, including some prominent women, were saved.**

**Some of the Jews became jealous. They hired some baddies, who formed a mob and started a riot in the city. The mob made its way to the house of Jason, where Paul and Silas were staying, and demanded that they be brought out to them. Paul and Silas were nowhere to be found, so the mob dragged Jason before the magistrate instead. "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus!" They shouted. Instantly the whole city was in turmoil. Jason was ordered to post bail and then was released.**

**As soon as it was night, Paul and Silas were sent to Berea.**

## **Berea**

**In Berea they went to Synagogue.**

- *Acts 17:11-12 - Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.*

**When the Jews in Thessalonica found out the Word of God was being preached in Berea, they traveled there and once again, stirred up a crowd against Paul and Silas. Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea, but Paul was immediately escorted to Athens.**

## **Athens**

**While Paul waited for Silas and Timothy to join him in Athens, he toured the city. He became distressed by the number of idols scattered throughout the city. Everywhere Paul went, he talked openly about Jesus. Now, Athens was a city full of intellectuals and philosophers. They began to argue with Paul, some saying, "What is this guy going on about? He seems to be talking up some foreign god." As a result, Paul was invited to speak before the Areopagus.**

- *The Areopagus is a prominent rock outcropping located not far from the Acropolis. The name also referred to the Athenian governing council. Legend states that the Greek war god Ares (Roman god Mars) was tried by the other gods on the Areopagus for the murder of Poseidon's son, Halirrhothius.*

**Upon arriving at the Areopagus, the council addressed Paul. "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean."**

**Well, that was an opening Paul could not resist:**

- *"Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with the inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.... Therefore, since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone -- an image made by man's design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."* – Acts 17:22-31

**A few men believed including Dionysius, a member of the council, and a woman named Damaris.**

**Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.**

## **Corinth**

**In Corinth Paul met a Jewish tentmaker, Aquila, and his wife, Priscilla, who had recently come from Rome, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul, also being a tentmaker, stayed and worked with them.**

**Every Sabbath Paul went to Synagogue and taught about Jesus. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself fulltime to preaching. When the Jews became abusive, Paul shook out his coat and said, "Your blood is on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I am going to preach to the Gentiles!"**

**Many Corinthians, including Titus Justus and Crispus and his entire household believed and were baptized.**

**Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and half**

**While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court, but Gallio declined to hear the case because the issues regarded Jewish law. "Settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things." He said and had them ejected from the court.**

**The mob turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler and instigator of the trouble. They beat him in front of the court, but Gallio showed no concern whatever.**

**Paul left Corinth and sailed for Syria. Aquila and Priscilla went with him. When they arrived at Ephesus, Paul was invited by the Jews to spend some time with them, but he declined. He did promise that, if it was God's will, he'd come back, then he left. He landed at Caesarea, went up to Jerusalem to greet the brethren and then down to Antioch.**

**During this journey of about 3 years, Paul and Silas had traveled roughly 2,800 miles.**

## **What do we do with this story?**

**God's overall plan had always been to bring salvation to the world and that was Paul's mission. That mission brought Paul into conflict with, well, everyone - Gentiles, Jews and Jewish converts to Christianity.**

**Paul's mission turned the Gentile world on its head. Those who were steeped in idol worship and profiting from devil possession, did not take kindly to Paul coming in and messing in their business. They caused Paul considerable trouble.**

**The Jews he met in the synagogues, did not believe his testimony regarding Jesus and rejected it. That caused Paul considerable trouble.**

**The Jewish converts, questioned allowing Gentiles to become Christians without having to become "Jews" first. This second group were led by "Judaizing" teachers who argued that for Gentiles to be saved, all the Jewish ceremonial**

laws must be kept first, including circumcision. The Judaizers followed Paul to every city in the empire, also causing him considerable trouble.

However, true to Paul's character, he would not be silenced. He loudly proclaimed that Jews and Gentiles alike had been offered salvation through the death of Christ. Period.

Paul was bold and tenacious. He stood toe to toe against all opposition and the Good News spread. People believed. Heaven expanded.