

# Paul's Second Preaching Trip

Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. **And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.**

Acts 16:6-9

**Preparatory Reading:** Acts chapters 15-18; Ephesians 2-3.

**Related Link:** Paul's First Trip (notes) ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/paul-first-preaching-trip-notes.pdf>.  
Paul's First Trip (map) ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/paul-first-preaching-trip-slides.pdf>.  
Acts 16 (detailed notes) ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/acts-16.pdf>.  
Paul vs. Philosophers (notes) ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/superstition-or-truth.pdf>.

## **Introduction:**

1. The LORD gave the word, and a great company published it (Ps 68:11,18; Eph 4:8-11). Hallelujah!
2. He had revealed truth and sent prophets and scripture to the nation of Israel only (Psalm 147:19-20).
3. For 4000 years God allowed the Gentile world to be ignorant by idolatrous superstition and idiocy.
4. The Bible condemns the ignorance and rebellion of natural man (Acts 17:30; 14:16; Rom 1:18-32).
5. You could not know God's Son ... you would never know eternal life ... without a gospel preacher.
6. There is a logical and necessary order for God to send preachers for you to believe (Rom 10:13-17).
7. Without knowing God and His Son, neither would you know truth or wisdom on any subject at all.
8. But there were many prophecies of God sending the truth to Gentiles under Messiah (Isaiah 11:10; 42:1-12; 49:5-6,22-23; 54:1-5; 60:1-5; 66:10-12,19-21; Jer 16:19-21; Malachi 1:11; Ps 22:27-31).
9. The great mystery of godliness included God sending preachers about Jesus to Gentiles (I Tim 3:16).
10. Jesus ordained apostles and charged them to preach His gospel throughout the earth (Matt 28:19-20).
11. Based on His almighty power, He promised them power to turn the world upside down (Acts 1:8).
12. He prepared and chose Paul for the specific work of taking the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9,22,26).
13. For a dramatic intro and map for Paul's trip ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/paul-second-preaching-trip-slides.pdf>
14. The purpose of these sermons is to provide a broad and general knowledge of Paul's preaching trips.
15. The book of Acts ... Acts of the Apostles ... is inspired and preserved church history of Jesus Christ.
16. Paul made about four clearly revealed preaching trips that we can read about in Luke's book of Acts.
17. Our expositional interest is very limited, lest we forget the main lesson – God sent preachers for us.
18. Most geographical, historical, political, linguistic, religious, economic, or military details are nothing.
19. Our purpose is to see God expanding His revelation to our kind – to Gentiles – by Paul's preaching.
20. We must see how God *prepared, identified, favored, and protected* Paul to preach Jesus to Gentiles.
21. We want to study Paul's *methods ... power ... content ... and results* by blessing of the Holy Ghost.
22. We have two main goals (a) thank God for sending His gospel and (b) publish it to others ourselves.
23. This section of church history recorded in Acts by Luke tells how Paul took the gospel to Europe.

## **Background:**

1. The Bible first mentions Saul, known soon as Paul, at Stephen's stoning (Acts 7:57-60).
2. Jesus Christ met him on the road to Damascus and converted him fully (Acts 9:1-22).
3. Those fleeing Saul's persecution in Judea started a church in Antioch (Acts 11:19-24).
4. Barnabas, who confirmed Paul at Jerusalem, brought him to Antioch (Acts 11:25-26).
5. Paul's first preaching trip began with prayer and ended with review (Acts 13:1 – 14:28).

6. Paul then went to Jerusalem to unite the apostles against Jewish legalists (Ac 15:1-21).
7. The inspired council chose Paul and others to take its rules to Antioch (Acts 15:22-35).
8. Paul's second preaching trip was to confirm churches he had started (Acts 15:36 – 16:5).
9. The Holy Ghost cut Paul off every way but west – to send him to Europe (Ac 16:6-12).
10. This section of church history recorded in Acts tells how Paul took the gospel to Europe.

## **Paul's Second Preaching Trip**

### **ACTS 15**

- A. Antioch – Paul Planned a Second Trip (36)
- B. Antioch – Paul and Barnabas Separated (37-41).
  1. Paul and Barnabas separated over Mark (37-39).
  2. Paul took Silas into Syria and Cilicia (40-41).

### **ACTS 16**

- C. Derbe – Paul Returned to His Churches (1-5).
  1. Paul chose young Timothy to join them (1-3).
  2. They delivered decrees from Jerusalem (4).
  3. The churches were strengthened and grew (5).
- D. Philippi – the Lord Directed Paul (6-12).
  1. They evangelized Phrygia and Galatia (6).
  2. The Spirit rejected Asia and Bithynia (6-8).
  3. The Spirit called them to Macedonia (9-10).
  4. The Spirit led them to city of Philippi (11-12).
- E. Philippi – the Conversion of Lydia (13-15).
- F. Philippi – Persecution for the Gospel (16-24).
  1. Paul cast out a spirit of divination (16-18).
  2. Slander for their loss brought prison (19-24).
- G. Philippi – Conversion of the Jailor (25-34).
  1. The Lord worked His own miracle (25-30).
  2. Paul presented the gospel in prison (31-34).
- H. Philippi – Paul Departed for Other Places (35-40).
  1. He gently punished city magistrates (35-39).
  2. He comforted the brethren and departed (40).

### **ACTS 17**

- I. Thessalonica – Paul Established a Church (1-9).
  1. Paul reasoned in the synagogue (1-4).
  2. Jews in Thessalonica opposed him (5-9).
- J. Berea – Paul Established a Church (10-15).
  1. Paul preached in the synagogue (10-12).
  2. Jews from Thessalonica opposed him (13-15).
- K. Athens – Paul Engaged Greek Philosophers (16-34).
  1. Paul used the synagogue and market (16-18).
  2. Paul preached the truth on Mars' Hill (19-31).
  3. Some mocked, deferred, and believed (32-34).

## **ACTS 18**

- L. Corinth – Paul Established Another Church (1-18).
  - 1. He made tents with Aquila and Priscilla (1-3).
  - 2. He first preached in the Jewish synagogue (4-6).
  - 3. He preached to many there for 18 months (7-11).
  - 4. The Jews created a riot to persecute Paul (12-17).
  - 5. Paul sailed for Antioch by way of Ephesus (18).
- M. Ephesus – Paul Established a Church in Asia (19-21).
  - 1. He reasoned with Jews in the synagogue (19).
  - 2. He sailed for Jerusalem for the feast (20-21).
- N. Antioch – He Returned Home via Jerusalem (22).

### **A. Antioch – Paul planned second trip to confirm churches started first trip (15:36).**

- 1. Paul introduced his plan to Barnabas, his traveling partner and friend of long time.
- 2. He knew the churches needed follow-up, especially with decrees from Jerusalem.
- 3. He planned by the Spirit to revisit the churches they started to confirm in the truth.
- 4. What if Paul had not planned this trip? What if God had not blessed a second trip?
- 5. Due to the nature and purpose of this study, we must ask these crucial questions.

### **B. Antioch – Paul and Barnabas separated over Mark before second trip (15:37-41).**

- 1. Paul and Barnabas separate over Mark, so Barnabas took him to Cyprus (37-39).
  - a. Barnabas stubbornly wanted John Mark his nephew with them again (37-38).
  - b. John Mark was nephew of Barnabas by his sister Mary (Acts 12:12; Col 4:10).
  - c. Paul did not trust Mark for quitting on the first trip and deserting them (13:13).
  - d. Barnabas was from Cyprus; he went there (4:36); Paul avoided Cyprus (15:41).
  - e. Great men may differ, but let us never fight over nepotism or family favoritism.
  - f. Paul's opinion should have meant more to Barnabas than his quitter nephew.
  - g. Did nepotism ruin Barnabas? No. Compare the timelines (Acts 18:1; I Cor 9:6).
  - h. Paul used Barnabas to illustrate apostolic authority over 5 years after their split!
  - i. Paul identified Mark as Barnabas's nephew for honor 10 years later (Col 4:10)!
- 2. Paul took Silas to replace Barnabas and traveled through Syria and Cilicia (40-41).
  - a. What if Paul had quit by the discouraging argument with Barnabas? He did not.
  - b. Going forth two-by-two is both wise and Jesus' example (Ec 4:9-12; Mark 6:7).
  - c. The Antioch church took Paul's side in the matter and commended him to God.
  - d. We do not know all the details – Barnabas may have left in a huff and hurry.
  - e. God in His glorious providence doubled the productivity of Paul and Barnabas.
  - f. Going to Pisidia and Lycaonia, Paul first visited churches in Syria and Cilicia.
- 3. John Mark repented and reformed conduct to Paul's praise (Col 4:10; II Tim 4:11).
  - a. There is more that could be written about John Mark, but it is beyond this study.
  - b. He was a ministerial failure, but repented and was restored by Paul's approval.
  - c. His dead flies were no worse than Peter's; repentance clears all (II Co 7:10-11).
  - d. By Paul's honor to Barnabas 5 years later, he had likely corrected Mark's faults.
  - e. By his honor to Barnabas and Mark 10 years later, all worked out (Col 4:10)!

## **ACTS 16**

### **C. Derbe – Paul returned with Silas to the churches he had started (16:1-5).**

1. Paul met and chose a young man named Timothy to join his preaching team (1-3).
  - a. Paul had been at Derbe and Lystra before, the first trip with Barnabas (14:6-22).
  - b. His parents were different several ways, a converted Jewess and a pagan Greek.
  - c. Who were Timothy's mother and grandmother? Eunice and Lois (II Tim 1:5).
  - d. He had a great reputation, a noble goal (Pr 22:1; Lu 2:52; I Tim 5:10; He 11:2).
  - e. Paul chose him for ministry; he became a great one (Phil 2:19-23; I Tim 4:17).
  - f. To placate Jews in that region and avoid unnecessary offence to Timothy's reputation and ministry, Paul circumcised him due to a stigma from his father.
  - g. Paul did not contradict the council (16:4), but showed wisdom (I Cor 9:19-23).
  - h. When the grace of Christ was at stake, he did not circumcise Titus (Gal 2:1-5).
  - i. Yet once again, when Paul came to Jerusalem, he made a vow (Acts 21:17-26).
  - j. It is godly wisdom to know the proper use of matters of liberty (I Cor 10:23).
  - k. For more of Christian ethics ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/christian-ethics-case-studies.pdf>.
2. The three told Gentile churches the decreed rules of the Jerusalem Council (4-5).
  - a. Paul taught the free grace of God (15:40; 20:24). Circumcision was excluded.
  - b. The Gentiles were established in the faith by learning the law was not for them.
  - c. The churches increased in membership daily by the Spirit and gospel of grace.
  - d. The "as . . . so" construction of 16:4-5 shows their establishment by the decrees.

### **D. Philippi – Paul is directed by the Spirit to take the gospel into Europe (16:6-12).**

1. Paul is routed by the Holy Spirit to avoid both Asia and Bithynia on this trip (6-7).
  - a. Paul was an apostle with an extraordinary degree of God's grace and the Spirit.
  - b. The Spirit forbade preaching the word in Asia (southwestern modern Turkey).
  - c. What happened to those people who died in Asia without hearing the gospel?
  - d. He also forbade preaching the word in Bithynia (northwestern modern Turkey).
  - e. In between these two Roman provinces was the frontier province of Mysia.
  - f. The Lord can close doors, so that the only open door is His will for your life.
  - g. These dots in the progress of the gospel turned to your advantage. Give thanks.
2. Paul is routed by the Holy Spirit across today's Aegean Sea to Macedonia (8-10).
  - a. They passed by Mysia and came down (altitude) to Troas on the Aegean (8).
  - b. The Spirit directed Paul with an obvious vision of a man of Macedonia, who implored him to cross the Sea and enter Macedonia to help them of that place.
  - c. Godly men react immediately to obey God's will (Ps 119:60; Gen 22:3; 19:16).
  - d. A vision from God is a pretty sure thing, so Paul assuredly gathered God's will.
  - e. Here we have the first reference to Luke with Paul by the plural, first person *we*.
  - f. Luke met and joined Paul in Troas by comparing his *they* (8) against *we* (10).
  - g. Luke was often a companion of Paul (Col 4:14; II Tim 4:11; Philemon 1:24).
3. Paul is routed by the Spirit to the city of Philippi in the Macedonia region (11-12).
  - a. Samothracia is an island in the archipelago off the coast of Thrace (or Greece).
  - b. The Holy Spirit led them to Neapolis, and then to the chief city of Philippi.

- c. The Lord blessed Paul's visit to form a church that later received an epistle.
- d. This city had Roman liberty; it was considered a colony; the laws were Roman.
- e. They were in the city a few days waiting for Jesus to open a door (II Cor 2:12).
- f. Paul had likely not been in Europe before, but now the Lord would save many.

#### **E. Philippi – Lydia and household converted after hearing Paul preach (16:13-15).**

- 1. Observe again Paul's sabbath day practice. He waited for God-fearers to assemble.
  - a. If there was a synagogue there, we do not know, but likely not by what follows.
  - b. Paul, Silas, Timotheus, and Luke visit a river prayer meeting of some women.
- 2. Lydia, a worshiper of God, had her heart opened by God to receive Paul's words.
  - a. This woman was by birth or permanent residence of the city of Thyatira, Asia.
  - b. Her testimony was similar to Cornelius of worshiping God and praying (10:2), yet we know that the unregenerate neither seek or fear God (Rom 3:10-18).
  - c. She was already elect of God, justified by Christ, and regenerated by the Spirit.
  - d. Soft hearts [alive] are pricked (2:37); hard ones [dead] are cut (5:33; 7:51,54).
  - e. Yet God must open the hearts of even regenerated saints (Mat 16:17; Gal 1:16; Ep 1:15-23; Mat 11:25-27; II Tim 2:7; Ps 119:32; Luke 24:45; Acts 11:18,21).
  - f. Lydia needed to be converted – turned to the truth, as Peter was (Luke 22:32).
  - g. She and her house were baptized, showing a simplicity of baptism (2:38; 8:37).
  - h. There were no infants in this number by force of doctrine (8:37; I Peter 3:21).
  - i. Appealing to her faith, she asked this group of evangelists to stay in her house.

#### **F. Philippi – Paul and Silas rebuke a devil and are severely persecuted (16:16-24).**

- 1. Paul cast out a spirit of divination in a girl that cost her masters income (16-18).
  - a. There are no coincidences in God's government of the world – He planned this.
  - b. **Divination.** Foretelling future or finding the unknown by supernatural means.
  - c. **Soothsaying.** Predicting the future by pretense or supernatural power.
  - d. God condemned such activities, even if innocent or popular (Deut 18:9-14).
  - e. Satan had possessed a young girl by a spirit, giving her supernatural knowledge.
  - f. The magicians of Pharaoh were able to perform limited signs (Exodus 7:11-12).
  - g. Satan's demons always knew Jesus Christ, His apostles, and frauds (19:11-20).
  - h. Her masters had discovered this *gift*, and they used it for their financial gain.
  - i. Ignore any supernatural gifts – simply and only follow the word (Deut 13:1-5).
  - j. The apostles were on their way to prayer, likely three times daily (3:1; 10:3,9).
  - k. Since they prayed often each day, this gave the spirit opportunity to meet them.
  - l. The declaration was gloriously true, but was undesired by its profane source.
  - m. Paul got fed up with the profane distraction and commanded the spirit to depart.
  - n. The apostolic formula was simple – commandment in the name of Jesus Christ.
  - o. There was no extended exorcism; the spirit left immediately (22:13 cp 9:18).
  - p. If her masters had made much money, then the city had confidence in her spirit.
  - q. But Paul showed far superior power that could not be resisted by her spirit.
  - r. Yet the foolish masters and citizens miss the power by fighting for her profits.

2. Paul and Silas were slandered by the girl's masters, whipped, and jailed (19-24).
  - a. In spite of Paul's actual message, their own damsel's testimony, and the miracle of devil expulsion, these blind pagans could only think of cash loss. America?
  - b. The enemies of the gospel will use political force to stop preachers if possible.
  - c. As a colony of Rome (12), the rulers were Romans and exalted Roman law.
  - d. As a general rule, Christians in the Roman Empire were models of citizenship.
  - e. There is no New Testament evidence of Paul teaching customs against Rome.
  - f. Paul taught God had ordained Caesar and Rome's Empire (Romans 13:1-7).
  - g. Peter taught we submit to civil ordinances for the Lord's sake (I Pet 2:11-17).
  - h. When prophesying against Rome, Paul was very cautious (II Thess 2:3-7).
  - i. So much for *innocent until proven guilty*. They were falsely charged (20-21), denied a trial (22), publicly stripped (22), publicly beaten without trial (23,37), and put in stocks in the inner prison without any medical attention (24,33).
  - j. It is amazing how much unity occurs among men against Jesus Christ and truth.

### **G. Philippi – Paul and Silas converted the jailor and his house that night (16:25-30).**

1. We will take extra time with this section due to ignorant Arminians and their abuse of this text as a recipe for regeneration based on the mere sound of its words.
  - a. Recall what ignorant Arminians do with Revelation 3:20 to prepare your mind.
  - b. They actually think this man invited Jesus into his heart while on the cell floor.
  - c. They think this event justifies altar calls, jail ministries, sinner's prayers, etc.
  - d. Unconditional salvation ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/salvation/unconditional-salvation/sermon.php>.
  - e. Five phases of salvation ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/salvation/five-phases-of-salvation/sermon.php>.
  - f. Salvation of Cornelius ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/salvation/when-was-cornelius-saved/sermon.php>.
  - g. Salvation by Works ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/salvation/salvation-by-works/sermon.php>.
2. Beaten and bound, the two's spirits were rejoicing in the Lord (Eph 5:18-19; 6:18).
3. God sent a sudden and great earthquake, opening all doors and bonds and stocks.
  - a. This earthquake shook the prison foundations, which were likely substantial.
  - b. The presence and power of God had to equal at least what Sergius Paulus saw.
  - c. But this is not the greatest miracle God worked in the darkness of this city jail.
4. The jailor, in great fear for dereliction of duty, showed a pagan heart about suicide.
  - a. The jailor did not cry out in repentance for his sins and beg the mercy of God.
  - b. The jailor did not ask Paul and Silas to hear more about the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - c. The jailor did not ask Paul and Silas to repeat his favorite sermon he had heard.
  - d. The jailor did not ask Paul and Silas how they had cast out the damsel's devil.
  - e. The jailor was not lying on his bed considering their prayers and singing (25).
  - f. The jailor was soundly asleep in vain comfort of authority and depraved faith.
  - g. The jailor applied his depraved religion to relieve his fearful soul by suicide.
5. Paul relieved his fears and blew his mind by saving his life and stating all present.
  - a. Saving the jailor was against nature – abused men would have exhorted suicide!
  - b. All present – also by God's power and Paul's influence – was against nature.
  - c. Combine sleep, earthquake, fear, suicide, life spared, job secure, joy, peace, etc.

6. Consider wisely the incredible change that occurred in this pagan, Roman jailor.
  - a. He believed and obeyed Paul in a matter of panic and life-threatening danger.
  - b. He rushed to Paul and trembling from the situation fell at the preachers' feet.
  - c. He realized this man and his God had power and benefits he had never known.
  - d. After they raised him up, he brought them out and properly asked to be saved.
  - e. The change in this man was by the grace of God. Contrast others (John 9:30; Acts 4:16; 6:8 – 7:60; Luke 16:31). What invitational hymn did they play?
  - f. He had never been to Sunday School and had no clue of "saved" that you do.
  - g. Peter in Matthew 14:30 intended no more than this – *Jesus, don't let me drown.*
  - h. The jailor meant no more than this – *Get me out of my mess to what you have.*
7. What was this pagan jailor seeking? Can we find the sense (Neh 8:8; II Tim 2:15)?
  - a. He was not a weekend theological student asking for justification by faith.
  - b. He was not asking for election, predestination, reconciliation, or glorification.
  - c. He was not asking what to do in order to be born again, as many presume.
  - d. He did not understand God's holy claims against him by Adam and his sins.
  - e. Under great fear and conviction, he was seeking peace with God and hope.
  - f. Maybe he knew the frequent testimony of the devil-possessed damsel (16:17).
  - g. He knew that Paul and Paul's God and Paul's religion crushed his worldview.
  - h. He had never met men with this power, providence, and cheerful personalities.
  - i. He wanted their religion – a powerful, personal God and peace, joy, hope, love.
8. His bizarre and drastic behavior after not killing himself was like a certain thief.
  - a. What caused a thief to stop cursing, rebuke his fellow, and beg Jesus for mercy?
  - b. Consider how the eunuch and Cornelius were both moved to seek more truth.
  - c. Compare how Sergius Paulus was astonished by power and turned to believe.
  - d. Compare how some hopeless philosophers turned to the truth of Paul's words.
  - e. Gentiles without the gospel are without hope and without God in the world.
  - f. After regeneration, the gospel from men like this was a very precious gift.
9. Paul told him to believe on Jesus Christ for his salvation and his family's (31-34).
  - a. This is exactly what you should answer to anyone asking a similar question.
  - b. Compare how Paul desired salvation of Israel – from ignorance (Rom 10:1-4).
  - c. When a father embraces the truth, he can lead his family into it (Deut 6:4-9).
  - d. Compare how the Bible speaks of Abraham and Joshua leading their families.
  - e. Paul told Timothy he could save all his hearers by his choices (I Timothy 4:16).
10. What did Paul offer? Can we find the sense of his words (Neh 8:8; II Tim 2:15)?
  - a. Paul did not offer him election, predestination, justification, or regeneration.
  - b. There are three phases of salvation that occur prior to believing (eternal, legal, and vital), and there are two phases that follow it (practical and final).
  - c. Paul offered him peace with God and hope through the gospel of Jesus Christ, and he further offered by the Spirit the same peace and hope for his family.
  - d. Paul offered the means of gospel salvation and the evidence of final salvation.
  - e. Paul did not offer him anything on mere faith alone (James 2:14-26; Gal 5:6).

11. Contrary to all Fundamentalists, this is not the formula for regeneration of dead men.
  - a. Regeneration precedes any faith or action toward God (John 1:13; 3:3-8; 5:25).
  - b. There was no question about the Lordship of Jesus Christ – He is the Lord!
  - c. There was nothing of inviting Jesus into his heart or other Arminian heresies.
12. Paul and Silas preached the gospel to the jailor and to his whole house before they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and returned kind care of the apostles.
  - a. The jailor knew nothing of sin, hell, Jesus, or eternal life when he asked.
  - b. They had to teach him before he could believe on Jesus, which they clearly did.
13. From the faithless, hopeless vanity of pagan Rome, he then trusted God with joy.
  - a. Creation, providence, and conscience are not nearly enough to truly reveal God.
  - b. God chose to save men to the knowledge of God by preaching (I Cor 1:17-21).
14. His faith was immediately followed by works of love and charity (I Thess 4:2-4).
15. We do not by this special operation of God form jail ministries for the worst men.

#### **H. Philippi – Paul gently punished the rulers of Philippi before departing (16:35-40).**

1. Why did the magistrates release them in the morning after ordering secure bonds?
  - a. There is not much of a natural explanation for such conduct and none given.
  - b. But they likely knew they had been hasty to beat and imprison without a trial.
  - c. How much was the Spirit in the matter? Did the Lord simply want the jailor?
2. For the jailor to keep his job, the prisoners were present, including Paul and Silas.
  - a. After preaching, baptizing, and eating, Paul and Silas were back in their cell.
  - b. There was no reason to endanger the jailor's job or life, so they asked for cuffs.
  - c. We know this was true, for the sergeants and fetching require them in their cell.
3. Paul explained his goal by seeking a more public effort by them to cover the crime.
  - a. Paul did not appeal to Caesar, for the danger to his life and ministry were past.
  - b. To clear the gospel of false claims and protect the saints there, Paul was crafty.
  - c. His prudence set a precedent and reminder for rulers to not offend the church.
4. When the magistrates heard this news, they are afraid of what they did to Romans.
  - a. Silas must also have been Roman, for Paul used two plurals of *us* and *Romans*.
  - b. Where clear laws can serve the saints, we wisely will use them (22:25; 25:11).
  - c. We do not pretend to know the law better than their lawyers and fight foolishly.
5. The rulers personally came to the jail, brought them out, and begged them to leave.
  - a. Even after obtaining this personal escort, they stayed in Philippi a while longer.
  - b. By entering Lydia's house, they identified the persons that should be protected.
6. Paul and Silas comforted the saints then left for their next field of endeavor (40).
  - a. They enter Lydia's house, where Timothy and Luke had been staying also (15).
  - b. They comforted them by their release, the jailor's conversion, and God's grace.

### **ACTS 17**

#### **I. Thessalonica – Paul arrived from Philippi and organized another church (17:1-9).**

1. Paul again entered the synagogue there to present the truth to those fearing God (1).
  - a. We again see Paul's methods – he looked for God's elect in the most likely place.



- b. Why did he not stand in a mall food court and let go with his gospel preaching?
- c. If regeneration is necessary to believe (it is), then this is the only sensible method.
- 2. Observe that gospel preaching to the great apostle is reasoning from Scripture (2-3).
  - a. He opened (introduced his case) and alleged (asserted and argued his evidence).
  - b. Since the context is logical (17:2) and legal (the two words chosen), we use the legal definition of both, which fits the further context (17:4b).
  - c. **Open.** To state or bring forward (an argument, assertion, etc.) in opening a case.
  - d. **Allege.** The action of adducing as evidence; citing, quoting; making an assertion.
  - e. The prophecies of Jesus Christ were fulfilled, but it was hard for Jews to believe.
  - f. Jokes, anecdotes, and stories may draw crowds, but it is not true Bible preaching.
- 3. Both Jews and Gentiles believed, including a great multitude of national Greeks (4).
- 4. The Jews in Thessalonica opposed him by stirring up the people against him (5-9).
  - a. Jewish envy again opposed the apostle Paul like at Antioch in Pisidia (13:45).
  - b. Here they take local profane persons and assault the house where Paul stayed.
  - c. With much people (majority) and noise (intensity), the mob must have been right.
  - d. They aroused fear that Paul and company were turning the world upside down.
  - e. They then accused them of countering Caesar by preaching another King. Amen!
  - f. They did not capture the speakers, so they took bond of Jason and released them.
  - g. This event contributed to his obscure prophecy against Rome (II Thess 2:3-8).

**J. Berea – Paul preached in the synagogue with good success among them (17:10-12).**

- 1. Paul and Silas again went straight to the synagogue in this city to preach the gospel.
  - a. Rather than tire of reading about synagogues, see Paul’s evangelistic methods.
  - b. He was entirely consistent with Jesus about not feeding dogs and pigs (Matt 7:6).
  - c. Street preaching by Arminian fools is no more scriptural than infant baptism.
- 2. Here we have the definition of noble hearers – receptive minds and daily searching.
  - a. When one audience or contact does not work, then go to the next – for a Berean.
  - b. Noble men have a ready mind to receive truth rather than a closed mind to reject.
  - c. Is your mind ready, eager, anticipating, and excited to hear Bible preaching?
  - d. It is the duty of prudence to read, know, and prove all by Scripture (I Thess 5:21).
  - e. Since Paul was preaching the truth to noble hearers, there were many converts.
- 3. Jews from Thessalonica oppose him in Berea by stirring up the people there (13-15).
  - a. The envious Jews from Thessalonica could not let Paul preach in Berea either.
  - b. The brethren pretended to put Paul on a ship, but they took him to Athens instead.
  - c. At Athens, Paul sent a message to Silas and Timotheus to come as soon possible.
- 4. For more about noble hearers ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/noble-hearers.pdf>.
- 5. For noble hearers ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/exposition/preaching-service/sermon.php>.

**K. Athens – Paul engaged Jews and then Greek philosophers in this city (17:16-34).**

- 1. For details about Paul on Mars’ Hill ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/superstition-or-truth.pdf>.
- 2. Paul preached in the synagogue and debated philosophers in the market (16-18).
  - a. Paul had a spirit that was stirred, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

- b. Does your spirit get stirred up by all the error seen throughout America in 2019?
  - c. He began again with the Jews in the synagogue, and also the devout Gentiles.
  - d. And he found a place in the market to dispute daily with those who would hear.
  - e. The philosophers of Athens heard of his new doctrine and desired a public forum.
  - f. **Epicureans.** A major philosophic sect of Greece and Rome founded by Epicurus (341-270 B.C.). The purpose of life is to enjoy pleasure, whether physical or intellectual. Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. They had no place for a creator God, His providence, or judgment after death.
  - g. **Stoicks.** A sect of Greece and Rome founded by Zeno of Cyprus (about 355-261 B.C.). They were pantheistic, with God the impersonal force in the universe along with matter. The purpose of life was to choose the moral good – virtue – over pleasure and feelings regardless. They exalted temperance like monks.
  - h. The philosophers ridiculed him as a babbler, so do not be surprised at the charge.
  - i. They ridiculed him as teaching strange gods (plural) by perverting his words.
  - j. He preached Jesus Christ and resurrection from death no matter where he spoke.
3. These men are intrigued by his words and ask him to speak at Mars' Hill (19-31).
    - a. Areopagus and Mars' Hill were the same place with two names (17:19 cp 17:22).
    - b. Areopagus is the Latin word for the Greek words Hill of Mars, or Mars' Hill.
    - c. More than just an elevated place near the temple of Mars in Athens, it was also the supreme court of the city for matters civil, legal, and philosophic.
    - d. The Bible tells us enough about Greeks – they sought natural wisdom (I Co 1:22).
    - e. Because Athenians loved to hear new things in their pursuit of wisdom, they provided Paul a forum in which to address all the philosophers and seekers.
    - f. His audience was the most intellectual men of the most intellectual city on earth.
  4. Consider Paul's content and method when given an opportunity like this before men.
    - a. Ignorance – creation – providence – knowability – repentance – judgment - Jesus.
    - b. He accused them of superstition. These were the most educated and intellectual men of the day. Our modern versions have altered this to read "very religious."
    - c. **Superstitious.** Unreasoning awe or fear of something unknown, mysterious, or imaginary, esp. in connexion with religion; religious belief or practice founded upon fear or ignorance. 2. An irrational religious system; a false, pagan, or idolatrous religion.
    - d. He wisely used an altar to the unknown God to introduce the true and living God.
    - e. No matter how cute or creative, we do not assume a crowd of ignorant elect here.
    - f. If they feared God and had any sense, they would have been at the synagogue.
    - g. These men were pantheists (Stoicks) or polytheists (Epicureans), not wise at all.
    - h. Among the many Greek gods, these fearful guessers had covered all divine bets.
    - i. There was a synagogue in Athens, and they were not worshipping God there.
    - j. Paul said, "I'll tell you about the true and living God you know nothing about."
    - k. Neither sect believed in the obvious living, personal, creator God (Rom 1:20-23).
  5. He launched into creation as distinguishing the true God from all other gods (24-25).
    - a. Creation is a basic fact of truth; only men with faith believe it (Heb 11:1-3).

- b. The immensity, complexity, and sovereignty of creation rejects need for man.
- c. He appealed to worshipping God in spirit and in truth as Jesus taught (Jn 4:24).
- d. Observe the reference to God as the “Lord” of heaven and earth (Acts 2:36).
- 6. He moved to providence in the directing and governing of men in the world (26).
  - a. Paul also used God’s providence to calm pagans in Lystra earlier (14:15-17).
  - b. Regardless of skin color and such, the blood and nature of men are the same.
  - c. The creator God made these men and sustains them to populate the whole earth.
  - d. The economic cycles, military successes, famines, popular fads, and other events that affect nations are determined and appointed by this Lord of earth.
  - e. The Lord of heaven and earth has also established their national boundaries.
- 7. His creation and sovereign government of the world is to reveal himself (27-28).
  - a. There is no excuse for men not to seek the Lord with their knowledge of Him.
  - b. God is not far off or disguised from man’s pursuit; He is near in every tongue.
  - c. This personal God is knowable, and therefore their material temples were vain.
  - d. Paul quoted a Greek poet to show support for the personal providence of God.
  - e. He quoted from a poet Aratus, who phrased these words in a hymn to Jupiter.
  - f. The true God is not pantheistic nor polytheistic, nor deistically distant from man.
  - g. The true God created, sustains, intervenes, and governs men at a personal level.
  - h. If we are created like His offspring, then idols and altar worship are inadequate.
- 8. God allowed this Gentile ignorance in the past, but now He commanded all to repent.
  - a. For much of the history of the world, God dealt with the patriarchs or Israel only.
  - b. But now the message of God was going forth into all the world (Rom 1:16-19).
  - c. Our Lord’s apostles were commanded to attack the gates of hell (Matt 16:18).
- 9. Paul concluded with an invitation about the coming judgment of God by Jesus.
  - a. God has appointed a day to judge all men by His ordained Man, Christ Jesus.
  - b. God has kindly guaranteed the coming judgment by raising Him from the dead.
- 10. His teaching in this Greek (wisdom seeking) place met with mixed results (32-34).
  - a. It appeared that Paul was not allowed to continue speaking by their interruption.
  - b. Preaching of Christ divides men here as in other places (John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19).
  - c. Several heard and believed, including Dionysius of the Areopagus and Damaris.
- 11. For details about Paul on Mars’ Hill ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/superstition-or-truth.pdf>.

## **ACTS 18**

### **L. Corinth – Paul started a church in this wicked city of Achaia, Greece (18:1-18).**

- 1. Corinth, capital of Achaia, had much fornication, prosperity, lasciviousness (1).
  - a. It was prosperous by long existence with harbors of Ionian and Aegean Seas.
  - b. Both wealth (“a Corinthian”) and immorality (“Corinthianize”) were proverbs.
  - c. We may detect some of this from Paul’s epistles (I Cor 4:7-8; 5:1-2; 6:9-20).
  - d. Paul took the gospel from intellectual Athens to the pleasure-mad Corinthians.
- 2. Paul lived with Aquila and Priscilla there, supporting himself making tents (2-3).
  - a. Whether Aquila and Priscilla were saved before meeting Paul, we are not told.
  - b. Pontus was a Roman province north of Galatia on the coast of the Black Sea.

- c. Paul, a very educated man, had acquired the trade of tentmaking for necessity.
  - d. To further the gospel, he forewent support from Corinth (I Cor 1:26; 9:6,11,12).
  - e. However, Paul received support from other churches while working (Phil 4:16).
  - f. Corinth was wrong for not taking this issue into their own hands (I Cor 9:5-12).
3. Paul again preached in the Jews' synagogue with success and opposition (4-6).
    - a. We are told repeatedly about the most aggressive evangelist – in synagogues.
    - b. Note two things about evangelism – it is reasoning (17:2-3; 18:4) and persuading (19:26); it is not entertaining or flattering; it is not coddling or compromising.
    - c. Silas and Timotheus had stayed in Berea, Macedonia before catching up (17:15).
    - d. Paul had a fervent spirit attentive to the Spirit, which had stirred before (17:16).
    - e. The Jews in Corinth opposed themselves and blasphemed as Satan's captives.
    - f. Paul does teach patience and gentleness (II Ti 2:24-26 vs Matt 7:6; Pr 26:4-5).
    - g. Ministers have a limited responsibility to the wicked (Ezekiel 3:16-21; 33:1-9).
    - h. He cursed these Jews to the judgment of God (I Thess 2:14-16 cp Matt 27:25).
    - i. His turn to the Gentiles is for Corinth at this time (18:19; 19:10; 20:21; 28:17).
  4. Paul, turning from Jews, preached to the Gentiles there for eighteen months (7-11).
    - a. He entered the home of a proselyte (13:16,26,43; 16:14), next to the synagogue.
    - b. By grace Paul converted Crispus, chief ruler of the synagogue and his house.
    - c. This initial convert is identified elsewhere by Paul in his epistle (I Cor 1:14).
    - d. This cannot be the same as Sosthenes (17), for he would have been fired soon.
    - e. Other Corinthians were converted and baptized, including Gaius (I Cor 1:14).
    - f. Let the gospel order be understood – hearing, believing, and only then baptism.
    - g. If we are patient, we shall see why Baptists were called Anabaptists (19:1-7).
  5. The Lord had much people in Corinth. Who were these people? Why not all men?
    - a. These are the elect of God ordained to eternal life (13:48; II Timothy 2:10).
    - b. The Lord knoweth all them that are His (II Timothy 2:19; Rom 8:29; Gal 4:9).
    - c. The Lord does not know the wicked and will tell them so soon (Matthew 7:23).
    - d. Let Arminians, who defile God's sovereign election, choke on these words.
    - e. Your conversion is by the same means – God sent a man for you by His grace.
    - f. Paul stayed there eighteen months teaching, or preaching, the word of God.
  6. The Jews caused a riot to have Paul punished civilly by the Roman ruler (12-17).
    - a. Achaia was the province; Gallio the Roman proconsul; Corinth was the capital.
    - b. The Jews, united in hatred of Christ, accuse Paul before Gallio, the deputy.
    - c. The Jews, as usual with the enemies of Christ, falsely accuse Paul of sedition.
    - d. It is our duty to live holy lives according to the law at all times (I Pet 2:12-17).
    - e. Gallio showed disdain for the Jews, and so the Greeks beat their chief ruler; which taught the Jews to think before bringing their petty problems up again.
    - f. Sosthenes was later converted, for Paul listed his name very high (I Cor 1:1).
    - g. It was not time for Paul to leave, so the Lord delivered Paul from Gallio (18), just as he had promised to him in a vision by night earlier for His much people.
  7. After the riot Paul left Corinth with friends and made a Jewish vow in Cenchrea (18).
    - a. Luke wrote that he sailed into Syria, but this summary is expanded next (19-22).

- b. This is a great verse to consider and remember to rightly divide by its context.
- c. He took Aquila and Priscilla from Corinth but he left them in Ephesus (18-19).
- d. The final stops were Corinth, Cenchrea, Ephesus, Caesarea, Jerusalem, Antioch.

### **M. Ephesus – Paul formed his first church in Asia; it will be important (18:19-21).**

1. Paul left Corinth for Caesarea in Syria; he hoped to be at a feast in Jerusalem (21).
  - a. He brought Aquila and Priscilla from Corinth to Ephesus and left them there.
  - b. Aquila and Priscilla were useful brethren (Rom 16:3; I Cor 16:19; II Tim 4:19).
  - c. Two of the three times this holy couple are mentioned, Prisca is first (Gal 3:28).
  - d. They are a fine example of a power couple by all they did for Paul and saints.
  - e. His vow was for Jews in the Jerusalem church (21:20-26; Nu 6:18; I Cor 9:20).
2. Paul reasoned with the Jews, as his manner, in the synagogue in Ephesus also (19).
  - a. Ephesus, a major city on the western coast of Asia Minor, would get Paul again.
  - b. Preaching is reasoning – it is presenting facts and arguments to persuade men.
3. Paul did not stay long in Ephesus, as he had to make the feast in Jerusalem (20-21).
  - a. He left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus to help what he started and sailed away.
  - b. Though the Jews desired him to stay; he had to leave; he did return for 2+ years.

### **N. Antioch – Paul returned to his home church after a stop at Jerusalem (18:22).**

1. He landed at Caesarea, Syria as planned (18), and went up (altitude) to Jerusalem.
2. This cannot be any church at Caesarea, for he traveled – went up – before saluting.
3. Any general reference to a church in that part of the earth could only be Jerusalem.
4. He greeted the Jerusalem church and then went down (altitude) to Antioch, Syria.
5. Antioch was his home church, so he spent some time there with the brethren (23).

### **Conclusion:**

1. What will you do with the message God sent you about His Son and the great mystery of godliness?
2. Have you believed the full Bible record about the Lord Jesus Christ and declared your faith openly?
3. If you ignore His gracious kindness by gospel preachers, He can send strong delusion to believe lies.
4. Do you feel bound to give thanks always to God for choosing you to believe truth (II Thess 2:13).
5. Your true appreciation for God sending you truth is to want to send that truth to others beyond you.
6. How can God or we believe the gospel means much to you unless you want to share it with others?
7. Other events that happen to you of importance you share with others as good news of an earthly sort.
8. For a dramatic intro and map for Paul's trip ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/paul-second-preaching-trip-slides.pdf>.

### **For Further Study:**

1. The sermon (notes) ... *Paul's First Preaching Trip* ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/paul-first-preaching-trip-notes.pdf>.
2. The sermon (map) ... *Paul's First Trip* ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/paul-first-preaching-trip-slides.pdf>.
3. The sermon (notes) ... *Acts 15* ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/acts15.pdf>.
4. The sermon (slides) ... *Dispensationalism's Best Verse* ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/dispensationalists-best-verse.pdf>.
5. The short sermon (notes) ... *Acts 16* ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/acts16.pdf>.
6. The long sermon (notes) ... *Acts 16* ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/acts-16.pdf>.
7. The sermon (notes) ... *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ* ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/believe-on-the-lord-jesus.pdf>.
8. The sermon (notes) ... *Acts 17* ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/acts17.pdf>.
9. The sermon (notes) ... *Paul vs. Athens' Philosophers* ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/superstition-or-truth.pdf>.
10. The sermon (notes) ... *Acts 18* ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/acts18.pdf>.
11. The sermon (slides) ... *Great Mystery of Godliness* ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/mystery-of-godliness-powerpoint.pdf>.

12. The sermon series (outline) ... *Great Mystery of Godliness* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/mystery-of-godliness.pdf>.
13. Jesus' charge to the apostles to reprove the world ... *John 16:8-11* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/john-sixteen.pdf>.
14. The sermon (notes) ... *Reprove the World* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/reprove-the-world.pdf>.
15. The sermon (slides) ... *The Great Commission* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/great-commission.pdf>.
16. The sermon (outline) ... *For Love of a Soul* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/love-of-a-soul.pdf>.
17. The sermon (slides) ... *One Soul at a Time* ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/evangelism-one-at-a-time.pdf>.
18. Temples of Idols in Greece ... <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/greece/articles/the-most-beautiful-temples-in-greece/>.