

ACTS

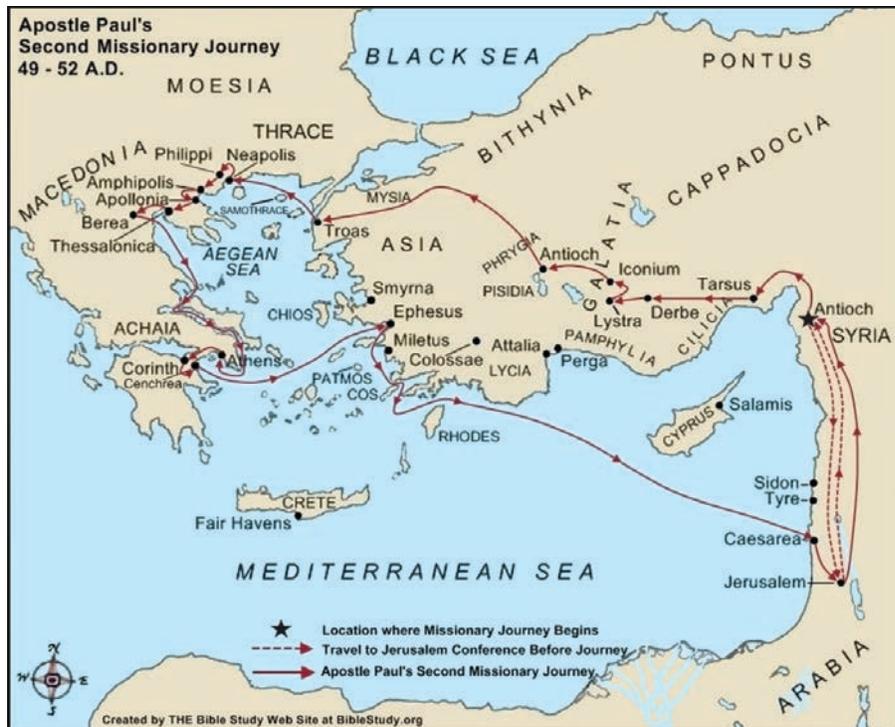
Chapter 16

Note from Kathy

Have you ever wondered, what is my next move? Where do I go from here? Taking care with our steps can spare us much regret. The only way to be sure we are going in the right direction is to hear from the Lord. Psalms 37:23 says, "The steps of a man are established by the LORD, when he delights in his way." Our heavenly Father takes great pleasure in directing our proper course. We see a beautiful example of this in Acts 16 as the Lord guides the apostle Paul on his second missionary journey.

Acts 16:1

Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek.



Observation

1. Make a list of all the regions and towns mentioned in this chapter. While reading the scripture, I underline places with a brown colored pencil making them easier to see.

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2. Who does Paul meet for the first time in Acts 16:1? _____
This young man was very valuable to Paul and his ministry.

■ Acts 16:6-10

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

■ Acts 16:13-15

On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home.

■ Acts 16:19-24

When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. ²⁰They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar ²¹by advocating customs unlawful for Romans to accept or practice." ²²The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. ²³After they were severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. ²⁴When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

3. What did you learn about this young man in verses 1-2?
4. These believers did not have the *Bible* as we do today. Everything they knew about following Jesus they learned from these leaders while they were together. As Paul, Silas and Timothy traveled from town to town, what did they share with all the believers they met along the way?
5. In verses 6-8 we read that Paul was a bit confused as to where the Lord wanted him to go next.
 - First, the Lord kept him from going to _____
 - Next, the Lord kept him from going to _____
 - Where did Paul spend the night? _____

I heard someone say one time, "It is much easier to steer a ship that is moving."

6. During the night what happened that helped Paul know where God wanted him to go?
7. Where are Paul, Silas and Timothy in verses 13-15, and who did they meet?
8. Scripture tells us it was the Sabbath. Where would you normally find Paul, Silas and Timothy on the Sabbath? _____
What does this tell you about this area?
9. Acts 16 tells us that these missionaries met a fortune-teller who began following them around. What did she yell for all to hear?

You might think this would help draw attention to them, so they could preach. Did Paul see it that way? _____ What did Paul say and do?

10. Was everyone amazed and rejoicing when Paul cast the demon from this woman and her life and heart were changed?
11. What happened to Paul and Silas for freeing this woman of a demon spirit?
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12. After all this dreadful treatment, what do we find these two missionaries doing that night?

Suddenly, what happened that would drastically alter the course of events? This was no ordinary event of nature.

13. According to verse 27, what did the jailer fear had happened?

■ Acts 12:18-19

In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter.¹⁹ After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross examined the guards and ordered that they be executed.

■ Acts 15:37

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

■ Acts 16:39-40

They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city.⁴⁰ After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

■ Biblestudytools.com

You can use the Strong's Concordance online at biblestudytools.com.

14. We discussed this in Acts 12:18-19—what happens to Roman guards who lose their prisoner?
15. All the jailer had seen that night caused him to want what Paul and Silas had been singing and preaching about. He asked them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The men shared with him the simplicity of the gospel: believe and receive. What unexpected and compassionate thing did the jailer do next?

Who else was saved that night?

16. Scripture tells us the next morning the officials sent word to release Paul and Silas, but Paul refused to be released. What did Paul say was the problem?

What these officials had done was a gross violation of a common maxim in the Roman law: *Many who are accused of evil may be absolved, when the cause is heard; but unheard, no man can be condemned.* What were Paul and Silas denied that was their right as Roman citizens?

Where had this unjust punishment been carried out?

17. The officials did as Paul requested—they came to the prison to appease them and escort them out. Some translations say they apologized, and others say they begged them. What did the officials want Paul and Silas to do?
18. After their release, did Paul and Silas leave the city as requested? Where did they go and why?

Application

1. Look up the meaning of the name Timothy.

What does the meaning of his name tell you about the hopes and dreams of his mother?

What hopes and dreams do you have for your children or grandchildren?

What are you actively doing to help bring it about?

2. Paul wanted to take Timothy with him on this missionary journey. Paul had experienced difficulties before with the Jews and wanted to re-

■ 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide-range of people,²⁰ religious, nonreligious,²¹ meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists,²² the defeated, the demoralized whoever. I didn't take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ - but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I've become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life.²³ I did all this because of the Message. I didn't just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!

■ Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

■ Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

■ Psalm 118:14

The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.

■ 1 Thessalonians 1:6

You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

■ Hebrews 2:18

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

move any stumbling blocks before they became a problem. Did you notice the genuine meekness displayed when Timothy agreed to be circumcised so that he would not offend the Jews along the way?

Can you recall a time you submitted to something to keep from offending others?

Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 to see Paul's heart for others. This version is from The Message Bible, because I especially liked the translation.

3. This meekness and consideration of others was probably no new thing for Timothy. In Acts 16:2 we see that all the believers in his hometown of Lystra spoke well of him. How do you suppose others speak of you?

As followers of Christ we carry his name and should live each day with that thought in mind. Do you know of anyone who displays this type of meekness and consideration for others?

4. We are introduced to Lydia in this chapter. Lydia is a business woman who worshiped God. She was hungry to know God. God orchestrated it so that Lydia could hear Paul and Silas share the gospel that day. What events can you look back on and see God's hand orchestrating in your life as a believer?
5. Paul has been brought before the magistrates and accused of throwing the city into an uproar. He and Silas were severely beaten and taken to prison. The next day held nothing good for these two men. I would say this classified as a crisis. Crisis is defined as a time of intense difficulty, trouble or danger. Were you surprised to read that after their flogging and unfair treatment, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God? What is your response to mistreatment or crisis?

Read these verses, and in one word describe the gift promised to believers.

Matthew 11:28-30

Philippians 4:6-7

Psalm 118:14

1 Thessalonians 1:6

Hebrews 2:18

6. Knowing what the jailer would think, we see Paul very quickly tell him, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" Why such compassion for the guard of the prison?

Paul had been unfairly treated by those in authority, yet he showed

them compassion. Have you ever experienced unfair treatment by others but extended compassion when the situation changed?

Conversely, have you ever treated someone unfairly, yet you were shown compassion?

7. That night the jailer was saved, and so was his entire household. There is something about the leader in the home coming to faith that gets the attention of other family members. When loved ones see the dramatic change the Holy Spirit makes, they know he is real. Do you have any family members whose salvation was totally unexpected, and the change was so apparent that many others believed after seeing them?
8. Paul received word that he was released to go free. He would not simply leave and allow these officials to get away with this kind of illegal treatment. He made a stand for the future sake of other believers in that city. How did bringing this injustice to light spare other Christians from this type of mistreatment?

As a Christian, there are times when it is best to allow mistreatment to simply be forgiven. But there are other times when bringing it to light can do much good. Can you think of examples of this in our day?

9. In verse 37 Paul insisted the officials escort them out because they had illegally and publicly flogged, humiliated and jailed Roman citizens without cause. The officials did exactly what they were asked to do. What valuable lessons could someone in a position of authority learn from studying this situation?
10. After their release Paul and Silas went to Lydia's house where they had been staying. It was important for the believers there to see how Paul and Silas responded to their mistreatment and to hear the words of encouragement. Our personal testimony of God's care can be a valuable tool to build the strength of believers around us. People like Corrie Ten Boom and Mariam Ibraheem are modern-day Christians who suffered tremendously, but God was their source of strength and their deliverer. In what way do the testimonies of those persecuted for their faith strengthen your walk of faith?

Key Places in the Book of Acts

